RECENT OFFICERS OF GENERAL SYNOD

A list of presidents, from the first in 1794 to 1955, can be found on pages 308-311 of the 1956 *Minutes of General Synod*. The list of presidents from 1956-1978 can be found on page i of the 2002 *Minutes of General Synod.*

PRESIDENTS

Year of Election	*From*	*Place of Election*
1979—The Rev. Edwin G. Mulder	Michigan	Holland, MI
1980—The Rev. Harry Buis	Michigan	Schenectady, NY
1981—The Rev. Jack H. Hascup	New York	Hamilton, ON
1982—The Rev. James I. Cook	Michigan	Orange City, IA
1983—The Rev. Leonard V. Kalkwarf	Pennsylvania	Pella, IA
1984—The Rev. William C. Brownson	Michigan	New Brunswick, NJ
1985—The Rev. Kenneth N. Leestma	California	Kalamazoo, MI
1986—The Rev. James A. Neevel	New York	Garden Grove, CA
1987—The Rev. Robert L. Wise	Oklahoma	Holland, MI
1988—The Rev. Wilbur T. Washington	New York	Bronx, NY
1989—The Rev. Sylvio J. Scorza	Iowa	Grand Rapids, MI
1990—The Rev. John E. Hiemstra	New York	Orange City, IA
1991—The Rev. Louis E. Lotz	Iowa	Holland, MI
1992—Elder Beth E. Marcus	Michigan	Albany, NY
1993—The Rev. Warren D. Burgess	Michigan	Vancouver, BC
1994—The Rev. Harold J. Korver	California	Pella, IA
1995—The Rev. I. John Hesselink	Michigan	Mahwah, NJ
1996—The Rev. Anthony D. Vis	Iowa	Orange City, IA
1997—The Rev. Charles Van Engen	California	Milwaukee, WI
1998—The Rev. Frederick Kruithof	Michigan	Holland, MI
1999—The Rev. Gregg Mast	New York	Sioux Falls, SD
2000—Elder Carol L. Mutch	New Jersey	Hempstead, NY
2001—The Rev. Steven R. Brooks	Colorado	Pella, IA
2002—The Rev. John C. H. Chang	New York	Orange City, IA
2003—The Rev. David D. Schutt	California	Holland, MI
2004—The Rev. Steven VanderMolen	Iowa	Wheaton, IL
2005—The Rev. Irving Rivera	New York	Schenectady, NY
2006—Elder Bradley Lewis	New York	Pella, IA
2007—The Rev. John Ornee	Michigan	Pella, IA
2008—The Rev. Carol Bechtel	Michigan	Holland, MI
2009—The Rev. James Seawood	New York	Holland, MI
2010—The Rev. Donald Poest	Ohio	Orange City, IA
2011—The Rev. Lisa Vander Wal	New York	Grand Rapids, MI

STATED CLERKS

The Rev. John A. Ingham	1932-1942
The Rev. James E. Hoffman	1942-1961
The Rev. Marion de Velder	1961-1968

GENERAL SECRETARIES

The Rev. Marion de Velder	1968-1977
The Rev. Arie R. Brouwer	1977-1983
The Rev. Edwin G. Mulder	1983-1994
The Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson	1994-2011
The Rev. Thomas R. De Vries	2011-

PERMANENT COMMISSIONS, BOARDS, AND AGENCIES 2010-2011

*Indicates serving a final term

GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL

Fred Algera	2011*	RSC
Randall Bohl	2012*	
Jonathon Brown	2013*	
John Busman	2012*	RSH
Michelle Chahine, *Moderator*	2011*	RSGL
James Cobb (*Ecumenical ELCA, non-voting*)	2013*	
Thomas Dibble	2013*	RSMAt
Stephanie Doeschot	2011*	
Andrea Godwin-Stremler	2014*	RSFW
Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (*General Secretary*)		*Ex-officio*
Larryl Humme	2013*	
Aaron Klein	2011*	
Marianne Lin	2011*	
Jo Anna Lougin	2014*	
Toni Macon	2012*	RSNY
Gloria McCanna	2014*	
Justin Meyers	2014*	
Lizbeth Moss	2011*	
David Patterson	2012*	
Jeffrey Peterson	2014*	
Christopher Poest	2013*	RSMAm
Donald Poest	2011*	P, GS
Kathryn Romero	2013*	
James Seawood	2011*	PP, GS
Gregory Town	2014*	RSA
Arnold Van Ankum	2012*	
Lisa Vander Wal	2011*	VP, GS
Evan Vermeer	2012*	
Ai-Lan Wang	2013*	

RACIAL/ETHNIC COUNCILS

AFRICAN-AMERICAN COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Shawn Gibson
Christopher Grier
Jo Anna Lougin, *Chairperson*
Annie Lee Phillips
Jimmie Stevenson
James Steward

COUNCIL FOR HISPANIC MINISTRIES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Pedro Agudelo
Rosa Funes
Rafael Garcia, *President*
Fernando Jensen

Selso Antonio Pichardo
Carlos Rivera
Jose Manuel Serrano

COUNCIL FOR PACIFIC AND ASIAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ock Kee Byun
John Chang
Norman Chen
Hak Ryong Kim, *Chairperson*
Joel Kim
Baktha Kumar
Shuo-Min (Imos) Wu

COMMISSIONS

CHRISTIAN ACTION

Thomas Goodhart, *Moderator* 2011*
Linda Hippenhammer.....2013*
Samuel Kwon.....2012*
Pamela Pater-Ennis 2013*
Terry Provance (*Reformed ecumenical observer*) 2011*
Mark Rich (*ELCA ecumenical observer*).....2011
Dayber Rodrigues Goncalves.....2011
Loretta Rolle.....2012
Cora Solomon.....2011
Jimmie Stevenson.....2013*
Steve Young.....2012

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP AND EDUCATION

Sharon Atkins.....2013
Brooke Boersma.....2012
James Daniels.....2013*
Lois Fiegl, *Moderator* 2011
Mitchell Kinsinger 2011
Scott Nyp.....2012
Dennis TeBeest 2012

CHRISTIAN UNITY

William Bennett 2013*
Judith Cobb (*ELCA*).....2011*
Norma Coleman-James 2013
Harold Delhagen 2011*
Christopher Dorn.....2011*
Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (*General Secretary*) *Ex-officio*
Jeffrey Japinga 2012
Fernando Jensen 2011
Susan Sgarlat, *Moderator* 2012
Vacancy.....2012

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Glenda De Koster	2013*	
Christopher Grier	2013*	
Ronald Rienstra	2013	
M. Scot Sherman, *Moderator*	2012	
Adriene Thorne	2011	
Lisa Tice	2011	
Andrew Vivanco	2012	

CHURCH ORDER

Joshua Bode	2012	
James Donkersloot	2011*	
Randy Kooy, *Moderator*	2011*	
Jason Schnelker	2012*	
Lori Walber	2013	

HISTORY

Douglas Carlson	2013*	
Mary Kansfield	2011*	
Hartmut Kramer-Mills	2012*	
J. Jeffery Tyler, *Moderator*	2011*	
Audrey Vermilyea	2013*	
Lori Witt	2012*	

JUDICIAL BUSINESS

Richard Baukema	2013*	RSGL
John D'Amanda	2013	RSA
Jonathan Gundlach	2013	RSFW
James Ramsay	2012*	RSC
Wayne Sneller	2011*	RSH
Edward Thornton	2012	RSMAt
Cary Winn, *Moderator*	2012*	RSMAm
John Wood	2011*	RSNY

NOMINATIONS

Armando Alas	2013	CHM
Donald Broek	2012*	RSH
John Chang	2012*	CPAAM
Kenneth Labbé	2012	RSC
Carol Mutch, *Moderator*	2011*	RSMAt
Phyllis Palsma	2013	RSA
Annie Lee Phillips	2011	AAC
James Seawood	2011*	PP, GS
Sherwin Weener	2013*	RSGL
Paul Wernlund	2011*	RSMAm
Vacancy	2011	
Vacancy	2012	RSNY
Vacancy	2013	RSFW

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Santos Gonzalez	2012	CHM
Mark Kellar, *Moderator*	2011*	AAC
Kevin McMahan	2011	
Kenneth Petty	2011	
Keith Ross	2012	
Lois (Holly) Schut	2013*	
Lewis Tait	2012	
Vacancy	2013*	CPAAM

THEOLOGY

J. Mark Anderson	2013	
J. Todd Billings	2013*	
James De Jong (*Reformed ecumenical observer*)	2011	
Eugene Fisher	2012	
Daniel Griswold	2013	
Steven Hoogerwerf	2011	
Philip Hougen (*ELCA ecumenical observer*)	2011	
Renée House, *Moderator*	2011	
Angie Mabry-Nauta	2012*	
Young Aie Na	2011*	
David Timmer	2012	
Leanne Van Dyk	2013	

WOMEN

Kathryn Brogan	2012	
Mark Bush	2012*	
Leonor Cabellero	2011	
Joanne Fernandez-McDermott	2013*	
Lynn Japinga	2011	
Stacey Midge, *Moderator*	2012*	
Lisa Tait	2013*	
Vacancy	2013	

AGENCIES

BOARD OF BENEFITS SERVICES

Carl Boersma	2013	
Dennis Bolling	2012	
Michelle Chahine	2011*	GSC Moderator
John De Koster	2012*	
Mary Draayer	2012*	
Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (*General Secretary*)		*Ex-officio*
Vernon Hoffs	2012	
Daniel Kleinheksel	2013*	
Janet Krueger	2013*	
Donald Poest	2011*	P, GS
Paul Pratt, *President*	2011*	
Carl Van Voorst	2011	
Craig Vander Molen	2012*	

Gerald Vander Wal 2011*
Lisa Vander Wal .....2011* VP, GS
Timothy Zeutenhorst.....2013
Vacancy.....2013

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA CHURCH GROWTH FUND, INC.

Diane Faubion 2011
Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (*General Secretary*) *Ex-officio*
Stephen Hanson.....2012
John Koerselman.....2011
George Schneidermann 2013*
Benjamin Sweet 2012
Vacancy.....2013

MINISTERIAL FORMATION CERTIFICATION AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Eddy Aleman 2012
Dwight Bailey 2011
Nancy Ann Callender.....2011*
Verlyn Hemmen 2013
Renée House.....2012*
Bradley Lewis, *Moderator*.....2013*
Anne Mead.....2013
Barton Strong 2013*
David Theonugraha.....2012*

REFORMED CHURCH PRESS

Paul Boice
Kenneth Bradsell
Lizbeth Moss.....2011*
Christopher Poest 2013*

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RCA Endowment Fund ..... www.rca.org/financials
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ACTS AND PROCEEDINGS

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA CONVENED IN ITS TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTH REGULAR SESSION ON THE CAMPUS OF CALVIN COLLEGE IN GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, ON THURSDAY, THE SIXTEENTH OF JUNE, A.D. TWO THOUSAND ELEVEN, AT 9:30 A.M., CENTRAL TIME.

FORMATION OF THE SYNOD

OPENING OF SYNOD

The General Synod was opened by president Donald Poest on Thursday morning, June 16, 2011, with a worship liturgy led by the Rev. Donald Poest and the Rev. Timothy Ten Clay.

JOINT SESSION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA AND THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

The joint session of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) was held on June 16 at 1:30 p.m. in the Covenant Fine Arts Center on the campus of Calvin College. The Rev. Donald Poest, president of the General Synod, welcomed delegates from both communions and invited the Rev. James Dekker, president of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, to open the session with prayer.

The president invited the Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, RCA general secretary, and the Rev. Joel Boot, interim executive director of the CRCNA, to address the delegates. They shared a time reflecting on areas of collaboration between the two denominations.

A report was distributed highlighting the established areas of collaboration between the RCA and CRCNA. The general secretary recognized and thanked Richard and Helen DeVos for the significant grant that the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation has provided to expand the collaborative church planting efforts of the two denominations.

The Rev. Joel Boot offered closing thoughts and the Rev. James Dekker invited delegates to share their stories and testimonies regarding how they have been impacted by RCA/CRCNA partnerships.

To acknowledge and highlight the approved common translations of the three reformed standards by both communions, the Rev. James Dekker introduced a resolution regarding the RCA and CRCNA common translations:

To recognize the passage of the common translations of the doctrinal standards by the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America; and further,

To affirm the usage of these translations in our joint publishing efforts through Faith Alive Christian Resources; and

To celebrate the historic vote by the respective synods, and to affirm it in each other's presence, we will sing the doxology to signify our mutual affirmation and declare it to be the first joint-action of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, and the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

The delegates affirmed the resolution by singing the doxology.

The Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, addressed the General Synod.

The joint synod processed to worship in the Calvin College chapel, where a joint service of celebration and hope was held. The joint service included the following participants: liturgist, Elizabeth Testa; preacher, the Rev. Rik Stevenson; celebrant, the Rev. Donald Poest; celebrant, the Rev. Moses Chung; musicians from Fair Haven Ministries (RCA), Hudsonville, Michigan. Other participants in the service included numerous delegates, staff members, and seminarians.

The offering was received for the work of the Rev. Larry McAuley in Malawi. The Rev. McAuley is ordained in the RCA and serves the people of Malawi under the auspices of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

Thursday Afternoon

Joint session of the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America—as noted above.

Thursday Evening

Opening Prayer—the Rev. Stephanie Doeschot, General Synod Council

The Rev. Don Den Dulk, RCA military endorsing agent, introduced the RCA military and institutional chaplains and offered prayer.

Closing Prayer—the Rev. Dr. Gregg Mast, president, New Brunswick Theological Seminary

The daily worship team included the Rev. Trygve Johnson, Hope College chaplain, as preacher and musicians John Chisum, Kristin Bredeweg, Jared Heddens, Adam Davis, Mark Weymouth, and Elizabeth Testa.

Friday

Morning Closing Prayer— Elder Mary Bechler, chair, General Secretary Search Committee

Afternoon Opening Prayer— John Chen, seminarian from New Brunswick Theological Seminary

Afternoon Closing Prayer— Elder Marlene Velarde, Classis of Rocky Mountains

Saturday

Morning Closing Prayer— the Rev. Richard DeBruyne, Classis of California

Sunday

Morning—General Synod participants worshiped in area churches
Afternoon Opening Prayer— the Rev. James Seawood, Classis of New York
Afternoon Closing Prayer—Dr. George Cheriyan, American Mission Hospital, Bahrain

On Sunday evening, an ecumenical dinner was held with an array of distinguished ecumenical guests in attendance (see the list of ecumenical guests on pages 15-16).

Monday

Morning Closing Prayer— Elder Evan Vermeer, General Synod Council
Afternoon Opening Prayer—the Rev. Todd Van Ek, Classis of the City
Afternoon Closing Prayer— the Rev. Don Poest, General Synod President
Monday evening a service of installation was held for the incoming general secretary, the Rev. Thomas R. De Vries, as noted below.

SERVICE OF INSTALLATION FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

A service of installation for the incoming general secretary, the Rev. Thomas R. De Vries, began in the Calvin College chapel at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, June 20, 2011, and came to a close at 9:15 p.m.

Participants included:

Charge to the General Secretary—the Rev. Glenn De Master
Charge to the General Synod Council and General Synod—the Rev. Irving Rivera
Vows—the Rev. Lisa Vander Wal and the Rev. Thomas R. De Vries
Commitments—the Rev. Donald Poest
Declaration of Installation—the Rev. Donald Poest
Prayer of Installation/Laying on of Hands—the Rev. Douglas McClintic and the Rev. Edwin G. Mulder

The service celebrated the diversity and the unity of the denomination. The offering taken was dedicated to Hand2Hand Ministries, an outreach program begun at Fair Haven Ministries in Hudsonville, Michigan, that provides food to children who would otherwise go hungry over the weekend. Participants included synod officials and other denominational leaders, classis and regional synod leaders, college and seminary presidents, leaders and members of Fair Haven Ministries, and ecumenical guests.

Tuesday Morning

Opening Worship—Elizabeth Testa and Paul Thé, worship team members
Installation Service for New Officers

An installation service for the new officers of General Synod and a communion service were held on Tuesday, June 21. Participants in the service included the Rev. Donald Poest, president of General Synod who presided over the installations; the Rev. Thomas De Vries, preacher; the Rev. Lisa Vander Wal, president-elect of General Synod; the Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, general secretary, who administered the sacraments; and the Rev. Thomas Smith, vice president-elect of General Synod.

Roll Call of General Synod

REGIONAL SYNOD OF ALBANY

Classis of Albany
MINISTERS
Harlan Ratmeyer, 30 Church Rd, Selkirk, NY 12158-1415
Timothy Van Heest, PO Box 86, Knox, NY 12107-0086

ELDERS
Larry DeLaMater, 38 Old Troy Rd, East Greenbush, NY 12061-1524
Kathy Johnson, PO Box 67, South Bethlehem, NY 12161-0067

Classis of Columbia-Greene
MINISTERS
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Nancy McClure-Long, 1042 County Route 22, Ghent, NY 12075-3616

ELDERS
Andrea DiPace, 1118 County Rte 6, Germantown, NY 12526-6006
Nancy Hoag Rasweiler, 94 Roxbury Hollow Farm Rd, Hudson, NY 12534

Classis of Montgomery
MINISTER
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ELDER
Shirley Hermann, 109 Kristin Rd, North Syracuse, NY 13212-2608

Classis of Rochester
MINISTERS
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Brian Maag, 310 Washington St Apt A29, Newark, NY 14513

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Lois Fiegl, 5550 Eddy Ridge Rd, Marion, NY 14505
Richard Morano, 3984 Pilgrimport Rd, Lyons, NY 14489-9330

Classis of Schenectady
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Classis of Schoharie
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ELDERS
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Bernhard Van Dijk, 5682 Gilpin St, Burnaby, BC V5G 2H9

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Joanne Radstake, RR 1, Alma, ON NOB 1AO

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Classis of Cascades
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Kathleen Barker, 595 Sunset Rd, River Vale, NJ 07675-5706
Carol O'Neill, 132 Vreeland Ct, Mahwah, NJ 07430-2022

Classis of New Brunswick
MINISTERS
David de Forest, 95 Glenwood Dr, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724-2723
Ronald Vande Bunte, 15 Lisa Dr Apt D1A, South River, NJ 08882-2565

ELDERS
Marilyn De Socio, 6 Comiche Ct, Manchester, NJ 08759-6168
Nancy Ruiter, 127 Howell Rd, Freehold, NJ 07728-8884

Classis of Passaic Valley
MINISTERS
Jill Fenske, 55 Ramapo Rd, Pompton Plains, NJ 07444-1334
Rolnand Perez, First Hispanic Reformed Church of Newark, PO Box 340, Bellville, NJ 07109-0340

ELDERS
Donald Engold, 75 King St, Haledon, NJ 07508-1339
John Tice, 21 Garnett Pl, Norwood, NJ 07648-1202

REGIONAL SYNOD OF NEW YORK

Dwayne Jackson, 81 Cossio Dr, Newark, NJ 07103

Classis of Brooklyn
MINISTER
Douglas Banks, 155 Lincoln Rd, Brooklyn, NY 11225-4005

ELDERS
Erik Ander, 1625 Emmons Ave 2K, Brooklyn, NY 11235
Devonna Cousins, 126 Saratoga Ave Apt 1B, Brooklyn, NY 11233-5800

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MINISTERS
Taylor Holbrook, 9 Sachs Ct, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533-6231
Nickolas Miles, 9 Russett Ln, Ulster Park, NY 12487

ELDERS
Daniel Byers, 753 Hewitt Ln, New Windsor, NY 12553-5463
Douglas Constant, 142 Zandhoek Rd, Hurley, NY 12443-5705

Classis of Nassau-Suffolk
MINISTERS
Paul Quevedo, 21 Midway Ave, Locust Valley, NY 11560
Wai Choon Tan, 2 Herkomer St, New Hyde Park, NY 11040-4936

ELDER
Richard Lavorata, 11 Saint Clair St, Deer Park, NY 11729-3509

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Irving Rivera, 5 Milo Dr, Middletown, NY 10941
James Seawood, 11 Edgeworth Pl, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-3021
Theresa Troia, 47 Scribner Ave, Staten Island, NY 10301-2315

ELDERS
Mindy Chung, 28 Ridge Ave, Staten Island, NY 10304-1421
Jay Nix, RR01, Box 6125, Christiansted, VI 00850
Robert Prather, 171 Forest Grn, Staten Island, NY 10312-1714

Classis of Orange
MINISTERS
Paul Nulton, 3 Sugarloaf Ct Apt 1, Vernon, NJ 07462
Brian Randazzo, 489 State Route 17K, Rock Tavern, NY 12575

ELDER
Judith Randazzo, 489 State Route 17K, Rock Tavern, NY 12575

Classis of Queens
MINISTERS
Neil Margetson, 5 W 108th St Apt 21, New York, NY 10025-3399
Thomas Hung Yong Song, 61-20 170th St Apt 2, Flushing, NY 11365

ELDERS
Marie Joyce, 4116 47th Ave Apt 4E, Sunnyside, NY 11104-3039
John Sanfilippo, 220 25 93rd Rd, Queens Village, NY 11428-1911

Classis of Rockland-Westchester
MINISTERS
Edward Schreur, 1 Manse Ln, Scarsdale, NY 10583
John Vanden Oever, Piermont Reformed Church, 361 Ferdon Ave, Piermont, NY 10968

ELDER
Frances Blauvelt, 49 Alan Rd, Spring Valley, NY 10977-6047

GENERAL SYNOD PROFESSORS OF THEOLOGY
James Brownson, 151 W 12th St, Holland, MI 49423
Renée House, 20 Wilmer Pl, Metuchen, NJ 08840
Gregg Mast, 25 Seminary Pl, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Leanne Van Dyk, 52 E 25th St, Holland, MI 49423

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Commission on Nominations
Carol Mutch
Commission on Race and Ethnicity
Mark Kellar
Commission on Theology
Angie Mabry-Nauta
Commission for Women
Stacey Midge

ADDITIONAL COMMISSION DELEGATES

Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education
Michelle Koobs
Commission on Race and Ethnicity
Grace Biskie
Commission for Women
Carlinda Peoples

REGIONAL SYNOD WOMEN

Regional Synod of Canada
Aurelia Thomas
Regional Synod of Mid-America
Judith Hazelton
Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics
Jennifer Nace
Regional Synod of New York
Pamela Edwards
Anna Jackson

YOUTH

Regional Synod of Canada
Stephanie DeGiovanni
Regional Synod of Mid-America
Todd Paben
Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics
Samuel Kim
Regional Synod of New York
Jo-Ann Palms
Central College
David Bouska
Whitney Pavlat
Northwestern College
Janet Pitsenberger
Cody Raak

ECUMENICAL DELEGATES

The Rev. Bruce Adema, Christian Reformed Church in North America
The Rev. Karen Thompson, United Church of Christ
The Rev. Ron Roberson, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

ECUMENICAL GUESTS

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
Dr. Peter Borgdorff, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Bishop Don Dixon Williams, Bread for the World

Thomas Getman, The Getman Group
Dr. David Hallman, World Council of Churches
Dr. Richard Hamm, Christian Churches Together in the USA
The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Walter Hurley, Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids
His Eminence Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim, Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch
The Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, National Council of Churches
The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Miller, Moravian Church
Dr. Mary Nelson, Bethel New Life
Mr. Stanley J. Noffsinger, Church of the Brethren
The Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, World Communion of Reformed Churches
The Rev. Glenn Palmberg, Evangelical Covenant Church
The Rev. Gradye Parsons, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Bishop Sharon Rader, United Methodist Church
The Rev. Ron Roberson, U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops
His Grace Bishop Serapion of Los Angeles, Coptic Orthodox Church in North America
Becca Stelle, Church of the Saviour
The Rev. Karen Thompson, United Church of Christ
The Rev. Dr. Stephen John Thurston, National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.
Hubert van Beek, Global Christian Forum
The Rev. Berten Waggoner, Vineyard USA
The Rev. Jim Wallis, Sojourners
The Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE PEOPLE

General Synod Council Missionary Observers
George Cheriyan, American Mission Hospital, Bahrain
Sharon Moss, Jackson County Ministries
Mark and Deb Wilson, Food for the Hungry, Cambodia
William DeBoer, Jicarilla Apache Reformed Church
David Sal Thang Vunga, Reformed Evangelical Church in Myanmar

Parliamentarian
Bruce Neckers

SEMINARIAN SEMINAR

New Brunswick Theological Seminary
Dawn Alpaugh
Roberta Arden
John Chen
Leah Ennis

Western Theological Seminary
Derek Dokter
Sarah Farkas
Chelsea Harberts
Jeffery Lampen
Kristin Tremper

Ministerial Formation Certification Agency
Brian Blummer
John Compton
Blaine Crawford
Kelly Fuller
Susan Hetrick
Linda Miles
David J. Sung
Elizabeth Testa
Justin Wallick

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

In order that the parliamentarian, Bruce Neckers, and executive staff may respond to questions for clarification and participate as requested by the General Synod president in presentations to the General Synod and in other activities that appear on the agenda, the General Synod:

VOTED: To grant privilege of the floor to the parliamentarian and the General Synod Council executive staff so they may respond to questions for clarification and participate as requested by the president in presentations and other activities on the agenda.

SEATING OF DELEGATES

The general secretary informed the synod that there were no irregularities and all delegates could be seated. The possible membership of General Synod was 244, with enrolled membership at 223, therefore, a quorum was declared present.

MINUTES AND JOURNAL

The Acts and Proceedings of the 204th regular session of the General Synod were read by title. The General Synod authorized its officers to approve the journal of actions.

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

General Synod Council members Stephanie Doeschot and Jeffrey Petersen, and Carol Mutch, corresponding delegate from the Commission on Nominations, were appointed as tellers. The following seminarians were also appointed as tellers:

Dawn Alpaugh
Roberta Arden
Emmett Brown
John Chen
John Compton
Blaine Crawford
Leah Ennis
Sarah Farkas
Kelly Fuller
Chelsea Harberts
Susan Hetrick
Mary Anne Hill
Sung Ran Kim
Jeffery Lampen
Linda Miles
David J. Sung
Elizabeth Testa
Kristin Tremper
Justin Wallick

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND SCHEDULE

The General Synod approved a schedule based on the agenda of General Synod prescribed in the Special Rules of Order (*BCO* 2003, Chapter 3, Part II, Article 1).

In addition to the prescribed agenda, the schedule provided for the following presentations, forums, programs, or activities:

The joint session of the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America was held on Thursday afternoon (see page 1).

A celebration of the service of the outgoing general secretary, Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, was held on Friday evening.

An ecumenical dinner was held Sunday evening with many special ecumenical guests in attendance (see page 3).

The installation of the new general secretary, Thomas R. De Vries, was held Monday evening (see page 3).

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The General Synod approved the list of delegates serving on advisory committees.

VOTED: To approve the 2011 General Synod advisory committee assignments.

All regular and corresponding delegates were assigned to one of nineteen "all-synod advisory committees." Each of these advisory committees reviewed the same reports and recommendations pertaining to the business before synod. The president named one delegate to be moderator of each of these issue advisory committees. The named topics were: 1) "The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church," and 2) the report and recommendation of the General Synod Council to approve the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Thomas R. De Vries to be general secretary.

A limited number of delegates were designated by the president to serve on advisory committees that considered specific business on church order and governance and overtures and new business.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDER AND GOVERNANCE

Moderator: James Brownson (General Synod Professor)
Vice Moderator: Nancy Ruiter (New Brunswick)
Ministers:
Gary De Witt (Columbia-Greene)
Mark Heijerman (West Sioux)
Stacey Midge (Schenectady)
John Stapert (Southwest)
Elders:
Richard Kingma (South Grand Rapids)
Richard Lavorata (Nassau-Suffolk)
Oteria Marsden (Central Iowa)
Willem Spaans (Canadian Prairies)
Dennis Vander Werff (Wisconsin)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND NEW BUSINESS

Moderator: Paul Quevedo (Nassau-Suffolk)
Vice Moderator: David Theonugraha (Central California)
Ministers:
Fred Harrell (City)
Jeffrey Japinga (Holland)
Diane Konynenbelt (North Grand Rapids)
Nancy Ryan (Montgomery)
Elders
Arlan Draayer (East Sioux)
William Kenneally (Schenectady)
Jay Nix (New York)
Stephen Thomas (Southwest Michigan)
John Tice (Passaic Valley)

Moderators of the All-Synod Advisory Committees

Jeffrey Allen
Philip Assink
Kathy Jo Blaske
Joshua Blunt
Gregory Brower
Jonathan Elgersma
Kent Frens
Nancy Halliburton
Taylor Holbrook (Deb Swanson, co-moderator)
Dwayne Jackson
Christopher Jacobsen
Nikolas Miles
Christa Mooi
Chad Pierce
James Reid
Todd Van Ek
Carol Wagner
Ruth Webb
Art Wiers

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS

The General Secretary noted that the Office of the General Synod received no communications that were required to be referred to appropriate committees.

PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF NEW BUSINESS

No items of new business were accepted by the synod.

We Are the Body of Christ

by Donald Poest
President, General Synod

When I was elected vice president of General Synod, I quoted Psalm 16:5-6 (NIV): "Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance."

The privilege of serving in this capacity for the past two years has simply confirmed that gratitude to God in my heart.

Knowing that I may forget some, I must at least try to express my gratitude to many. Thank you, Cathy, for supporting me in this role, even though it has meant many adjustments to your life. Thank you, Brunswick Reformed Church, and especially the more than ninety of you who committed to being prayer partners for me this past year. My love and respect for you continue to grow.

Thank you, Jay Carroll, Dan Toot, and Kevin Poest, for being three outstanding young men of God who have faithfully and truthfully preached the Word in my absences. You have grown, but so have the people who have heard you. Thank you to the incredible staff of the RCA at all levels. You continue to model a culture of positive, Christ-like servanthood, and I have benefited often.

Thank you, Reformed Church in America, for giving this privilege to a simple pastor from Brunswick, Ohio, Classis of Lake Erie, which is hardly mainstream in this denomination. Because of you, I have been able to see the church in action from Monarch, Alberta, to St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands; from Paramount, California, to Harlem, New York.

In wider circles, I have been privileged to participate in the formative gathering of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, which took place on this campus last June. I also traveled with a joint RCA/CRC team to meet with church heads in Israel. I just returned from participating in the German Protestant *Kirchentag* in Dresden.

Again and again I have seen the church of Jesus Christ alive and in action, in various forms and places, working for the glory of Christ, her head.

But I must tell you that more than once I have asked myself: Why me? Why now? For what purpose? And especially: Why me during this time of such major transition within our own denomination? For those of you who don't know, I've served as pastor of Brunswick Reformed Church in Brunswick, Ohio, for the past thirty-three years. It's the only church I have served, which means I've never experienced a transition such as we are now experiencing with Wes stepping down. So what can I say with any credibility?

As I have prayed through these questions, I have come to a great peace that I must do with the RCA what I seek to do each weekend at Brunswick Reformed—open God's Word and make it as understandable and applicable as possible. So that is what I will seek to do this morning. I'll start by posing three questions:

Do we trust God's sovereignty over his church, or do we try to control it our way?
Do we take his Word seriously, or only when we can interpret it to our advantage?
Do we believe the church is Christ's body, or do we treat it like a dysfunctional family?

Permit me to read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27:

> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
>
> Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect, whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.
>
> Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

The human body is amazing! Last year "Bodies: The Exhibition" made a stop in Cleveland for a few weeks and I attended. If you ever get a chance, take this in. It's a wonderful display of the human body, arranged by systems: skeletal, muscular, nervous, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, and reproductive and urinary. Each system is shown to be very different, yet all are interdependent. Each system has many different parts within it, but all systems are dependent on the head.

While the apostle Paul didn't have this kind of medical technology on display in his day, he understood the body well enough to know it made a great analogy for the church. So often, we compare the church to a family. But the body is a better choice. If family members get upset with each other, they can get up and leave; body parts can't do that. If family members don't want to talk to each other, they can go years without communicating; body parts can't do that because they need each other. Family members can declare themselves in charge of their own destinies; body parts really do have to take their orders from the head.

The Reformed Church in America is both a body part within a system, and a body itself. We are one part of a system known as Protestantism within the larger body of Christ. Within the RCA as a body, our structure of regional synods and classes, churches and ministries, chaplaincies, commissions, councils, and task forces can all be seen as various systems or parts within our body. All are unique and separate, all are interdependent, and all are dependent on Christ who is the head.

Another truth pointed out in our passage applies to us as well: one body part can't put down another part as unnecessary or less valuable. We need each other even though we may not know it or like it. It is God who places us where he wants, for the purpose he gives us.

Because God has put the body together, anything that is divisive leads to dis-ease. And parts having equal concern for each other leads to health. "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." That's not optional, it's not my opinion, and it's not open for debate. That is a truth from God's Word.

I have been fortunate to see this reality lived out in very healthy ways across our denomination. Let me give you a few examples.

The Board of Benefits Services offers the Senior Pastors program. Seventeen retired pastors, many in partnership with their spouses, provide a network of support for some four thousand retirees who have served as pastors, missionaries, and non-ordained church workers, and those retirees' surviving spouses. The senior pastors and their spouses do this to keep in contact and to share a sense of connectedness, to see if there are any needs for assistance, and to share a word of prayer. It's one of our best ministries, unique to the RCA, and it's a system that is almost invisible to the church. These senior pastors and spouses meet once a year in person to encourage each other and share ministry insights. And they love being together! What strikes me about this is that I am quite confident that in their active ministry years some of these pastors would not have trusted each other, and would have had strongly divergent opinions on many matters. But those issues no longer matter; now they are mature comrades in ministry, serving a similar cause, glad to be parts of one body.

As I mentioned, last June I was privileged to be a delegate to the convening body of the newly forming World Communion of Reformed Churches. The delegates represented 80 million Christians from 227 denominations in 108 countries. That's diversity! But they functioned with an understanding that they were taking orders from one head, Jesus Christ, to whom all honor and obedience was due. So debates were civil, decisions were respected, worship was joyful, communion was celebrated, and the church functioned as one body.

I have been on mission trips, working at various sites under the excellent leadership of mission personnel Bruce and Laurie Hawley. We worked not only with RCA churches from different parts of the country, but at times also with churches from other denominations. And it has been a great experience, one I highly recommend, because we all focused on a common cause, knowing we were working for the same Lord. We were one body serving one head.

Last October I participated in a Sankofa journey from Grand Rapids to Birmingham and Montgomery and Atlanta and back. African Americans and Caucasians and Koreans and Hispanics rode the bus and watched the films and toured the sites and shared our individual pilgrimages together. And through that shared experience the Holy Spirit touched each of us in individual ways, challenging us and encouraging us to live out what it means to be one body, his body, the church, in ways that attract rather than disgust the world outside our doors.

I have participated in several events sponsored jointly by the RCA and CRC. Among these were a trip to Israel to pursue mission possibilities; a Fresh Start conference for churches seeking to birth new congregations out of dying ones; and a "Jump into the River" event for church planters and parenting pastors, which was followed by the national Exponential Church Planters conference. These encounters have been planned and executed so seamlessly that it has been hard to determine who is part of which family. More importantly, it hasn't mattered, because we are one body, the body of Christ. Hopefully you will experience this later today as our two synods worship, work, and break bread together. Some of

you experience similar ministry cooperation with our Formula of Agreement partners, and God is honored through all of this.

Let me give you one more example of being the body of Christ. For me, the experience of being a part of the search team seeking the candidate for general secretary was the highlight of my year. And it has nothing to do with the outcome of that process, although I personally believe that Tom De Vries is an excellent candidate. But it was the process that impacted me so powerfully. Twelve individuals from various regions and perspectives from across the RCA met with the task of presenting one person to the General Synod Council.

We were certainly diverse in our perspectives of what the denomination needed, of what we personally wanted, of what our region might want, and of what we thought God wanted for such a time as this. Supported by many others in prayer, we talked, we sang, we prayed, we shared Scripture, we listened, we wept, we interviewed, we ate, we shared personal journeys, and ultimately we reached a consensus. It was enriching and it was exhausting and it was exhilarating and it was excruciating. But we did it as one body, seeking to listen to one head, rejoicing together and grieving together, honoring each other and honoring Christ. And as I look back on that process I am left feeling that if we can do it there, we can do it in wider circles as well!

Unfortunately, I have also seen the "dis-ease" in the body. Let me highlight three areas of dis-ease. One is related to how people answer questions about the nature and purpose of the church—questions like: Why does the church exist? How is the church to be led? How are the various structures of the church to be staffed? How does the church reach consensus on vision? How is the church to be supported financially? Who determines which programs are staffed, and at what level? The dis-ease is not in the differences of opinion, but in the attitude that says, "Those who don't see it as I see it are less correct and less valuable than me." That's the heart and the lungs and the liver each thinking it's the really important organ, and that the body would be healthier if all the parts did what it does. I don't think so! And the fact that the church has struggled with such attitudes since Paul's day doesn't excuse it in our day.

Another area of dis-ease is related to how we feel toward people who express their faith in action differently than we do. Some are passionate about evangelism; others are equally passionate about social justice. Some emphasize discipling the faithful while others emphasize racial reconciliation and some believe that everything would be so much better if we just prayed more. Some are church planters, some work in turn-around situations, some are chaplains, some are missionaries working with indigenous peoples, some are missionaries trying to penetrate new cultures in the urban centers of this nation, and some serve in the country and some in the city. Some write theological papers that help us all to reflect more biblically, while others initiate ministries on the front lines of the major social ills of our day.

Again, the dis-ease is not about the wide diversity. It's rooted in our failure to take seriously what Paul says about God arranging the parts in the body as he wishes, and we become judgmental of those who are unlike us—often to the point of thinking the body would be better off without some of these other parts. We're the eye saying to the hand, "I don't need you." Or the hand saying to the foot, "I don't need you." We are foolish enough to think that we have the wisdom to make the decisions as to who is necessary and who is not. Too often we even judge that those not like us may not even be "real Christians" like we know we are. Jesus had to deal with that with his disciples as well. Listen to these words from Matthew 13:24-30:

> He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

All too often we focus on pulling out what we have determined to be weeds, and in the process we do great damage to the credibility of the church, giving those on the outside one more reason to have nothing to do with us. Let's trust God to determine who the weeds are, and to pull them in his timing, rather than trying to do it ourselves!

In the meantime, let's also live like one body. A church planter trying to connect with his or her new community in Florida may be able to learn much from a seasoned pastor in New York, where a concept of parish ministry already exists, with the pastor involved in all of community life. And that New York pastor can benefit from exposure to the passion of the Florida planter for evangelism. A church in Michigan that is dying, in part due to a liturgy that is routine and lifeless week after week, can learn from the creativity of City Church in San Francisco. A church in Iowa can learn from Highland Park Reformed Church in New Jersey about how to set up a church-based non-profit corporation that can bring kingdom impact to a whole community.

The goal is not uniformity, but unity. We may disagree on many theological points, and many church practices, and even on some scriptural interpretations while still valuing each other as different parts of one body, the body of Christ. Yes, God can be honored through country music as well as classical, through the King James Bible as well as *The Message*, through both Democrats and Republicans, through worship in Korean or Spanish or English, or even Dutch. It's his church, with Jesus Christ, not us, as the head!

Let me identify one more kind of dis-ease, one that I think may be most insidious of all. It is that of mistrust of leadership—a spiritual ill that we must address. It is endemic to our culture, but God has called us to be countercultural. Many of you face mistrust of leadership in your local contexts, where local government and school boards are mistrusted by their constituencies, and local pastors and consistories are mistrusted by their congregations. All too often this mistrust then bubbles up to higher levels in the denomination as well.

Wes, one of your great gifts to this denomination over the past seventeen years is how well you have managed to stay above the mistrust that you have often faced, but seldom deserved. Thank you for the model you have given! On our travels through Israel almost two years ago, Marlin Vis spoke of all the political factions tugging for the allegiance of Jesus in his day. But, Marlin reminded us, "Jesus refused to be labeled or limited by any one group." Wes, you have walked in the footsteps of your Master very well, and we are better because of it. But this has also led you to face much suspicion and mistrust through the years as people have erroneously concluded that if you didn't identify primarily with their group, you must be aligned with others, and against them.

Now, as we face the possibility of confirming a new general secretary at this synod, we as a church must address our mistrust of leadership. Scripture very clearly commands us to

honor our leaders. First Timothy 5:17 says, “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor.” (And we don’t get to individually choose, according to our preconceived agendas, whether or not they are leading well.) Romans 13:1-2 says, “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.” If this is true with regard to civil authorities, how much more should it be true with regard to church leaders! And even more true of those of us who claim to be “reformed and ever reforming according to the Word of God”!

I’m not saying that honoring our leaders is always easy; I know that sometimes I certainly have to work at it. For example, a few years ago during a presidential campaign I asked my congregation to please remove me from any emails that contained political cartoons, no matter which party was involved. It was a simple step of trying to avoid making fun of those to whom I should be giving honor. And when it comes to hearing comments about “bad” church leaders, I try to always remember the example of David in 1 Samuel 24 and 26 and 2 Samuel 1. Several times David is urged by men very loyal to him to put King Saul, by this time a very bad king, to death. His response was this: “The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord’s anointed, to raise my hand against him; for he is the Lord’s anointed” (1 Samuel 24:6). My friends, I do not believe God will honor the RCA until and unless we are willing to honor those he places in leadership over us, even in times when they are not leading as we think they should!

One of the reasons for such mistrust is that we don’t all get asked to serve in leadership. And secretly we are convinced that we could do a better job than those who are leading. Perhaps. But not likely. What I have experienced in my years in ministry is that when people serve in the areas where God has gifted them, they do very well. But when they are either misplaced in ministry or try to usurp the ministry of someone else, the results are not good. An elbow cannot see better than an eye; an ear is good for hearing, but lousy at digesting; my big toes are essential for balance, but they don’t do much good in processing impurities from my blood.

The same is true in the church. Someone with gifts of service doesn’t necessarily make a good elder; one with gifts of mercy should not automatically be asked to teach adult education; an evangelist should be free to share her faith rather than be asked to lead a prayer ministry. And remember, it is God, through his Holy Spirit, who gives these gifts to his people. We best honor him when we serve as the “body part” he has called us to be rather than being envious of other parts, or worse yet, being judgmental or mistrusting of those parts that are not like us. Let’s allow those who are gifted and called to lead to lead!

What does all this mean for us going forward? Permit me to apply this to one particular opportunity before us, and then, in closing, to give a challenge.

Understandably, much of the attention in the RCA this past year has been focused on the search process for the next general secretary. Somewhat overlooked is the reality that we have also begun a process to determine what comes next, after 2013, at the conclusion of our ten-year goal known as Our Call. Where is God leading us? What will we be asked to build on the foundation laid during these ten years? What adjustments do we need to make? What new directions lie before us? How will we hear the whispers of the Spirit?

The discernment process being set up takes seriously the concept of being the body of Christ. We need each part to participate. We need each part and each system to listen to, learn from, and value the other parts and systems. We need to hear from churches, and we need to hear from chaplains; we need to hear from classes, and we need to hear from coun-

cils and commissions. And what we need to hear are the answers to three simple questions: What is God doing within you? What is God doing through you? What is God doing ahead of you?

Based on my personal pastoral experience, a local church will reap great benefits from taking the time to engage these three questions. And if the wider church can hear about what God is doing and blessing in our local churches, together we will be better able to discern God's direction for the future of the RCA. The plan is to take the responses of local churches to the three questions, add them to what the new general secretary is hearing from God, combine it all with a discernment event, and then prepare a report to the 2012 General Synod for further refinement.

The event associated with this discernment, which will culminate in a report to synod, is a gathering called "Conversations" that will take place next February in Orlando. I've already heard some of the objections: Who's going to come? It's too expensive. Who's going to control the agenda? Why is this being done apart from General Synod? Rather than me trying to address all of the questions and the mistrust, let me ask you to approach it differently. Attend the workshop at this synod that will answer many of those questions. Go to the web pages www.rca.org/discernment or www.rca.org/conversations and get accurate information and timelines. Gather a group at your church and engage the three questions. Then send someone to Conversations. But don't just send someone who wants a few days in Florida in February. Send the person from your body who has been gifted by the Holy Spirit with wisdom or discernment, or both of these. If they can't afford it, ask for scholarship help. But first ask for help from those within your body who have been given the gift of giving, so that they can also participate in this way. If we follow God's giftings, and if we function as the body of Christ, we will be able to also trust the process!

As I conclude this morning, I have no proposals to offer. As I said at the beginning, I believe God has simply asked me to put before you this truth of his Word: "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." But I do have a request. Recently a friend of mine gave me a copy of the May edition of Steve Brown's *Key Life Network* newsletter. In it he discusses being able to speak with credibility with those who hold very different opinions from our own. Let me quote one paragraph. Steve writes:

> Jack Miller said the only people in the Body of Christ who have anything to say are those who are repentant and the most repentant people in the church should be its leaders. Repentance is an attitude more than an act…It's hard to have that attitude, know who you are and who He is, and pull a trigger on someone who is different than you. It's an attitude that one can be wrong as well as sinful.

I can be wrong. So can you. God cannot, and that includes the way he puts this unique body called the Reformed Church in America together. Rather than focusing on what some other part of the body is not doing right, my request is that this week we focus on our own sinful attitudes, and that we then take this attitude of repentance home with us. Let's take a few moments of silence to begin that process right now.

[*Time of silent reflection*]

Lord Jesus Christ, we are your bride! We see our flaws, but you see our beauty. We see our shortcomings, but you see our potential. We see our limitations, but you see our strengths. We see a world that all too often sees us as irrelevant, but you see a world that can be transformed as we allow you to work through us. Lord, help us to live worthy of the calling we have received, and help us to live it out in love as a healthy body of Christ. In your name we ask this. Amen.

Report to General Synod 2011

Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, General Secretary

"Sankofa" is the name of an African bird that flies forward while looking backward. Its head is turned, taking an egg off its back, symbolizing how we take what we learn from the past to guide our journey toward the future. "Sankofa" is what the RCA has called our journeys toward racial reconciliation, journeys on which African Americans, Anglos, and those of other racial backgrounds have traveled together by bus to experience the historic civil rights sites in the South. The Sankofa image also frames my report to you. In this, my last report to the General Synod as your general secretary, I want to take you on a Sankofa journey—looking backward even as we fly forward.

The *Book of Church Order* requests this report. It says: "The General Synod shall have a general secretary whose duty shall be to present at each General Synod meeting a report articulating the vision for the church, including recommendations for the future" (1.IV.5.3). This is the seventeenth time I have fulfilled this duty.

The best definition that I know of vision in the life of the church is this: *Vision is a compelling picture of God's desired future.* At the center of many tasks expected of your general secretary is this: to hear a variety of voices and work with a variety of leaders in the assemblies of the church to discern God's vision for our future, and then to align the resources, staff, and energy necessary to move toward that end.

This was a new expectation for the general secretary when I began in 1994, and one underscored strongly to me by the search committee. It was also a new expectation for the Reformed Church in America, and it did not come naturally. One of the key lessons learned, which guides us to the future, is that discovering vision and clarifying mission for a congregation, classis, synod, or board takes an intentional, prayerful, focused process of discernment.

Simply doing the business of the church doesn't lead to the mission of the church. Our normal processes and procedures have to be opened to provide both a greater space of time and depth of Spirit to allow us to grasp a compelling picture of God's desired future and then commit ourselves to that end.

I recall looking at the thick business agenda of the General Synod Council when I first began, and suggesting that we spend the following meeting on retreat, with no workbook, and the assignment only to read the book of Acts. That gathering at a Franciscan retreat center in Phoenix began the process which led to the RCA's Statement of Mission and Vision being adopted two years later, in 1997. Those words, and more importantly, the commitments they represented, have become embedded in the RCA's DNA, changing our denominational culture.

In the spirit of Sankofa, I want to sketch for you the highlights of what has happened in the decade and a half since then. I trust we'll learn together what we need to take forward with us as we journey toward the future.

The Mission and Vision Statement instilled a missional mindset in many RCA congregations as well as our governing bodies. Here's a definition I'd offer of what it means to be missional: *A missional church places its commitment to participate in God's mission in the world at the heart of its life and identity*.

The RCA has been learning that the critical choice we face in this time is whether we are

"settled" or "sent." Beyond differences in theology, geography, and style, the decisive issue is whether we find ourselves comfortably settled and absorbed by our surrounding culture, or whether we are claimed and sent by the call to join God's mission in the world.

This is what drew us to embrace Our Call. General Synod, at the Mission 2000 event, directed its General Synod Council to set forth a clear goal, over a ten year period, which would be the result of following our vision and focusing on our mission. It took nearly three years of careful, intense discussion and probing discernment to develop the goal. But in 2003, after deep debate in the day and earnest prayers in the night, General Synod enthusiastically adopted Our Call. Here's what we said:

> *Following Christ in mission together, led by the Holy Spirit, and working with all the partners God provides, we believe that God is calling the Reformed Church in America over the next ten years to focus its energy and resources on:*
> • *starting new congregations, and*
> • *revitalizing existing congregations,*
> *thereby empowering fruitful and faithful ministries for the glory of God.*

This is what we have done over the last eight years. It has not always been easy, but no one should have expected it to be otherwise. Like congregations, a denomination as a whole is capable of doing a variety of good and useful things. The challenge is to prioritize what is most critical for our mission at a given time, recognizing that "the good can be the enemy of the best."

Our Call has prioritized what is most critical, and is changing the RCA. We are, indeed, seeing new fruitful and faithful ministries emerge, for the glory of God.

The church multiplication movement in the RCA is extending the love and grace of God in Christ to literally thousands of people who have been spiritually homeless. Remember, we start new congregations because this is the most effective way for the gospel to touch and transform those whose lives are disconnected from the church and alienated from God's love. Such persons may have been severely wounded by earlier religious experiences, or they may have been living in perpetual spiritual isolation from God.

But these souls are drawn to the message of God's grace and the experience of Christ's love through the compassionate and creative outreach of new congregations. This is what has been happening in remarkable and historic ways in the life of the RCA since Our Call was adopted.

The stories are inspiring. In Kalamazoo, Centerpoint church planted The River, which has a ministry that includes a large homeless population. The River then planted Vanguard in a troubled area of the city. Vanguard ministers with people from gangs, and some of them have accepted Christ and been baptized. This summer, Vanguard will plant a new church in St. Joseph/Benton Harbor and send as its leader their own founding pastor, Nate Bull, an African American graduate of Western Seminary. This is how church multiplication happens.

This afternoon you heard about the new church planting initiatives in Florida that are being done cooperatively with the Christian Reformed Church, with the support of the DeVos Foundation. This effort also includes new church plants in Arizona, northern California, and the city of Wyoming, Michigan.

Most remarkably, 55 percent of the new RCA churches planted over the past three years involve people of color, and several have been multiracial churches since their beginning.

These new congregations reflect the reality of our diverse North American culture, and the changing face of the RCA.

Moreover, I'm delighted to share that, with intentional recruiting, we are now seeing several female church planters emerge as part of this movement.

Here's what has happened since Our Call was adopted by General Synod in 2003: 185 RCA congregations have been planted and had New Congregation Plans approved. An additional 45 new congregations are underway. Taken together this means that in the RCA today people gather at 230 new locations in worship, fellowship, and service as part of Christ's body.

This also means that on average a new RCA church is being planted every ten days. And over the last three years, official RCA new church starts are emerging at a faster rate than at any time in the history of the RCA, in other words, since 1628.

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From the start, however, we've known that discovering ways to revitalize our existing congregations was just as important as starting new churches. Congregational revitalization became the other main initiative of Our Call.

In 1996, Tony Vis, as General Synod president, called together a group of pastors whose congregations had experienced an inspiring revitalization of their life and ministry. They shared stories and gave a groundbreaking report to the 1997 General Synod that laid the foundation for our efforts in congregational revitalization. The primary drafter of that report was Tom De Vries.

A guiding conviction of revitalization efforts since then, throughout the years of Our Call, is that the spiritual health and renewal of the pastor and other congregational leaders is indispensible to the hope of congregational revitalization. That is why extraordinary efforts, supported by $3 million from the Lilly Foundation over ten years, have been focused on encouraging pastors to join high commitment groups—we call them networks—with their peers. These disciplined, safe spaces encourage relationships that are built on covenantal accountability, mutual support, and transformational learning.

Today, as we approach the end of Our Call, seventy-seven network groups are functioning for the nurture and support of 478 RCA pastors. It is impossible to lead a congregation on a journey of transformation and missional engagement alone. Creating pastors networks—trustworthy places of sharing and support—nurtures the courage and spiritual clarity that are essential for the journey of congregational revitalization.

This also accounts for the explosive growth of "coaching" in the RCA. Each of us needs someone who can come alongside us on our journey, prompting us to discover the wisdom we need and encouraging us to take the next critical steps. Today 220 church leaders have completed a comprehensive "foundational coach training" program, and many more have taken part. A few weeks ago, a gathering in California that offered coach training in Spanish drew seventy-two eager participants. And in Paterson, New Jersey, thirteen church leaders recently attended another coach training event.

And more is on the congregational revitalization horizon. Last January I was with a group of staff, including those from each regional synod, who shared in a moving seminar with Jim Herrington and Trisha Taylor that explored the dynamics of personal and congregational transformation. This gathering was part of the ongoing Ridder Leadership Initiative

developed at Western Seminary in partnership with RCA staff. Three weeks ago, thirty-three pastors and 174 congregational leaders gathered on a weekend, willing to embark on a two-year commitment to this process.

Congregational revitalization requires deep change. It must be nurtured and guided by those who have learned how to deal honestly with themselves, relate with integrity to others, and surrender their lives wholeheartedly to God's purposes and love. We are learning how to provide the networks of relationship and support that are essential to nurture these qualities in congregational leaders. This undergirds all the ways that God's grace is flowing in the RCA's life. Calling forth transformational leaders is our fundamental priority.

Our Call has been supported by commitments to discipleship, leadership, and mission. We've learned that discipleship in a missional church requires far more than Christian education; it calls for spiritual practices that reach our hearts and our heads, shaping us to be more like Jesus in all we think, say, and do.

New pathways for congregational leadership have been opened. The most significant is the commissioned pastor designation. Expectations for the training of commissioned pastors have been clarified, and in many regions this provision has been life-giving to congregational ministry. Further, the urgent need for deepening the training of elders and deacons is also being addressed.

Throughout the course of Our Call, the RCA's historic commitment to global mission has not only been sustained but has opened new chapters. The Reformed Evangelical Church in Myanmar, created through a partnership with the RCA, now does fruitful church planting in the harsh circumstances of one of the world's most repressive countries. Our newest mission partnership has been established in Cambodia, where Mark and Deb Wilson will work in training programs for Cambodian pastors. Further, the efforts of RCA missionaries seconded to the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico's southern states have produced a body of believers committed to sending their own missionaries to other parts of the world, and at their own expense. Stories like these abound in the life of RCA global mission, but they are not nearly as widely known as they deserve to be.

Take a moment to look at all the places where the RCA is engaged in mission partnership around the globe.

Following Christ in mission within North America has opened our vision, our hearts, and our confessional identity to a multiracial future. The General Synod of 2008 recognized that Our Call was seriously incomplete without an intentional commitment to a multiracial future freed from racism. Grounding this commitment in the biblical vision of Revelation 7:9, synod did not simply adopt words. Rather, they called for actions that now are being implemented through the leadership of my staff colleague Earl James and a wide coalition of those in the RCA.

Then, as our missional calling and our new church starts were changing the face of the RCA, the Belhar Confession declared that our biblical calling to racial reconciliation, justice, and unity is indispensible to our Christian witness. The RCA's adoption of the Belhar providentially provided a confessional foundation for embracing the multiracial future coming to us through Our Call.

The RCA's commitment to become a missional church has also prompted changes in our governing bodies. One of the lessons I've learned is that the path to transformational change rarely begins by working to change structures. Rather, deep changes have to come in the culture, direction, and mission of an organization. This then creates momentum that

makes structural change both necessary and possible.

That's what has happened in the RCA. The General Synod Council, your executive committee, was reorganized, and now functions through "policy governance," establishing "ends" or desired outcomes for Our Call, and then empowering staff and holding them firmly accountable to achieve those outcomes.

Several classes have rewritten their bylaws, restructuring themselves around the directions of Our Call. Some regional synods as well have reordered their structure and style to focus on the priorities that have emerged through Our Call.

In summary, our missional calling has been transforming the life of the Reformed Church in America. Through prayerful discernment, we have been listening for God's call, and then following God's leading with consistent, persevering commitment. We yearn to embrace the compelling picture of God's desired future. This is the hope and conviction that will guide us beyond Our Call to the next chapters of our story that God is writing.

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So, like the Sankofa bird, we're retrieving the lessons of our past, but we are flying forward. What matters is how we are encountering our future, and whether we are equipped to meet the challenges of ministry that lie ahead of us.

There are three fundamental challenges which, in my judgment, the RCA must face:

First, the deep alienation of a younger generation from our congregations and from traditional religious institutions.

Second, our understanding of the nature and the forms of the church in a time of rapid organizational change in our society.

Third, the urgent need for proclaiming and living a whole gospel that is radically centered on following the person of Jesus.

I'll begin with the younger generation that increasingly is "absent without leave" from the organized church. Overall, we know that the cultural and religious terrain in North America is shifting rapidly. Today, the fastest growing group of those classified according to religious affiliations for all ages are the ones who answer "None." These now total 17 percent of the population, and in some geographic regions that figure becomes much higher. Overall in the U.S, there are more people who say they have no religious affiliation than there are mainline Protestants.

But when we examine the trends among young adults the picture is even more revealing, and troubling. Their disaffection with religious institutions is growing rapidly. In her book *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*, Kenda Creasy Dean offers the following results of a national study of youth and religion:

- Eight percent of American youth are devoted and attend religious services once a week or more.
- Twenty-seven percent of American youth attend religious services two to three times a month.
- Seventeen percent of American youth attend religious services a few times a year.
- Twelve percent of American youth are disengaged and never attend religious services.

Further, there is no evidence that this changes as these young people age. The days when young people in our churches would get confirmed, go off to college, drop out of church, and then return to church when they got married and had children seem to be a thing of the past.

These mega-trends become more existentially uncomfortable when we look at the average age of those who belong to the RCA's congregations.

Here's the truth. We stand in danger of losing a whole generation of those presently between the ages of twenty and thirty from our congregations. For increasing numbers of them, their sense of estrangement from religious institutions is profound. If this trend continues for a couple more generations, the church in North America will end up looking like the church in Europe.

At the same time, many of these young adults are on their own spiritual quests. Our task, it seems to me, is not to persuade them to join our congregations. Rather, we should listen to their spiritual questions and imagine ways in which they could be invited into new forms of communities that gather around God's grace and love.

I pray that many in the RCA will hear a call to focus on understanding the unique spiritual needs of these young adults, and imagine new forms of ministry which might engage them and their gifts in faith communities of worship, discipleship, and service.

One step that might help would be to make a major commitment to campus ministry in various locations throughout North America. The RCA, of course, has three excellent colleges. But I am thinking here of the vast majority of students from RCA congregations who attend other colleges and universities. While some support exists for campus ministry, such as in the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes, by and large this has never been a priority commitment of the RCA.

Developing a ministry presence on college and university campuses would open avenues of insight and understanding that could help shape broader connections to young adults. And we could do this ecumenically.

We could also offer RCA young adults opportunities for service, meeting community needs in cooperation with the outreach of our congregations. Thousands of young people today serve with Vista and AmeriCorps for a year for a minimum, sacrificial salary. Others compete for service in projects like Teach for America. Why couldn't the RCA sponsor such service opportunities, including the experience of living in Christian community with others doing such work?

But the challenge posed by this religiously disaffected generation goes deeper. In the book *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity*, written by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons and based on research by the Barna Group, we read this: "[T]he title of this book, *unChristian*, reflects the outsiders' most common reaction to faith; they think that Christians no longer represent what Jesus had in mind, that Christianity in our society is not what it was meant to be…"

The perception of many discerning young adults is that the church is hypocritical, overly judgmental, and protectively sheltered from realities in society. In the end, engaging this younger generation in the church's life and witness depends upon church members—you and me—becoming more deeply engaged in the call to live courageously as followers of Jesus. Think of it this way: if a young adult considers participating in the life of an RCA congregation, he or she would expect to learn practices that would make that person more

like Jesus. And if that isn't happening in a congregation, not much else matters at all.

Our second challenge deals with some fundamental understandings of how we define the church. At First Reformed Church in Schenectady, New York, in February of this year, I sat with a group of about forty folks from the RCA who had come to join me in the church parlor for an afternoon "fireside chat." A thoughtful, gray-haired woman in the back of the room raised her hand and asked, "Is the church an organism or an organization?" That perceptive question has stayed with me. It crystallizes so many of the issues facing denominations like the RCA.

Overall in our culture, loyalty to all institutions is decreasing. People are less prone to "join," and would rather simply participate. This goes against assumptions of how we organize ourselves as a church as well as how we calculate the per-member assessments that fund about one-third of denominational activities.

The sheer pace of change in our culture, and the revolution in how we receive and share information, is undermining assumptions about how long-established institutions function. My friend Brian McLaren posed this question to me at a seminar: "When you walk into a post office, do you have the feeling you're in an institution that has a bright future?" A few years ago the postmaster general told a congressional committee that the local post office had a secure future because people would always have to pay their bills. He didn't imagine how that function could happen electronically.

Institutions built on receiving information and resources at a centralized point and then distributing it in ways they control are giving way to the more immediate, free-flowing, horizontal forms of electronic communication. Just think of "snail mail" versus email. Changes in information-handling are radically changing how institutions function. For us, the question is whether congregations and denominational structures are on the front end of those changes, or are lagging far behind. In the RCA's overall communication systems we've allocated resources and at times made painful choices in our attempts to respond to these changes and meet the evolving needs of RCA members.

But the deeper challenge here involves far more than adapting to a new environment of electronic communication. We need to face probing ecclesiological questions.

There's always been tension between established, institutionalized expressions of the church and newly emerging forms of Christian community and spiritual practice that are outside organizational boundaries. But I believe we are entering into a time when this tension will become acute, and seriously strain both the present structures and the theological understandings of the church.

As a historic denomination, we have a clear way of defining what a church is and describing its necessary features. But for growing numbers of people who will be shaping a religious future, this is a paradigm that doesn't connect or make sense to the way they live their lives, or to their pathways of spiritual practice. Think, for instance, of mushrooming house churches, creative expressions of the "emergent church," or fellowship groups gathering in a home to live stream the sermon of a pastor who is more than a thousand miles away. Moreover, consider the astonishing growth of Christianity in places like China, where spontaneous gatherings of new Christians are far beyond the control or structure of the organized church.

All this presents a dilemma to those like us who assume that the church is a body of believers who gather to hear the Word preached, to celebrate the sacraments, and who are organized and governed by deacons and elders, with a minister of Word and sacrament.

My concern as I imagine the future is that it just may not work to try to persuade those whose lives are wired and lived differently, or who encounter faith in Christ in vastly different cultural contexts, to fit into our present organizational forms of the church.

So I'd ask these questions:

How do we make room, within our definitions of the church, for those who find vital Christian community on the fringes, or outside of, established religious institutions?

How can those in the leadership of the organized church create imaginative, hospitable space for others to walk together in their journey of faith, knowing that they may not fit neatly into our categories and structures?

How do we think creatively about the ways in which social media are redefining how we nurture relationships, learn, and build community?

How might answers to questions like these reshape our models of being the church?

My hope is that some established RCA churches and classes will experiment with ways they can offer hospitality to organic, emerging models of religious practice and community without trying to define and control them.

So I trust that some in the RCA will focus their spiritual imagination more on viewing the church as an organism, and less on thinking about the church as an organization. That could be a key in discovering ways of connecting the gospel of God's grace and love to growing numbers of people who are alienated from religious institutions and often wandering in spiritual wastelands.

Now to the third challenge—witnessing to the whole gospel.

The changing landscape in our culture is presenting deep challenges of injustice. Today in the United States, the income of the richest four hundred people equals the income of the lower 50 percent of the population. The gap between the rich and the poor has been growing wider in alarming proportions for the last decade or more in ways that would prompt the indignation of Old Testament prophets. Today one child in four lives in poverty, and 15 percent of U.S households struggle to put enough food on the table, according to official statistics. Moreover, an immigration crisis places the clear biblical calling to care for the alien and sojourner in our land in tension with a record, and still rising, number of deportations.

These challenges directly impact many of our congregations and their witness to God's redeeming love for all and God's compassion for those on society's margins. Such questions of social justice are not partisan issues to be avoided, but gospel imperatives to be confronted. And our younger generation will be the first to tell us so.

It's essential that the RCA continue to recover and proclaim a whole gospel, which never makes a division between the evangelical message that a relationship with Jesus Christ saves and transforms one's personal life, and the biblical witness that calls us all to seek God's desired justice in the world. This division is a sin, particularly of the American church in the last century, that has severed evangelism and social justice.

The RCA, through its unique history and theological disposition, is evangelical and ecumenical. It's so important for our future that we live fully into that identity, and proclaim the whole gospel. A generation of young adults, and especially those who have experi-

enced suffering and injustice related to their racial and ethnic backgrounds, yearn to hear and see a gospel that transforms lives and transforms the world.

Proclaiming a whole gospel is both a biblical imperative and a practical priority. It is an indispensible commitment in shaping the RCA's future witness.

These three challenges can be summarized by one question—a question I'd like to leave with you as you seek to discover God's desired future:

> *How do we develop a creative and transforming witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that can be seen and heard by those outside the doors of our congregations?*

Answering that question will keep the RCA on a journey of deep change. That's where we need to be.

Further, focusing on that question is the way we will continue to preserve our unity. The biblical call to live in unity with one another has been grounded through our common call to follow Christ in mission. We've not allowed ourselves to become divided by any number of contentious issues in our history; that's a testimony to God's grace. And by staying on our present path, we will not allow ourselves to be divided in the future by differences in pastoral practice over issues like homosexuality. Our mission will maintain the unity of the Spirit that we treasure as God's gift.

At this synod, we are taking two important steps to heal past divisions in the wider church. We experienced one this afternoon in the first joint session of synod ever held between the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The second will come in the opportunity to approve the joint recognition of baptism with the Catholic Church. While this has been our practice, the formal agreement will be a historic witness recognizing that the waters of baptism flow across other differences in theology and polity. In both cases, wounds centuries old are finding healing.

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During these last several months, I've had the privilege of traveling to various parts of the RCA. In classis meetings and over breakfasts in fellowship halls, gracious dinners in banquet rooms, and bagels in a church basement, I've been able to listen and share with people from Sioux Center, Iowa, to Port Ewen, New York. I reflected in those times about the lessons we've learned together in these past seventeen years. In the spirit of Sankofa, I'll share some of those as we go forward.

First, the "deep change" required in becoming a missional church takes time. That's because we're changing organizational culture. A few years after starting as general secretary, I remember reading an article titled "Changing the Way We Change." Its thesis was that much well-intended change fails because it doesn't address the deeper issue of the culture of an organization—meaning its values, style, habits, and expected behaviors. A phrase I heard this year sums up this truth: "Culture eats strategy for lunch."

So we're not dealing just with goals and strategies and tactics. Rather, we're called to a deeper work of the Spirit in our life that shifts the ways we think and act, reshaping the ways we make decisions and the values we embrace. It takes space and time for congregations, classes, regional synods, and the General Synod to become centered in our missional calling. "Following Christ in mission, in a lost and broken world so loved by God" is not a slogan. It's a way of life, and a way of being the church.

Second, such change only happens as we ground our journey in the biblical story. We have to make the spiritual connection between the life of a congregation in New York's Mohawk Valley and a people called out of the bondage of Egypt into a new land. The journey of a congregation in Oak Harbor, Washington, has to be connected to how Jesus sent the seventy into mission in Luke 10, going "to every town and place where he himself intended to go," curing the sick, and proclaiming that the kingdom of God has come near. The relationship of 230 emerging new churches to the long established congregations of the RCA, with all the creativity and tensions that arise, has to be linked to how the new missional church in Antioch related to the church in Jerusalem in Acts 11.

These biblical stories have to become embedded in our life, and open our eyes and our hearts to the story that God's Spirit is continuing to write in our congregations and assemblies today. And then, when this whole process is saturated with prayer, we'll discover and embrace the next steps that God is beckoning us to take, in every congregation, classis, board, institution, and synod.

Third, we must welcome the new emerging leaders that God is sending to the RCA. One of my most encouraging experiences in these last four years has been to call together such young leaders for times of retreat. It began from the need to connect those being called to the RCA who were coming from non-RCA backgrounds, and from non-Anglo racial and ethnic groups. In other words, the young leaders who can't play Dutch bingo.

On these retreats we would simply tell our stories, and the stories I began to hear were awesome. Young men and women, often from non-Christian backgrounds, shared their suffering, hardship, and then joy. The mother of one young woman was a priestess in a Wicca temple. The parents of a young man were devout Buddhists. The parents of another died from a murder and suicide. I could go on. But in each case God's grace intervened in their lives, calling them to Christ, and then into ministry as part of the RCA.

The only way I can explain this is that God is bringing to the RCA those emerging leaders who will help guide us to the future that God has designed.

I'd like you to listen to why three of these emerging leaders have chosen to offer their gifts of ministry in the life of the RCA.

[Three video clips]

There are dozens, even hundreds more stories like these. They are the provision of God's grace to our life. Our task is to welcome and affirm these emerging new leaders—both those who, like myself, had never heard of the RCA until they went to college, and those who were baptized as infants in an RCA congregation. A new thing is happening in our midst, and leaders are being called by God's Spirit to shape and guide us in the decades ahead.

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My friend Max DePree, one of the best authors on the subject of leadership, has said, "Leaders begin by defining reality, and end by saying thank you." So this is the time to express my gratitude.

I never imagined that I would serve as the RCA's general secretary, and apart from my marriage, I don't think I've done anything for seventeen years. All this has been clearly beyond me. It's certainly no course that I ever charted. So my gratitude goes first to God, whose grace continues to sustain and surprise me, leading to unexpected destinations.

Through everything, the privilege of serving as your general secretary has been an occasion of deep joy.

The Reformed Church in America has been so gracious to me, as one not raised in your fold, and whose only knowledge growing up of the RCA was the bizarre name—the Flying Dutchmen—of a basketball team from a college in Holland, Michigan. Each General Synod president and our officers, as well as the General Synod Council, have been unfailing in their support of my service. And the GSC committees that have directly monitored my performance during my tenure always expressed their genuine care for my life, my family, and my well-being, as well as for the duties that I performed. I've been treated graciously and well by the Reformed Church in America, and that has made the burdens that this office inevitably must bear much lighter to carry.

The staff that serve the Reformed Church in America are extraordinarily gifted. That's not just my opinion. Before senior staff are hired they are interviewed by a psychologist who has been part of the RCA and works with a distinguished consulting firm dealing with high-level staffing and personnel issues for major companies. Recently, having interviewed most of our senior staff, he told me that the quality of our staff team was such that we could run any major corporation.

None of us would want to do that; we all have been called to the church. But my staff colleagues have exceptional qualities, and are persons of deep faith and spiritual commitment. Those things that have been accomplished during these past years to strengthen the mission and ministry of the Reformed Church in America have happened because of them. They are not only colleagues but trusted friends. I have loved working with them.

Most importantly, my journey as general secretary has been taken from beginning to end with the love and support of my wife, Karin. She accompanied me from the time we first sought to discern this call, and throughout all that has unfolded since, with uncommon grace. Karin has endured hundreds of my trips and countless late nights on my computer with a steady love, and through it all our life together has grown deeper. I thank her profoundly.

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On Wednesday evening, August 25, 2010, I was in the Filadelphia Church in Stockholm, Sweden, with about four thousand others from around the world attending the Pentecostal World Conference. I was there representing the Global Christian Forum. Barely a month earlier, I had announced my decision to finish my service as general secretary.

Brian Houston was speaking that evening. Houston is the leader of Hillsong Church in Australia, a Pentecostal mega-church with global partner congregations.

Houston began with a story of being on a moving walkway in an airport. There was a commotion at the end, with people bumping and pushing into one another. A woman unfamiliar with such a walkway had simply stopped at the end when it was over, and the walkway was carrying others into her.

"What I want to say to you tonight is this," Houston preached. "Just because something is over, don't stop."

He proclaimed, "The end of an era is not the completion of a destiny. Every end is an opportunity for God to do a new thing."

The sermon affected me deeply, and I recall it with you this evening. It's my task now to get out of the way. I don't want to be like the person at the end of the walkway into whom others keep bumping.

This is the opportunity for God to do a new thing, and I rejoice in that. The RCA is moving into a new era, with a new leader. The nominee, Tom De Vries, is one whose gifts are extraordinary and whose commitment to the RCA is unfailing. Pending your approval, we will carry out a smooth and seamless transition.

Yet, it will be a transition to a new day. And of this I am certain: the best years of the RCA are ahead of us. We are called into a future full of promise.

So let me then leave you with these final words.

Beyond our dogmas and creeds, and beneath our programs and projects, our central, compelling question must continue to be this: "What do we do about Jesus?"

Our problem is that we have domesticated Jesus, and lost the radical challenge which that question poses. So our central task in our day is to resurrect who Jesus is. We need to hear anew the call of what it means to be his disciple in this time and place.

So our focus must rest on the person of Jesus. On his love for the poor, on his fierce rejection of religious hypocrisy. On how he confronted corrupt power—both secular and religious—with God's truth. On how he rejected narrow nationalism. On his inclusive love for those pushed to the margins of society. On his call to love our enemies. On how he served and washed the feet of his followers. On his clear rejection of materialism, and his trust in God's gifts of grace. On his power to heal. On his call to forgive. On his irresistible love for sinners and outcasts. On the gift of his sacrificial, redeeming love. On the power of his resurrection. On his call to feed his sheep. And on his commission, sending us near and far, to make disciples of all nations.

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is a radical commitment. But this is how God's love transforms the world.

In the end, the purpose of all we do as a denomination, through our committees, commissions, classes, consistories, choirs, and callings; in workbooks and worship liturgies; in benefits programs and church loan funds; in seminaries and seminars—in all of this, we desire to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

That's why we have to recover who Jesus is, and ask again and again, "What do we do about Jesus?"

So that is the question that you and I, and all in the Reformed Church in America, must continue to courageously answer. In so doing, we will become the vessels used by God's love to transform the world.

Report of the General Synod Council Serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod

The Son of God gathers, preserves, and protects the church by his Spirit and his Word (Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 54). The church exists to announce, teach, and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church speaks and it acts. For those of us in the Reformed tradition, the church governs its life and it determines how best to carry out its mission through its assemblies.

God seeks certain characteristics, and the world also watches to see if those characteristics are evident in our life and work together. Our ability to go forth and preach the gospel is the work of our congregations, classes, and synods. Together we are a body of committed believers in covenant with one another. Christ's mission is enhanced when the Word of God and our love for each other is the foundation for order, discipline, and effectiveness. This Reformed understanding of the church and the manner through which we govern our life together is foundational to Our Call.

Our prayer throughout the year and as we meet as a General Synod body is that our unity and attention to governance will glorify God.

> The General Synod Council is established by and responsible to the General Synod. It shall act as the executive committee of the General Synod and it shall administer the affairs of the Reformed Church in America between the sessions of the General Synod. It shall implement decisions, policies, and programs of the General Synod through proper channels and agencies. It shall support, strengthen, and coordinate the work of the several commissions, boards, institutions, and agencies of the Reformed Church in America, thus seeking to increase the effectiveness of the mission and witness of the church (*BCO,* Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 7, Section 1).

The General Synod Council serves "as the Executive Committee of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, as the Committee of Reference at meetings of the General Synod, and as the Board of Trustees of the General Synod as may be required by law" (*BCO,* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 6a).

For a full listing of the responsibilities of the General Synod Council, refer to the Bylaws of the General Synod (*Book of Church Order,* Chapter 3, Part 1, Article 3, Section 6).

The work of the General Synod Council (GSC), as directed by previous General Synods, is reported to this General Synod in two areas: 1) matters of governance—the work the GSC has done with respect to a) the meeting of the General Synod, b) matters of its own organization, including its oversight and stewardship of the financial resources given to it, c) its support and supervision of denominational staff and the general secretary, d) the work of its committees, teams, and racial and ethnic councils, and e) a general overview of the work of the church as reported by the GSC in its role as the General Synod Executive Committee; and 2) the work the GSC has done with regard to the oversight of the mission and ministry assigned to it by the General Synod under the rubric of Our Call, the General Synod's ten-year goal, and which is reported by the GSC in its role as the General Synod's program agency. Referrals addressed to the GSC from previous General Synods are dealt with throughout this report.

Review of Regional Synod Minutes

The General Synod office received and read the 2010 minutes of the regional synods of Albany, Canada, the Far West, the Great Lakes, the Heartland, Mid-America, the Mid-Atlantics, and New York. The minutes were found to be in order.

Ad Interim Appointments

The following persons served for one or more meetings on the body indicated, based on the ad interim approval of the General Synod Council:

To the New Brunswick Theological Seminary Board of Trustees:
Alburta Jones, Class of 2012
To the Commission on Judicial Business
John D'Amanda, Class of 2013 (RSA)
To the Commission on Nominations:
Phyllis Palsma, Class of 2013 (RSA)

If members are serving on an ongoing basis, their names are submitted for General Synod approval in the report of the Commission on Nominations.

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

GENERAL SYNOD MEETING

Referral of Business

The business of General Synod was assigned to the appropriate committees as presented in the General Synod Workbook.

R-2
To approve the agenda and schedule of the General Synod as presented in the General Synod Workbook. (ADOPTED)

General Synod Offering

The General Synod received offerings at the opening worship on Thursday and at the closing worship on Tuesday. The offerings were designated by General Synod president Donald Poest to support 1) the Malawi Project Resources fund, which funds community relief and development projects in Malawi, and 2) the Granberg-Michaelson Emerging Leaders Scholarship Fund.

The Seating of Delegates

The Bylaws of the General Synod require that a classis be current in the payment of its General Synod assessments before its delegates may be seated as members of the General Synod (*BCO*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 1, Section 1a). The general secretary reported on classes' payments of General Synod assessments and reported whether there were any delegates who could not be seated because of irregularities.

Amendments to the *Book of Church Order*

The General Synod of 2010 adopted and referred to the classes for approval nine amendments to the *Book of Church Order*. The Classis of California did not register a vote on the amendments. The amendments are recorded in the 2010 *Minutes of General Synod* as noted.

		Disapproved	Approved
1.	**General Synod Professors of Theology** (*MGS 2010*, R-18, pp. 87-95) *BCO*, Preamble (p. 1); Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 8 (pp. 68-69); Chapter 2, Part I, Article 3 (pp. 76-77); Chapter 2, Part III, Article 1, Sec. 2 and Article 2, Sec. 5 (pp. 87, 88-89); The Formularies Chapter 1, Part IV, Articles 1 and 3 (pp. 63-65) Chapter 2, Part I, Article 5 (pp. 78-81)	**5**	**40**
2.	**Greater Missional Emphasis for the Classis—First Change** (*MGS 2010*, R-20, p. 112) *BCO*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 2, Sec. 2 (p. 29)	**5**	**40**
3.	**Greater Missional Emphasis for the Classis—Second Change** (*MGS 2010*, R-21, p. 113) *BCO*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 2 (p. 29)	**6**	**39**
4.	**Greater Missional Emphasis for the Church—First Change** (*MGS 2010*, R-22, p. 113) *BCO*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2 (p. 13)	**7**	**38**
5.	**Greater Missional Emphasis for the Church—Second Change** (*MGS 2010*, R-23, p. 113) *BCO*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2 (p. 13)	**7**	**38**
6.	**Declaration for Commissioned Pastors** (*MGS 2010*, R-33, pp. 144-145) *BCO,* new Formulary 16	**2**	**43**
7.	**Discipline of a Commissioned Pastor** (*MGS 2010*, R-82, p. 324) *BCO,* Chapter 2, Part I, Article 3, Section 3 (p. 76)	**2**	**43**
8.	**Temporary Classis Members Counting toward a Classis Quorum** (*MGS 2010*, R-83, pp. 325-326) *BCO,* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 4 (p. 31) Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7 (pp. 37-38)	**9**	**36**

9.	**Recourse for Dismissal by Committee of a Complaint or an Appeal** (*MGS 2010*, R-84, pp. 327-328) *BCO,* Chapter 2, Part II, Article 2, Section 5 (p. 85) Chapter 2, Part III, Article 2, Section 5 (p. 88)	**1**	**44**

R-3
To declare amendments 1 through 9 to be approved and that they be incorporated into the 2011 edition of the *Book of Church Order*. (ADOPTED)

Amendments to the Bylaws of the General Synod and Special Rules of Order of the General Synod in the *Book of Church Order*

The 2010 General Synod approved in first reading for recommendation to the 2011 General Synod the following amendments to the Bylaws of the General Synod and Special Rules of Order of the General Synod:

The Professorate Membership and Responsibilities—*BCO*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 6, Sections 1 and 2; and Chapter 3, Part I, Article 8, Section 1 (*MGS 2010*, R-19, pp. 95-96)

Naming the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education—*BCO*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 12 (*MGS 2010*, R-79, p. 301)

Church Herald References Removed—*BCO*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 4, Section 2a; and Chapter 3, Part I, Article 8, Sections 3 and 5 (*MGS 2010*, R-85, pp. 328-329)

R-4
To declare the above amendments approved by the 2010 General Synod in first reading to be incorporated into the 2011 edition of the Bylaws of the General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Appointment of the General Synod Treasurer and Assistant Secretary

In accordance with its corporate bylaws, the General Synod must annually appoint a treasurer of the General Synod corporation (Corporate Bylaws of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, Article VI).

R-5
To appoint Barbara Boers as treasurer of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. (ADOPTED)

In accordance with its corporate bylaws, the General Synod may elect or appoint such other officers as the needs of the corporation may from time to time require (Corporate Bylaws of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, Article VI). In order for Kenneth Bradsell, director of Operations and Support, to have authority to sign legal documents for the corporation of the General Synod, it is necessary to approve the following recommendation:

R-6
To appoint Kenneth Bradsell assistant secretary of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. (ADOPTED)

General Synod Planning

Responsibility for planning the agenda and schedule for the annual meeting of the General Synod is assigned to the General Synod Council in its capacity as the General Synod Executive Committee. Planning the annual meetings begins shortly after the conclusion of the current meeting and involves the General Synod officers, the general secretary, staff from the General Synod Office and numerous others. The 2011 meeting also involved planning by joint teams from the RCA and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. At the fall meeting of the General Synod's commissions and the GSC moderators of the commissions, the moderator of the GSC, senior staff, the general secretary, and officers meet to consider anticipated business from all of these entities for the next year's meeting. Initial plans for the annual meeting are discussed at the fall meeting of the GSC. At the GSC's March meeting a full schedule is reviewed and approved. The GSC also reviews recommendations for the assignment of business to various synod advisory committees and selects those agenda items for consideration in the "all-synod" advisory process that has been developed to give all delegates an opportunity to be more fully engaged in discussions of issues that seem to have the greatest impact on the life, mission, and ministry of the RCA. The GSC determined this year that this process would be devoted to a discussion of a report from the Commission on Theology regarding bringing deacons into the assemblies of the church beyond the consistory. In addition, the GSC determined that the all-advisory committees would be utilized to introduce the Rev. Dr. Tom De Vries to the General Synod as the GSC's recommended candidate to succeed the Rev. Dr. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson as general secretary.

The selection of General Synod worship leadership and the preacher is a prerogative of the General Synod president. A worship planning team works with the president and the selected preacher to develop all of the worship liturgies for the synod. This year the team also worked collaboratively with a team from the Christian Reformed Church to plan the joint RCA/CRC worship celebration on Thursday, June 16. RCA members of the team were John Chisum, Trygve Johnson, Donald Poest, Elizabeth Testa, and Paul Thé.

The decision to transition in 2011 from a printed agenda and reports to a fully computerized meeting was reviewed and approved by the officers and the GSC on the recommendation of a staff team that began working on the project in cooperation with a staff team from the Christian Reformed Church in late 2009. The equipment supporting the 2011 meeting was purchased jointly by the RCA and the CRC (laptop computers were jointly rented). Technology support staff from both denominations supported the CRC synod and were present to assist delegates at the RCA synod. The transition to electronic reporting, in addition to providing a significant reduction in cost due to the reduction in paper use and shipping, reduces the environmental impact of the meeting.

The 2011 synod also introduced simultaneous translation as well as enhancements to support persons with various disabilities. Simultaneous translation was limited to Spanish this year. Other languages will be added in future years based on the needs expressed by delegates and guests. The meeting space was equipped with a "hearing loop" for those with a hearing disability. The synod leadership and staff took the opportunity to thank the RCA and CRC disability ministries for their advocacy for this enhancement. Thanks were also expressed to those delegates who volunteered to assist those with other disabilities.

General Synod Meeting Location

The proposed location for the next annual meeting of the General Synod in 2012 is Trinity College in Chicago, Illinois. The General Synod is able to respond to invitations from the

assemblies of the church to meet in other locations. Planning for the meeting requires invitations to be submitted at least two years in advance of the proposed meeting. The meeting is tentatively set for June 21-26, 2012.

RCA Discovery and Discernment Process

Background

For centuries, the Reformed Church in America has been actively involved in applying the grace, mercy, and truth of the gospel in living out our faith with boldness and faithfulness.

Beginning in 2003, the RCA has been serving God faithfully with a focus on Our Call, a ten-year commitment to church revitalization and church multiplication built on the foundations of leadership, discipleship, mission, and embracing a multiracial future freed from racism. As we move toward the culmination and conclusion of this chapter, the ability to discover and discern God's leading requires further submission, reflection, prayer, and conversation in seeking God's direction for the future.

In 2009 the General Synod Council directed the general secretary to form a discernment process planning team. This team was intended to help facilitate a process that creates connected and collaborative environments for hearing how the movement and work of God is underway in the RCA.

The team came together with the assignment:

> **To develop a plan that engages the assemblies of the church (consistories, classes, regional synods, and the General Synod) in a process of discernment of the RCA's continuing call to mission and ministry.**

The plan that has emerged is envisioned as a process to enable the entire RCA to engage in an evaluation of how the commitment to Our Call has shaped us as God's people, and how it is moving us forward into new horizons of mission and ministry.

In addition, it is designed to be a process that engages all of the assemblies of the denomination—consistories and the local congregations that they govern, classes, regional synods, and the General Synod—in a process of discovering where their stories and God's story intersect. Through this process of discovery it is expected that the RCA will emerge in 2013 with a clear sense of direction for our life together following the conclusion of Our Call.

The Big Picture

At the center of this process of discovery are three questions, all of which build on the faith and conviction that our God is a God of mission and is already at work. Those questions are:

How is God working within you?
How is God working through you?
How is God working ahead of you?

As consistories and congregations gather to engage those questions we will gather stories and responses and invite the other assemblies of the denomination to listen for God through the stories of the people of God. A series of additional conversations shaped by key questions will guide the denomination-wide discovery process in our assemblies. Those conversations will be times of listening, discerning, discovering, and engaging. The

layers of conversations and the questions being asked in each conversation will follow this basic timeline:

The Conversations



Engaging: "What adjustments is God asking us to make?"
General Synod

Discovering: "Where does God's work in our past and our present point us in our future?"
Regional synods and General Synod

Discerning: "What common things is God showing us?"
Classes

Listening: "What is God saying?"
Church networks/affinity groups/commissions

Sharing: "How is God working within you? Through you? Ahead of you?"
Local church

This process is built on two biblical foundations—Acts 11, the relationship between Jerusalem and Antioch; and Colossians 3:12-17, a passage about discerning God's will and deepening relationships.

It is built on these key values

- Patience and commitment to process
- Personal connection
- Wide range of voices
- Invitation versus inspection
- Valuing both past and present
- Multi-option delivery system
- Deepening trust through relationship and process
- Telling stories as illustrations of God at work
- Local church and classis commitment to the process
- Simple and reproducible discernment model

Congregational Discovery Workshops

Congregational Discovery Workshops are currently being held in RCA congregations throughout North America. These workshops, in which the three key questions—How is God working within you? How is God working through you? and How is God working ahead of you?—are explored, are the foundational events on which the rest of the process is built. More about these workshops and the entire discernment process can be found at www.rca.org/discernment.

Conversations: Seeking God's Future Together

February 10-12, 2012, in Orlando, Florida, the RCA will gather in an event reminiscent of Mission 2000 to seek God's future for the RCA together. This event, which will be held at

the Buena Vista Palace Resort across the street from Disney World, offers conversation-friendly space and first class accommodations at nonprofit prices.

Every organized church and emerging congregation in the RCA is urged to send one or more delegates to this event. ***Conversations*** will be designed as an intersection of three conversational streams. Congregations will share their stories from the Congregational Discovery Workshops with others from across the RCA. We will celebrate what God has done and what we are learning through Our Call. We will hear from the RCA's new general secretary what that person is hearing from God through listening and traveling throughout the RCA in the first months in that role as our newly elected leader.

We will trust the Holy Spirit to speak through these many voices and to lead us through a process of discovery, discernment, and direction. More about this event will unfold in the months ahead. You can learn more now at www.rca.org/conversations.

General Synod 2012

As the timeline indicates, when the RCA gathers in denominational assembly for General Synod in 2012 one of its primary tasks will be to hear what has emerged throughout the denomination-wide discernment process and to answer the question: ***"Based on God's work in our past and our present, what is the shape of God's call on the RCA in our next chapter together?"*** The goal, hope, and dream of the General Synod Council is that all of the assemblies of the RCA (consistories, classes, regional synods, and the General Synod) will enter the conversation and together discern how God is working within us, how God is working through us, and how God is working ahead of us.

Overview of the GSC's Work on Matters of its Internal Governance and Administration

The General Synod Council operates internally according to a not-for-profit governance practice known as "policy governance" developed by Dr. John and Miriam Carver. Policy governance has allowed the GSC to enhance its ability to monitor various "ends" and objectives established to fulfill the General Synod's directives regarding Our Call, the General Synod's ten-year goal for mission and ministry. Policy governance has also enhanced the GSC's ability to both support and monitor the work of its general secretary and staff through a series of "limitations" policies. The GSC has also established and holds itself accountable for its own work through polices concerning its own internal "governance" and its relationships with the general secretary and staff.

During the past year both the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA) and the Board of Benefits Services concluded work, and received approval from the General Synod Council, to also operate in accord with the principles of policy governance. This work required extensive discussion over a period of two years to clarify the governing relationship of these agencies with the GSC in its capacity as the executive committee of the General Synod. The work has been completed. Revised bylaws for both MFCA and the Board of Benefits Services are included in the General Synod agenda.

RCA Salary Structure for FY 2011

In 2006 the General Synod Council adopted policies to establish clear guidelines for oversight of its staff. The policy pertaining to staff compensation states: "With respect to employment, compensation, and benefits and recognition of employees, consultants, contract workers, and volunteers, the general secretary will not cause or allow jeopardy to fis-

cal integrity or to public image or decisions that are unrelated to the relevant market" (GSC Policy EL-7).

The staff compensation system benchmarks all positions against externally appropriate positions and responsibilities through the use of salary compensation surveys in the private nonprofit and church sectors, as well as comparison of jobs in national and regional areas. The system is sensitive to regional differences in cost of living and takes into account the RCA's benefits package.

This system incorporates fourteen compensation levels spanning grades 10 to 23; Grade 10 represents the most junior clerical positions and Grade 23 represents the top executive position, general secretary.

To further clarify, the grades fall into the following categories of the GSC staff salary administration format:

Professional Associates, Executive Assistants, Administrative Assistants,
Secretarial and Office Staff: Grades 14-10
Executive Staff: Grades 22-15
General Secretary: Grade 23

The following tables represent the 2010 salary ranges by region, which were used for fiscal year 2011:

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA COMPENSATION STRUCTURE - MICHIGAN

2010

	HOURLY PAY RATE			ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE			
GRADE	**LOW**	**POLICY**	**HIGH**	**LOW**	**POLICY**	**HIGH**	**RANGE SPREAD**
10	11.36	**$12.98**	14.60	22,147	**$25,311**	28,475	**25%**
11	12.78	**$14.61**	16.44	24,928	**$28,490**	32,051	**25%**
12	14.48	**$17.04**	19.60	28,244	**$33,228**	38,212	**30%**
13	17.25	**$20.29**	23.33	33,631	**$39,566**	45,500	**30%**
14	20.09	**$24.35**	28.61	39,173	**$47,483**	55,792	**35%**
15	23.54	**$28.53**	33.52	45,898	**$55,634**	65,369	**35%**
16	27.08	**$33.85**	40.62	52,806	**$66,008**	79,209	**40%**
17	31.99	**$39.99**	47.99	62,384	**$77,981**	93,577	**40%**
18	36.49	**$47.08**	57.67	71,150	**$91,806**	112,462	**45%**
19	42.56	**$54.92**	67.28	82,998	**$107,094**	131,190	**45%**
20	47.89	**$63.85**	79.81	93,381	**$124,508**	155,634	**50%**
21	54.79	**$73.05**	91.31	106,836	**$142,448**	178,059	**50%**
22	60.41	**$83.32**	106.23	117,794	**$162,474**	207,154	**55%**
23	68.26	**$94.15**	120.04	133,105	**$183,593**	234,080	**55%**

MICHIGAN USED AS BASE RATE OF PAY

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA COMPENSATION STRUCTURE - NEW YORK

2010

	HOURLY PAY RATE			ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE			
GRADE	**LOW**	**POLICY**	**HIGH**	**LOW**	**POLICY**	**HIGH**	**RANGE SPREAD**
10	12.84	**$14.67**	16.50	25,031	**$28,607**	32,182	**25%**
11	14.44	**$16.50**	18.56	28,153	**$32,175**	36,197	**25%**
12	16.36	**$19.25**	22.14	31,907	**$37,538**	43,168	**30%**
13	19.49	**$22.93**	26.37	38,006	**$44,714**	51,421	**30%**
14	22.70	**$27.51**	32.32	44,257	**$53,645**	63,032	**35%**
15	26.59	**$32.23**	37.87	51,850	**$62,849**	73,847	**35%**
16	30.61	**$38.26**	45.91	59,686	**$74,607**	89,528	**40%**
17	36.15	**$45.19**	54.23	70,496	**$88,121**	105,745	**40%**
18	41.23	**$53.20**	65.17	80,399	**$103,740**	127,082	**45%**
19	48.10	**$62.06**	76.02	93,788	**$121,017**	148,246	**45%**
20	54.11	**$72.15**	90.19	105,519	**$140,693**	175,866	**50%**
21	61.90	**$82.53**	103.16	120,700	**$160,934**	201,167	**50%**
22	68.27	**$94.16**	120.05	133,119	**$183,612**	234,105	**55%**
23	77.13	**$106.38**	135.63	150,395	**$207,441**	264,487	**55%**

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA COMPENSATION STRUCTURE - IOWA

2010

	HOURLY PAY RATE			ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE			
GRADE	**LOW**	**POLICY**	**HIGH**	**LOW**	**POLICY**	**HIGH**	**RANGE SPREAD**
10	11.14	**$12.73**	14.32	21,721	**$24,824**	27,926	**25%**
11	12.52	**$14.31**	16.10	24,416	**$27,905**	31,393	**25%**
12	14.20	**$16.71**	19.22	27,697	**$32,585**	37,472	**30%**
13	16.90	**$19.88**	22.86	32,951	**$38,766**	44,581	**30%**
14	19.68	**$23.85**	28.02	38,369	**$46,508**	54,646	**35%**
15	23.07	**$27.96**	32.85	44,981	**$54,522**	64,063	**35%**
16	26.54	**$33.18**	39.82	51,761	**$64,701**	77,641	**40%**
17	31.35	**$39.19**	47.03	61,136	**$76,421**	91,705	**40%**
18	35.76	**$46.14**	56.52	69,729	**$89,973**	110,217	**45%**
19	41.71	**$53.82**	65.93	81,335	**$104,949**	128,563	**45%**
20	46.93	**$62.57**	78.21	91,509	**$122,012**	152,514	**50%**
21	53.69	**$71.58**	89.48	104,686	**$139,581**	174,476	**50%**
22	59.20	**$81.65**	104.10	115,433	**$159,218**	203,002	**55%**
23	66.90	**$92.27**	117.64	130,447	**$179,927**	229,406	**55%**

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA COMPENSATION STRUCTURE - CALIFORNIA

	2010						
	HOURLY PAY RATE			ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE			
GRADE	LOW	POLICY	HIGH	LOW	POLICY	HIGH	RANGE SPREAD
10	12.50	**$14.28**	16.07	24,365	**$27,846**	31,327	**25%**
11	14.06	**$16.07**	18.08	27,419	**$31,337**	35,254	**25%**
12	15.94	**$18.75**	21.56	31,078	**$36,563**	42,047	**30%**
13	18.97	**$22.32**	25.67	36,995	**$43,524**	50,053	**30%**
14	22.10	**$26.79**	31.48	43,098	**$52,241**	61,383	**35%**
15	25.89	**$31.38**	36.87	50,483	**$61,191**	71,899	**35%**
16	29.80	**$37.25**	44.70	58,110	**$72,638**	87,165	**40%**
17	35.19	**$43.99**	52.79	68,624	**$85,781**	102,937	**40%**
18	40.15	**$51.80**	63.46	78,283	**$101,010**	123,737	**45%**
19	46.82	**$60.41**	74.00	91,295	**$117,800**	144,304	**45%**
20	52.67	**$70.23**	87.79	102,711	**$136,949**	171,186	**50%**
21	60.26	**$80.35**	100.44	117,512	**$156,683**	195,853	**50%**
22	66.45	**$91.66**	116.87	129,584	**$178,737**	227,890	**55%**
23	75.08	**$103.56**	132.04	146,408	**$201,942**	257,476	**55%**

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA COMPENSATION STRUCTURE - ILLINOIS

	2010						
	HOURLY PAY RATE			ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE			
GRADE	LOW	POLICY	HIGH	LOW	POLICY	HIGH	RANGE SPREAD
10	12.27	**$14.02**	15.77	23,922	**$27,339**	30,756	**25%**
11	13.80	**$15.77**	17.74	26,908	**$30,752**	34,595	**25%**
12	15.65	**$18.41**	21.17	30,515	**$35,900**	41,284	**30%**
13	18.62	**$21.91**	25.20	36,316	**$42,725**	49,133	**30%**
14	21.69	**$26.29**	30.89	42,294	**$51,266**	60,237	**35%**
15	25.41	**$30.80**	36.19	49,550	**$60,060**	70,571	**35%**
16	29.26	**$36.57**	43.88	57,049	**$71,312**	85,574	**40%**
17	35.37	**$44.21**	53.05	68,968	**$86,210**	103,451	**40%**
18	39.41	**$50.85**	62.29	76,847	**$99,158**	121,468	**45%**
19	45.97	**$59.31**	72.65	89,632	**$115,655**	141,677	**45%**
20	51.71	**$68.95**	86.19	100,839	**$134,453**	168,066	**50%**
21	59.17	**$78.89**	98.61	115,377	**$153,836**	192,294	**50%**
22	65.24	**$89.98**	114.72	127,209	**$175,461**	223,713	**55%**
23	73.72	**$101.68**	129.64	143,750	**$198,276**	252,802	**55%**

The classification system evaluates positions based on duties and tasks as identified by the position incumbent and as verified/validated by his or her manager. As positions change and duties are modified, the system allows for reevaluation and placement of employees into different appropriate ranges. It also provides management with objective criteria when informing employees what must be done to advance within both the organization and within his or her assigned pay range. The system, when reviewed and updated regularly based

on competitive benchmark pay data (as opposed to applying across the board adjustments that may not reflect actual pay practices), serves the church well.

General Secretary's Review

The General Synod Council has a Relationship and Review Committee appointed annually by the moderator. The committee is responsible for providing pastoral care, counsel, and support for the general secretary. In addition, the committee conducts an annual performance review based on expected job outputs, and a broader and more extensive performance review receiving input from the wider church every third year.

With the current governance structure, the general secretary is required to provide "monitoring reports" at each meeting of GSC. The monitoring reports detail strategies, outcomes, supporting data, progress, and compliance in the accomplishment of stated ends policies for seven strategic policy areas determined by GSC. In effect, the performance of the general secretary is evaluated every time GSC meets. This monitoring report process makes public the effectiveness of the general secretary in carrying out requisite responsibilities.

In analyzing and reviewing the monitoring reports each provided action and progress in the realization of the stated ends policies. The general secretary should be commended for the effort and achievement in leading staff in the accomplishment of agreed upon ends.

The committee reports to the GSC at the fall and spring meetings in executive session. As part of this process the general secretary completes a "self-evaluation" instrument, an instrument also used in the annual evaluation process for all GSC personnel. The committee addresses with the general secretary goals in areas of personal and professional improvement.

Since his announcement of his intent to retire in July 2011 as general secretary, the Relationship and Review Committee has assumed additional responsibilities to ensure a smooth transition of leadership. The committee has worked closely with Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, the officers, and the GSC to ensure that the mission, ministry, and administrative functions of the church operated without interruption during the search process and transition to a new general secretary. The committee's duties encompassed "end of service" arrangements for Wesley Granberg-Michaelson. The committee has been engaged since early spring in preparations for receiving a new general secretary upon approval of this meeting of the General Synod.

General Secretary Selection

With the announcement in the summer of 2010 of the decision of Wesley Granberg-Michaelson to conclude his service as general secretary, the General Synod Council (GSC) embarked upon a search for the person whom God would call to the RCA as our next general secretary.

The *Book of Church Order* (Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 5, Section 3) states:

> The General Synod shall have a general secretary whose duty shall be to present at each General Synod meeting a report articulating a vision for the church, including recommendations for the future; to keep faithful record of all the proceedings of the body; and to furnish official notices in writing to all persons directly affected by judicial decisions of the assembly. The general secretary shall also be responsible for forwarding to the denominational archives minutes of the General Synod and subsidiary corporations, and shall undertake such other duties as may be assigned by the synod.

The *Bylaws of the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America* (Article VIII) states:

> 8.1 The general secretary shall be employed by the GSC upon the recommendation of its search committee and only following the prior approval thereof by the General Synod.
>
> 8.2 The identification of a general secretary for employment by the GSC shall be accomplished through a search committee. The search committee for the general secretary shall be appointed by the GSC (subject to the remaining provisions of this Section 8.2). The search committee shall have not less than ten nor more than 12 members. Membership on the search committee may include the moderator of the GSC, two other members of the GSC who are appointed by the GSC, and such other members as are needed to provide a committee broadly representative of the Reformed Church in America. All members shall be confessing members of a local church (as that term is defined in the *BCO*), but need not be members of the GSC. The GSC shall designate the moderator of the search committee. The current general secretary shall not be a member of the search committee.
>
> 8.3 The GSC shall be responsible for the supervision of the general secretary. The GSC shall review the performance of the general secretary annually in a manner that is consistent with the GSC's policies. Not less frequently than every three years the GSC's review of the general secretary shall be a comprehensive performance review that solicits data from various leaders throughout the Reformed Church in America. For all such reviews of the performance of the general secretary, the GSC may appoint a committee of its own membership to conduct interviews (including with the general secretary), gather data, and prepare a report. The report shall be submitted to the GSC at its annual meeting.
>
> 8.4 The GSC may terminate the employment of the general secretary.

In August 2010 the GSC solicited applications from across the church from persons interested in serving on the search committee. The GSC met in special session in September to select the committee from the more than 160 applications received. The GSC appointed the following persons to the committee: moderator Mary Bechler, Eddy Aleman, Stephanie Doeschot, Andrea Godwin-Stremler, Michael Hardeman, Jan Hoffman, Paul Janssen, Daniel Meeter, Michael Pitsenberger, Don Poest, Jimmie Stevenson, Barton Strong, and Gregg Mast as advisor.

The committee first met on October 25, 2010, and established norms to guide its work together: transparency of process; confidentiality regarding candidates; accountability to God, each other, the GSC, and the RCA; integrity in trusting each other in the process and the use of time; and an abiding commitment to make room for the work of the Holy Spirit.

At its November 2010 meeting, the search committee discussed the process of how it would choose a candidate for presentation to the General Synod Council and determined a goal of seeking a consensus candidate, and agreed to a process for evaluating resumes.

Sixteen candidates answered God's call to submit their applications and resumes. At its January 2011 meeting, the search committee decided to invite five from this number for personal interviews in February 2011, with two candidates emerging as finalists.

The committee completed its work on March 4, 2011, with the selection of a candidate, Thomas De Vries, to present to the GSC.

At its March 23-24, 2011, meeting the GSC discussed the process that would be used in its deliberation regarding the candidate that the General Secretary Search Committee presented to the GSC for its consideration for recommendation to the 2011 General Synod. The GSC agreed to the following process:

- To seek agreement in its decisions without divisiveness, with the understanding that consensus means a "substantial majority" and the members not in agreement are willing to accept the decision of the body and support the will of the whole.
- To consent to Lisa Vander Wal compiling a list of questions, from the interview question sheet and from GSC members, to be presented to the candidate after his presentation in order to prevent duplicate questions.
- To receive an update report from the General Secretary Search Committee moderator regarding the candidate.
- To dialogue with the candidate for the position of general secretary.
- To deliberate in executive session.
- To use a two-thirds vote in moving toward consensus regarding recommending the candidate for the general secretary position to the General Synod 2011 (GSC 11-2).

In executive session the GSC was introduced to the candidate and heard an extensive presentation from him beginning with devotions from John 15, and including the following areas: relationship to classes and regional synods, global mission, ecumenical leadership, fundraising and development, staff leadership, and visionary leadership. There followed an extended time of open questions from the GSC. After a time of silence and prayer the GSC voted by written ballot and then affirmed by full consensus:

> To select Tom De Vries as the candidate to be presented to the General Synod to serve as the next general secretary of the Reformed Church in America.

The General Synod Council offered a recommendation (R-7) to approve the appointment of the Rev. Thomas R. De Vries as general secretary for the consideration of delegates in the all-synod advisory committee process. The report of the committees follows.

Report of the All-Synod Advisory Committees on GSC's Nominee for General Secretary

As the all-synod advisory committees on GSC's nominee for the general secretary, we were given four tasks:

- To review the role and responsibilities of the general secretary.
- To respond to Tom De Vries's address to the synod.
- To provide feedback to the GSC on the state of the RCA.
- To provide advice on R-7.

As moderators of the all-synod advisory committees, we were asked to listen, summarize, and make recommendations based on committee discussions. We want you to know that your voices have been heard. We heard a variety of voices—supporting, affirming, dissenting, questioning. For example, many delegates also had questions about the nominee's position on issues such as women in ministry, infant baptism, and homosexuality. Delegates appreciated Tom's commitment to building relationships with the Eastern synods. A few voices reflected frustration with the General Synod Executive Committee's presentation, as well as the role of delegates in the process. We also heard a desire for much more information about the candidate's qualifications and experience.

Delegates recognized the daunting demands of this position, and many expressed a strong desire to support the emotional, spiritual, relational, and physical health of the general secretary. There is general concern and care across the denomination for the person who serves in this position.

The advice of the committees was to vote in favor of R-7 for the following reasons:

1. Overall, the all-synod advisory committees affirm Tom's call to the position of general secretary.
2. Delegates celebrated Tom's commitment to Jesus Christ and his biblical moorings.
3. Tom's visionary leadership and missional focus coincides with a long commitment to mission in the RCA.
4. Delegates strongly affirm Tom's model of listening, learning, and loving before leading.
5. Tom's commitment to being the general secretary of the entire RCA resonated with delegates.

Joys and Laments

Celebrating that the General Synod has only faced the transition of our general secretary once in the last seventeen years, the advisory committees took this unique opportunity to reflect on the state of our denomination.

We heard some laments, including:

- Grief over loss within the denomination (e.g., the loss of the Church Herald, some GSC staff leaving from New York, churches closing).
- The younger generation is more disconnected from church.
- We're still losing members and total giving, and have hope that revitalization efforts will bear more fruit.
- There is a level of mistrust that exists within the denomination.

We also heard many joys, including:

- Our commitment to both diversity and unity
- Our continuing missional emphasis, and our strong intention and commitment to mission and outreach
- Our rich theological heritage and history
- Our strong, ongoing biblical foundation
- Our ecumenical partnerships, including growing collaboration with the Christian Reformed Church

We want to thank you for offering your voices and, more importantly, for the way in which you offered them. We feel privileged to share with you what you shared with us.

A motion was made to amend R-7 as follows (additions are underlined):

> To approve the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Thomas R. De Vries as general secretary of the Reformed Church in America, effective August 1, 2011, with a term of six years, renewable by a vote of the General Synod at its stated session.

VOTED: To not amend R-7.

R-7
To approve the appointment of Thomas R. De Vries as general

secretary of the Reformed Church in America, effective August 1, 2011. (ADOPTED)

After the synod voted to adopt R-7, the Rev. Thomas R. De Vries addressed the synod.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON FINANCE

2010 FINANCIAL RESULTS

Annual Audit

The 2010 financial statements of the General Synod Council, Board of Benefits Services Insurance Plan, Board of Benefits Services Retirement Program, Board of Benefits Services General Fund, Church Growth Fund, RCA Fund, and RCA Endowment Fund were audited by Capin Crouse LLP, Certified Public Accountants. Each corporation received an unqualified audit opinion. To review the complete set of audited financial statements, visit www.rca.org/financials. The GSC Audit and Risk Management Committee received and reviewed the audited financial statements and management comment letters for the corporations listed above. Highlights of the financial statements of each organization are presented below.

Financial Summary – Fiscal Year 2010

General Synod Council

Income for the work of the General Synod Council for fiscal year 2010 included:

- 53 percent from voluntary contributions of congregations and individuals. These funds were primarily designated for specific programs that support Global Mission, church multiplication, discipleship, leadership, and revitalization.
- 33 percent from the General Synod assessment.
- 14 percent from investment, event registration, and sales income.

The 2010 fiscal year ended with a net addition to reserves of $1.1 million.

- $420,000 was in unrestricted reserves which have been set aside for either longer term projects ($150,000) or for Global Mission operations ($300,000).
- Reserves increased by $470,000 in donor designated reserves, mainly from contributions for mission projects, especially the relief work in Haiti.
- $220,000 of the growth was from investment income and contributions for permanently restricted purposes.

Actual unrestricted operating income in fiscal year 2010 was 4 percent below income projections and expenses were 7 percent below budget.

Total unrestricted contributions decreased $800,000 between 2009 and 2010 and $500,000 between 2008 and 2009. The main decrease was in Global Mission, as the number of missionaries has decreased. Despite the decrease in income, Global Mission ended the year with a $337,000 surplus in unrestricted operating funds as a result of cost management.

Temporarily restricted contributions increased by $470,000 from 2009 to 2010. The increase was due to $1.1 million in contributions received by Reformed Church World Service in response to the earthquake in Haiti and two estate gifts. A $1 million grant from the Lilly Foundation was recognized in 2009.

Investment income was $993,000 in 2010 compared to $757,000 in 2009. The increase was a result of market recovery and consistent and growing investment balances.

Total Global Mission spending increased as a result of temporarily restricted net assets released for Haiti. However, Global Mission's operating expenses decreased due to decreases in operating costs for Global Mission.

Church multiplication expenses rose slightly in 2010 from 2009 as efforts continue in planting hundreds of new churches.

Leadership and revitalization spending decreased slightly in 2010 from 2009 as the GSC becomes less reliant on the Lilly grant.

Spending on a multiracial future freed from racism has increased over the past three years, since the inception of this area of Our Call. Amounts spent were $633,000 in 2008, $933,000 in 2009, and $947,000 in 2010.

Expenses for the work of the General Synod have declined since 2008. This is the result of maintaining and reducing expenses in order to allocate more funds to the six areas of Our Call. Expenses totaled $4.1 million in 2008 and $3.5 million in 2010.

Management and general expenses have remained the same from 2009 to 2010. These expenses have remained level after accounting expenses decreased as a result of the transition to Grand Rapids. These expenses were $2.2 million in 2008 and $1.2 million in both 2009 and 2010.

Board of Benefits Services

The Board of Benefits Services Insurance Fund continued to show solid financial results for the fiscal year with just over $1 million in net income. Accumulated net assets totaled $11 million at September 30, 2010. The budget for 2011 includes plans to spend some of the reserves on wellness initiatives and a premium holiday.

The Board of Benefits Services Retirement Program's assets continued to be impacted by the economic downturn through March 2010, when investment results began to improve. Participant accounts lost $2 million in market value in fiscal year 2010. A total of $9.1 million was newly invested in the 403(b) Retirement Plan from individuals and organizations, which is 4 percent less than the amounted invested in the previous year.

A total of $324 million was invested in both retirement plans at September 30, 2010. The Board of Benefits Services staff continues to work with local congregations to ensure compliance with the retirement plan document requirements for signed adoption agreements and full contributions for all eligible participants.

Church Growth Fund

The RCA Church Growth Fund's financial performance continues to be strong. As of September 30, 2010, the Church Growth Fund had $33.4 million in loans outstanding with $2 million in new loans issued during the year. One of the sources of funds for these loans is savings certificates issued to individuals and churches. Savings certificates in the amount of $11 million were invested by churches, classes, regional synods, and individuals at September 30, 2010.

The Church Growth Fund continues to operate efficiently with low administrative costs when compared to other denominational church growth funds, and it continues to offer competitive interest rates on loans to local churches. Net income was $1.185 million. The board of the Church Growth Fund designates 25 percent of its profits to church multiplication grants, which amounted to $340,000 in 2010.

GSC INVESTMENTS

The GSC's investments are managed by outside investment managers. The treasurer, the GSC Investment Advisory Committee, and the various boards are responsible for ensuring that funds are prudently invested, investment managers adhere to established investment policies, and performance of the funds is monitored on an ongoing basis. The Investment Advisory Committee meets twice a year to carry out these responsibilities and to report to each of the boards. The following is a brief overview of the investments in the RCA Fund, the RCA Endowment Fund, the RCA Retirement Program, and the Planned Giving Programs. Individual investments in the RCA Fund and RCA Endowment Fund are listed in each audited financial statement and can be found on the RCA website: www.rca.org/financials.

The RCA Fund (excess operating funds)

The RCA Fund is where all excess operating funds of the GSC, Board of Benefits Services, and Church Growth Fund are jointly invested to provide both liquidity and solid investment results. The RCA Fund also makes it possible for local churches, classes, agencies, and regional synods to receive a competitive rate of return for the short-term investment of surplus funds.

The Bank of New York actively manages this portfolio of fixed income securities including corporate bonds, U.S. treasuries and agencies, and mortgage-backed securities. The benchmark return is the Merrill Lynch U.S. Corporate and Government 1 to 5, A rated, and above index total. RCA Fund participants receive distributions of earned income (dividends and interests) on a quarterly basis. Total distributions in fiscal year 2010 to all participating organizations were over $1.7 million.

RCA Endowment Fund

As of December 31, 2010, there were 228 accounts in the RCA Endowment Fund. Market value of the portfolio was $12.5 million and the historic dollar value was $9.2 million. On December 31, 2010, the value of endowments belonging to the GSC, BOBS, and the CGF was $9.7 million. The remaining $2.8 million represented endowments held for related organizations that have been entrusted to us by donors throughout the years. In light of the losses of market value on all endowed investments during recent years, the market value of each endowment is closely monitored against the historic dollar value by quarter to ensure compliance with the intent of each endowment and state law. As of December 31, 2010, there were no endowments "underwater," meaning their market value had fallen below the original gift value. The earnings available for expenditure during fiscal year 2011 are estimated to be $400,000 for the GSC, BOBS, and the CGF, and $50,000 for related organizations.

In order to preserve the corpus of the endowments, the RCA Endowment Fund policy for fiscal year 2010 was to pay out 5 percent of a five-year rolling average market value to be distributed in four equal quarterly installments.

Legg Mason Investment Advisors serves as investment manager for the portfolio. The investment objective is to generate long-term preservation and growth of capital after inflation. Portfolio investments are diversified among high-quality companies and industry sectors to reduce risk.

RCA Retirement Plans

Fidelity Investments serves as investment manager and record keeper for the 403(b) Retirement Plan and the Retirement Plan. Plan participants may select from a variety of mutual funds that have been approved and are monitored by the Investment Advisory Committee and the Board of Benefits Services. Changes to the investment options available were made in 2010 to funds with lower management fees, which created an annual savings of approximately $350,000 to participants in the Freedom Funds.

Planned Giving Programs

The General Synod Council provides gift annuity and pooled income funds and acts as trustee for several charitable remainder trusts. State Street Global Advisors provides investment management and recordkeeping services for these programs. At December 31, 2010, State Street managed RCA planned giving assets totaling $2.4 million. The primary investment objective is to provide for long-term growth of principal and income without undue exposure to risk. The portfolios are invested in equities, fixed income, and cash equivalents. The investment mix takes into consideration factors such as the type of life income vehicle, the payout requirements, beneficiary income requirements, and overall investment policy of the GSC.

UNITED STATES INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE GROUP TAX EXEMPTION

As the denomination's parent organization, the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America was granted a group tax exemption by the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on January 17, 1986. The exemption recognizes as exempt from federal income tax all agencies, assemblies (including local churches), and institutions within the RCA that have satisfied the requirements for inclusion in the group.

As a condition to the continuing effectiveness of the group exemption determination, the General Synod must maintain an accurate roster of agencies, assemblies, and institutions that are a part of the group for which the exemption has been granted. The General Synod must file annually with the commissioner of the IRS a report summarizing additions to the roster, deletions from the roster, and any revisions to the information about those agencies, assemblies, and institutions that remain on the roster (such as changes of name or address). The report, filed in June of 2010, identified three entities added to the roster, seven entities deleted from the roster, and twenty-three entities for which there was a change of name, change of address, or correction of employer identification number.

2012 PROPOSED GENERAL SYNOD ASSESSMENT

The 2012 recommendation from the General Synod Council for per-member assessment amounts with a comparison to the 2011 per member amounts are presented in this table:

General Synod Assessment Request Analysis per member and by year for budget				
Name of Assessment	**Description**	**2010 GS Minutes**	**2011 Approved Amount**	**2012 Proposed Amount**
General Synod Council			$ 36.27	$ 38.09
Disabilities	Moved to General Synod Council line		0.60	-
Board of Benefits Services	Assistance for retired pastors		1.50	1.50
Theological Education	$253,197.04 for each institution divided by number of members	R-41	4.85	4.88
2010 Synod Initiatives: Theological Education	$80,000 for MFCA students; coordination of care, call, and standards; meeting of professors of theology	R-41	0.50	0.51
Assessment Task Force	2010 request funds the full work of the task force	R-17	0.03	-
White Privilege Task Force	2010 request funds the full work of the task force over two years	R-89	0.25	-
			$ 44.00	$ 44.98
	Total change in $			$ 0.98
	Total change in %			2%

General Synod Council Assessment

The assessment revenue received by the General Synod Council is used to cover a portion of the costs of the General Synod, General Synod Council, and program expenses of the Our Call ten-year goal, including the support for this work provided by the Office of the General Secretary, the General Synod Office, Development, Finance, Information Technology, and Communication. Assessment income provides a consistent stream of revenue to the General Synod Council as we covenant to start new congregations, revitalize existing congregations, and work together to disciple, develop leaders, do global mission work, and work toward a multiracial future freed from racism.

Assessment revenue to the General Synod Council (GSC) funds one-third of the GSC's budget ($6 million of $17 million). The remaining expenses are covered by contributions, investment income, fees for services, and event registrations.

The proposed assessment request of $44.98 per confessing member would add approximately $140,000 (just under 1 percent) in new assessment dollars to GSC's Our Call budget. These funds would be used to cover salary and program costs of this second-to-last year in Our Call.

R-8
To approve the General Synod Council 2012 assessment of $38.09 per confessing member. (ADOPTED)

Disabilities
The costs of carrying forward the work of Disabilities Ministries are now fully incorporated in the General Synod Council assessment.

Board of Benefits Services Assistance Assessment
At least as far back as 1971, the Board of Benefits Services (BOBS) has been the recipient of a General Synod assessment that provides funding to help support retired pastors who have not received adequate retirement benefits and who have demonstrated financial need.

For FY 2011, the $1.50 per member assessment provided $238,000 toward the assistance grant budget totaling $500,000. Typically, additional funds are transferred from BOBS' general fund to the assistance fund to make up any shortfall that may occur after inclusion of donations and investment income.

For 2012 the Board of Benefits Services recommends the continuation of the $1.50 per member assessment to help provide assistance to pastors who have not received adequate retirement benefits and have demonstrated financial need.

R-9
To approve the $1.50 per member assessment for the Board of Benefits Services to provide sufficient assistance funding for retired pastors who have a demonstrated need in 2012. (ADOPTED)

Theological Education Assessment
The 2010 Report of the Task Force on Theological Education Assessment included the assessment request for theological education, which covers funds for New Brunswick Theological Seminary, Western Theological Seminary, and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency.

The proposal was approved in the 2010 General Synod as was the funding request for the following (*MGS 2010*, R-41, pp. 156-157):

- To maintain the present allocation to the seminaries and to the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA) at the level approved by the 2009 General Synod ($253,197.04 each to New Brunswick Seminary, to Western Seminary, and to MFCA) for three years, neither increasing nor decreasing the actual dollar amount
- $55,000 for MFCA to decrease fees for students for enrollment and psychological assessments
- $10,000 to fund the annual gathering and work for the General Synod professors of theology
- $15,000 for a newly formed coordination and collaboration group, which would address the mandates of care, call, and standards

The theological education assessment for the first bullet point above was $4.85 in 2011. To maintain the same total dollars for the three institutions in 2012, the per-member assessment would need to increase by $0.03 based on the estimated number of confessing members in 2010 from data gathered through late February 2011. That data shows an approximate decrease in the number of confessing members of 1.8 percent.

R-10
To approve the $4.88 per member assessment for theological education in 2012. (ADOPTED)

The proposed per member assessment amount for the other three bullet points would need to be $0.51 in order to cover the total costs of $80,000.

R-11
To approve the $0.51 per member assessment in response to the 2010 General Synod recommendation R-41 from the "Task Force on the Theological Education Assessment." (ADOPTED)

Assessment Task Force Assessment
Approximately $5,000 is being funded by a 2011 per-member assessment to assist the task force in gathering the data needed for responding to the 2010 General Synod R-17 (*MGS 2010*, p. 78):

> To instruct the moderator of the General Synod Council in consultation with the GSC to form a task force of no more than seven members, representing at least three racial-ethnic groups, small, medium, and large churches, and at least five regional synods, whose objective is to observe and analyze the practices used in each classis and regional synod to determine assessments, in order to bring awareness regarding the current realities and disparities in these assessment systems. These conversations are to include a discussion of the values surrounding our work together and what values might best inform our decisions about denominational funding; and further, to explore alternate funding systems, with final report and recommendation to the 2011 General Synod.

An update about the work of the task force is provided in a separate section of the workbook. There will be no need to repeat the funding request for the work of this task force.

Assessment for Resources and Experiences to Understand White Privilege
The 2010 General Synod approved the following recommendation in R-89 (*MGS 2010*, pp. 337-338):

> To direct the General Synod Council to establish a task force that develops a series of discipleship resources and experiences that are educational, transformational, and incarnational such that people understand white privilege and its effects in our lives, and become equipped to live from self and Christian identities that are freed from the harmful and hurtful effects of white privilege; and further, to comprise the task force of twelve members including two from the Commission on Race and Ethnicity, two from the Commission on Christian Education and Discipleship, one from each racial/ethnic council, two experts in creating resources, and three persons not from these groups who are passionate about and committed to this assignment. The task force is to be multigenerational and include equivalent numbers of men and women; and further, the task force shall be of two years duration and forward to General Synod 2012 its final report, to include at minimum the following:
>
> 1. A compendium of recommended resources and experiences.
> 2. A series of transformational experiences that feature a) cultural dislocation (moving outside one's comfort zone in order to see with new eyes), b) partnership across cultures (learning in transracial and/or intercultural relationships, and c) actionable projects (to actually "join the journey" in dismantling racism and white privilege as opposed to mere thinking and discussing it); and further,
>
> that the General Synod Council provide funds sufficient for this task force to complete its work.

Funding for this recommendation was approved with a $0.25 per-member assessment which will cover the work of this task force over two years.

There is no need to repeat this funding request.

The Committee of Reference presented two new recommendations to propose funding for two recommendations the synod had previously adopted:

R-12
To approve the $0.08 per member assessment in response to R-48 to plan, develop, and provide funding for a youth conference. (ADOPTED)

R-13
To approve the $0.18 per member assessment in response to R-49 for training capacity for leaders of racial/ethnic congregations to better access financial resources. (ADOPTED)

Total Assessment Requests for 2012

Name of Assessment	**2012 Amount**
Amounts brought from General Synod Council	
General Synod Council	$ 38.09
BOBS	1.50
Theological Institutions	4.88
Theological Education	0.51
	$ 44.98
Amounts added during Synod	
Youth conference (R-48)	0.08
Access to financial resources (R-49)	0.18
	$ 45.24
$ change	$ 1.24
% change	3%

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of the GSC's development office is to encourage churches and individuals to steward their God given resources and voluntarily give generously to support the kingdom of God through the Reformed Church in America. Its focus is to coordinate all fundraising efforts, including fundraising for Global Mission and each department that supports Our Call.

Development representatives, assigned by territory, visit individuals and churches encouraging, building relationships, and finding opportunities for individuals, foundations, organizations, and churches to accomplish their local and global mission objectives through outright gifts, bequests, life income plans, and grants. Gifts can be designated to a specific mission/missionary/partner or given to the Great Commission Connection—a fund that supports the specific areas of Our Call. Churches, classes, regions, and individuals can also invest in Church Growth Fund savings certificates. Each of these giving opportunities provides support for our shared call to follow Christ in mission.

The development staff represents the GSC in every area where RCA churches are located but individual staff members work primarily in certain areas:

Laura DeVries – Michigan, Florida, New Jersey, Southern California, and Washington

Scott Engelsman – Canada, Michigan, Arizona, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin

Noreen Fargione – New York and Pennsylvania

John Lee – All Pacific/Asian communities

Marlin Vis – Michigan, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Kansas, and Oklahoma

Dick Welscott – Michigan, Central and Northern California, Colorado, and Idaho

To contact a member of the development staff or arrange a visit to your congregation, call (616) 698-7071 or email ldevries@rca.org.

PIM Share Support

Partner in Mission Support (PIM) provides support for 108 missionaries serving in 40 countries around the world. Gifts are directed to a specific missionary or mission partner.

Great Commission Connection

Gifts to the Great Commission Connection can be designated to any area of Our Call.

- To *Global Mission* for unreached people, partner development, and relief or justice efforts around the world.
- To *Multiplication* to recruit, train, resource, and coach church planters to start new congregations, equipping them to touch hearts, change lives, and transform communities in the name of Jesus.
- To *Revitalization* to help train coaches, start pastors networks, and rekindle congregational ministries, helping churches to be agents of God's redemptive work in the world.
- To *Leadership* to help the RCA identify, develop, equip, and mobilize godly leaders to lead the church in mission.
- To *Discipleship* to train and coach discipleship leaders, and to develop and translate new resources to help congregations build effective faith development programs.
- To *Multiracial Future Freed from Racism* to provide learning materials and collaborative experiences to help congregational leaders grow RCA ministries that are racially and ethnically equitable.

Contributions to the mission and ministry of the General Synod Council in FY 2009 totaled $6,643,439 and an additional $3,212,055 in donor designated gifts was released for min-

istry. These combined contributions totaled 56 percent of all funds available for global and local mission programs.

Pledge commitments to a specific missionary or mission partner through PIM shares of $6,484,669 were made and $5,787.964 (89 percent) were fulfilled. There were 547 churches that participated in RCA Global Missions through PIM shares and designated these commitments to the following regions:

Africa	28%
Asia/Pacific	17%
Americas	27%
Europe	7%
Middle East	18%
Non-designated	3%

Non-designated, other, and non-PIM-share gifts to Global Mission helped fund underfunded regions. The total expenditures by region were as follows:

Africa	24%
Asia/Pacific	17%
Americas	38%
Europe	8%
Middle East	13%

Outright gifts to local mission (primarily designated to Our Call) totaled $571,113.

RCA Church Growth Fund

Since 1861, the Church Growth Fund has enabled RCA churches to borrow money to build new or renovate existing buildings to carry out ministry to their communities. In the past ten years it has also awarded over $2.6 million in grants to help start new congregations. Bequests and outright gifts are being sought and savings certificates with competitive interest rates are offered to support this important ministry.

The Van Bunschooten Bequest

The RCA continues to recognize and thank those who respond through membership in a giving society known as the Van Bunschooten Society.

The summary history of the Van Bunschooten Bequest is as follows:

> At a meeting of the General Synod in New York City on June 9, 1814, Dominie Elias Van Bunschooten, one of the advisory members, walked up the aisle and laid down on the table ten bonds amounting to $13,800 and $800 in cash and asked synod to accept the gift for the education of pious youth for ministry.
>
> On January 10, 1815, in his seventy-seventh year, Dominie Van Bunschooten went home to his reward and was buried in the church yard of First Reformed Church in New Brunswick, New Jersey. In his last will and testament he added more than $3,000 to his former donation, making a total of more than $17,000—a princely sum for those days.

> Dominie Van Bunschooten thus had the honor of making the first substantial contribution for assisting young students of theology. His example has been followed from time to time by others, thus realizing his desire as expressed in the bequest "that he might be a humble pattern for others to copy after."
>
> It would be impossible to catalogue all the results that have flowed from these donations. For more than a century they have made possible the education of candidates for the ministry, for the work both at home and abroad. All honor to him and the other liberal donors who have followed his example (*MGS 2004*, pp. 187-188).

In honor of Dominie Elias Van Bunschooten, the Van Bunschooten Society was formed in the Reformed Church in America to honor those who have arranged a life income plan or included the Reformed Church in America in their will.

REPORT OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COUNCIL

The African American Council (AAC) continues its prophetic ministry of being a voice for people of African descent in and outside of the RCA. In 2010 great progress was realized in this ministry through regional and national meetings, as well as through many AAC members serving on RCA boards, commissions, committees, and task forces. Once again, the highlight of the year was the Annual Caucus Gathering. This event affords the opportunity for black members of the RCA to come together for fellowship, work, and ministry. A Youth and Young Adult Conference was held in conjunction with the caucus. The theme for both conferences was "Our Responsibility to the Next Generation." Workshops were offered in the areas of worship, spiritual and numerical church growth, and community outreach.

As always, the caucus stayed focused on Our Call. New churches were introduced and others were recognized for their efforts in revitalization. One highlight was a reception held for the fifteen new pastors and seminarians in attendance. There was tremendous enthusiasm on the part of these new leaders in being able to be at this gathering. One new church plant pastor stated, "I was very skeptical of trying to develop a church in the RCA, until I came to the caucus and met people who looked like me. I am deeply encouraged and look forward to a wonderful future of a great work for the Lord in the RCA."

In 2010, the council conducted the following meetings:

- The executive committee and council met to assess the ongoing work and ministry of the council.
- Regional meetings of the council were held to organize and assist with the overall mission and vision of the council and the denomination.

The council also experienced changes in the responsibilities of its members. Wilbur Jones, chairperson, left the denomination, and Jo Anna Lougin then became chairperson, serving out Jones's term. Jimmie Stevenson became first vice-chair, and James Steward was elected second vice-chair.

The AAC continues to be appreciative of the work of its director, Glen C. Missick, who also serves as director for African American/Black Ministries for the RCA. Missick reports that just about all RCA black churches now have some form of pastoral leadership. He continues his recruiting efforts, especially of new church plant pastors, as well as his nurturing of present pastors and lay leaders, through Congregational Mission.

The council commends the General Synod Council (GSC) for attending to its recommendation that the GSC look into what the council perceives as the "benign neglect" of classes in relating to the RCA's black churches. The AAC is aware that the GSC has appointed a task force to look into this matter, and the AAC looks forward with anticipation to solutions that can help remedy this problem.

It is the council's hope that recent recommendations approved by General Synod—the recommendation to add Multiracial Future Freed from Racism as a sixth dimension of Our Call, the recommendation declaring that racism is a sin (*MGS 2009*, R-70, p. 311), and the recommendation to approve the Belhar Confession as the RCA's fourth doctrinal standard (*MGS 2009*, R-55, p. 247)—will help the denomination move closer to becoming a denomination freed from racism. Further, the AAC urges the GSC and the other commissions to continue to explore the issue of white privilege as it relates to people of color. The council believes that by addressing this issue the denomination can begin to move closer to racial and ethnic reconciliation.

The AAC also remains concerned about the work RCA Global Mission is conducting in the nation of Haiti. The AAC would like to join in dialogue with Global Mission to help develop strategies that are culturally and racially sensitive in helping to bring relief to the people of this nation of predominantly black people, a nation that has seen its share of problems over the last two years. The AAC feels left out of whatever ministries are being conducted in Haiti by the RCA in the sense that as black people they could be extremely helpful in relating to the Haitian people, just as Europeans, Asians, Hispanics, and others relate to their racial and cultural groups in times of trouble and need.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR PACIFIC AND ASIAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES

The Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries (CPAAM) has successfully entered its thirty-second year of ministry in 2011. On March 14, 1980, the Reformed Church in America held the first consultation in which its Asian American constituents gathered to discuss the steps needed to launch a ministry for the Asian American people. Following this first consultation, the General Synod of the RCA established CPAAM with four goals that have been the backbone of CPAAM in the past and will continue to be the most important functions of this ministry for the present and the future.

To identify, communicate, and interpret Pacific and Asian American concerns, needs, and gifts.

Since its beginning thirty-one years ago, Pacific Asian immigrant pastors have been active in building church foundations and in raising church communities locally and denominationally. We honor and appreciate all the pioneer work of our first generation pastors and the seeds that they have planted. As we enter a new decade, CPAAM is recognizing the significance of young emerging leaders who are called to be the successors of our pioneer pastors. Thus, the thirty-first CPAAM consultation, which took place from May 13 to May 14, 2010, at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, took steps to incorporate young leadership in the CPAAM community. For the first time, two Hope College students, Yui Hamada and Gabrielle Russell, were invited and attended the consultation. Drew Yamamoto, a recent graduate of Western Theological Seminary who is now supervisor of RCA mission in Asia and the Pacific, was given the honor of preaching at the opening service. Their presence sparked an avid interest and awareness of the younger generation by the respected first generation leaders. Another defining characteristic of the thirty-first consultation was the increased number of women participating due to inviting a wider

range of women leaders within the CPAAM churches. During a pre-gathering and the consultation, these women were able to fellowship, discuss particular issues and concerns related to their ministries, and establish a networking system for encouragement and support.

To advocate on behalf of Pacific and Asian Americans before the assemblies of the Reformed Church in America.
The Asian Resource Center was established in 2010 by CPAAM coordinator En Young Kim with three goals: discernment (identifying issues facing CPAAM congregations and communities in the RCA), development (discussing potential solutions and strategies to resolve these issues), and distribution (sharing these discoveries with the greater RCA community via various communication resources). Gerri Yoshida, facilitator of the Asian Resource Center, has set up two book discussions so far. The first, held in November 2010, centered on the book *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, by Eric Law. Eleven participants with backgrounds in various Asian countries discussed their experiences as minorities in America and how that has affected their participation in interracial groups. The second book discussion, held in February 2011, focused on *The Geography of Thought*, by Richard E. Nisbett, which examines how Asians and Westerners think differently and how this affects their perceptions and behaviors. That group was a multiracial group of ten pastors and elders who discussed ways Asians can more effectively communicate in consistory and classis meetings and the benefits of more cross-cultural experiences for churches and communities. It is envisioned that meetings like these will empower CPAAM pastors and churches to be more fully and effectively included in the life of the RCA.

To effect empowerment of Pacific and Asian Americans within the Reformed Church so that they can become fully included participants in the design and implementation of the denomination's mission.
The issue of cultural bias within the assessment process for selecting church planters has been a concern among many CPAAM pastors because of cultural and language barriers. Recently, the Church Multiplication Team (CMT) granted a group of Korean pastors the opportunity to be trained as assessors in the Behavior Assessment process. On October 14, 2010, Doug McClintic visited the RCA office in New York to introduce the assessment process to thirteen Korean pastors. Although all of them received the proper training, only two of them will become official assessors after completing the entire training process. Also, the CMT created "Collaboration Multiplication" for already formed churches that are not yet large enough to be organized and so do not qualify for a New Congregation Plan grant. In CPAAM there are many church plants that start on their own with little outside financial support. Through resources and training, Collaboration Multiplication provides a helpful path for CPAAM churches to become part of the RCA.

In terms of church revitalization, a new network was created by five Korean pastors to discuss and study Korean American ministries. This network is supported by the RCA as an Affinity Network, which is a network that provides collegial support, covenantal accountability, and transformational learning. Other groups such as ethnic groups, women, and emerging leaders are also looking to create separate networks under the Affinity Network system. Another good tool of church revitalization is coaching. Coaching is used by the RCA to support and encourage congregational leaders and churches. Although initially this tool was not very popular within the Asian communities because of cultural differences, it has been gaining more acceptance from certain groups such as English-speaking Asian Americans in the past year.

To advise the General Synod, its commissions and boards, and other assemblies regarding the ways Pacific and Asian Americans can enrich the worship and enhance the witness of the denomination.

On October 1, 2010, Kenneth Bradsell, the director of Operations and Support, called for a gathering of the executive committee members of the RCA's racial/ethnic councils to address the issue of improving the relationships between the General Synod Council and the three racial/ethnic councils in accordance with *Book of Church Order* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, 2b. Hak Kim, Baktha Kumar, Norman Chen, and En Young Kim attended as CPAAM representatives. CPAAM, along with the two other councils, was glad for this meeting because it was a tangible step toward a multiracial future freed from racism. The CPAAM executive committee was challenged to become familiar with the annual General Synod Referrals Progress Report. It also felt compelled to pick out the issues relevant to its constituents and share this information with them, while at the same time collecting their feedback and reporting it back to the General Synod Council (GSC). Through this mechanism, CPAAM hopes to establish effective communication between GSC and the members of CPAAM.

Conclusion

The Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries is engaging in new challenges as it enters its thirty-second year of ministry. Some of these challenges include embracing young emerging leaders and women within our ministry, planting new churches across the country, welcoming churches who desire membership into the RCA, providing educational resources for children and youth, and enhancing effective communication with the larger body of the RCA. We thank all our leaders and contributors who have dedicated their time and effort to the ministry of CPAAM. We are especially grateful to our CPAAM coordinator, En Young Kim, for all her work in caring for CPAAM churches and pastors, representing the CPAAM communities at RCA meetings, and advocating for CPAAM and the RCA at ecumenical gatherings.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR HISPANIC MINISTRIES

As we begin each new day, we plan of all the things we must do before our day is over. Many of us even write a list so we don't forget to do them. If we go back and revisit one of these lists we will find that the list we so carefully wrote is still missing the to-do items of Matthew 28:18-20:

> All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

This happens to all of us. We get so concentrated on the things we must do that we forget the work we were told to do by our Lord Jesus Christ. Many of us work in an environment where a high percentage of the people around us are are followers of Jesus Christ; some of us don't. Through TV, Internet, radio, and all types of instruments for communication, members of the secular world and Christians learn about the statistics of how many non-believers now live in this great nation. It used to be that everybody talked about the U.S. as the Christian nation, but we are losing a battle with the enemy.

A high percentage of the ministries of the RCA and other denominations have in common that they are more concerned with a short-term goal, a goal that only goes for a couple of decades. It gives the impression that their goals go only as far as their lives or their time in this world. The goal of many churches is to have their ministry survive one generation. As believers in Christ, our goal should go for generations to come and can be accomplished one step at a time.

Challenges for the Hispanic Community

In a bad economy like this one, some of our Hispanic churches are going though tough financial problems. The bad economy is a big factor in the number of memberships in our congregations, because people have to move from city to city and in some cases from one state to another state going after jobs. In some churches as much as 50 percent of the congregation has moved or is facing the decision to have to move.

Another factor that challenges our Hispanic churches is a lack of RCA educational material. We don't have enough resource material that has the stamp of our denomination on it. These materials need to be in Spanish because the mentality of the Latino community is to learn as much as they can in their native language. Leaders of the Latino community need to be able to provide them with the material they need to keep our denominational roots and knowledge of the Protestant church to which we belong.

Communication is also a factor that needs to be dealt with. When we talk about communication, it is not that we don't speak to each other or don't know about each other. The problem is how a system of communication and distribution can be developed. If an educational book for Sunday school is translated to Spanish, who knows about it? And how do we make sure that this book is used by our churches? We need a system of communication and distribution that is not just for our Hispanic pastors to use but to which our pastors can direct their congregations to learn about the work that our denomination is doing in the U.S., Canada, and around the world.

Another challenge is that in the RCA there is not enough interaction among pastors of different races, and this is often a factor in misunderstandings. Most of the misunderstandings come from not knowing another race's culture. For example, there are many people who seem to think that everything south of the U.S. border is just like Mexico—they seem to think that Central America and South America are, culturally and socially, just extensions of Mexico. That way of thinking is brought to the church of Christ when a new convert comes to the RCA, but we, as the oldest in the family of Christ in the U.S., have the opportunity to walk with them and share our testimony with them and bring a new understanding. The mentality that everything south of the U.S. border is like Mexico brings to the RCA many misunderstandings and often becomes a barrier among leaders in the RCA.

Integrating the Work of the Hispanic Churches and the Work of the RCA

We all face many obstacles in life and in our walk with God. We forget his commandments and don't apply the obedience that is required from us to do his will. This needs to change from the top to the bottom in the Hispanic community. The RCA can give its support by continuing some already established programs and practices:

- *The annual meeting of the Hispanic Council that takes place in different states*. Although the council meeting is held only once a year, it is very helpful. It helps us know about each other and updates us on changes that happen in our denomination. Last year's gathering was a great event, and our leaders were very enthusiastic about starting new churches and revitalizing existing congregations. Tim Vink, the RCA's coordinator for church multiplication, was our facilitator and challenged us to become more active in parenting churches.

- *The coaching seminars that are being established by our denomination through Congregational Mission director Ken Eriks and Council for Hispanic Ministries executive Brigido Cabrera*. These coaching seminars will launch Hispanic ministries to a new dimension. This year four coach training seminars will be held: in

California, in New York and New Jersey, in Florida, and in Toronto. The purpose is to train a large group of leaders to serve as "coaches" who will help pastors persevere under the intense load of their ministry. We are focusing on new pastors, youth leaders, and established pastors with the vision of having more communication and fellowship among Hispanic leaders. Starting this year, we are also challenging the regions mentioned above to hold gatherings twice a year for all the Hispanic churches of that region for a time of renewal. We will hold workshops at these gatherings; the workshops' content will depend on what a region's churches need in order to grow. Some workshops may deal with urban problems, others with reaching out, and so on.

- *Building relationships through gatherings with the Multiracial Strategy Coalition, the other racial/ethnic councils, and the General Synod Council*. These relationships are helpful because they allow us to interact with each other and bring to the table the problems that we as ethnic people in the U.S. and Canada are facing, especially in the areas of immigration, discrimination, and racism. Immigration issues are deeply affecting Hispanic communities because we are a very visible minority. For example, the Arizona immigration law, SB1070, invites racial profiling against people of color by law enforcement in violation of the federal guarantee of equal protection under U.S. law. Historically the RCA was established by immigrants and many of its present members were born outside of the U.S. and Canada. We urge the RCA to take steps to address issues related to immigration, because the only hope that many ethnic people have is that the church will act on their behalf for social justice.

- *Integrating Hispanic leaders into classes.* This will help Hispanic leaders better understand the RCA and do a much better job of spreading the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Council for Hispanic Ministries is a constitutional body of the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America whose purpose is to collectively express the desire and will of Hispanics in the Reformed Church in America and coordinate and advocate for ministries, missions, programs, and other resources. The council works with the regional synods and classes to 1) establish and revitalize Hispanic congregations, 2) identify potential areas for ministries in Spanish, 3) provide theological training for new leaders, and 4) identify leaders to fill ministry vacancies. As the RCA works to improve its leadership across the U.S. and Canada in the areas of discipleship, leadership, mission, church multiplication, etc., doing all this work through the classes and councils is a great thing that our denomination is involved in, and it fulfills the Great Commission that our Lord Jesus gave to us.

- *Prayer and support for the new denomination called the Iglesia Reformada Dominicana (IRD)*. The Hispanic Council has been very instrumental in the formation of the IRD, the Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic, and continues to work with its leaders to prepare them for the great harvest that the IRD calls "the movement of reformation."

A Spanish Website

An additional way the RCA could support Hispanic ministries would be to set up a form of communication that would allow Spanish-speaking members of the RCA to share information and get information on denominational resources. The Hispanic Council suggests setting up a website in Spanish where any member of the denomination may go to find information about Hispanic ministries and learn about the ways that the integration of Latinos in 1974 into the ministry of RCA is bearing fruit. The website would also be a

place where members of the Hispanic community could find out what is going on throughout the denomination.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATION

"I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind…" (1 Corinthians 1:4-5).

Throughout the year and through every aspect of Our Call, the RCA has been blessed. It has been blessed with incredible stories of the goodness and the faithfulness of God. In response we give thanks to God from whom all blessings flow, and we share these stories with each other.

GSC Coordinated Communication Strategy Uses Multiple Tools with an Increasing Focus on Web/Electronic Communication

Throughout 2010, GSC staff continued a strategic shift toward a coordinated plan that emphasizes communication tools that align with RCA member needs while increasing efficiencies through the use of electronic and web communication. This shift reflects the changes occurring in our world, our denomination, our churches, and our homes. With the diversity of the RCA, communication needs to take the form of both print and electronic media, and must increasingly be presented in a number of languages, including English, Spanish, Korean, and Chinese.

A Survey on RCA Today Readership and Satisfaction

The 2009 General Synod directed communication staff to conduct a readership review of *RCA Today* to determine the quantitative level of actual readership as well as the levels of satisfaction with the qualitative issues of content and layout, in time to report to General Synod 2011.

General Synod staff contracted the Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research at Hope College to conduct the survey. The survey took place in February and March 2011. More than one thousand individuals took the survey, a response rate that lends statistical significance to the results.

In regards to the extent of *RCA Today* readership, 83 percent of respondents read all or most of the issues, 12 percent read some of the issues, and 5 percent read very few or none of the issues. Of the survey participants, 76 percent read the print version of *RCA Today* magazine, 20 percent read a combination of the print and online versions, and 4 percent read the online version.

RCA Today readers are satisfied, overall, with the magazine, with 71 percent either satisfied or very satisfied, 17 percent neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 11 percent either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. *RCA Today*'s most widely read feature is Regional Synod News, followed by Questions of Faith and Church Life. Features that are read least are articles on the RCA's multiracial future freed from racism and articles on multiplication.

Readers are most satisfied with Church Life, articles on revitalization, and Notes from the Editor. Conversely, while readers most often read Regional Synod News, this feature received the lowest satisfaction scores with 71 percent satisfied/very satisfied, 24 percent

neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 5 percent dissatisfied/very dissatisfied. Unprompted suggestions for improvement highlight the need for increased regional coverage.

Readers like the general appearance/aesthetics, illustration/graphics, and layout of the magazine. Readers who receive the print magazine like the quality of the printing and paper used.

The survey was also expanded to include feedback on other communication pieces such as the *RCA Today* bulletin inserts, *Mission Today* bulletin inserts, and the RCA website. Half of the *RCA Today* magazine readers also receive bulletin inserts from *RCA Today* and *Mission Today*. The majority (86 percent) of *RCA Today* readers visit the RCA website and nearly one-third (32 percent) visit weekly or more often. The most common reasons for visiting the website are to check RCA resources, read information about the RCA, and/or read news about the RCA/General Synod. Those who don't visit say they do not have an interest or are unaware the website exists. The greatest complaint with the website is that it is not user-friendly or easy to navigate, with 28 percent of respondents dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with navigation and ease of use. The most satisfied website users are younger (ages eighteen to thirty-four), non-white, from households with more than three readers of *RCA Today*, church members who are not in church leadership, and people have been connected to the RCA for ten years or less.

Communication staff will continue to seek feedback from RCA members as we produce communication pieces to enrich and inform congregations and support the mission and ministry of the RCA.

RCA Electronic Communication Changes to Meet the Needs of Leaders, Members, and Seekers

More than 30 percent of the GSC denominational communication budget supported web, email, blogging, and social networking as an effective means to facilitate two-way communication with RCA members and share information with the church. Through the web, blogging, and social network sites, voices from throughout the denomination can be heard, healthy discussion can occur, and an editorial independence naturally occurs in ways never experienced in print communication.

The RCA website continues to evolve as the needs of RCA pastors, leaders, and members change. In the past year, increasing attention on the website was also given to presenting basic resources for those seeking information on the RCA and its ministries.

Stories from throughout the denomination continue to be featured on the homepage, with new stories posted several times each week. Practical resources, resource suggestions, newsletters, and other documents and forms are being posted daily. (The website has over 7,200 pages currently, an increase of more than seven hundred pages over the previous year.)

In May 2010, the RCA website launched a redesigned look, along with a small restructuring. *RCA Today*'s website became the focal point for news and discussions, a new "Discover the RCA" area was created to better introduce seekers to the denomination, and the church search engine was upgraded to utilize Google Maps. The remainder of www.rca.org continues to be focused on providing resources to churches and their leaders. *RCA Today*'s pages have seen a significant jump in visitors since the restructuring (homepage visits are up 300 percent, for instance) and each news article now gives visitors the ability to post their own comments.

Each month the RCA family of websites receives more than 40,000 visitors looking at over 200,000 pages (full year numbers: half a million visitors looking at nearly 2.5 million pages). Most visitors continue to come via a search engine (just over 50 percent), while a quarter come through links from other sites, and 20 percent come directly. The two busiest weeks for the websites are during synod and the week following U.S. Thanksgiving (when people utilize the extensive Advent and Christmas resources).

The website team continues to maintain the *RCA Today* and *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought* websites, as well as lending assistance to synods, agencies, and ecumenical partners that are in need of help.

Translation Efforts Increase

An integral piece of the RCA's coordinated communication strategy around the goal to build a multiracial future freed from racism includes the urgent need to translate resources into the languages spoken throughout the denomination.

With the encouragement of past General Synods, the support and involvement of regional synods, and the ongoing cooperation of the racial/ethnic councils of the RCA, the number of communication pieces that were translated continue to increase. Particular focus has been placed on translating constitutional documents as well as Reformed creeds and confessions. The translations of creeds and confessions have increased rapidly through coordinated translation efforts with other denominations (e.g., Christian Reformed Church, Korean Presbyterians, Taiwanese Presbyterians, etc.). Additional translation work was done around leadership training resources. In order to make these resources available to the largest audience, the majority of the translated material is posted on the web in lieu of printing. This is both cost effective and allows translated material to be made available more quickly. This momentum will continue as we look to bring RCA communications into the languages in which our members worship the Lord.

Reformed Church Press

Reformed Church Press (RCP) is organized as a separate corporate entity of the General Synod. However, for more than a decade, it has functioned with the oversight of the General Synod Council. It provides the means for the RCA to continue to produce selected resources to support specific RCA mission and ministry in fulfillment of both the Statement of Mission and Vision and Our Call. It is the imprint used on all RCA produced materials, including books, General Synod documents, DVDs, CDs, promotional and communication vehicles, and *Perspectives* (a theological journal).

RCP also supports the efforts of the Commission on History and its publication of historical resources. In the past year, new resources published by the Commission on History include:

- *Collegial Bishop*, edited by Allan Janssen and Leon Vanden Broek
- *The Church Under the Cross*, by Wendell Karsen
- *Supporting Asian Christianity's Transition from Mission to Church: A History of the Foundation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia*, edited by Samuel C. Pearson
- *The American Diary of Jacob Van Hinte*, edited by Peter Ester, Nella Kennedy, Earl Wm. Kennedy
- *A New Way of Belonging: Covenant Theology, China and the Christian Reformed Church, 1921-1951*, by Kurt Selles
- *Envisioning Hope College: Letters Written by Albertus C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps, Jr., 1857-1875*, edited by Elton J. Bruins and Karen G. Schakel
- *The Church Under the Cross, Vol. 2*, by Wendell Karsen

Report on the Faith Alive Christian Resources Partnership

The RCA continues to work with Faith Alive Christian Resources as a partner in distributing resources. RCA staff meet regularly with Faith Alive Christian Resources leadership to ensure the partnership is working well and supporting the resource needs of both the RCA and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Staff cooperation between Faith Alive and the RCA is strong. The RCA receives revenue from the Reformed Church Press materials sold through Faith Alive and this continues to provide revenue that, in turn, is used to produce additional resources to support the RCA and other Reformed congregations throughout the United States and Canada.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON THE RCA ARCHIVES

The RCA Archives exists to serve as the memory of the church. The corporate memory of what we have done and who we have been constitutes our heritage as we seek faithfully to serve our Lord in mission throughout the world. The RCA Archives is staffed by one person and preserves records from congregations, classes, regional synods, the General Synod, and staff offices in order to document how we have followed the call to mission, since a strong future is built upon a solid understanding of the past. The primary goal of the Archives in this process is to offer stability and relevance to the long-term mission of the church. To learn more about the Archives and its role, visit www.rca.org/archives.

Another major component of the work is to assist staff offices and commissions that need background on a variety of programs and projects carried out in the RCA as well as researchers who are interested in RCA history. This past year, the archivist was in communication with and assisted 260 individuals with records management, research, and information requests, including 44 people who visited the archives on 35 days during the calendar year.

The Archives also has a center in Canada that is ably staffed by volunteers Joan Drost, John Drost, and Margaret Kapteyn. They work hard to gather records from the congregations and the regional synod and make them available in Canada. The collection there continues to grow and provides a significant research center in that country.

Congregations—Renewal happens at many different levels. This office assists in that process by reviewing, preserving, and rehearsing the stories of the past. Through the acquisition of congregational records and oral histories, the stories of past successes and failures are preserved and shared so that future generations may understand their journey and recognize the strengths and assess the weaknesses.

The corpus of gathered records serves many congregations as they celebrate anniversaries and build upon the strengths of their ministries. The past can be held up as a mirror in which the present evaluates itself as it moves into the future. The office continues to receive the records of both disbanded and active congregations into the RCA Archives.

Records Management—The archivist regularly visits and corresponds with a number of assemblies to assist them with their record-keeping tasks. This year, the archivist offered training events on caring for congregational records for the Regional Synod of New York. The workshop talk is available from the RCA Archives on a set of three audio CDs.

The archivist prepares retention schedules for congregations and staff offices in order to assure both the preservation of significant records needed for legal, financial, administra-

tive, and historical purposes and the disposal of records that are no longer necessary for the ongoing work of the church.

Historical Series—The archivist also assists with the publication of the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America and serves as its production editor. The archivist works closely with the general editor and the Commission on History in the production of the volumes in the series by designing and typesetting the books and assisting in photo research and fact checking. A full list of the more than seventy volumes can be found at www.rca.org/series. You may also "friend" the series and remain current about new publications on Facebook.

Mission—The office also assists in the proclamation of the gospel over time. Today's people continue to be inspired and encouraged by yesterday's mission. A number of researchers who have worked with the missionary correspondence find their lives influenced by the work of those faithful servants who have gone before us. In several instances the works of the past affect the work of the present as these researchers become inspired by the example of the past servants.

The archivist continues to serve the professional archival community through participation in and presentation of papers at the Society of American Archivists and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archivists Conference. He also serves as the steering committee of the Lone Arrangers Roundtable of archivists working in small repositories and continues as a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists.

This office recognizes its important position in the ministry of memory as it continues in its stewardship of our shared heritage. Preserving our memory is an important task so that we can assure tomorrow that it has a yesterday. It is also a process of thanksgiving as we grow out of yesterday into tomorrow.

GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO GENERAL SYNOD 2010 REFERRALS

Response to *MGS 2010*, R-17, p. 78, Task Force for Future Funding

Delegates to the 2008 General Synod voted "to encourage the General Synod Council to find ways to explore alternative strategies for funding the church's work" in response to a proposal issued by General Synod president John Ornee. Delegates at the 2010 General Synod considered this same topic and approved the following recommendation:

> To instruct the moderator of the General Synod Council in consultation with the GSC to form a task force of no more than seven members, representing at least three racial-ethnic groups, small, medium, and large churches, and at least five regional synods, whose objective is to observe and analyze the practices used in each classis and regional synod to determine assessments, in order to bring awareness regarding the current realities and disparities in these assessment systems. These conversations are to include a discussion of the values surrounding our work together and what values might best inform our decisions about denominational funding; and further, to explore alternate funding systems, with final report and recommendation to the 2011 General Synod.

Michelle Chahine, moderator of the General Synod Council (GSC), named the following members to the task force: Bruce Bugbee, Tom DeVries, Robert Hoffman, Mary Linge, John

Muniz, James Nakakihara, and Loretta Rolle. Barbara Boers, the RCA's CFO/treasurer, serves as the staff person and Randy Bohl, a GSC member, is the moderator.

The task force agreed to survey classis and regional synod stated clerks, seeking their input about current realities and their personal values about assessments. Forty-four respondents representing thirty-four classes and four regional synods provided the following information:

- In general, classes use a per-member assessment amount. Few have tried other methods, though some are considering or have considered using a percentage of income.
- A few classes give discounts to small churches and for early payment, and charge additional amounts for either late payments or large churches.
- 75 percent of respondents were not aware of the funding systems of other denominations.
- Alternative funding sources identified include sale of real estate, rental income, or special offerings.
- When asked to respond personally to whether or not they believe this statement about assessments: "Every confessing member should equally share in the responsibility of funding the ministry of the greater church," 70 percent agreed or were neutral (scoring 3, 4, or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5).

The Task Force for Future Funding received a one-year extension of its work, with a report to be provided to the 2012 General Synod. This additional time will allow more voices to be heard at various classis meetings. No additional funding will be needed to complete the tasks given to the task force.

Additional steps to be taken by the task force during this time extension include:

- The task force will meet by phone to discuss the responses to the survey.
- The current task force members will be polled to assess each person's interest in an additional year of service. For those not returning, replacements will be sought to maintain the membership balance as defined in the *2010 Minutes of the General Synod.*
- The task force moderator has been invited to a meeting of the classis stated clerks just prior to the 2011 General Synod to share information about the process so far while also gathering their comments.
- A workshop will be given during the 2011 General Synod for delegates to explore the survey results, talk about disparities in the current system, and share ideas about alternative funding systems.
- Data on the way other denominations are funded will be gathered and included in the final report.
- Members of the task force and chosen volunteers will meet with classis leadership in the next twelve months using a process with questions to be defined by the task force. These listening sessions will provide additional information about the values of funding our work together and alternative funding systems.

Response to *MGS 2010*, R-24, p. 114, Regarding *BCO* Amendments Emphasizing Missional Call

> To direct the General Synod Council to gather and share annually, during the first five years after the adoption of these *Book of Church Order* amendments, the creative and faithful ways consistories, congregations, classes, and their partners in mission are fulfilling these responsibilities.

The amendments referred to in this recommendation emphasize the missional call and responsibility of the classis and its congregations and are before this synod for the declarative vote. GSC action will commence after the 2011 vote.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-25, p. 114, Sharing Reformed and Missional Stories

> To direct the General Synod Council to make collecting and sharing of stories on being Reformed and missional a priority, especially through the Office of Communication and Production Services and the RCA Archives; and further, to encourage congregations and classes to nurture a culture of storytelling in order to gather wisdom, share ideas, and inspire the body of Christ for mission and ministry.

The communication team is using the RCA website, Facebook, Twitter, and print pieces to urge RCA congregations and members to alert the team to stories and share them with both local congregations and the denomination. The same media are used to tell those stories. The team is exploring options for podcasting the stories. The RCA archivist is being consulted in order to use his resources and ideas to further this project.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-26, p. 114, Sustaining a Reformed and Missional Focus

> To direct the General Synod Council to sustain the Reformed and missional focus of this dialogue throughout the denomination, making use of the DVD resource and the RCA Story Project, in order to strengthen relationships, engender trust, inspire faithfulness and innovation, and guide our shared task of discernment as to the future direction of the Reformed Church in America.

A video series about being Reformed and missional is available on the RCA website and was promoted in monthly e-news updates and in a combined resource mailing to churches. To view the video, visit www.rca.org/reformedandmissional. A discernment process planning team is in the process of organizing a church-wide discernment event focused on the future direction of the RCA to be held in Orlando in February 2012. More information on this event will be shared with RCA members and congregations throughout this spring and summer. To learn more, visit www.rca.org/discernment.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-27, p. 117, Consistory Empowerment Team

> To thank the Fresh Wind Task Force for completing its work over the past two years and formally disband it effective July 1, 2010; and further, to instruct the General Synod Council, in cooperation with the general secretary, to form a Consistory Empowerment Team, using funds already in the Ministry Services budget, to offer training and other initiatives to develop and train vibrant, Spirit-filled elders, deacons, and other congregational leaders; and further, to include a progress report of the Consistory Empowerment Team to the General Synod annually.

The Consistory Empowerment Team was established in response to R-27. Its progress report is below.

Report of the Consistory Empowerment Team

The Consistory Empowerment Team was established in response to R-27 adopted by the General Synod 2010 which reads:

> To thank the Fresh Wind Task Force for completing its work over the past two years and formally disband it effective July 1, 2010; and further, to instruct the General Synod Council, in cooperation with the general secretary, to form a Consistory Empowerment Team, using funds already in the Ministry Services budget, to offer

training and other initiatives to develop and train vibrant, Spirit-filled elders, deacons, and other congregational leaders; and further, to include a progress report of the Consistory Empowerment Team to the General Synod annually.

Why a Consistory Empowerment Team?

Past General Synods have been reluctant to continue to renew task forces for work over a period of years for good reason: a task force is likely not to be a body designed to implement changes and make continuous improvements over a period of time. When a task force has identified key priorities, it makes more sense to establish a team that includes varied members and continuing staff support and can do its work within the context of Our Call. We believe that the process of better selecting, equipping, empowering, encouraging, and nurturing growth in elders and deacons across the RCA is understood well enough that it is time to establish a team at the denominational level. The team is called the Consistory Empowerment Team because the aim is to empower consistories—which include mostly elders and deacons—to better lead ministry in and by their congregations and, in some cases, in and by their assemblies. Training is a major part of that empowerment.

The Training Survey for Elders and Deacons

An online leadership survey that was initiated by the task force in 2009 points out that many of our lay leaders (approximately two-thirds) do not feel adequately prepared to shoulder the responsibilities that we expect of them and potentially could be much more effective in their assigned roles! Many pastors are also too heavily burdened and not fully equipped to add leadership development to their job descriptions. Three of every ten elders and deacons received an orientation to their responsibilities and two of every ten received formal training. The complete survey results can be found at the RCA Consistory Center website, www.rca.org/consistorycenter. The Consistory Empowerment Team did a comprehensive analysis of the survey results. It is hoped that a second survey can be initiated in 2012 to compare results and assess the strategy of the team's initiatives.

First Team Meeting

The Consistory Empowerment Team met on March 3-5, 2011, at the Prince Conference Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Members of the team include the following:

Bart Strong (Leader)	Westdale Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ontario
Andrea Baker	Grace Reformed Church, Brooklyn, New York
Sarah Goodrich	Schoharie Reformed Church, Schoharie, New York
Brad Lewis	First Reformed Church of Schenectady, Schenectady, New York
Curt Patterson	Orchard Hill Reformed Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa
Julie Ploeg	Olivet Reformed Church, Grandville, Michigan
Meredith Nieuwsma (staff)	RCA Office, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Ellen Ratmeyer (staff)	RCA Office, New York, New York

Over the course of several days the team used a modified Appreciative Inquiry process to identify best practices in leadership development, significant current realities, and how to bridge the gap between leadership realities and leadership excellence.

Some of the significant realities that were identified through the Consistory Survey, Frost Center report, and other sources include:

- Overall church lay leaders don't feel prepared to fulfill their responsibilities
- Some apathy regarding roles of elder/deacon (filling the chair)
- Pastors not generally trained to train others/to lead others
- Evidence of mission drift
- A need for more communication and commitment
- Synod of Far West doing something right in lay training?
- General lack of ongoing leadership training in consistories
- Little recognition regarding adult learning styles—discussion important
- Need to engage people further in following Christ's call in their lives

Through a process of small group discussion and goal refinement, the committee spent many hours reviewing and building on the *Four Points of Focus from the Fresh Wind Letter* and developing best practices by answering the questions in the letter from a personal and denominational perspective. The areas of focus and questions are as follows:

The Four Points of Focus from the Fresh Wind Letter
Identifying and Collating Best Practices

1. ***We look at the world with Christ's eyes and let his spirit within us lead our feet to join him in mission.***
   a. How are you moving from your comfortable pews to not only see and hear the needs of our world but to be active participants in mission?
   b. How are you using your educational, financial, and human resources to join Jesus in mission?
   c. How are you building intentional, sustainable relationships with other churches, educational institutions, and community-based organizations in order to understand and meet the needs and challenges of your communities to be missionaries in your own back yards?

2. ***We lead our congregations and the denomination to become welcoming and diverse.***
   a. How are you helping to transform congregations already in diverse neighborhoods?
   b. How are you actively seeking partnerships with churches and organizations that reflect the diversity of North American society?
   c. How are you helping people learn, individually and collectively, about other cultures and the history of race relations?

3. ***We equip and empower all disciples to serve in areas where God has best gifted them.***
   a. How and when did you "discover" or discern your spiritual gifts?
   b. How has this knowledge impacted your call to be a faithful disciple?
   c. How are you equipping and empowering all disciples to serve in areas where God has best gifted them?

4. ***We nurture vibrant leaders who put God's interests before any and all personal interests.***
   a. How are you building a well-articulated vision, shared by leadership and the congregation, to live in union with God and one another?
   b. How are you claiming Christ's call for pastors, elders, deacons, and non-ordained leaders to serve as equal partners in ministry, with separate roles, while pursuing a common mission for the church?
   c. When have you identified and resolved an issue before it became a conflict so that the world sees your unity in following Christ?

All of the answers to the above questions were collated, discussed as a group, and prioritized. The top priorities were refined and developed into a goal statement that will guide the work of the team over the next few years. The role of the team, with the help of staff, will be to communicate, provide resources, and facilitate the training of lay leaders where feasible and appropriate, in order to fulfill the following mission:

In Healthy Congregations, Ministry Isn't Left to the Minister!

Dynamic ministry is accomplished through implementing God's call for your life.

- intentional process as part of the church's culture
- understanding who God created us to be
- spiritual gift assessments are vital
- Purposeful Living tool is available to all
- financial commitment to training (local and regional)
- a mission for everyone's gifts
- an open door for all generations

Vibrant Spirit-filled leaders require a deep reliance on the Bible, to walk with Christ, and to truly love all.

- leaders must develop a missional outlook
- being the hands and feet of Jesus
- called to serve
- a heart of mercy and justice
- priesthood of all believers
- ongoing learning is essential

Leaders in flourishing congregations cultivate an environment of honesty, trust, and mutually respectful relationships.

- confronting all fears
- modeled by church leaders
- surrendering of control
- defining boundaries
- delegating authority
- empowering lay leaders
- nurturing mutual accountability

How we communicate this mission to leaders in the church is vital. We must use every available avenue to keep this agenda in the hearts and minds of leaders. A comprehensive list of resources to address the above needs will be developed and communicated to church leaders. Some new resources may be required; however, it was generally felt that we are resource rich when it comes to training material.

A list of communication avenues was developed to help facilitate communication and training opportunities:

- Leadership Summit (Willow Creek)
- Consistory Center website
- Topical webinars
- Connect with special groups of pastors that meet (emerging leaders, networks, and consider other groups)
- Facebook
- Direct communication to churches: mailings and email blasts
- General Synod workshop
- Classis meeting report (pass out questionnaire)
- Continuing education events connected to classis meeting

- Consistory meeting
- Congregational meeting

Where do we go from here?

Members of the committee were given assignments to move our agenda forward. A decision was made to investigate having one face-to-face gathering of the team each year, possibly alongside the GSC meeting in October, in order to have dialogue with other church leaders. The term of office for team members was determined to be three years renewable each year through a written commitment. At various times throughout the year the team will meet electronically as needed and will be kept updated through email. Measuring the effectiveness of the Consistory Empowerment Team will be important as we implement our strategy. A leadership survey every two to three years will enable us to compare results and leadership needs. Periodic questionnaires will also help us refine our message and action plans.

Above all we want lay leaders in the church to be the hands and feet of Christ. To that end a synod workshop has been developed as part of our strategy and will be presented Saturday afternoon at this synod. The workshop has the following title and is open to all:

Equipping and Empowering Lay Leaders to be the Hands and Feet of Christ

This workshop will update the work of the denomination's Consistory Empowerment Team and will explore themes of empowerment, delegation, and mutual accountability as they pertain to the question "Who is responsible for doing ministry in your church?"

Respectfully submitted,

Bart Strong
Leader, Consistory Empowerment Team

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-29, p. 124, Make Available Reports Related to Constitutional Inquiry Questions

To instruct the General Synod Council to make the contents of this report [of the Task Force to Review the Constitutional Inquiry Questions] and the report of the Commission on Theology on "Constitutional Inquiry Questions" available to consistories and classes to assist them in responding to the questions.

The Report of the Task Force to Review the Constitutional Inquiry Questions (*MGS 2010*, pp. 118-124) and the report of the Commission on Theology on "Constitutional Inquiry Questions" (*MGS 2000*, pp. 145-148) are available on the RCA website. The reports were promoted through the RCA's monthly e-news update and highlighted in the November combined resources mailing to churches. The proposed *Book of Church Order* changes to the Constitutional Inquiry Questions now come to the 2011 General Synod for adoption through the report of the Commission on Church Order.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-30, p. 136, Incorporate Multiracial Future Initiative in GSC Ends Policy

To direct the General Synod Council to incorporate into its ends policy "A Multiracial Future Freed from Racism," a continuing initiative that focuses on transitioning the RCA to become freed from racism and that incorporates the following objectives:

1. Promote systems changes that reduce or eliminate institutional racism
2. Develop multiracial congregations
3. Multiply congregations of color
4. Expand training for the RCA's multiracial future
5. Revitalize congregations through church-based community development
6. Learn with the global church
7. Develop leaders of color

For information on the GSC's response, please refer to the Report of the General Synod Council on the RCA's Multiracial Future Freed from Racism.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-32, p. 141, Reconvene Worship Initiatives Task Force

> To instruct the RCA Worship Initiatives Task Force to reconvene in order to evaluate the Worship Renewal Project, summarize learnings, and make whatever further recommendations they deem necessary to the General Synod of 2012.

The worship task force is presently involved with the Worship Renewal Grant that it has received from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Presently, Ron Reinstra is organizing worship renewal teams. The teams will gather to form best practices for worship renewal; they will study and gather resources, participate in the annual Calvin Symposium on Worship, and discern the best ways to share what they have learned with the wider church. The task force will reconvene in the spring to evaluate the Worship Renewal Project, summarize its learnings, and discern if further recommendations are necessary to bring to the General Synod of 2012.

There are approximately eighteen worship renewal teams convened across the U.S., from San Francisco to Pella to Grand Rapids to Albany. Most met once or twice in 2010 and expected to meet four to six times before the summer of 2011. At these meetings, groups are framing conversations about best worship practices around theological themes articulated in Leanne VanDyk's *A More Profound Alleluia*. Conversations are further rooted in actual practices through the use of volunteered video clips. Approximately twenty-five group leaders/members met in Grand Rapids in January 2011 to participate in the worship symposium. There a special session gave them the opportunity to process what they're learning and to spur them to deeper reflection.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-39, p. 150, Form a Task Force to Create Native Peoples Restoration Plan

> To direct the General Synod Council to form a task force entirely of Native American/First Nations people, consisting of up to two representatives from each of the RCA Native American/First Nations congregations, who will consult with resource persons familiar with the history of the RCA and Native American Indian Ministries to create a restoration plan; and further, that the task force be funded to continue its work for up to two years; and further, that the task force will provide a report to the General Synod Council at its fall 2011 meeting.

Task force leader Ina Montoya reported that three of five congregations identified delegates to the task force. Jicarilla Apache Reformed Church: Ina Montoya, Marlene Velarde; Mescalero Apache Reformed Church: June Denny, Rainey Enjady; Winnebago Reformed Church: James Bear, Ramona Sandoval. Apache Reformed Church and Comanche Reformed Church members are not yet named. Resource persons named are Nick Miles, United Church of Rosendale, Bloomington, New York, and Chris Moore, West End Collegiate Church, New York City. William DeBoer will provide staff support. The task force may hold its first meeting prior to General Synod.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-40, p. 150, Create Venues to Hear the Voices of Native Peoples

> To direct the General Synod Council to work in consultation with the Native American/First Nations Task Force to create venues for the denomination to be more intentional about listening to the voices of Native American/First Nations congregations and communities.

William De Boer will work with the task force named in the response to R-39 above.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-42, p. 157, Establish Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group

Interim Report of the Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group

As a response to the recommendations of the Call, Care, and Standards Task Force that met in 2010, the 2010 General Synod decided:

> To establish the "Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration (CCSC) Group," with accountability to the General Synod Council and funding through assessment, for an initial period of three years…
>
> (*MGS 2010*, R-42, p. 157)

Furthermore R-42 places with this group the following six responsibilities connected to the practice and accountability of theological education in the Reformed Church in America:

1. In consultation with the professorate, coordinate regular review of the standards, and propose needed revisions to the General Synod through the report of the GSC.
2. Facilitate appropriate resources, support, and sharing of best practices among congregations and classes in their discernment of the call of ministerial candidates and in their care of ministerial candidates in the ordination process.
3. Provide a forum for collaboration among the seminaries and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA) regarding ministerial formation as it relates to RCA church order and the mission of the church.
4. Assist the GSC in formulating and updating an ends statement that focuses the use of the assessment for theological education.
5. Assist the GSC in conducting a triennial review of the overall assessment for theological education, considering both the total amount and its division, in light of RCA church order and the mission of the church, as expressed through appropriate GSC ends statement(s).
6. Coordinate the evaluation of overall effectiveness of the seminaries and the MFCA in assisting candidates to meet the standards established by the RCA.

While the final report of this group is not due until 2013, the CCSC submits this interim report for two reasons. First, the CCSC requests two specific actions, one from the GSEC (the GSC in its role as the executive committee of the General Synod and one from the GSC (the General Synod Council). Second, this interim report is submitted in order to give the GSEC an account of the group's discussions about and progress toward its mandate.

Requests Requiring the Action of GSC/GSEC

1. **The CCSC requests the GSEC to direct the CCSC to propose to the GSEC a set of measurable goals for the theological education assessment, as a fulfillment of the request of R-41 and R-42.**

Rationale

The mandate from R-42 given to the CCSC was written as follows:

> Assist the GSC in formulating and updating an ends statement that focuses the use of the assessment for theological education.

While this statement originated from the Task Force on Care, Call, and Standards, the CCSC has since noted a number of issues regarding the wording of this mandate. First, the term "ends statement" is problematic. Since "end statements" have always been written by the GSC, it is unclear what role the CCSC would have in developing, or "assisting" in the development of one involving the assessment for theological education.

Additionally, there is a question regarding the interpretation of an "ends statement" for theological education. Currently, all "ends statements" are interpreted by the general secretary. The CCSC does not think that this is the most appropriate model for interpreting the effectiveness of our three agencies in their pursuit of meeting the standards for theological education. Therefore, the CCSC suggests that it develop a report containing a list of "measurable goals" for the assessment for theological education as a fulfillment of the request of R-41 and R-42. This report will also include the ongoing means by which these goals will be assessed and evaluated, as part of the agencies' interpretation of these goals. Finally, this report will identify how assessment funding will be tied to these goals.

Second, the CCSC understands that this report should go to the GSEC rather than the GSC. The seminaries and the MFCA are agents of the General Synod and report directly to the General Synod. Seminaries are a corporation in which the General Synod is the "sole member." Therefore it seems more prudent that the directive would come from, and be submitted to, the GSEC.

2. **The CCSC requests that the GSC convene a denominational conversation on the placement of our ministerial candidates. Such a conversation should pay particular attention to the participation/placement of women and of people of color.**

Rationale

The CCSC had a lengthy discussion on the care of candidates for ministry. Many candidates for ministry are finding calls simply through word of mouth or some other informal means. The CCSC proposes that a denominational discussion on the process of placement, especially for first-time ministerial candidates, would help develop a method that might "open doors" for a larger group of candidates.

Additionally, while the group was in agreement that all three of our agencies provide a welcoming environment for people from a variety of demographics, the same cannot be said for the placement of these candidates into meaningful professional ministry. Many women and minority candidates have been forced to wait extended periods of time to

receive a call, and others cannot find churches/organizations willing to hire them. The CCSC recommends a discussion specifically on this topic to find ways of caring for candidates who have been called to ministry and completed the requirements for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, but who do not have any means of fulfilling their vocation. Furthermore, this discussion would help the denomination in its journey to fulfill some aspects of "Our Call."

[Note: At its March 2011 meeting the GSC requested that RCA staff contact the RCA seminaries and the RCA's coordinator of pastoral services, Elaine Tetreault, to arrange a conversation with subcommittee members John Busman, Toni Macon, and Lisa Vander Wal (GSC members) in order to gain an understanding of the problems and concerns regarding placement of ministerial candidates and provide a report to the GSC at its October 2011 meeting.]

Synopsis of CCSC Discussion and Work to Date

The CCSC had a very productive discussion on a number of issues from our mandate, which included the following:

1. Standards for Theological Education

The mandate, from R-42:

> In consultation with the professorate, coordinate regular review of the standards, and propose needed revisions to the General Synod through the report of the GSC.
>
> Coordinate the evaluation of overall effectiveness of the seminaries and the MFCA in assisting candidates to meet the standards established by the RCA.

The group reviewed the current standards for the preparation for ministry in the Reformed Church in America, including a discussion concerning their origin and practice. It then had a broad discussion around the standards including whether our eight standards are the right standards, and if not, what is unnecessary and what is needed but not named; how those standards are applied and how they might be evaluated; and with whom the conversations about these questions (both the mandate and the questions we raised) could and should be held, especially including the professorate.

Preliminary conclusions and directions:

- We would want to ask the General Synod professorate to take the lead in the review of how we as a denomination are doing against the standards; that is, to coordinate an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the seminaries and the MFCA in assisting candidates to meet the standards established by the RCA. The final responsibility to do this work remains with the CCSC. However, we are asking the professorate to recommend a means for how we do this.
- We remain at this point a bit unsettled about how to engage the church and its officers around the standards themselves, that is, to coordinate regular review of the standards, whether they are the right standards, and any proposed revisions. This would also need to be done in consultation with the professorate as well as with a number of different partners, possibly including (but not limited to) classes and their care committees, elders, pastors, and students, perhaps with some kind of broad survey instrument.
- Consultations with the professorate could be helpful both in the initial formation of the questions and processes and then again in the examination of the data.
- These proposed directions suggest at least one meeting that would overlap with the meeting of the professorate.

2. Call and Care of Candidates

The mandate from R-42:

> Facilitate appropriate resources, support, and sharing of best practices among congregations and classes in their discernment of the call of ministerial candidates and in their care of ministerial candidates in the ordination process.

The committee reviewed past and ongoing efforts around issues of candidate call and care. We focused on the work with the classis student-care committees regarding their unique challenges and opportunities. This discussion included an anecdotal evaluation of last year's candidate-care committee event in Phoenix, attended by half of the classes. This event seemed by and large to be effective and productive. We also named the challenges and tensions inherent in the growing number of students approaching classes or MFCA who are well into their theological education or even hold an M.Div. and want to serve in the RCA (and usually immediately).

The CCSC also discussed the following issues:

- The need for making formational resources for both classes and candidates more available. Primarily, this could happen by developing clearer and more identifiable tabs/locations on the rca.org website. We are not asking here for significant new material but for reframed means of identification and access. This could be tasked to Phil Tanis and to Jennifer VanderMolen on the RCA staff, with direction from and consultation with Cor Kors and persons named from each of the seminaries.
- Regarding further means by which the three agencies might connect with the classes, and the classes with each other, we acknowledge the reality of no budget and the challenges that creates for organized and regular communication between the agencies and the classes.
- We want to continue to seek a strong level of uniformity and unity in our processes amid the responsibility of the individual classes, but not pursue any new single "cookie-cutter" approach.

The group had some discussion about how we as a denomination, especially in our classes, interact with potential students, clergy, and congregations coming into the RCA, and especially with persons of color and non-English-as-first-language speakers and the congregations they typically serve. In the RCA, we have in the past called this "gracious welcome." We see this as an important and ongoing issue for the RCA, but did not find it an issue for this table. We do wish, however, to communicate this discussion to Earl James, the staff person responsible for taking this issue forward.

3. Collaboration between the Seminaries and the MFCA

The mandate from R-42:

> Provide a forum for collaboration among the seminaries and the MFCA regarding ministerial formation as it relates to RCA church order and the mission of the church.

The CCSC discussed the need for more collaboration among the seminaries, the MFCA, and even the classes regarding ministerial formation. These discussions included:

- Website work. As noted above, there is a need for more "user friendly" webpages for both candidates and classis candidate care committees.

- Communication practices. A variety of methods for better communication were discussed. The CCSC brought up potential needs for better communication between the agents and the classes. This could happen through more standardized methods of communication between the agencies and classes. We also discussed the possibility of creating and hosting student portfolios.
- The group discussed the benefits of hosting events and/or creating ways for classes to communicate with each other and the agencies, similar to the successful event held in Phoenix in February 2010. This could be a forum in which the classes and agencies could communicate best practices.
- The creation of a denominational database for candidates. Within this, address issues related to needs of students (e.g. health insurance).
- The placement of graduates. The CCSC discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the current system. Particularly, we discussed the difficulty for women and people of color to find calls to ministry. From this discussion came the second recommendation to the GSC mentioned above.

The entire list of potential collaborative projects falls to the agencies (Western Theological Seminary: Tim Brown and Leanne VanDyk; New Brunswick Theological Seminary: Gregg Mast and Renee House; Ministerial Formation Certification Agency: Cor Kors, with staff person Ken Eriks). They met March 31, 2011, in Holland, Michigan, in advance of the spring meeting of the professorate, to discuss collaborative ideas.

4. Theological Assessments

The mandate from R-42:

> Assist the GSC in conducting a triennial review of the overall assessment for theological education, considering both the total amount and its division, in light of RCA church order and the mission of the church, as expressed through appropriate GSC ends statement(s).

The CCSC discussed two main ideas pertaining to the assessment for theological education. First, we discussed the rationale for dividing the assessments for theological education approved by the General Synod. Second, we discussed the need to determine how the amount of the overall assessment for theological education should be formulated.

Regarding a potential basic formula for dividing the assessment for theological education, we discussed an initial proposal that 70 percent of the total assessment funding would be divided evenly among the three agencies and perhaps tied to the measureable goals connected to the standards; that 20 percent would be allocated on a per student basis (phased in over five years, and at a fixed amount per student, based on petitions for certificates of fitness received; this overall amount could be increased if the total number of students increases); and that 10 percent would be allocated for collaborative and innovative projects.

Second, we discussed the need for the development of a clear rationale for the funding of theological education in general, and the overall level of the whole assessment amount in particular. It's one thing to divide an amount of money equitably; it's a very different thing to make the case for the size of that amount in the first place. And that the overall size of the amount is based in part on determining the cost of the certificate of fitness for ministry, which is most clearly and directly seen in the budget of the MFCA, whose sole business it is to help students obtain the certificate.

The basic rationale for assessment, we suggest, is not mission, but what we are *required* to do by the *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*). The *BCO* mandates the three agents to offer the certificate of fitness for ministry. That drives the largest portion of the assessment. It also places the certificate at a center place in the discussion of theological education and its funding. The MFCA budget is the clearest and most specific analysis of what it costs to deliver the certificate of fitness for ministry. Thus, the 70 percent of the assessment formula mentioned above is tied to the order of the RCA; the remaining 30 percent is tied to the mission of the RCA. And order and mission were specifically stated in our mandate.

5. Creation of Review Groups

In order to fulfill the mandate given to the CCSC in R-42, the CCSC has requested an academic standards review and created two subcommittees.

Academic Standards Review

The CCSC has requested that the General Synod professors take the primary responsibility for assessing how well candidates are fulfilling the standards necessary for the certificate of fitness for ministry. The first step for the professorate would be to propose to the CCSC a strategy for the assessment by the CCSC of the fulfillment of the standards by the ministerial candidates. Chad Pierce represented the CCSC group at a meeting of the professorate in Holland, Michigan, on April 1-2.

***BCO* Review Subcommittee**

The primary focus of this subcommittee will be to review the *BCO* regarding, among other things, the "division of labor" between the agencies and the classes. This subcommittee will also connect this review of the *BCO* with the review of academic standards. Gregg Mast will convene this committee, which will also include Kathleen Edwards-Chase and Lisa VanderWal.

Goals and Assessment Subcommittee

Using the discussions of the broader CCSC, this subcommittee will create a set of measurable goals for the theological education assessment. Additionally, this group will discuss the method used to determine the amount of assessment money the CCSC will request from General Synod for theological education. Jim Brownson will convene this subcommittee, which will also include Tim Brown, Cor Kors, Eddy Aleman, and Carol Jones.

6. Major Topics for Future Discussion

The CCSC named a number of important issues that could potentially be part of future agendas of the group. These include:

- New models for ministerial formation, enhancing accessibility, and context
- Exploring pastoral formation in languages other than English (especially Spanish and Korean)
- Exploring parameters for defining acceptable seminaries (and how this is tied to the *BCO* review)

Additionally, important questions were named at the Phoenix meeting of the Call, Care, and Standards Task Force and included in its 2010 report to the General Synod. This

report of the CCSC group includes a section of that report here in order to identify these items as issues we did not address at this meeting but still want to explore as the CCSC:

> This newly formed group shall focus its energies on those aspects of ministerial formation directly related to the General Synod and its responsibilities and mission, not infringing on those responsibilities given to the classes or consistories. While the task force does not have the authority to set an initial agenda for the group, it envisioned these possible questions and tasks, based on its broad conversations about the support and obstacles currently faced by persons seeking vocational call as ministers of Word and sacrament in the RCA:
>
> - Should RCA church order be changed to allow classes to receive candidates for ordination who are not yet members of an RCA congregation? If so, how?
> - How can the RCA provide a more gracious and faithful welcome to and equipping of licensed candidates and ordained ministers from other denominations who do not yet fully meet RCA requirements?
> - How can the seminaries and the MFCA collaborate in the mission of the RCA so as to inspire voluntary contributions toward ministerial formation?
> - How effectively are the processes of ministerial formation in the RCA nurturing a Reformed identity among candidates, and how can the RCA do even better?
> - Should the RCA develop a list of approved seminaries? If so, what steps should be taken?
> - How can RCA ministerial formation be more welcoming to women and ethnic minorities?
> - How can appropriate data be gathered on the needs and trends affecting ministerial formation and service in the life of the RCA in the present and in the future? Such areas might include projections on retirements and vacancies, ministerial effectiveness and satisfaction, rate of church planting, trends in racial and gender diversity in pastoral leadership, etc.
>
> (*MGS 2010*, p. 159)

7. Future Meetings

- Fall conference call: September 27, 2011, 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- (proposed) Phoenix, Arizona: January 23-25, 2012

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Pierce, chairperson, on behalf of the Call, Care, Standards, and Collaboration Group:

Eddy Aleman (MFCA)
Tim Brown (WTS)
Jim Brownson (WTS)
Kathleen Edwards-Chase (GSC)
John Coakley (NBTS)
Jeff Japinga (GSC)
Carol Jones (GSC)
Cor Kors (MFCA)
Gregg Mast (NBTS)
Lisa VanderWal (GSC)
Ken Eriks (staff)

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-46, p. 163, Commissioning and Ordaining of Undocumented Residents

To direct the General Synod Council to provide guidance for the assemblies, classes, and congregations of the RCA regarding commissioning and ordaining of undocumented residents of the United States and Canada to the offices of the church, and to report such findings to General Synod 2012.

Staff has begun the process of seeking background information and resources that may be relevant to the topic. This process includes the following:

1. Asking the moderator of the General Synod's Commission on Christian Action for references to any reports or studies that it may have done in the past that may be relevant to this topic.
2. Asking the RCA archivist for references to any reports or studies by any other General Synod commissions, task forces, or study groups that may be relevant to this topic.
3. Asking counsel for other denominations whether they or any formal body in the denomination they represent have engaged in any research or study that may be relevant to this topic.

In addition to the inquiry made of counsel to other denominations, staff also intends to review online resources of other denominations and religious organizations for additional relevant information.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-51, p. 166, Determining Assessments for Newly Organized Churches

> To direct the General Synod Council to adopt the following formula for determining assessments for newly organized churches: the classis shall be required to pay assessments based on a formula where newly organized churches will pay 20 percent of the full assessment amount the first year of organization, 40 percent in their second year, 60 percent in their third year, 80 percent in their fourth year, and 100 percent in subsequent years; and further, that the General Synod encourage regional synods and classes to apply the same formula when they calculate assessments to support ministries of those assemblies.

The implementation of this recommendation will begin with new churches that were organized after January 1, 2010. Staff from the Church Multiplication, General Synod, and Finance offices have coordinated the timing and flow of data so that new church plants in 2010 will be included in the assessment bills to be paid in 2012 and will be billed at 20 percent of the full assessment amount for the first year.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-57, pp. 180-181, Form a Peace and Justice in Israel and the Occupied Territories Working Group

> To instruct the General Synod Council, in consultation with the Commission on Christian Action and the Commission on Theology, to form a Peace and Justice in Israel and the Occupied Territories working group to develop resources and to suggest actions for the denomination, its congregations, and members for supporting Christians and others in the Middle East who are working for a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and to instruct the working group to make an initial report to General Synod 2011.

Interim Report of the Working Group on Peace and Justice in Israel and the Occupied Territories

The following people were appointed to the working group: John Paarlberg (moderator), Habeeb Awad, Joe Chahine, John Hubers, Hank Lay, Carol Luidens, Gloria McCanna, Henry Mikhail, Marlin Vis, Sally Vis, Duncan Hanson (staff).

Since October the group has been meeting by conference call every other week, gathering information on the situation in Israel and the West Bank, along with information and resources from other North American Protestant denominations. A diverse group of resource people have been or will be asked to participate in the conference calls, among them:

- The Middle East director for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), who has been part of implementing the ELCA's Palestine initiative, the "Peace Not Walls" campaign
- The coordinator for the Presbyterian (PCUSA) Church's Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the staff for the group that developed the recent PCUSA policy statement on Israel/Palestine
- A Jewish rabbi and a Jewish layperson, each of whom has distinct points of view on the future of Israel/Palestine
- Palestinian Christian representatives from the Sabeel Center in Jerusalem and Holy Land Trust in Bethlehem

We have also been listening to stories:

> Daoud Nassar, a Palestinian Christian, lives with his family on one hundred acres of fertile land west of Bethlehem. His grandfather bought the land in 1916, and the Nassar family has farmed there ever since, growing olives, almonds, grapes, pears, and figs. In 1991, Daoud Nassar learned that the Israeli authorities were planning to confiscate three-quarters of his land—a practice that is illegal under international law, but nonetheless widespread on the West Bank.
>
> Since then, the family has been locked in a costly legal battle with the Israeli government, despite possessing all the land registration documents and other paperwork necessary to prove their ownership of the land.
>
> The Nassar farm is part of a parcel of land that includes eight nearby Palestinian farming villages; Israeli authorities hope to annex this land in order to expand the Gush Etzion settlements, whose population is around 50,000.
>
> The Nassar farm is already surrounded by Israeli settlements; like many Palestinians, the Nassars have endured harassment, threats, and attacks from nearby settlers. In one such attack, Daoud Nassar's mother was threatened with a gun. In another, settlers uprooted 250 olive trees from the property.
>
> It is acts like this, Nassar says, that can easily fuel violence among Palestinians. For many others, the only possible options seem to be to resign themselves to the situation or to emigrate.
>
> But rather than respond to these attacks with more violence or to sell the land and emigrate, the Nassar family decided there should be another option. On a stone next to the front gate of the farm are the words "We Will Not Be Enemies." They established on their land a project called the "Tent of Nations," with the aim of building bridges between people of different backgrounds, and between people and land.

"We wanted to move away from a circle of blame, and channel our frustration into something positive," Daoud Nassar said. He invited children—both Palestinian and Israeli—to come to summer camps and work with each other on the land. They do arts and crafts together and learn that they can shape their own futures. Daoud says he is trying "to invest in the new generations… We have to act, not for our sake, but for the sake of the next generation."

For the past twenty years the family has been locked in a costly legal battle with the Israeli government, and has endured harassment and acts of vandalism by people from the nearby settlements. Recently the Israeli government issued demolition orders for several of the structures on the farm. Currently the demolition order is under appeal and awaiting a hearing by the Israeli Supreme Court.

Within the body of Christ all the members are to "have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it" (1 Co. 12:25-26).

How will members of the Reformed Church in America care for the Nassar family and other Palestinian Christians and suffer together with them?

In the South Hebron Hills of the West Bank children from the small village of Tuba walk to school in the neighboring village of At-Tuwani. The route to the school takes them past the Israeli settlement outpost of Havat Ma'on. (According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Hague Regulations, the International Court of Justice, and several United Nations resolutions, all Israeli settlements and outposts in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are illegal. Most settlement outposts, including Havat Ma'on, are considered illegal also under Israeli law.)

Since 2001, settlers have routinely attacked the children on their journey to and from school. In November 2004 Israeli authorities established a daily military escort for the children. Despite the escort the children continue to be victims of violence. At times the soldiers comprising the escort fail to protect the children. They frequently arrive late, causing the children to wait, sometimes for hours, before and after school. In addition, the soldiers regularly fail to provide a complete escort of the children, almost always leaving the children to walk unescorted beside settlement buildings in an area where settlers have attacked them.

The military escort offers only partial protection, but without it many of the children would not attend school at all. Alternative routes to the school take up to two hours by foot through a rocky, hilly landscape. Children and their relatives have been attacked by settlers on these longer paths to school as well. A perilous situation continues: each day the schoolchildren of Tuba must choose whether to walk to school and potentially face violence on their journey, or give up their opportunity for education.

"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me…Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones" (Matthew 18:5, 10).

How will members of the Reformed Church in America take care that these children are not harassed and despised?

Rami Elchanan is a Jewish Israeli citizen, a seventh generation Jerusalemite, and a graphic designer. He saw combat as a soldier in the Sinai during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Ten years later, on Yom Kippur evening, his daughter was born in

Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital. Rami and his wife Nurit named the baby Smadar (from the Song of Solomon, meaning "The Grape of Vine"). In September 1997 on the first day of the school year, a few days before Yom Kippur, Smadar and her friends went to Ben Yehuda Street in Jerusalem to buy books for the new school year. There two Palestinian suicide bombers killed five people that day, among them three girls aged 14. Smadar was one of them.

The mourners at her funeral represented a mosaic of Israeli and Palestinian society—Jews and Arabs, left- and right-wingers, religious and secular people, representatives of the settlers in the Occupied Territories and personal representatives of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat.

After the seven-day morning period and feeling alone in grief, Rami asked himself: "What's next? Where do you go from here? Where do you direct this new and terrible pain, this unknown and intolerable ache? What do you do with the rest of your life when suddenly you have become a completely different person?"

"There are only two options," said Rami. "The first is obvious, automatic, and immediate. When someone murders your fourteen-year-old little daughter, the one and only thing you have in your head is unlimited anger and an urge for revenge that is stronger than death. This is a natural feeling; it's only human. But when the first madness of anger passes, you begin to ask yourself penetrating questions: If I kill someone in revenge, will that bring my baby back to me? And if I cause someone pain, will that ease my own pain? And the answer is absolutely 'No.' Then, during a long and slow, difficult, and painful process you gradually reach the other road, and you try to understand: What occurred here? What can drive someone to such anger and despair as to be willing to blow himself up together with little girls? And most important: What can you, personally, do to prevent this intolerable suffering from afflicting other lives?"

Rami has joined with others in an organization called "Bereaved Families Supporting Peace, Reconciliation & Tolerance." It is an organization composed of Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Muslims who have experienced terrible loss and pain. They also share a message of hope: "This conflict does not have to continue. Our children need not suffer and die. We can and must stop this vicious circle of violence, murder and retaliation, revenge and punishment."

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers'" (Psalm 122:6-7).

How will members of the Reformed Church in America pray for the peace and security of all who love Jerusalem?

It is the task of the working group to develop resources and suggest actions to help members of the Reformed Church respond concretely to these and similar situations affecting the lives of people in Israel and the Occupied Territories. We welcome suggestions and comments. They may be sent to the moderator, John Paarlberg (johnpaarlberg@verizon.net). We anticipate presenting a full report with recommendations to the General Synod of 2012.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-58, p. 182, Expand RCA Mission Partnerships with Haitian Churches

> To direct the General Synod Council, through its Global Mission program, and in conjunction with the Iglesia Reformada Dominicana, to explore and implement an expansion of Reformed Church in America mission partnerships with Haitian churches, Haitian organizations, and other ecumenical partners, which focus on responding to the devastation from the 2010 earthquake and equipping congregations and church leaders with knowledge, skills, and tools to build community, overcome poverty, and protect orphans with report to the General Synod of 2011.

The directive of General Synod's R-58 has been implemented. The RCA's partnership with Church World Service allowed Global Mission to channel $500,000 to relief and development work. The partnership with Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) allowed another $250,000 to be applied to long-term development in Haiti. Global Mission was instructed to work in conjunction with the Iglesia Reformada Dominicana (Dominican Reformed Church, or IRD), and $36,942 was channeled through them. The IRD purchased food and water with this money and distributed it to their partners and contacts in Haiti. Pastors identified by the IRD were contacted and introduced to the network of ministries of the Christian Reformed Church, which include the Christian Reformed Church in Haiti, the CRC's World Mission program, CRWRC, and Sous Espwa, which serves as the clearing house for six ministry areas.

Global Mission is entering into a covenantal relationship with Sous Espwa, and RCWS is committing an additional $40,000 to help Sous Espwa provide micro loans to pastors that had been identified as partners with the IRD in Haiti, fund a diaconal program for practical ministries through the Reformed network, and support a reforestation program as a visible expression of our concern for creation. Haitian pastors that relate to the IRD have been invited to participate in training conferences, as well as other services provided by Sous Espwa. As Sous Espwa continues to reach other communities, RCWS is waiting for word on other funding proposals, especially the ones reaching people with HIV as well as orphan care.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-61, p. 182, Develop Ministry Teams to Champion Multiracial Future Freed from Racism

> To urge the RCA's regional synods, classes, and consistories, the theological seminaries, the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA), and affiliated colleges to develop ongoing ministry teams that champion for them the values, goals, activities, and relationships needed to become more multiracial and freer from racism; and further, to direct the General Synod Council to develop and/or identify suitable resources for the development of such teams and collaborate with synods, classes, theological seminaries, the MFCA, and affiliated colleges interested in exploring, initiating, and empowering such teams in their respective areas.

In response to R-61 the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice:

- Has developed tools and resources that can assist in the development of teams.
- Has requested information from regional synods, RCA colleges, and RCA seminaries about the current status of such ongoing teams. The office has received reports from both seminaries, two of the colleges, and seven of the regional synods. Both seminaries have teams, as do one college and one synod. Several synods have potential and interest for teams, and one is actively exploring the creation of a team. One classis has a team with which the office is actively engaged; another classis recently

established a team for which the office led a retreat regarding its formation; a third classis is in the early exploration stage. At least four congregations have teams which the office has assisted in various ways.
- Collaborates with the New Brunswick Seminary's Anti-Racism Transformation Team on a project about the Belhar Confession. The project involves creating a DVD of videotaped panel discussions on "Belhar and Anti-Racism," "Belhar and Everyday Life," and "Belhar and the Legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr." The video will be available on the RCA and seminary websites; individuals, families, congregations, assemblies, and educational classes will be encouraged to use the product.

The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice will follow up by:
- Supporting existing regional synod and classis ministry teams.
- Continuing to engage regional synods and classes.
- Providing support to regional synods and classes that request assistance with establishing a team.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-62, p. 183, Identify and Encourage Use of Resources for Anti-Racism Training

To direct the General Synod Council to assist interested regional synods, classes, congregations, theological seminaries, the MFCA, and affiliated colleges in the development and/or identification of suitable resources for anti-racism training; and further, to urge all RCA classes, regional synods, congregations, theological seminaries, the MFCA, and affiliated colleges to participate in anti-racism training.

In response to R-62 the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice:
- Requested of regional synods, colleges, and seminaries their interest in going forward with this matter.
- Assists RCA colleges and seminaries through various means.
- Collaborates with Western Theological Seminary with two Journey two-year learning communities, one comprised of seven pastors from around the U.S. and Canada with members of their congregations attending some sessions, and the other comprised of twenty-five people from eight Great Lakes Synod congregations.
- Supports the Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics by participating in its active and engaged Multicultural Ministry Team, which is providing training in the region.
- Assists the Regional Synod of the Heartland with planning its Hispanic-oriented Sankofa journey.

Note: New Brunswick Theological Seminary, constitutionally an intercultural educational institution committed to anti-racism, offers a number of anti-racism training experiences.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-64, p. 183, Study Efforts to Restore Relationships with Native Peoples

To direct the General Synod Council to study and explore what other denominations are doing in current ministries to rectify harm done in and among Native American and First Nations people, and to implement appropriate recommendations in consultation with the Native American/First Nations Task Force. The study should focus on:
1. Reconciliation efforts undertaken.
2. Efforts Native American and First Nations people identify as restorative, blessing, and beneficial.

The work on this matter is being undertaken by the R-39 task force described above.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-66, p. 207, Urge Classes to Support Congregational Revitalization

To urge each classis to:

1. Partner with its congregations to develop intentional revitalization goals appropriate to specific ministry contexts, grounded in the three dimensions of the Great Commandment and Great Commission: our love for God, our love for neighbor (missional impact), and our commitment to making and nurturing disciples;
2. Engage and support at least 25 percent of its congregations in a specific commitment to become revitalizing churches;
3. Share stories of revitalization and missional impact with the wider church through the General Synod Council; and further,

to instruct the General Synod Council to provide opportunities for collaborative learning and to include information on the classes' progress toward these goals in *RCA Today*, the RCA website, and its annual report to General Synod during the last three years of Our Call, 2011, 2012, and 2013.

Congregational Mission staff has offered help to classes to assist with this request through:

- A series of webinars, developed by Rodger Price with participation by others, that is designed to encourage mutual learning and sharing of resources among classes. Three webinars were held in January 2011, which a total of twenty-eight people attended.
- A letter from Ken Bradsell, Rodger Price, and Vicky Menning to stated clerks.
- A letter from the general secretary to General Synod delegates and classis officers.
- Phone calls to stated clerks.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-71, p. 272, Insurance and Covenant of Care Premiums Forgiveness

To direct the Board of Benefits Services to continue to honor requests for premium forgiveness until December 31, 2010, for churches that are current in their premium payments or "Covenant of Care" premiums for calendar year 2010 but continue to owe these payments for the period ending December 31, 2009; and further, to prepare an incentive program within the financial ability of the Board of Benefits Services that would reduce the cost of medical insurance premiums beginning in 2011 for those churches and ministers in classes that demonstrate 100 percent faithfulness to the constitutional requirements of participation in RCA medical insurance or the payment of the "Covenant of Care" premium, and all retired ministers including those in classes in non-compliance; and further, to increase the assessment of those classes in which consistories that as of December 31, 2010, are in arrears in the payment of premiums for the benefits required in Formulary #5 (Call to a Minister of Word and Sacrament) or the payment of the "Covenant of Care" premium for all of its ministers serving full-time in congregations under call or contract, unless the minister is covered through the Canadian health care plan, with one-third of the arrears assessment due by May 31 in each of the subsequent three years.

This report is found in the Board of Benefits Services section on pages 212-236.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-72, p. 273, Offer Wellness Incentive Programs

To encourage the Board of Benefits Services, within its financial ability, to continue to offer "wellness" incentive programs for its participants in the RCA health insurance

plan or paying the Covenant of Care premium.

This report is found in the Board of Benefits Services section on pages 212-236.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-73, p. 273, Review RCA Insurance Plan

To instruct the Board of Benefits Services to engage in a comprehensive review of the current RCA insurance plan in light of the new health care legislation adopted by the U.S. Congress, to adjust the RCA plan as may be necessary and beneficial for plan participants, and to report to General Synod annually on the impact of this legislation on the RCA's group medical plan.

This report is found in the Board of Benefits Services section on pages 212-236.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-75, p. 296, Assess Insurance Costs

To direct the Board of Benefits Services to continue its financial assessment on the cost of various levels of insurance for RCA participants including investigating the viability of a less comprehensive coverage plan that would meet basic health care needs, and present a report with supporting data to General Synod 2011.

This report is found in the Board of Benefits Services section on pages 212-236.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-76, p. 296, Explore Potential Health Care Partnerships

To direct the Board of Benefits Services to explore potential partnerships with other forms of health care plans as an avenue to improving health care value; and further, to make available the paper "Witnessing to the Incarnation of a Covenant of Compassion: The Church and the U.S. Health Care System."

This report is found in the Board of Benefits Services section on pages 212-236.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-78, p. 300, Form Discipleship Growth Strategies Task Force

To instruct the General Synod Council to form a task force that will include in its discussions discipleship, revitalization, and multiplication as they relate to exploring strategies for discipleship growth in our new and existing churches.

In response to the General Synod's action the GSC instructed the Discipleship Office to coordinate a conversation with staff and constituents representing revitalization, multiplication, and discipleship with the hope of further exploring strategies for discipleship growth in new and existing churches. The Discipleship Office staff has had conversations with both Revitalization Office and Multiplication Office staff on how to be more effective in creating discipleship opportunities for both new and existing churches. Some strategies are being explored and being shared with the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education. In lieu of the GSC funding a task force, this is being accomplished via conference calls and staff meetings.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-81, p. 312, Create Belhar Implementation Team

To instruct the General Synod Council, in partnership with the Commission on Christian Unity and other appropriate commissions, to create a Belhar Implementation Team, for a minimum of three years, to assist the Reformed Church in America and its

congregations in the reception of the Belhar Confession into the life and witness of the RCA; and further, to focus the mandate of this team on two key areas—first, on the development of resources and other practices to assist congregations, classes, and the denomination as a whole in the adoption and use of the Belhar Confession; and secondly, on the implications of the adoption of the Belhar Confession for all six elements of Our Call, for the current work of RCA staff in implementing Our Call, and for the development of a new ten-year goal for the RCA; and further, to ensure that this team reports annually to the General Synod on its work and on the fulfillment of these goals.

Report from the Belhar Implementation Task Force

The Belhar Implementation Task Force gathered for its first meeting February 17-18, 2011, at the Hampton Inn–LaGuardia in Flushing, New York. Attendees were Mitchell Kinsinger, moderator of the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education; Adriene Thorne-St. Rose, member of the Commission on Christian Worship; Justin Meyers, GSC representative; Gregory Town, GSC representative; Stacey Midge, member of the Commission for Women; Jessica Kast-Keat, representative of the Commission on Christian Action; Norma Coleman James, representative of the Commission on Christian Unity; and Kenita Harris, staff.

The task force began its work with members sharing their perspectives on and experiences with the Belhar Confession. Powerful stories of the Belhar's use along with strong affirmations of its gospel themes of unity, reconciliation, and justice energized us for our work for this important work for the church. After a strong session of brainstorming, we agreed to a three-fold approach to our work. Because liturgy is the work of the people we have chosen to structure our work following the three-fold order of worship: Approach, Word, and Response.

Furthermore, we believe that this structure is also a way for the church to conceive of the Belhar's reception into its life and witness. Following our Reformed principle of *reformata et semper reformanda, secunda verbum dei*—reformed and always reforming according to the word of God—we believe that the Belhar is only as strong as it issues the call on the church to continue to reform according to God's word. Thus we have shaped our and the church's work as consisting of three "re-" words: reform, reconfessionalize, and respond.

Reform: Reform the ministries and practices of Our Call according to the gospel as emphasized by the Belhar. The task force generated a preliminary list of possible directions for each Our Call area.

Reconfessionalize: While the members of the task force have some desire to reclaim the importance of all four RCA standards in the life, mission, and ministry of the church, we have only been given the task of implementation of the Belhar Confession. Nevertheless, we feel we cannot encourage the church's use of the Belhar without an appreciation of our confessional nature. Thus it is our intention to explore what it means to be confessional in the twenty-first century in order to widen our understandings and commitments. To this end, we call the church's attention to the Commission on Theology's report to General Synod in 2009: "Belhar and 'Our Call': Theological Reflections on the Implications of a New RCA Confession for the Identity and Direction of the RCA as a Denomination" (*MGS 2009*, pp. 315ff).

Respond: In response to our "reform" and "reconfessionalization," we respond with resources and ministry models according to the gospel as emphasized by the Belhar. We will be exploring and soliciting ways that the Belhar can shape how we revitalize and start churches. Our "responding" should emerge out of our corporate life together. We are facilitators, not experts, and we ask the greater church for input in understanding how the Belhar Confession reaches into congregational as well as everyday life.

Initial Recommendations

The Belhar Implementation Task Force strongly urges the GSC to ask the General Synod to assign Communication and Production Services to:

1. Develop and implement a new marketing plan that encourages congregations to creatively use *Unity, Reconciliation, and Justice: A Study Guide for the Belhar Confession*.
2. Prepare a report on the how congregations are using *Unity, Reconciliation, and Justice: A Study Guide for the Belhar Confession* as result of the marketing plan, and forward its report to GSC, with a copy to the Belhar Implementation Task Force, for its October 2011 meeting.

The task force also urges the GSC to incorporate questions within the annual Consistorial Report Form that are shaped by the elements of unity, justice, and reconciliation. (This is, in part, to provide examples and illustrations of the ways churches are incorporating the Belhar into their ministries.)

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-87, p. 334, Relationship of the GSC and the Racial/Ethnic Councils as Defined in *BCO*

To direct General Synod Council to complete by November of each year through 2015 a written annual report that evaluates the status of the General Synod Council's relationship with the racial/ethnic councils against the mandate of the Bylaws of the General Synod (*Book of Church Order* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 2b) and includes in that evaluation the General Synod Council's plan for the coming year for improving through the councils its access to the collective vision and voice of RCA racial and ethnic congregants and congregations; and to forward this report to the Commission on Race and Ethnicity each year.

Currently the three racial-ethnic councils prepare and forward in February or March of each year reports to General Synod Council for inclusion in its report to General Synod. Typically, the reports identify the council's activities of the year. Also typically, to our knowledge, General Synod Council has not requested in those reports information specific to Article 3, Section 2b.

Unlike all other General Synod Council advisory committees, the councils have not been asked to report on needed governance decisions. Neither has any person been assigned to report.

October 2010 Educational Event

On October 1, 2010, Kenneth Bradsell, director of Operations and Support and assistant secretary, and Earl James, coordinator of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice, facilitated an educational event for members of the racial-ethnic councils' executive committees and the General Synod Council's racial-ethnic executives. Results of the event include:

- Ensured event participants understood the requirements of Article 3, Section 2b.
- Highlighted the history of and reasons for aligning the councils to the General Synod Council.
- Reviewed the structural relationship of the councils to the GSC since the GSC's transition to a Policy Governance Board (the role/responsibility of the GSC, the role/responsibility of each council, and the lines of accountability).
- Reviewed the role/relationship of GSC staff assigned to work with the councils and their responsibility/accountability.
- Reviewed assignments of the 2010 General Synod to the General Synod Council.
- Affirmed three critical mechanisms for implementing Article 3, Section 2b.

Earl James, coordinator of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice, will facilitate the ongoing process of assisting councils in implementing their rights and responsibilities under Article 3, Section 2b. Kenneth Bradsell will continue to work with Earl James and the GSC on the GSC's role/responsibility for and in relationship to the councils.

The General Synod Council has clarified its expectations of the racial/ethnic councils and implemented methods to align GSC's expectations and reporting by councils with the requirements of Article 3, Section 2b. The General Synod Council appointed a committee comprised of JoAnna Lougin, Justin Meyer, and Jeff Peterson to develop this goal.

The councils have increased their capacities to gather input from their constituents and develop creative methods for delivering advice to the General Synod Council.

At the October 2010 meeting of the GSC, members were asked to review Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3 (General Synod Council), Section 2 (Composition), Paragraph a, and to consider requesting the Commission on Church Order to reword the last sentence to read: "…and shall obtain nominees from each racial and ethnic council" or such other suitable language that brings into GSC membership a designated representative from each of the racial/ethnic councils.

At the end of February the council chairs and staff assigned to support the councils met with representatives of the General Synod Council and assigned staff to consider additional steps in strengthening the relationship of the GSC with its racial/ethnic councils. The representatives reviewed proposed changes to the Bylaws of the General Synod that would: a) serve to better ensure representation on the GSC from each of the racial/ethnic councils; b) delete language from the current bylaws that all agreed serve no purpose. The proposed changes were presented to the GSC at its March 2011 meeting. The GSC recommends to the General Synod:

R-14
To adopt the following revision to the Book of Church Order, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Sec. 2.a for approval by the synod and to be voted for ratification at the 2012 General Synod (additions are underlined, deletions stricken out):

a. One-half of the membership of the ~~council~~ General Synod Council (GSC) shall be elders and one-half shall be ministers and not less than one-third of the membership shall be women. The Commission on Nominations shall assure the composition of the council reflects the full diversity of the church and shall ~~obtain recommendations from each racial and ethnic council.~~ assure representation from each of the racial/ethnic councils on the GSC. When a racial/ethnic coun-

cil will not be represented on the GSC in the next term, the racial/ethnic council representing the missing council shall submit no less than three recommendations to the Commission on Nominations for use in nominating regular classical delegates or at-large delegates to the GSC.

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance was:

R-15
To refer R-14 to the Commission on Church Order in consultation with both the General Synod Council and the Commission on Nominations for report to the 2012 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

1. Although the moderators provided input, there was not time or opportunity for the Commission on Church Order or the Commission on Nominations to meet as full commissions to provide input on this change.
2. Representation on the GSC is a complex and multi-sided affair that requires careful and thoughtful review.

R-16
To adopt the following revision to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Sec. 2.b for approval by the synod and to be voted for ratification at the 2012 General Synod (additions are underlined, deletions stricken out):

b. The General Synod Council shall have racial/ethnic councils~~. The racial/ethnic councils are constitutional bodies of the Reformed Church in America~~ which express the collective vision and voice of racial and ethnic congregants and congregations as they develop ministries and advocate for policies of racial and ethnic inclusion, economic, social, and racial justice, both within the Reformed Church in America and ecumenically. (ADOPTED)

Plan through September 2011

By September, the following three mechanisms for implementing Article 3, Section 2b will be developed:

- Annual informational event to occur as soon as possible after General Synod to educate councils on the mission and ministry matters referred to the General Synod Council.
- Implementation of communication strategies for councils to gather input from their constituents regarding General Synod referrals.
- Delivery of advice by councils to the General Synod Council.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-89, p. 337, Task Force on Understanding White Privilege

To direct the General Synod Council to establish a task force that develops a series of discipleship resources and experiences that are educational, transformational, and incarnational such that people understand white privilege and its effects in our lives, and become equipped to live from self and Christian identities that are freed from the harmful and hurtful effects of white privilege; and further, to comprise the task force of twelve members including two from the Commission on Race and Ethnicity, two from

the Commission on Christian Education and Discipleship [now the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education], one from each racial/ethnic council, two experts in creating discipleship resources, and three persons not from these groups who are passionate about and committed to this assignment. The task force is to be multigenerational and include equivalent numbers of men and women; and further, the task force shall be of two years duration and forward to General Synod 2012 its final report, to include at minimum the following:

1. A compendium of recommended resources and experiences.
2. A series of transformational experiences that feature a) cultural dislocation (moving outside one's comfort zone in order to see with new eyes), b) partnership across cultures (learning in trans-racial and/or intercultural relationships, and c) actionable projects (to actually "join the journey" in dismantling racism and white privilege as opposed to mere thinking and discussing it); and further, that the General Synod Council provide funds sufficient for this task force to complete its work.

The R-89 Task Force on Understanding White Privilege members were approved by GSC on February 8, 2011. The task force planned an initial meeting for March or April 2011. Grace Biskie is chairing the task force. The other members are Scott Nyp, Jim Daniels, Holly Schut, Kevin McMahan, Oliver Patterson, Joanna Chen, Pedro Agudelo, Lisa Tait, Dave Biskie, Gerri Yoshida, and Nellie Rodriguez-Windsor. The staff person is Jay Harsevoort.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-91, p. 340, Critique the Effects of White Privilege

To direct the General Synod Council and the Commission on Race and Ethnicity to study and critique the effects of white privilege in the processes and operations used and decisions made by General Synod and General Synod Council.

At its October 2010 meeting the GSC voted "to resubmit R-91 to General Synod 2011 with a request that a budget be applied to the recommendation so that the appropriate work can be completed" (GSC 10-32). At its March 2011 meeting the GSC revisited its October action noting that its intent in October 2010 was to resubmit a defeated recommendation (*MGS 2010*, R-90) that specified the membership and other particulars for implementing the study adopted in R-91. It noted in March that no resubmission was necessary because the General Synod had not prescribed the way in which the GSC and the commission would carry out the study requested in R-91. Further, the GSC was informed that sufficient funds could be allocated in FY 2012 to implement the study through the appointment of a GSC task force. The GSC intends to implement R-91 no later than the fall of 2011 in cooperation with the Commission on Race and Ethnicity.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-92, p. 360, Distribute "Exploring Mission as a Fourth Mark of the Church"

To distribute the paper "Exploring Mission as a Fourth Mark of the Church" for study and use in the RCA.

The paper is available at http://images.rca.org/docs/synod/ExploringMissionAs4thMark.pdf. It was promoted through the November/December resource packet and included in the September News and Resources email to churches and ministers.

Response to *MGS 2010,* R-93, p. 374, Distribute "Christian Presence and Witness among Muslims: Opportunities and Challenges"

To distribute the paper "Christian Presence and Witness among Muslims: Opportunities and Challenges," for study and use in the RCA.

The paper is available at http://images.rca.org/docs/synod/ChristianPresenceAmongMuslims.pdf. It was promoted through the November/December resource packet and included in the September News and Resources email to churches and ministers.

GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO GENERAL SYNOD 2009 REFERRAL

Response to *MGS 2009*, R-54, p. 237, Continuing Conversations on Homosexuality

To affirm the value of continued dialogue and discernment on the topic of homosexuality within the church, to state that our dialogical and discerning work is not done, and that legislative and judicial steps are not a preferred course of action at this time; and further, recognizing the appropriate authority of assemblies, to encourage assemblies, when possible, to refrain from disciplinary proceedings as a way of dealing with minority viewpoints on this controversial issue, to be monitored by the GSC, for report to the 2011 General Synod; and further, to recommend that officeholders and ministers avoid actions in violation of the policies of the earlier statements of General Synod on ordination and relevant state laws on marriage, with sensitivity to the pastoral needs of all involved.

General Synod 2009 approved R-54 in response to the ending of the formal denomination-wide dialogue on homosexuality. While the formal dialogue has concluded, conversations continue throughout the church in a wide variety of contexts. The material developed for the dialogue process remains available at www.rca.org/dialogmanual, and the General Synod Council commends this material to the church as a helpful aid for continuing these important conversations.

Additionally, the GSC is pleased to report that assemblies are heeding the encouragement of General Synod 2009 and are refraining from disciplinary proceedings regarding minority viewpoints on homosexuality.

PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF THE STATISTICAL REPORT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA FOR THE YEAR ENDING 12/31/2010

	2008	2009	2010	2009-2010 Increase or (Decrease)
1. Churches	933	935	924	(11)
2. Church Households	104,774	101,623	99,419	(2,204)
3. Confessing Members	161,272	158,529	155,622	(2,907)
4. Inactive Members	39,545	40,122	40,507	385
5. Baptized Members	59,303	57,627	54,990	(2,637)
6. Total Membership	260,120	256,278	251,119	(5,159)
7. Adherents	51,448	54,158	52,448	(1,710)
8. Average Worship Attendance	176	166	163	(3)
9. Received on Confession	6,536	6,673	6,291	(382)

10.	Received on Certificate	2,977	2,981	2,644	(337)
11.	Transferred	2,930	2,650	2,412	(238)
12.	Deceased	2,711	2,499	2,536	37
13.	Other Removals from Roll	5,816	5,118	6,034	916
14.	Infants Baptized	3,141	3,087	3,069	(18)
15.	Adults Baptized	1,476	1,770	1,526	(244)
19a.	RCA Assessments	12,535,989	12,676,910	12,761,136	84,226
19b.	RCA Contributions	15,005,604	12,085,997	12,029,310	(56,687)
19c.	Other Contributions	20,132,770	19,459,695	21,403,951	1,944,256
20.	Congregational Purposes	289,315,922	263,988,246	263,543,209	(445,037)

Church Plants with a Denominational Plan
There are 160 church plants with a denominational plan on file. Of those reporting, the average worship attendance is 83.

Organized/Received/Adopted
Home Church Fraser Valley, Langley, British Columbia (2/10) Classis of British Columbia
New Hope Community Church, Shelby, Michigan (2/10) Classis of Northern Michigan
Vanguard Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan (6/10) Classis of Southwest Michigan
The Branch, Grand Rapids, Michigan (2/10) Classis of South Grand Rapids

Disbanded/Released
First Reformed Church, Amsterdam, New York (10/08) Classis of Schoharie
First Reformed Church, Monroe, South Dakota (1/10) Classis of South Dakota
Faith Reformed Church, Portage, Michigan (2/10) Classis of Southwest Michighan
First Reformed Church of Kew Gardens, Kew Gardens, New York (3/10) Classis of Queens
Miraloma Community Church, San Francisco, California (3/10) Classis of Central California
Belleville Reformed Church, Belleville, New Jersey (4/10) Classis of Passaic Valley
Christ Community Church, Utica, New York (4/10) Classis of Montgomery
First Reformed Church, Union City, New Jersey (6/10) Classis of Greater Palisades
DaSom Korean Reformed Church, Long Beach, California (10/10) Classis of California
Springford Reformed Church, Springford, Ontario (10/10) Classis of Ontario
Maitland Community Reformed Church, Maitland, Ontario (11/10) Classis of Ontario
Within Reach Ministries, Kalamazoo, Michigan (12/10) Classis of Southwest Michigan
Hope Community Church, Scottsdale, Arizona (12/10) Classis of the Southwest
Woodbourne Reformed Church, Woodbourne, New York (12/10) Classis of Orange

Merged
United Reformed Church, Somerville, New Jersey and Third Reformed Church, Raritan, New Jersey became United Reformed Church, Somerville, New Jersey (6/10) Classis of Delaware-Raritan.
The Classis of Illiana and the Classis of Florida became the Classis of Illiana.

Resolutions for Retiring Staff and in Memoriam

David Dethmers

David Dethmers retired in June 2010 after more than eleven years of service with the Reformed Church in America. David served Global Mission as mission supervisor for

Europe and as coordinator for mutual mission, volunteer services, mission resources, Reformed Church World Service, diaconal ministries, and hunger education. His gifts as a planner, coordinator, wordsmith, and consultant were invaluable to the whole staff. David was instrumental in helping Global Mission communicate with the church while staying engaged with global partners and ecumenical agencies.

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, in the year of our Lord 2011, offers praise and thanks to God for David's eleven years of service to the whole church as a pastor, colleague, friend, denominational executive, mission supervisor, and most of all, as a child of God's redemption; and

be it further resolved that the two hundred fifth regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, on behalf of the Reformed Church in America, expresses to David and Anna Dethmers its gratitude, admiration, and affection and offers its prayers for years of health, love, and joy in continuing service to Christ and his church.

Mary Hondorp and Zulay Mann

Two administrative assistants retired in 2010: Mary Hondorp, who served the Reformed Church in America for nine years, and Zulay Mann, who served for fourteen years. Global Mission staff enjoyed working with these two women, whose gifts, personality, and commitment to the church and her Lord were celebrated and affirmed. Both were instrumental in resourcing RCA congregations while working closely with their supervisors to address the needs and challenges of the global church.

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, in the year of our Lord 2011, offers thanks to God for Mary Hondorp and Zulay Mann, for their gifts of administration, their love for the work of Global Mission, their desire to use their gifts in service to the Lord, and their hope that through their work in supporting missionaries others would come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and

be it further resolved that the two hundred fifth regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, on behalf of the Reformed Church in America, expresses to Mary Hondorp and Zulay Mann its gratitude, admiration, and affection and offers its prayers for years of health, love, and joy in continuing service to Christ and his church.

Vicky Menning

In 2003—after serving as a congregational leader at Covenant Community Church in Muskegon Heights, Michigan, and as copastor and then senior pastor at Trinity Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, contributing to congregational transformation and community impact in both places—Vicky Menning joined the RCA staff part-time, serving in a partnership among the RCA, Western Theological Seminary's Journey Center for the Church's Learning, and the Synod of the Great Lakes. During those years of service Vicky helped forge many collaborative relationships that bear fruit today. Since 2006 she has focused her vocational and ministry efforts as the RCA's coordinator of church health and coaching; Vicky has equipped more than one hundred Natural Church Development coaches and has led the development and implementation of the RCA's coach training process, which offers support to hundreds of pastors and congregational leaders in their work. Vicky also has been a coach and advocate on behalf of women in ministry, especially younger women.

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in June 2011 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, offers thanks to God for Vicky Menning's eight years of competent and faithful service to the ministries of the Reformed Church in America, and for her commitment to social justice, racial reconciliation, the care of creation, relational evangelism, and transformational discipleship, all anchored in a life of prayer, immersion in Scripture, and commitment to community; and

be it further resolved that the two hundred fifth regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, on behalf of the Reformed Church in America, expresses to Vicky and Bruce Menning its gratitude, admiration, and affection and offers its prayers for years of health, love, and joy in continuing service to Christ and his church.

Ellen Ratmeyer

Beginning her service with the RCA in 1988 as an executive assistant to human resources coordinator Al Poppen, Ellen Ratmeyer grew in her role and importance to the RCA and our shared mission. At various times Ellen carried the responsibilities for pastoral placement services and specialized interim ministry. Since 2004, Ellen has served as coordinator for consistory training and ministry services, providing leadership for chaplain services and consistory training and formation for leadership in the offices of elder and deacon. Ellen is a certified spiritual director and a valued coach. She is committed to the baptismal ministry of all disciples and to the unique call of elders. Ellen was a key elder and leader in Preakness Reformed Church in Wayne, New Jersey, for many years. She led the RCA in development of key resources such as *Companions on the Way* and *Deacons and Elders: Called to Serve*. The Consistory Center on the RCA website and the newly formed Consistory Empowerment Team also are elements of Ellen's legacy.

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in June 2011 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, offers thanks to God for Ellen Ratmeyer's twenty-three years of competent and faithful service to the ministries of the Reformed Church in America and for her commitment to a life of deep prayer, intentional reflection, profound kindness, advocacy for the wronged and the pained, courage in the face of power, and faithful service in whatever arena God calls her to exercise her baptismal identity; and

be it further resolved that the two hundred fifth regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, on behalf of the Reformed Church in America, expresses to Ellen and Harlan Ratmeyer its gratitude, admiration, and affection and offers its prayers for years of health, love, and joy in continuing service to Christ and his church.

Glen Missick

In his service as the staff person to African American/Black Ministries, Glen Missick worked to strengthen its effectiveness in various regions. His creativity and many ministry relationships contributed to an annual African American Caucus that has been a highlight for many.

In his role as a GSC staff person, Glen helped identify pastors for the RCA's existing African American/Black congregations and church planters for new congregations. An advocate for racial justice, Glen has helped the RCA move toward God's multiracial future, a future more free from racism.

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting June 16 to 21, 2011, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, offers thanks to God for more than twelve years of service to the ministries of the Reformed Church in America by Glen Missick, who began serving on the RCA staff on October 1, 1998, as director of the African American Council and concluded his service on June 1, 2011, as director of African American/Black Ministries; and

be it further resolved that the General Synod invites its delegates and guests to join in expressing to Glen Missick its gratitude and appreciation and our prayers that he and Jennifer will enjoy many more years of health and joy in continuing service to Christ and his church.

Douglas Fromm

For twenty-two years, Douglas Fromm has provided guidance to the RCA's commitment to seek the unity of Christ's church. Since 1989, Doug has served as the associate for ecumenical relations for the Reformed Church in America. He began that service at the request of Edwin Mulder, who was serving as general secretary at that time, and continued this service with Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, who served as general secretary from 1994 to 2011. Early in his service he assisted the process that resulted in the RCA's Ecumenical Mandate, which was adopted by General Synod and became a blueprint for guiding the RCA's ecumenical work.

For years, Doug patiently guided the process that resulted in the adoption of the Formula of Agreement, which overcame divisions present since the Reformation between Reformed bodies—specifically the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, and the Reformed Church in America. Adopted in 1997, the agreement established a lasting basis for table and pulpit fellowship among these four denominations.

Doug also guided the process of official dialogue between the family of Reformed churches and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Years of discussions led to the agreement on the mutual acceptance of baptism presented to the 2011 General Synod, among other results. He also met with Pope John Paul II in a visit to Rome.

For more than fifteen years, Doug worked with the Commission on Christian Unity to facilitate the study of the Belhar Confession and the process by which it was eventually adopted as a fourth confessional standard of the Reformed Church in America. Doug also worked tirelessly, first with Ed Mulder and then with Wes Granberg-Michaelson, on the RCA's involvement with the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A., and the Global Christian Forum. What makes this service all the more remarkable is that he did so part-time, while serving as the pastor of Upper Ridgewood Community Church, an RCA congregation in northern New Jersey. Doug always remained rooted in the local church while pursuing the unity of the wider church, and thus he always brought the perspective of the local congregation to the RCA's wider ecumenical commitments.

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting June 16 to 21, 2011, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, offers thanks to God for more than twenty-two years of committed service to the ministries of the Reformed Church in America by Douglas Fromm, through which the RCA has been faithful to its biblical calling and its historic commitment that "we all may be one, so that the world may believe"; and

be it further resolved that the General Synod of 2011 expresses its profound gratitude to Doug and its wishes for God's grace and presence to accompany him and Diane in the next chapter of their lives.

Jane Schuyler

Jane Schuyler has been a member of the RCA staff since 1987, when she was hired as a media specialist. Jane has used her gifts in a variety of ways. Jane's responsibility was to recommend content for the RCA Distribution Center and the TRAVARCA audio-visual lending library and to serve as a liaison to RCA congregations in advising and recommending resources for their ministry. She also has collaborated with ecumenical partners in curriculum development, workshops, and training events. Currently, as the RCA resource specialist, she provides leadership and oversight in two areas of RCA ministry: the RCA Helpline and the Children and Worship program. She has faithfully served the RCA by providing clear and well-researched answers to a myriad of questions from RCA pastors, leaders, teachers, and children.

Jane has been committed to faith formation for children and adults and has exhibited this by providing training, resourcing, and advocacy for educators and leaders in the denomination. She goes beyond finding appropriate answers to meet the needs of people in their specific context as she manages the RCA Helpline, and she is seen as a person who will find answers for even the most difficult of questions. Jane has supported the Children and Worship program both in RCA congregations and abroad, including orchestrating new translations and continuing to train new leaders and create opportunities for innovation and partnerships within the program.

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in June 16 to 21, 2011, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, offers thanks to God for Jane Schuyler's twenty-four years of competent and faithful service to the ministries of the Reformed Church in America and for her commitment to lifelong learning and passion for discipleship for people of all ages; and

be it further resolved that the 2011 General Synod, on behalf of the Reformed Church in America, expresses to Jane and Larry Schuyler its gratitude, admiration, and affection and offers its prayers for years of health, love, and joy in continuing service to Christ and his church.

Fay Daley, in Memoriam

Fay Daley began serving the Reformed Church in America in 2008, first as the executive assistant for African-American/Black Ministries and then as the first executive assistant in the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice. Much of what the RCA achieved through that office's first eighteen months came as a result of Fay's contributions in terms of her thinking, her direct efforts, and her support of the office's executive coordinator, Earl James. A list of her contributions includes Sankofa and other training efforts, development of the RCA's online *Church-Based Community Outreach Resource Guide*, development of the Multiracial Strategy Coalition, and groundwork for what has become the General Synod–mandated transition plan to help the RCA become more multiracial and freer from racism. Fay exemplified what it means to share work as a team player. She was an energetic, focused, caring person who made a difference in every arena that her life touched. She was a health expert and coach, a radio speaker, an author, a traveler, and a friend and encourager of many. She was courageous and caring until the day she left us far too early.

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in June 2011 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, remembers Fay Daley with gratitude, admiration, and affection and offers thanks to God for her years of creative, collaborative, faithful service to the ministries of the Reformed Church in America.

R-17
To adopt these resolutions. (ADOPTED)

Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

Wesley (Wes) Granberg-Michaelson has ably served the Reformed Church in America as her general secretary since 1994, leading us to a clearer sense of our shared mission and vision, a renewed focus on revitalizing existing congregations and multiplying new congregations, a deeper commitment to increased diversity, and greater service to our communities. Wes has fostered greater ecumenical relationships through the Formula of Agreement, Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A., the Global Christian Forum, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and an increased partnership with the Christian Reformed Church. He has recruited and hired a highly competent and increasingly diverse staff, overseen significant reorganization in staffing and governance policy, navigated difficult economic times wisely, and deepened relationships with regional synods, college and seminary presidents, and other affiliated agencies, and he has done it all with significant grace, good humor, deep passion, and profound love for Christ and his church.

Therefore, be it resolved that the two hundred fifth regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting June 16 through 21, 2011, at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, offers thanks to God for years of inspired and faithful service to the Reformed Church in America, and the church at large, by Wesley Granberg-Michaelson; and

be it further resolved that the two hundred fifth regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, on behalf of the Reformed Church in America, expresses to Wesley and Karin Granberg-Michaelson its gratitude, admiration, and affection and offers its prayers for years of health, love, and joy in continuing service to Christ and his church.

R-18
To adopt this resolution. (ADOPTED)

R-19
To declare the Rev. Dr. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson general secretary emeritus in honor of his seventeen years of dedicated service to the Reformed Church in America and the Christian church worldwide upon his retirement on July 31, 2011. (ADOPTED)

OVERTURES

Short-Term Disability Insurance

1. The Reverend Classis of Albany and the Regional Synod of Albany respectfully overture the General Synod to instruct its Board of Benefit Services to investigate possibilities for short-term disability insurance for pastors and to consider offering a common insurance to all congregations, for report to the 2012 General Synod.

Reasons:

1. While the RCA denominational insurance offers long-term disability insurance for all pastors, this does not begin to pay benefits until six months after the pastor is disabled. For that six-month period congregations are responsible to pay salaries and benefits for installed pastors while also providing for replacement pastoral services. This could be financially devastating for congregations.
2. A shared insurance program over a larger pool, such as the entire denomination, would be potentially less expensive than insurance purchased by each congregation.
3. If such a plan was available, the synod could encourage each classis to require such insurance for all pastors.

In response to Overture 1, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommended:

R-20
To instruct the Board of Benefits Services to investigate possibilities for making available short-term disability insurance for pastors and other plan participants, for report to the 2012 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. While the BOBS offers long-term disability insurance for all pastors, this does not begin to pay benefits until six months after the pastor is disabled. For that six-month period congregations are responsible to pay salaries and benefits for installed pastors while also providing for replacement pastoral services. This could be financially devastating for congregations.
2. A shared insurance program over a larger pool, such as the entire denomination, would be potentially less expensive than insurance purchased by each congregation.

Rescinding R-71 on Funding the Insurance Program

2. The Reverend Classis of Albany respectfully overtures the General Synod to rescind action R-71 of the 2010 General Synod, and to instruct its Board of Benefit Services to find a means to fund the insurance program that does not involve "Covenant of Care" payments.

Reason:

R-71 is unconstitutional as it mandates an assessment of indeterminate amount. General Synod has no authority to assess in the manner in which a governmental entity has the power to tax. General Synod is a stated meeting of representatives of the several classes to do things together that the classes are unable to do individually. Historically, the RCA has had assessments because a majority of the classes seated at a General Synod have agreed

to raise a particular sum of money in a particular year to enable the functioning of the General Synod and its agencies in the coming fiscal year. That action, taken each year, is both legally and theologically different from the granting of authority to tax or assess funds. At no time has a General Synod taken an action to establish or grant assessing authority to the General Synod. The synod is not like the states and municipalities which do hold legal authority to levy tax. The synod holds no such authority. The case of the Classis of Bergen in the 1960s, which was finally adjudicated at the synod of 1968, settled the matter. At that point in time, the only constitutional mention of assessments was in the section on the particular synod in which it was stated that particular synods may employ staff and assess the classes for the cost. The synod of 1968 removed this section (*MGS 1968*, pp. 175-180), leaving a Constitution in which there is no mention whatsoever of assessments.

Further, a synod may vote an assessment upon the classes but only for costs that are within the constitutional mandates for synods and classes. Individual ministers, consistories, and lay employees have only a business relationship with BOBS for provision of insurance. Synod has no ecclesial, constitutional authority over consistories or ministers or lay employees. Synod may request a classis to pay attention to a minister or consistory accountable to that classis who is not paying their bills, but in the current state of our church order, synod may not send classis a bill for a delinquency that is not a delinquency of classis.

3. The Classes of Greater Palisades, Rochester, and Schoharie overture the General Synod to rescind that portion of R-71 that increases assessments for classes in which consistories are in arrears in the payment of premiums for benefits required in Formulary 5, an action taken by the 2010 General Synod.

Reasons:

1. General Synod has no authority to assess classes for matters that are not a part of the "denominational program" (*BCO*, 1.IV.2.10).
2. As a policy matter, the unintended consequence of this decision was to pit consistories against each other. In order to pay the increased assessment, classes must raise the assessments of those consistories that were faithful (and able) to make payments.
3. It is unclear how the General Synod will make this possible. The synod must vote on an assessment amount before it assesses the classes. Assessment amounts cannot be the purview of either denominational staff or of a committee of the General Synod. Is the synod going to take action in the case of each classis?

4. The Classes of Mid-Hudson and Passaic Valley overture the General Synod to rescind action R-71 (*MGS 2010*, pp. 272-273).

Reasons:

1. R-71 is unconstitutional as it mandates an assessment of indeterminate amount. General Synod has no authority to assess in the manner in which a governmental entity has the power to tax. General Synod is a stated meeting of representatives of the several classes to do things together that the classes are unable to do individually. Historically, the RCA has had assessments because a majority of the classes seated at a General Synod have agreed to raise a particular sum of money in a particular year to enable the functioning of the General Synod and its agencies in the coming fiscal year. That action, taken each year, is both legally and theologically different from the granting of authority to tax or assess funds. At no time has a General Synod taken an action to establish or grant assessing authority to the General Synod. The Synod is not like the states and municipalities which do hold legal authority to levy tax. The Synod holds no such authority. The case of the Classis of Bergen in the

1960s, which was finally adjudicated at the Synod of 1968, settled the matter. At that point in time, the only constitutional mention of assessments was in the section on the Particular Synod in which it was stated that Particular Synods may employ staff and assess the classes for the cost. The Synod of 1968 removed this section (*MGS 1968*, pp. 175-180), leaving a Constitution in which there is no mention whatsoever of assessments.

It is therefore arguable, and classis so argues, that synod acted unconstitutionally by enacting R-71 as this action, by failing to specify an amount of money, unconstitutionally asserts authority to assess rather than voting a particular amount to be assessed. It is made more complicated in that the assessment is to be upon a third party—classis—for payment of individual personal and individual consistorial insurance delinquencies. This enactment of individuality is yet a further encroachment on constitutionality in that synod may vote an assessment upon the classes but only for costs that are within the constitutional mandates for synods and classes. Individual ministers, consistories, and lay employees have only a business relationship with BOBS for provision of insurance. Synod has no ecclesial, constitutional authority over consistories or ministers or lay employees. Synod may ***request*** a classis to pay attention to a minister or consistory accountable to that classis who is not paying their bills, but in the current state of our church order, synod may not send classis a bill for a delinquency that is not a delinquency of classis.

2. It is, classis believes, neither legal nor legitimate for BOBS to offer a "free month" to insurance participants rather than using the funds that make this possible to reduce premiums or increase reserves. The current Constitution and By-Laws of the Board of Benefit Services is not readily available on the RCA website and therefore classis does not know how the legal documents of the church prescribe the collection and use of monies for insurance purposes. (And given time constraints, there was not time available to find out.) It is commonly known, however, that the RCA insurance program is a self-funded program that employs a third party administrator. The RCA Insurance Program is not an insurance company, nor does the RCA employ either a non-profit or for-profit insurance company. Therefore, premiums in the program ought to reflect the experience of the insured group, such that premiums must go up if there are not adequate funds available and they must go down if more than adequate funds are available. It may not be legal—and it most certainly is not legitimate in the view of classis—for BOBS to use any monies to manipulate the classes and congregations of the Church by using monies paid for insurance premiums to fund advertising or for incentive programs or for anything else beyond the limited necessary funds for responsible administration.

3. Regardless of intention, the primary effect of R-71 has been to create hostility and division within the several classes. A classis is required by R-71 to force consistories that are insurance participants and current in their payments, as well as consistories that are not in the insurance program as they do not have a qualifying minister, to pay the delinquencies of both consistories who are delinquent and individual ministers who are delinquent. Without implying anything about what BOBS intended to say, the action in effect says to each consistory, "We order you to put up the money first and then pay yourself back by collecting our overdue bills if you can, and we will pay you with a little of your own money for your effort." This is neither Reformed Church order nor legitimate business.

In response to Overture 2, Overture 3, and Overture 4, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommended:

R-21
To amend the *Book of Church Order* Chapter 3, Part I (Bylaws of General Synod), Article 3, Section 6(c) to read as follows (additions are underlined):

To prepare a budget to sustain the established priorities, ministry, and mission of the Reformed Church in America and propose an assessment to the General Synod. <u>Assessments shall be specific dollar amounts voted by the General Synod, payment of which shall be mandatory.</u> (ADOPTED)

Reasons:
1. This was the original intent and language of the 1973 General Synod when it voted a definition of assessments (*MGS* 1973, pp. 124-126).
2. This amendment would eliminate the indeterminate nature of the amount of any assessment, the constitutionality of which was the principal objection raised in these overtures.
3. The new language retains the full right of the General Synod to propose, approve, and collect assessments; it simply defines more clearly the parameters of those assessments.

5. The Classis of the Southwest overtures the General Synod to rescind action R-71 (*MGS 2010*, pp. 272-273) and its related Covenant of Care changes. To insure a better outcome for all involved, Classis of the Southwest suggests that the Covenant of Care include a buy-in option so that if in the future a need should arise, a pastor/congregation could reenter the health care program. Additionally, to regain trust for all participants, Classis of the Southwest suggests that rules be established to assure that funds provided by the congregations are only used for the advertised purpose.

Reasons:

1. R-71 in its present wording distorts the responsibility of a congregation's obligations for the care of its pastor and gives the impression this can be accomplished only by mandates from a higher assembly.
2. R-71 does not honor Covenant of Care contracts of churches that have long standing relationships with their called pastors by superseding the wording of those contracts without agreement of the parties involved. This is a violation of contract policy and ethical business practices.
3. It is our understanding that the Covenant of Care program was implemented to subsidize the cost of ministers who opt into the Medical Insurance Program only during a period in their life when their healthcare costs increase. We also believe that ministers currently serving under a call prior to the current Formulary 5 and who, in agreement with their church, have opted out of the Covenant of Care, should be free to do so knowing that such decision takes them out of eligibility for the program for the tenure of their ministry. We recommend that rather than assessing classis for those ministers and churches who knowingly accept that consequence, that some sort of "buy-in" to the program is available if, in the future, they realize they are in need of the RCA's insurance program.
4. In its current configuration the Covenant of Care has three components, a) group life insurance, b) long term disability, c) Covenant of Care (program reentry). While items a and b are defined deliverable items of value, item c is publicized as a guarantee for RCA insurance program reentry, at a future date, regardless of health con-

ditions. For the definition of item c to be true to its advertising it is reasonable to assume the funds are being placed in a reserve account to cover the cost of persons reentering the program. We are now aware the item c funds are being used as slush funds for various BOBS programs and to supplement retirement pensions. It is our opinion that while these programs may have merit they are best funded by assessment line items which in some cases already exist. Additionally, the offer of "one free month" of insurance premiums was established to increase Covenant of Care participation by manipulating the vote of members of classis. These misrepresentations erode the trust of the RCA administration.

5. The effect of R-71 has been to create mistrust and division within the Southwest Classis. The fallout from R-71 could mean a less effective ministry of Southwest Classis and its churches in all areas of responsibility. The ultimate effect could be the negative way the public views the inner workings of the greater church body.

In response to Overture 5, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommended:

R-22
To instruct the Board of Benefits Services (BOBS) to study the issues related to Covenant of Care charges, "buy-in" options to enable pastors and/or congregations to re-enter the BOBS healthcare program, and use of funds received through the payment of insurance premiums, and to report its findings, and any proposed changes, to the 2012 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. Clarity around the issues raised in the overture, including re-entry to the program and use of funds, are important to the integrity and stability of the program and to the work of the BOBS.
2. Discussion between BOBS and Classis of the Southwest in response to the overture has already begun; these discussions need to continue.

Transfer of Ordination from Nondenominational Churches

6. The Classis of the City overtures the General Synod to instruct the Commission on Church Order and the Commission on Theology to review how the Reformed Church in America (RCA) recognizes the ordination of ministers from other "duly organized bodies of Christian churches" (*BCO* 1.II.11.1) and to consider the meaning of ordination in a post-denominational church culture. The classis requests that the commissions report the results of their reviews to the General Synod of 2012.

Reasons:

1. There is a significant increase of evangelical churches that operate independently yet ordain individuals with rigorous and thorough processes. The classis believes that those ordained by such churches should be recognized and be given the opportunity to be considered for transfer into the RCA.
2. The classis believes that our present definition eliminates potential candidates who could serve the RCA well if given entry into the RCA.
3. The classis believes we should, where possible, seek to recognize the ordinations of orthodox, independent churches in order to grow in visible unity as the Church uni-

versal while seeking to ensure these new ministers meet the requirements for ministry within the RCA. See generally, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (World Council of Churches, 1982) at Ministry #39, available at www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text.html.

4. The classis believes that the denomination would be well served by the adoption of a uniform standard by which transfers from independent churches could be considered rather than each classis adopting its own varying policies in attempting to apply *BCO* 1.II.11, Sec. 1 in our contemporary context.

In response to Overture 6, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business offered the following recommendation:

R-23
To instruct the Commission on Church Order and the Commission on Theology to review how the RCA recognizes the ordination of ministers from other "duly organized bodies of Christian churches" (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Sec. 1) in a post-denominational church culture, and to recommend, if warranted, changes to the *Book of Church Order*, for report to the 2012 General Synod.

Reasons:

1. There is a significant increase of evangelical churches that operate independently yet ordain individuals with rigorous and thorough processes. Those ordained by such churches should have an opportunity to be considered for transfer into the RCA.
2. Our present definition may eliminate potential candidates who could serve the RCA well if given entry into the RCA.
3. The RCA should, where possible, seek to recognize the ordinations of orthodox, independent churches in order to grow in visible unity as the church universal while seeking to ensure these new ministers meet the requirements for ministry within the RCA.
4. The RCA would be well served by the adoption of a uniform standard by which transfers from independent churches could be considered, rather than each classis adopting its own varying policies in our contemporary context when attempting to apply *BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Section 1.
5. This recommendation makes no change in the standards of ordination for the RCA; rather, it asks only to look at the requirements for recognizing ordinations from other bodies and seeks clarity in particular areas.

A motion was made to amend the recommendation:

R-23
To instruct the Commission on Church Order and the Commission on Theology to review how the RCA recognizes the ordination of ministers from other "duly organized bodies of Christian churches" (BCO Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Sec. 1) ~~in a post-denominational church culture,~~ and to recommend, if warranted, changes to the *Book of Church Order*, for report to the 2012 General Synod.

VOTED: To amend R-23.

A motion was made to further amend the recommendation:

To instruct the Commission on Church Order and the Commission on Theology to

review how the RCA recognizes the ordination of ministers from other "duly organized bodies of Christian churches" (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Sec. 1) specifically with regard to ministers ordained by congregations but not within organized denominations and to recommend, if warranted, changes to the *Book of Church Order*, for report to the 2012 General Synod.

VOTED: To not amend R-23.

R-23
To instruct the Commission on Church Order and the Commission on Theology to review how the RCA recognizes the ordination of ministers from other "duly organized bodies of Christian churches" (BCO Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Sec. 1) and to recommend, if warranted, changes to the Book of Church Order, for report to the 2012 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Requiring Scripture at Consistory Meetings

7. The Reverend Classis of East Sioux respectfully overtures the General Synod to amend the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 1, Part 1, Article 4, Sec. 3, to include Scripture as a requirement at all regular consistory meetings.

Reason:

The Reformed Church in America has always been centered on Scripture. We see it as a gift and as a guide for life and ministry. Therefore as we conduct the regular business of the church it must be present. By focusing on God's Word it will naturally lead us to focus on doing his will in life and in ministry.

In response to Overture 7, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business offered the following recommendation:

R-24
To urge all consistories to include the reading and/or study of Scripture at all regular consistory meetings; and further, to urge classis clerks to provide periodic reminders to consistories about the importance of this practice.

Reason:
The intent of this overture—that the work of our consistories should be regularly guided by the Spirit (prayer) and the Word (Scripture)—should be strongly affirmed and implemented by the church and by consistories. This action places the responsibility for that work directly with the consistories.

A motion was made to amend the recommendation:

R-24
~~To urge all consistories to include the reading and/or study of Scripture at all regular consistory meetings; and further, to urge classis clerks to provide periodic reminders to consistories about the importance of this practice.~~

To instruct the commission on Church Order to propose an amendment to the *Book of Church Order* (Chap. 1, Part I, Art. 4, Sec. 3) to include Scripture as a requirement at all regular consistory meetings.

VOTED: To amend R-24.

R-24
To instruct the commission on Church Order to propose an amendment to the *Book of Church Order* (Chap. 1, Part I, Art. 4, Sec. 3) to include Scripture as a requirement at all regular consistory meetings. (ADOPTED)

Tuition Free Seminary Education

8. The Classis of Holland overtures the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America to instruct the General Synod Council to create the "Free to Serve" Fund as a permanent investment held by the Reformed Church in America, and instruct the "Call, Care, Standards, and Collaboration Group" to develop and administer this fund. The purpose of the "Free to Serve" Fund is to make it possible for candidates under the care of an RCA Classis who attend an RCA seminary full-time or are enrolled in MFCA courses to complete their studies tuition free.

Reasons:

1. For nearly the first hundred years of Western Seminary's service to the church no tuition was charged to its students. In fact, no rent was charged for student housing up until the 1950s. We in the Reformed Church collectively made it possible for graduates to be free financially to serve wherever God called them. It is possible to restore our former tuition-free practice.
2. Today, it is not uncommon for graduates and their spouses to have in excess of $50,000 in debt.
   - The cost of attending college has increased 439 percent in the last twenty-five years. (*The Michigan Daily*, Ann Arbor, Michigan 12/30/2008)
   - "…an increasing number of theological school graduates report that the level of debt is affecting their career choices, holding them back from purchasing homes, preventing them from saving for their children's education, limiting their retirement savings, causing them to delay health care needs, and creating stress in their personal and professional lives." (Reported in *The Gathering Storm: The Educational Debt of Theological Students,* Auburn Studies, Bulletin #11, 2005.)
   - A couple who graduated from Western Seminary recently accepted their first call to a church in the Midwest. They entered their ministry with their new baby and $70,000 in debt ($800 per month for 120 months [ten years!] repayment schedule).
   - "We have no business having people going into ministry owing huge amounts of money. They're going into a position of service" (Sid Jansma, Chair of the Board, Calvin Seminary).
3. Creating the "Free to Serve" Fund:
   - This proposal recommends that the "Free to Serve" Fund is to be established by contributions from individuals and organizations. Imagine: Individual gifts of $250, given over five years at $50 per year—less than a cup of coffee per week—would make it possible for Reformed Church in America candidates to attend an RCA seminary or MFCA courses tuition free.
   - This proposal suggests that assessments should not be used as the primary vehicle for establishing the fund. But perhaps, the current $.50 per member assessment for MFCA students could be received into this fund.
4. The "Free to Serve" Fund would be a permanent investment held by the General Synod Council.
   - This proposal envisions that the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency

would be assigned responsibility for developing the fund, in conjunction with the RCA Development Office, and administering grants to candidates.
- The fund could disperse its investment earnings each year and perhaps up to 5 percent of its corpus.
- At the start, those taking courses through MFCA and senior candidates could have first priority to these grants. As the "Free to Serve" Fund develops, it is expected that the fund proceeds will provide full tuition grants for all full-time RCA candidates in RCA seminaries and all those taking courses through MFCA.

5. Administering grants from the "Free to Serve" Fund.
   - This proposal is stipulating "full-time" student-candidates, because we recognize a current trend of students enrolling part-time in seminary because of the financial challenge of their education. They can't afford to attend full time. The "Free to Serve" grants can motivate and enable student-candidates to complete their studies in a shorter time period, and therefore, those called to ministry can be ready to participate in their call to ministry sooner.
   - This proposal is stipulating that a classis would apply for a grant for the student-candidates under its care who qualify under the application rules. This application route assures that the grants are being requested for RCA candidates for ministry.
6. We ask General Synod to receive a ten minute presentation on this visionary proposal.

In response to Overture 8, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommended:

R-25
To deny the overture. (ADOPTED)

Reason:
While the intent behind the overture is laudable and should be explored further, the mechanisms by which the fund would be established and administered are too vague to seek approval from the General Synod at this time.

A Plan for Biennial General Synod

9. The Reverend Classis of South Grand Rapids overtures the General Synod to instruct the General Synod Council to create a plan for biennial meetings of the General Synod and to present this plan with appropriate changes to the *Book of Church Order* to the 2012 General Synod for approval.

Reasons:
- The actual cost of the annual General Synod meeting for the past three years averaged $440,000. If you add the cost of staff time directly related to the meeting, the whole cost is around $600,000 each year. Meeting every other year would result in significant savings of our resources that could be used to reduce assessments and engage staff members in more important work.
- Although the cost of the General Synod assessment is listed for 2011 at $44.00 per confessing member and this may seem like a small amount to pay for membership, the total cost of one synod meeting is greater than the annual income of 90 percent of RCA churches. The total cost of all assessments in a local church budget is one of the largest line items listed.
- Our current discussion of assessment formulas in the General Synod and the increasing number of churches unable to fully pay their assessments is proof of the real hardship that many churches experience under this heavy demand.

- Meeting every other year would allow more time to plan and evaluate the work of the church and to implement General Synod decisions—something that is challenging to do with annual meetings that create a very short window of opportunity.
- Other denominations have moved away from annual assemblies. The United Methodist Church holds its national assembly every four years; the Episcopal Church meets every three years; the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the American Baptist Church meet every other year.
- We are called by Jesus Christ in the Great Commandment to love God and love our neighbor. An observer to the annual General Synod might think our call is about committees, numbers, and tasks. Shifting to meeting every other year will create new opportunities to allow the community of the church to refocus on the call to multiplication, revitalization, and leadership development.

In response to Overture 9, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommended:

R-26
To instruct the General Synod Council to prepare a report on the implications of holding General Synod in alternative ways, including the possibility of a biennial General Synod, exploring benefits, drawbacks, and potential financial savings, for report to the 2012 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:
1. The cost of General Synod is a significant piece of the RCA budget. Exploring a biennial synod or other possible models could provide assessment savings at a time when there is high financial stress in many congregations.
2. The cost of General Synod is relatively small when measured against the benefits of deeper relationships established, momentum gained in ministry, and critical decisions that are made.
3. These two competing values, our ongoing commitment to good stewardship, and the possible roles that technology could play in alternative models, demand a deeper study of a number of possibilities and implications, rather than suggesting that General Synod Council pursue only one specific plan for a biennial synod, as suggested in the overture.

Insurance and Retirement Contributions

10. The Synod of the Great Lakes overtures the General Synod to instruct the RCA Board of Benefits Services to examine the levels of contributions that are required for the retirement and insurance plans as offered by the board.

Reasons:
1. The amount of contributions to the retirement fund and the type and cost of insurance for ministers are controlled by the General Synod and are required for all ministers serving the church full-time under call or contract (*BCO*, 1.I.2.7; 1.II.12.3). RCA classes cannot change these amounts when establishing the minimum salary and benefits for ministers.
2. It is time to evaluate the amounts of contributions to the retirement and insurance plans as offered by the Board of Benefits Services in light of the changes in our economy and general business practice in which employees are paying a larger portion of the cost of these contributions.

In response to Overture 10, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommended:

R-27
To instruct the RCA Board of Benefits Services to examine the levels of contributions that are required for the retirement and insurance plans as offered by the board, for report to the 2012 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. The amount of contributions to the retirement fund and the type and cost of insurance for ministers are controlled by the General Synod and are required for all ministers serving the church full-time under call or contract (BCO, 1.I.2.7; 1.II.12.3). RCA classes cannot change these amounts when establishing the minimum salary and benefits for ministers.
2. It is time to evaluate the amounts of contributions to the retirement and insurance plans as offered by the Board of Benefits Services (BOBS) in light of the changes in our economy and general business practice in which employees are paying a larger portion of the cost of these contributions.
3. BOBS already does this work on a regular basis.

Report of the General Synod Council on Church Multiplication

"But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together" (John 4:35-36).

Appreciating the effectiveness of church planting and its biblical precedent in the book of Acts, the Reformed Church in America has committed itself to church multiplication. And the heart of church multiplication is a passion for changed lives.

God's people across the RCA are imagining new ways to show and tell the good news of life in Christ. In renewing their commitment to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), many congregations and church leaders are discovering new life and energy—and plenty of challenges—as they plant new churches in their neighborhoods and communities.

New churches reach new people. In fact, the most effective way to reach spiritually lost people is by starting a new church.

Front Line Ministry Changes Lives

Two former gang members are elders in training and hold important ministry positions at Vanguard, an RCA church in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Vanguard pastor Nate Bull says both were baptized at Vanguard and went through its discipleship program. "Now one of them has created and helps lead a discipleship program for the youth of our congregation. The other is an intern with our shepherding pastor and runs a youth program for the neighborhood Hispanic American council."

Vanguard began twelve years ago with a Bible study that led to a street ministry in Kalamazoo's inner-city Edison neighborhood. Bull and his wife and their friends started gathering at the Bulls' home for Bible study every Friday. "We were so excited about what God was showing us that we began going into the streets to tell people about it," says Bull. "About five years ago I began doing street ministry full time."

He says Vanguard's mission has always been to meet people where they are. In Edison this has meant ministering on street corners; in bars, convenience stores, and liquor stores; and through barbeques and street evangelism.

GSC MULTIPLICATION ENDS MONITORING REPORT

Each spring, the RCA's general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for church multiplication follows.

GSC Global Ends Policy

> Empowered by the Holy Spirit and in covenant with the general secretary and staff, the General Synod Council will carry out its responsibilities in order to ensure that the Reformed Church in America will be a denomination where congregations are following Christ in mission, equipped and empowered for faithful and fruitful ministry, which requires all we have and all we are to the glory of God.

Church Multiplication Ends Policy

The RCA will foster a sustainable movement of church multiplication through starting new congregations.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION

Create a sustainable multiplication movement—this is the heart of the ends policy for church multiplication. During Our Call, the RCA has set a high goal—to start four hundred new congregations between 2003 and 2013. But it is a means to this end of creating a sustainable multiplication movement in the RCA. In order to achieve this, I have established the following goals in conjunction with appropriate GSC staff.

Goal for parenting churches: Expand parenting churches (production capacity) by 25 percent annually.

Outcomes:

- The RCA is planting at a baseline rate equal to four percent of our total number of churches and congregations.

Strategies:

- Through well-designed multiplying networks and direct coaching, continue to train for deep impact and high capacity parenting churches across the RCA.
- By leveraging classis and conference training opportunities, increase the number and commitment level of parenting churches in the RCA.
- With classis vision, leadership, and structures, cultivate a culture that supports new and experienced parenting churches, resourcing them and sustaining them through the challenging cycle of reproduction of new churches.
- Unbind assemblies of the RCA to seek church planting opportunities cross-culturally and cross-geographically, as led by the Lord Jesus in mission in a lost and broken world so loved by God (e.g., CMT Conviction, City Classis formation).

Data:

- The RCA now includes more than one hundred parenting churches, a five-fold increase since 2004.
- Over 75 percent of the RCA's new congregations have an identifiable relationship with a parenting congregation.
- Reproduction capacity continues to grow among our experienced parenting churches, as does interest from other existing RCA churches to parent and the rapid movement toward planting again by our new congregations in their first two to five years. This is all in partnership with strong classis support and accountability to the classis assembly. Classis funds are collected in the annual Pentecost offering campaign (One Sunday) to create funding capacity for parenting churches.
- Sixty participants combined from the RCA and CRC to focus for two days in October on urban church multiplication in the seventy-five largest metro areas of the United States and Canada. A new team is launched to develop our urban planting potential now.
- At the Exponential event in 2010, 160 participants learned about parenting and multiplying, including the Christian Reformed Church in partnership. Another Exponential is planned for April 2011, with 120 expected participants.
- Helpful book and digital resources have been created by RCA multiplication leaders.
- Using existing revitalization networks and offering a multiplication study segment is going forward in 2011.

- Two hundred New Congregation Plans have been approved since 2003, driven in large part by existing churches planting new churches. More than 250 worshiping congregations have started since 2003, reaching the lost by the thousands and growing disciples of Jesus Christ, transforming generations and communities. Stories and testimonies abound.

New Ministry Shines a Light in Montreal

In 1998, Carlos and Meire Rosa moved to Toronto from Brazil to help out at a new Portuguese-speaking RCA church start, Vida Nova. They had no idea that a little more than five years later they'd be at the helm of a new church plant in an area with no other RCA ministries.

One day an elder from Vida Nova called Carlos Rosa. "He said they were trying to plant a church in Montreal for years," says Rosa. "God said to him, 'What about Carlos and Meire? They're waiting.' Well, I wasn't waiting! But I said, 'I can pray. If God says go, we will go.' We wanted a clear answer."

After a lot of time in prayer, the Rosas got their answer. They were approved by the Classis of Ontario to represent the RCA as church planters in Montreal, and they began to feel called to minister in the city.

Igreja Luz para as Nações (Light for the Nations) has been meeting in Montreal, Quebec, since the fall of 2005. Today, around 50 people gather each week for the church's Portuguese-language service. The congregants are mostly Portuguese-speaking Brazilian immigrants, but there are a few worshipers from Portugal and a few French-speaking Canadians. As the congregation grows, the Rosas hope to add an English service and a French service to reach a greater number of people.

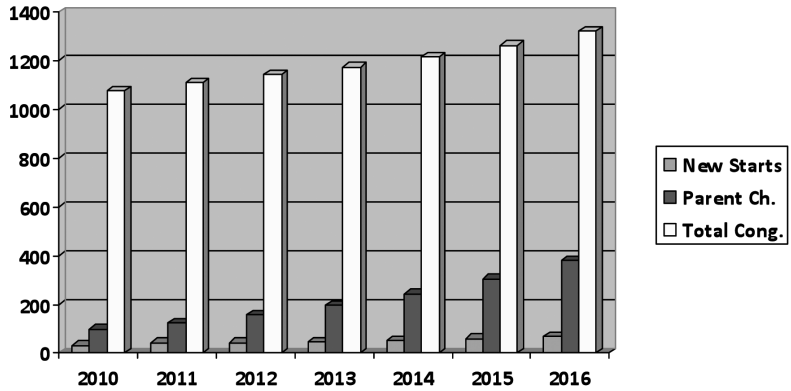
The church's services are contemporary, but the Rosas are committed to a strong Reformed theology. "I believe we should keep the doctrine, the fundamentals. We need to not compromise anything, but still touch people's hearts in this age," Rosa says.

The problem we've learned about by now in Our Call is that expecting fifty-five, eighty, and ninety-eight new congregation plans to be approved in 2011, 2012, and 2013 is too much acceleration on just one point of a ten-point (at least) multiplication movement. Sustainability would be threatened for those planters and church plants. Our current capacity in the RCA would be overrun in areas of commitment, staffing, funding, qualified planters needed, and the crucial transition to the second equipping leader in our new congregations four to seven years into their life cycle. The need for partnership with the revitalization side of Our Call requires more time and focus for deep change and results. The most severe economic recession in eighty years in the middle of Our Call did not help either.

A shift in strategy is necessary now in order to finish well in the last three years of Our Call and then see a sustainable multiplication movement continuously expanding. Metrics are needed that link both Production (P, number of new churches started annually) and Production Capacity (PC, number of churches and congregations with the mindset and behaviors of a parenting/reproducing church). Further, the annual projections in these numbers going forward are more accurate and scalable when based on a percentage of increase from our current track record in the RCA, eight years into Our Call.

Our starting point in 2011 for parenting churches is now one hundred. The total number of

organized RCA churches plus new RCA congregations with an approved New Congregation Plan is 1,075.



Year End	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Parenting Churches	125	156	195	244	305
New Starts	43	44	46	53	61
Church Closures	10	11	12	12	13
Total Congregations	1108	1141	1174	1215	1263
Net Gain Parenting Churches	25	31	39	49	61

Reminder: in 2003 the initial expression of church multiplication in Our Call included the goal of the RCA becoming 1,100 congregations by 2014, and thus a growing denomination again, at least in the category of the total number of churches. The calculation included church closures per year being eclipsed by a rising number of new congregations started each year, up to 320 in that period of time, netting 1,100 churches/congregations by the end of 2013. The discussion following General Synod in the regions and classes moved that number of 320 to 400, our current goal. Counting our new congregations planted, approved, and doing ministry, we may hit that target already in 2011. With 85 percent or more of these new congregations becoming organized churches over the next few years, we could see 120 more organized churches added to the RCA in the next five years.

Goal for church planting: To have forty-three approved New Congregation Plans in 2011.

Outcomes:

- Every church plant is born with an intentional plan and accountability to reproduce.
- The number of emerging planting leaders in the "pipeline" (named and nurtured there over years) will be triple the number of plants we are starting each year.
- Exponential funding: creative financial and resource results grow every year so that they multiply with the movement's rate of expansion.
- Classes organize new RCA congregations that reach self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating ability in a specific amount of time (three to five years).
- Working with RCA classes, 80 percent or more of new church starts that file a New Congregation Plan will eventually organize.
- Gospel movement dynamics will be deployed in planting and parenting environments for long-term growth and accountability to Jesus.

Transforming a City from the Inside

When Emmanuel Reformed Church recruited people to start a new church in nearby Compton, California, it asked for real commitment—each family was asked to move into Compton, a city plagued by poverty and notorious for gang activity.

"We're hoping to do incarnational ministry," says Pat Dirkse, pastor of the new City Church of Compton. "We wanted people to move in because we believe the city gets transformed from the inside out.

"We're going to experience the same things our neighbors experience, so we can turn and do something about the very thing we see a need on."

Three families bought houses in Compton, and two others rented apartments. Two families are waiting for their houses to sell before they can move.

The group is roughly a third Caucasian, a third Hispanic, and a third African American. "Compton is 65 percent Hispanic, 35 percent African American," Dirkse says. "Being white in Compton, people thought we were the police when we first showed up. Specifically with our call to move into the city, there's been a lot of questions—why are you here?

"And that's your opportunity to talk about the hope of the gospel. We believe God loves the city, and we love the city, and we're trying to serve it. This is why we're here."

Strategies:

- The New Congregation Plan that is signed by the planter, classis, and region requires commitment to the RCA value of churches planting churches.
- Provide training for planters in both the launch stage (Thrive) and after two to three years of development (Sustain), which explicitly raises this expectation and outcome.
- Tell stories that highlight the value of reproduction, even in new congregations that have not yet organized or purchased a facility.
- Coached multiplying networks and internships provide a learning environment where planters can begin to envision starting new congregations and new sites.
- Reproduction at the micro level—with disciples, leaders, life transformation groups, small groups, and house churches that learn to multiply—feeds reproduction at the macro level of the congregation and movements.
- Cultivate relationships in seven "fishing pools" for female and male qualified planters (among high school students, college students, commissioned pastors, seminary students, existing RCA ministers of Word and sacrament, equipping leaders from other denominations, and international leaders).
- Sustain a prayer movement that obeys the Lord Jesus, who says in response to the crowds of people still needing gospel transformation to "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:38).
- Create and support an excellent five-step assessment process to give personal and practical insight to emerging planting leaders to help them discern their call, character, and competencies for being a lead planter in a new mission context.
- Develop with established leaders, churches, classes, and seminaries the capacity for exponential leadership development structures which accelerate the quantity and quality of leadership needed for the multiplication movement.
- Support well our current church planters for risks undertaken in mission with excellent coaching, training, support structures, counseling, marriage retreats, and new placement opportunities as needed.

- Develop a diversity of funding streams for church multiplication that include centralized and decentralized, direct and indirect, additional and exponential methods in the RCA.
- Maintain a strong relationship with the RCA Church Growth Fund, which gives dollars annually from net profits for start-up matching grants with qualifying New Congregation Plans. Currently this funding stream is indexed at 25 percent of the CGF's annual net gains, and the CGF is seeking to expand by millions of dollars.
- Encourage and promote best practices for Church Multiplication Teams, compelling classis vision, strategic leadership, and missional structures for the forty-five classes of the RCA.
- Cultivate personal and empowering relationships with the "Top 40" leaders throughout the RCA classis structures for multiplication.
- Partner with revitalization initiatives to create health and growth in churches that then can be candidates for starting new churches (e.g., Churches on the Grow).
- Troubleshoot difficult situations with planters, parent churches, and classis structures so that a rate of more than 85 percent survival for all church plants inspires trust and further investment.
- Urge the timely organization of new RCA congregations (within four years of public launch dates) by addressing alignment and identity issues and incentives.
- Build bridges for planting across regional and classis barriers and distinctives.
- Seek first the kingdom of God and demonstrate gospel movement dynamics in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Our Call grows out of the RCA Statement of Mission and Vision: "The Reformed Church in America is a fellowship of congregations called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the very presence of Jesus Christ in the world…" The RCA's embrace of Our Call has provided a wide and compelling vision of a preferred future in terms of church multiplication and revitalization. Working in and through this particular calling of our Trinitarian God provides energizing focus, unity in primary objectives, and broader tolerance of secondary and tertiary issues in the RCA.
- Initiatives include renewal of gospel-saturated preaching, teaching that gives New Testament definition to the gospel of the kingdom itself, discipleship formation in a strong evangelistic method of the New Testament as we become more like Jesus in his continuing healing and deliverance ministry, prayer mobilization, and equipping leader networks and leadership selection criteria that emphasize sound Reformed doctrine and piety, including the steady evidence of the fruit and gifts of the Spirit.

New Country Church Springs to Life

It all started when Greg and Sally Firrantello invited the Stewarts, a family that Greg works with, to go with them to the Saturday night service at Faith Church in Dyer, Indiana.

Michelle and John Stewart were so inspired by what they experienced that evening that they decided to start a vibrant church in their own neck of the woods—Sheridan, Illinois—a farming community about seventy-five miles west of Faith Church.

"At Faith Church we saw people from teeny tiny kids to the oldest person excited to be at church," says Michelle. "It was such an example of people being excited about the relevancy of God's Word for our lives."

On Easter Sunday in 2009, the Stewarts and a small group of friends started worshiping in Sheridan in the loft of the Stewarts' wooden hay barn. "There were literally horses in the barn as you entered the lower level before climbing the stairs to the worship area," says Dave Weemhoff. Weemhoff is pastor of Faith Church's satellite campus in Cedar Lake and Faith's multi-site director.

The newly gathered worshipers call themselves Faith Church West. They all give themselves to the work of the church as volunteers, leading and supporting ministries and outreach activities like VBS, a Family Fun Horse Show, monthly Saturday night youth activities, small-group Bible studies, and a 9:00 a.m. breakfast held every Sunday.

Currently about 50 people gather each weekend for worship. "We don't have a pastor, and what that means is we have to be each other's pastor," says Michelle. "We're all responsible for each other. It's an awesome experience. We have more young kids that attend than adults, and they really grasp that idea—especially the teens, who are taking care of each other and supporting each other."

They now hold their Sunday service using a DVD of the worship service of Faith Church in Dyer. Faith's two established satellite churches, the one in Cedar Lake and another in Valparaiso, were already using the video recordings twice a month.

Data:

- Twenty-six New Congregation Plans were approved in 2010. Since 2003, exactly two hundred New Congregation Plans have been approved. Our goal by the end of 2010 was to have 167 New Congregation Plans, and we have well exceeded that goal to date.
- Four churches organized in 2010, according to records turned in by classis clerks (there may be more, but that is the official count right now). The average size of a church at organization is ninety-one confessing members, from Our Call figures. Currently, we average a four-year gap from starting the congregation to organizing a successful RCA church.
- Currently, more than one hundred emerging leaders are in the "planter's pipeline," with new assessments done each week for qualified planters.
- More than one-third of our new congregations continue to be multiracial or ethnically/racially different than the previous RCA Anglo majority. In fact, a review of 2008, 2009, and 2010 new congregations show a 55 percent rate of multiracial congregations or congregations planted among a non-Anglo people group. Of the seventy-seven total congregation plans approved in the last three years:
  - Twenty-six are multiracial
  - Eleven are Hispanic
  - Four are Asian
  - Two are black
  - Thirty-four are primarily Anglo/white

  We are working on a Native American plant as well, but the New Congregation Plan will come in 2011 if the internship in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is successful.
- Conversion growth continues to remain in the 40 to 90 percent range, with many adult baptisms per plant. A new evangelism training team called God's Storytellers has been launched across regions and races.
- Several funding initiatives are already in play. Donors contribute for planters following training and underwrite specific training or evangelistic initiatives, like Thrive. Others contribute in response to direct appeal letters, an annual Pentecost offering for the birth of new churches, or Partnership-in-Mission shares under our Global Mission partnership. Resources are also raised through strategic stewardship training, cause-related marketing efforts, grant writing, fasting and praying for supernatural provisions and breakthroughs, and a church multiplication golf tournament. Additional funds come from Fresh Start training that captures and redeploys kingdom assets through a classis, gifts in kind for rental space for plants, budget reductions for savings and reprioritization, ecumenical partnerships, and a portion of RCA assessments.

- Over $6 million has been raised and/or released this year for planting from individuals, churches, classes, regions, and the RCA denominationally. The DeVos Foundation awarded a multiplication grant to the RCA in collaboration with the Christian Reformed Church for $2 million over the next eighteen months. The Classis of Florida gave a legacy gift of more than $800,000 to create a new wave of church multiplication in the Florida region, which is stewarded with a strong multiplication team.
- We continue to offer Fresh Start training more than twice a year in conjunction with the Christian Reformed Church to help churches at the end of their life cycle make a legacy difference for the kingdom of God.
- Hundreds of miracles and healings have taken place in our new congregations, including several RCA-led healing conferences around North America.
- A new multiplication sub-team was created that will focus on training and assessment of our church plants in years four to seven so that a successful "second pastor" transition can occur if needed. This is a major sustainability issue to master with over 250 planters in the RCA field now.

A motion was made from the floor:

> Based upon the decline in the number of organized churches from 943 in 2002 to 924 in 2010 and the decline in total confessing members over the same period from 175,184 to 155,422; that GSC be directed to immediately begin an independent evaluation of all current Multiplication and Revitalization programs in order to determine their effectiveness in reaching the goal of 1,000 organized congregations. To the extent possible, preliminary results of this evaluation should be available to the GSC and General Secretary prior to the Conversations event in February 2012 in Orlando, Florida, with a final report to General Synod 2012.
>
> This evaluation will be critical in aiding the new general secretary in evaluating existing program effectiveness and in leading the denomination through the remaining term of the current ten year goal and developing effective goals and resource utilization for the future.
>
> VOTED: To not adopt the motion.

Report of the Reformed Church in America Church Growth Fund, Inc.

The Reformed Church in America Church Growth Fund, Inc. (CGF) supports the work and witness of the RCA by making loans to RCA churches, classes, and other agencies and affiliates so they can purchase, construct, or improve church property or facilities. The CGF also provides funds to the General Synod Council (GSC) for matching grants. Loans of up to $25,000 are made on an unsecured basis. Larger loans (up to the current loan limit of $2 million) are secured.

Detailed information regarding the CGF (such as the amounts that can be borrowed, the purposes for which funds may be borrowed, the requirements that must be satisfied in order to borrow funds, and how one may invest in the CGF) is available through the RCA's

website (www.rca.org/cgf). Following this report is a list of all churches that are borrowers from the CGF (or for whom loans have been approved) as of the end of fiscal year 2010.

Assets

Proceeds to fund loans made by the CGF come from gifts and bequests from members and friends of the RCA, the sale of savings certificates, and earnings on CGF assets. Savings certificates are offered in fixed maturities of one, two, five, and ten years. The certificates are securities, and therefore are offered for sale through an offering circular. The offering circular is available on the CGF portion of the RCA's website at www.rca.org/investincgf. Presently the CGF offers savings certificates for sale in nineteen states—Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. The rates of interest paid on savings certificates are established periodically by a subcommittee of the CGF board, and are posted on the RCA's website as well.

As of the end of fiscal year 2010 the total amount invested in savings certificates with the CGF was nearly $11 million. This is a $1 million increase from the end of fiscal year 2009, and higher than the amounts for fiscal years 2008 and 2007 as well, when the total amounts invested were $10.3 million and $9.28 million, respectively. These increases are the result of sales of savings certificates to new investors as well as "rollovers" of maturing savings certificates into newly issued savings certificates. The CGF believes that the higher level of investments in recent years is due to a number of factors, including the interest rates offered, the purposes for which the funds are used, the CGF's strong balance sheet, and—more generally—the overall manner in which the CGF continues to operate.

The CGF's total assets, net assets, savings certificates outstanding, loans outstanding, and loan commitments issued for fiscal year 2010 (with comparisons to fiscal year 2009) are as follows:

	FY 2010	FY 2009
Total Assets	$48.2 million	$46 million
Net Assets	$37.12 million	$35.94 million
Savings Certificates Outstanding	$10.95 million	$9.95 million
Loans Outstanding or Committed (#)	120	124
Loans Outstanding or Committed ($)	$39.77 million	$36.16 million
Loan Commitments Issued (#)	12	8
Loan Commitments Issued ($)	$6.776 million	$1.886 million
Total Funds Disbursed	$1.994 million	$1.6 million
Total Funds for New Ministry Grants	$340,000	$370,000

Loans

Of the twelve loan commitments issued in fiscal year 2010, three were for short term unsecured loans, and the others were for larger, secured loans. The CGF prays that the facilities that are purchased, built, or remodeled will enable the congregations to fulfill their call to ministry in their communities.

The CGF continues its efforts to attract more funds through the sale of savings certificates and the receipt of charitable contributions. Ads are running in *RCA Today*, and develop-

ment staff include the CGF in their presentations to prospective donors and investors. The CGF covets your prayers as it seeks to maintain an adequate level of funds for loans to RCA churches that are renewing and expanding their ministries, and encourages each member of the RCA to consider how he or she and his or her church, classis, and regional synod may support the CGF financially through gifts or investments.

Grants

As noted above, the CGF continues to provide resources to the GSC to fund matching grants for new RCA ministries. Since the inception of this program in 1999 and continuing through the end of fiscal year 2010, grants totaling $3,107,500 have been funded to 136 separate ministries. The CGF is pleased to be able to continue its financial support of the RCA's church multiplication efforts, and is encouraged by the reports it receives regarding the effect that church plants supported by such grants are having in the lives of individuals.

Future Plans and Staffing

The CGF expects that the need for loans and grants will increase as the GSC continues its work in support of "Our Call"—the RCA's ten year goal of starting 400 new congregations and revitalizing existing congregations. The CGF has begun to implement a plan to meet those needs. To ensure adequate liquidity to fund increased loan volume, contributions to the CGF and sales of savings certificates must increase. In the meantime, increased interest earnings on such loans should in turn result in increased funds available for new ministry grants.

Increased staffing is needed in order to effectively implement such a plan. In recent years the CGF had been served by a full time loan officer and a full time administrative assistant. All other staff support (e.g., for such things as development and promotion, financial services, and oversight by a director) came from individuals with significant responsibilities in other areas. Consequently, in the fall of 2010 the CGF expanded its director position to again be "full time" and is please to report that Bob Carlson has been selected to fill it. Carlson has served on the CGF board for a total of ten years (from 1995 to 2001 and then from 2007 to the present), and has served as the CGF's president for the past three. He brings with him many years of experience in community banking and a passion for the CGF and its mission of assisting churches in their ministries. The CGF asks that people join it in praying that his efforts will be fruitful and that many RCA members and ministries will be blessed as a result.

Last year the CGF acknowledged that the economic downturn had taken its toll on RCA members and, by extension, on their churches as well. The CGF continues to work with affected churches to help them through their difficulties while at the same time striving to remain faithful to the commitments made to investors and donors. Our hope is that the worst is behind us, that greater time and attention can be spent on new loans rather than on modifications of existing ones, and that the time spent by CGF staff on modifications of existing loans was well spent.

Bylaws Amendments

Finally, the CGF presents a recommendation to the 2011 General Synod. Unlike the organizational documents of other agencies of the General Synod (such as the General Synod Council and the Board of Benefits Services), the CGF's bylaws specify senior staff to whom staff of the CGF are accountable (rather than leave this to the determination of the

general secretary). To eliminate this inconsistency, the CGF has adopted amendments to its bylaws. The amendments appear at the conclusion of this report, and the CGF urges the 2011 General Synod to approve them.

As in prior years, much has been accomplished, and yet much remains to be done, all for the purpose of equipping congregations for ministry—a thousand churches in a million ways doing one thing—following Christ in mission, in a lost and broken world so loved by God.

As the CGF continues its work, the board of directors and staff ask for your continued support and prayers.

R-28
To approve the following amendments to the bylaws of The Reformed Church in America Church Growth Fund, Inc. (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken out):

ARTICLE VII STAFF

A. The operations of the corporation shall be managed by GSC staff appointed, ~~and~~ supervised, and accountable in accordance with GSC policies and in consultation with the corporation's Board of Directors.

B. GSC staff that is assigned to the corporation shall ~~report and be accountable to the Treasurer and shall~~ have such authority and duties as are determined by the Board of Directors. ~~Any such GSC staff that is also an officer of the corporation shall be responsible to coordinate operation of the corporation with the staff of the Reformed Church in America through the director of the unit in the Reformed Church in America that is principally responsible for evangelism and church development services.~~ (ADOPTED)

CANADA
Alberta
Christ Community Church, St. Albert, Alberta
British Columbia
Powell River Reformed Church, Powell River, British Columbia
Manitoba
Elmwood Community Reformed Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Ontario
Drayton Reformed Church, Drayton, Ontario
Forestview Community Church, Grimsby, Ontario
Classis of Ontario (New Life Reformed Church), Toronto, Ontario
Classis of Ontario and Christ Community Church, Welland, Ontario

UNITED STATES
Arizona
New Hope Community Church, Gilbert, Arizona
Desert Haven Community Church, Mesa, Arizona
Hope Community Church, Scottsdale, Arizona

California
Canyon Lake Community Church, Canyon Lake, California
Cornerstone Community Church, Chowchilla, California
New Hope Community Church, Fremont, California
CrossWinds Community Church, Hesperia, California
Park Hills Community Church, Los Angeles, California
Living Faith Community Church, Modesto, California
Palm Canyon Community Church, Moreno Valley, California
Desert Winds Community Church, Palmdale, California
Lincoln Avenue Community Church, Pomona, California
East Hills Community Church, Riverside, California
Colorado
New Hope Community Church, Aurora, Colorado
Springs Community Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Christ Community Church, Denver, Colorado
Florida
West Broward Community Church, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Classis of Florida (Korean Choong Hyun Church), Orlando, Florida
Christ Community Church, Palm Springs, Florida
First Reformed Church, Tampa, Florida
Rolling Hills Community Church, Zellwood, Florida
Georgia
North Atlanta Community Church, Roswell, Georgia
Idaho
Valley Life Community Church, Meridian, Idaho
Illinois
Christ Community Church, Lemont, Illinois
Calvary Reformed Church of Orland Park, Orland Park, Illinois
Bethel Reformed Church, Sterling, Illinois
Faith Community Church, West Chicago, Illinois
Indiana
Christ's Community Church, Fishers, Indiana
Christ's Community Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana
Community Reformed Church, Lafayette, Indiana
Iowa
Classis of Central Iowa (Bridgeway Church), Ames, Iowa
Crossroads Community Church, Estherville, Iowa, and East Sioux Classis
Classis of West Sioux and Rejoice! Community Church, LeMars, Iowa
Crossroads Church, Norwalk, Iowa, and Classis of Central Iowa
Good News Community Church, Okoboji, Iowa
Westview Church, Waukee, Iowa
Kansas
Crossroads Church, Overland Park, Kansas
Harvest Community Church, Wichita, Kansas
Maryland
Monocacy Valley Church, Ijamsville, Maryland
Michigan
RiverTree Community Church, Byron Center, Michigan, and Classis of South Grand Rapids
Wayfarer Community Church, Caledonia, Michigan
CrossWinds Community Church, Canton, Michigan
Classis of North Grand Rapids and Clancy Street Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Common Ground Community Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Third Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Grace Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan
Crossroad Chapel Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan, and Classis of Holland
Twin Lakes Reformed Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan
Within Reach Ministries, Kalamazoo, Michigan
Blacksoil, Lansing, Michigan, and South Grand Rapids Classis
Martin Reformed Church, Martin, Michigan
Laketon Bethel Reformed Church, Muskegon, Michigan
Covenant Community Church, Muskegon Heights, Michigan
The bridge, Portage, Michigan, and Southwest Michigan Classis
Rockford Reformed Church, Rockford, Michigan
Community of Joy, Traverse City, Michigan
LifeTree Community Church, West Olive, Michigan, and Classis of Holland
Zeeland Classis, Zeeland, Michigan

Minnesota

Riverside Reformed Church, Bloomington, Minnesota
Church of the Savior, Rochester, Minnesota

Missouri

Christ's Church, St. Peter's, Missouri

Nebraska

Hope Community Church, Lincoln, Nebraska
Papio Creek Church, Papillion, Nebraska, and Classis of Central Plains

New Jersey

Blawenburg Reformed Church, Blawenburg, New Jersey
Han Sung Church, Cresskill, New Jersey
Peace Korean Reformed Church, Fairlawn, New Jersey
Old Bergen Church, Jersey City, New Jersey
The Reformed Church in Kinnelon, Kinnelon, New Jersey
Trinity Reformed (Dutch) Church, Newark, New Jersey

New York

Fordham Manor Reformed Church, Bronx, New York
Community Reformed Church of Colonie, Colonie, New York
Siloam Church, Flushing, New York
Helderberg Reformed Church, Guilderland Center, New York
Fair Street Reformed Church, Kingston, New York
Levittown Community Church, Levittown, New York
Nassau Reformed Church, Nassau, New York
Pitcher Hill Community Church, North Syracuse, New York
Arlington Reformed Church, Poughkeepsie, New York
The Reformed Church, Poughkeepsie, New York
Pultneyville Reformed Church, Pultneyville, New York
The New Church of Greater New York, Roslyn Heights, New York
Niskayuna Reformed Church, Schenectady, New York
First Reformed Church of Bethlehem, Selkirk, New York
Grace Christian Church, Staten Island, New York
Community Church of Wurtsboro, Wurtsboro, New York
New Hope Reformed Church, Yonkers, New York

North Carolina

First Reformed Church of Cary, Cary, North Carolina

North Dakota

Red River Reformed Church, West Fargo, North Dakota

Ohio

New Hope Reformed Church, Powell, Ohio

Pennsylvania
Newtown Reformed Church, Newtown, Pennsylvania
The Reformed Church, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania
Tennessee
Franklin Fellowship Church, Franklin, Tennessee
U.S. Virgin Islands
St. Thomas Reformed Church, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands
Washington
Trinity Reformed Church, Kent, Washington
East Valley Reformed Church, Yakima, Washington
Wisconsin
Trinity Community Church, Brown Deer, Wisconsin
Hope Community Reformed Church, West Bend, Wisconsin

Report of the General Synod Council on Revitalization and RCA Congregations

[Jesus said,] "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:18-20).

That command of our risen Lord calls the Reformed Church in America to renewed obedience in a new day. It recalls us to our deep, historical commitment to constantly reform according to the Word of God, which is also the foundation for our deep, historic commitment to church revitalization. The Great Commission calls every congregation to reform its ministry and mission by God's grace and with God's direction.

What is a revitalizing congregation?

A revitalizing congregation is a body of believers, responsive to God's call, developing a faithful and fruitful life through new mission, new ministries, and new members.

Each congregation brings this call to renewal to life in its unique setting as it:

- Nurtures a missional mindset resulting in externally-focused ministry.
- Multiplies new disciples, new leaders, new teams, new mission, new ministries, new worship services, new sites, and new congregations.
- Intentionally develops a growing community of servant leaders who are equipped and empowered for ministry.
- Grows deeper in its love of God and wider in its love of the people among whom God has called it to serve—living by grace; practicing radically inclusive love; showing Christ-like hospitality; embracing the gifts of every person, race, and culture; seeking to become increasingly diverse as a reflection of the kingdom of God; and intentionally developing a growing community of servant leaders who are equipped and empowered for ministry.

The result is that lives are transformed by the love of Jesus Christ, the hungry are fed, the broken are made whole, hurts are healed, and hope overcomes despair. Neighborhoods, villages, towns, and cities become healthier, more just, and more gracious for all people as they experience God's expanding realm of grace, mercy, love, and justice.

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Grant from the Lilly Endowment Supports Revitalization Efforts

In 2004, the RCA received a $2 million grant from the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Initiative of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. The major components of the grant are:

- Formation of pastoral networks (now called coached revitalizing networks) for pastoral renewal, congregational revitalization, and increased ministry and mission effectiveness.
- Intentional interaction between pastors in networks and the leaders of the congregations the pastors serve.
- Grants: up to six hundred RCA pastors will receive a $1,000 Sustaining Pastoral Excellence grant. Grant proposals must demonstrate a partnership between the pastor and congregation and indicate how the grant will be used in the congregation's revitalization efforts. The intent is to encourage the pastor and consistory to discern congregational needs and opportunities together.
- Training of coaches throughout the RCA, both Natural Church Development coaches and network coach/facilitators.
- An RCA staff position, coordinator of leader renewal and networks, and partial funding for the coordinator of church health and coaching, along with administrative support for this office and all other attendant costs.

In November 2008, the RCA received a $1 million continuing funding grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. for the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program. This grant will support the program and allow it to continue through 2013.

Working Together to Revitalize Existing Congregations

Initiatives designed to encourage, resource, equip, and empower congregational revitalization have begun in a number of key areas.

Natural Church Development

Natural Church Development (NCD) is an ongoing, long-term church health process.

After carefully studying 32,000 congregations, pastor and researcher Christian Schwarz identified eight "quality characteristics"—eight factors that affect the life, effectiveness, and growth of congregations. Each characteristic also reflects an important dimension of how the Bible describes a fruitful church. The eight characteristics are:

- Empowering leadership
- Gift-oriented ministry
- Passionate spirituality
- Functional structures
- Inspiring worship
- Holistic small groups
- Need-oriented evangelism
- Loving relationships

Research shows that if any of these eight quality characteristics is underdeveloped, it limits the fruitfulness of the congregation. After a congregation takes the NCD survey, it forms a church health team and works with an NCD coach to use its strengths to address its lowest-scoring characteristic in an organic and systemic way. The goal is to use the NCD process or another health assessment tool to release the potential God has placed in the congregation.

Coached Revitalizing Networks

A coached revitalizing network connects four to seven pastors and provides transformational learning, covenantal accountability, and collegial support to help them live on the front lines of ministry. It also helps them:

- Grow deeper in Christlike character.
- Gain increasing clarity and focus in their calling.
- Develop new leadership and ministry competencies.
- Lead their congregations with courage.

Coached revitalizing networks are places where pastors clarify their personal mission and are equipped with knowledge and skills to serve their congregations as transformational leaders. When pastors participate in a coached revitalizing network, we expect that both pastors and congregations will:

- Deepen their discipleship through intentional spiritual formation.
- Grow more passionate about new mission, new ministry, and new disciples as they become more externally focused.
- Develop increasing competence as transformational leaders and intentionally multiply leadership.

It's called a "coached" network because coaching is central to coached revitalizing networks. An ongoing coaching relationship built around regular coaching sessions helps pastors address their specific opportunities, challenges, and issues with the assistance of a trained coach.

Network Helps Pastors Help Churches

"How do you get a congregation that's stuck in decline to break out of that and start to do new ministry that brings growth?" asks Art Wiers, revitalization point person for the Synod of the Great Lakes.

"Different leaders are going to do that different ways, but they can learn from each other."

The synod has created an environment for that learning in a new pastors network just for leaders of turn-around churches. The synod includes a number of churches that are seeking better health through revitalization efforts. Six of those churches are participating in the network.

Clayton Smith serves Good Samaritan Reformed Church in suburban Columbus, Ohio. Through a two-year revitalization initiative, Smith says, "We've had some significant numerical growth, but really they're just a great bunch of folks who are once again confident of who they are in the community."

Now Smith is sharing lessons learned at "Good Sam" with others in the network. As the church's turn-around efforts continue, he also receives support and accountability.

"I've always valued networks—the support that we receive from one another, and the learning that we're able to do together. I learn a lot from the guys in the network." Also participating in the network are Paul Bakker, Bruce Hunt, Dave Kingma, Kevin Schutt, and Mic Sutton.

"Every pastor in the network is serving a church that has gone through some difficulty," Smith says. "Every pastor is serving a church that has declined numerically, that has finan-

cial difficulty. I think every church needs to reassess what their ministry is to the community."

Wiers says that in spite of the contextual differences, the pastors get new ideas from each other and are able to "rework them in ways that apply to where they are."

Coaching

Coaching is a central discipline within Our Call. Trained coaches support and enhance coached revitalizing networks by empowering congregational leaders for ministry and helping them discern how God is calling them.

Trained Natural Church Development coaches work with a local congregation's church health team to help them receive the maximum benefit from the NCD process. Other coaches are trained to work with networks as coach/facilitators.

Across the RCA people are being identified who have the passion and the aptitude to coach. Once they are identified, the coordinator of church health and coaching trains them in coaching skills and skills related to networks or to NCD. Other coaching applications will also be developed as the RCA continues on the journey of revitalization. You can learn more about coaching in the leadership section of the GSC report to the General Synod.

Accepting the Challenges of Deep Change for the Sake of the World God Loves

At the heart of congregational revitalization is the reality that missional engagement with the world God loves requires challenging choices and deep change. This is why pastors and congregational leaders are encouraged to come together for learning, accountability, and support in networks and to enter into the deeper reflection and more intentional action that comes through a coaching relationship.

The revitalization journey is challenging, but the stories that emerge from that journey are exciting.

GSC REVITALIZATION ENDS MONITORING REPORT

Each spring the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for revitalization follows:

GSC Global Ends Policy

> Empowered by the Holy Spirit and in covenant with the general secretary and staff, the General Synod Council will carry out its responsibilities in order to ensure that the Reformed Church in America will be a denomination where congregations are following Christ in mission, equipped and empowered for faithful and fruitful ministry, which requires all we have and all we are to the glory of God.

Revitalization Ends Policy

> The RCA will be a fellowship of externally focused congregations where lives are being transformed and communities are being renewed.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION

This ends policy calls the GSC staff to collaborate with congregations, classes, and regional synods in ways specific to each region to make a difference among three distinct recipients:

- Help congregations become healthier and more missionally focused.
- Empower healthy, missionally-focused congregations to be a means by which lives are transformed.
- Support healthy, missionally-focused congregations as they work with a wide variety of partners to renew their communities.

This ends policy is focused on a long-term time horizon—2013 and beyond. It is my responsibility as general secretary to ensure that measurable outcomes for 2013 are established and yearly benchmarks between the years 2008 and 2013 are developed and monitored. To that end I have established the following goals, outcomes, and strategies.

Goal for congregational fruitfulness: Five hundred congregations will

- **Exhibit missional fruitfulness through stories of transformed lives.**
- **Show clear evidence of impact on their communities.**
- **Employ statistical criteria that confirm that they are making more and better disciples.**
- **Further, among these five hundred congregations:**
  - **At least 40 percent will celebrate a cultural and racial mix of congregational members that closely resembles their communities.**
  - **At least three hundred will have made a commitment to congregational multiplication.**

Outcomes:

- Between 2008 and 2013 the number of adult confessions of faith and adult baptisms per one hundred confirmed RCA members will increase by 25 percent in at least five hundred congregations and by 10 percent in the RCA as a whole.
- New ministries and new mission activities will increase by 30 percent (as reported in the Consistorial Report Form).
- By 2013, at least 20 percent of RCA congregations (existing and new) will meet the generally accepted criteria of "multiracial."
- By 2013, at least 75 percent of all RCA pastoral leaders will be multiculturally competent.
- By 2013, at least three hundred RCA congregations that existed in 2005 will have either already planted a church or will be actively involved in the multiplication movement and will be ready to be a parent church.

Strategies:

- Use the annual Consistorial Report Form to track the number of adult confessions of faith and adult baptisms.
- Baseline data for RCA congregations from the Consistorial Report Form Part II has now been established. By the 2011 GSC ends monitoring report, we will be able to begin reporting trends regarding new ministries and mission activities.
- See the multiracial future freed from racism monitoring report for information about multiracial congregations and multiculturally competent pastors.
- The coordinator of church multiplication has initiated conferences, communication to pastors networks, and direct one-on-one contacts to recruit new parenting churches.

Data:

- The aggregate data for the RCA from 2000 to 2008 for the number of professions of faith, reaffirmations, and adult baptisms per one hundred RCA members is as follows:
  - 2000: 5.59
  - 2001: 6.05
  - 2002: 6.63
  - 2003: 6.51
  - 2004: 6.47
  - 2005: 6.64
  - 2006: 6.73
  - 2007: 6.27
  - 2008: 6.56
- A decision has been made to no longer use Part II of the Consistorial Report Form. With no apparent way to monitor the desired outcome of a 30 percent increase in new ministry and mission activities, this will no longer be reported in future monitoring reports.
- The coordinator of church multiplication estimates that more than 110 churches have either birthed a new church plant or are in the process of becoming a parent church.

Church Gains Reputation of Caring

As a result of a strategic revitalization process, baptisms and worship attendance are up at Christ's Community Church, where membership has been on the decline for years.

An informal 2005 survey revealed that "the community thought the church was either dead or for an exclusive, small bunch of folks," says pastor Randy Wieland. "In the first phase of our strategy, we set out to change that mentality by hosting entirely free community celebrations. These began to grow in popularity until thousands of community folks would come out to celebrate Christmas, Easter, or Halloween on the church property.

"We also decided that we needed to change the picture of the church from an exclusive bunch of club members to a community impact group," Wieland says. So twice a year, church members volunteer throughout Glendale, Arizona, where the church is located, then invite people back to the church for a free barbeque and worship time. Wieland says Glendale was once a high growth area in Phoenix but is now somewhat rundown.

Christ's Community also started a Stephen Ministry, "adopted" a local elementary, and planned a few special services especially for first-time visitors. It's active in diaconal care for people both in and outside the church, offers discipleship and outreach programs, and hosts AA meetings. "The entire [revitalization] effort has been undergirded by a blossoming prayer ministry, as well as a preaching series that meets folks at their point of need," says Wieland.

Through all of these efforts, people came. They didn't necessarily stay. "We saw that we have had many folks attend a couple of times, but not necessarily stay beyond that," Wieland says. "We decided to include ways to help new people connect. Our new hospitality ministry invites folks that have visited two times over to dinner at someone's house." During two months this summer, 23 families visited for dinner.

According to a recent survey, "Our community identifies us as the church that cares about the community," he says.

Goal for congregational faithfulness: By 2013, at least five hundred RCA congregations already existing in 2005 have clear and compelling statements of mission, vision, and values and are prayerfully orienting their congregational lives and imaginations toward faithful and collaborative participation in the mission of God.

Outcomes:

- By 2013, at least five hundred RCA congregations will be engaged in ministry partnerships aimed at community impact with other RCA congregations, other Christian congregations and faith groups, or other community partners God provides.
- By 2013, congregational members in at least five hundred RCA congregations will be equipped to engage in incarnational ministries through which they serve people who aren't yet disciples of Christ and will be trained to engage in spiritual conversations with them.
- By 2013, at least one hundred previously declining RCA congregations will have become "turn-around congregations."
- By 2013, at least five hundred RCA congregations will be active, vital houses of prayer.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with the coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice to help congregations develop plans for ministry in their communities. Develop processes that will equip congregations to see their communities through God's eyes, to creatively join Jesus in ministry in their communities, to remain open to new opportunities the Holy Spirit will reveal to them, and where appropriate, to develop a 501(c)3 organization.
- Use the "Fresh Start" initiative.
- Use the "Redeveloper" Initiative.
- Using the Churches on the Grow process, Congregational Mission staff will engage with forty plateaued congregations to be intentional about growth (both spiritual and numeric).
- See the multiplication and discipleship monitoring reports for strategies and data regarding equipping people to engage in incarnational ministries.
- See the discipleship monitoring report for strategies and data about increasing the number of RCA congregations that are active, vital houses of prayer.

Data:

- See the multiracial future freed from racism monitoring report for data about collaboration with the coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice.
- Thirty-five churches have considered a Fresh Start through the trainings offered, and ten are in some phase of implementation of it.
- Three congregations have considered Redeveloper, and all three have decided to pursue it.
- At least sixty-five pastors have completed the Gallup Redeveloper Assessment.
- Eleven congregations are in the Churches on the Grow process now. We are reevaluating the plan to grow this initiative, as it has been more labor intensive than anticipated and we haven't figured out how to get to forty churches with current resources.

Goal for pastors networks: By 2013, at least five hundred ordained or commissioned pastoral leaders of congregations will participate in a coached revitalizing network for at least five years as a way to equip them to lead revitalizing, missional congregations.

Outcomes:

- Five hundred pastoral leaders will have been in pastors networks for five years by 2013.
- Five hundred pastoral leaders will have developed a personal calling statement using the Purposeful Living process.
- Five hundred pastoral leaders will have a coach helping them live out the mission, vision, and values God revealed to them in their personal calling statement.

Strategies:

- Seven hundred are in pastors networks by 2008.
- We take the facilitators of pastors networks through Purposeful Living in their training, suggesting it be the first transformational learning topic they engage in their network.
- See goal for pastoral coach availability in the leadership monitoring report for strategies and data around coaching.

Data:

- As of January 2011, 478 people are participating in seventy-seven pastors networks. Tracking the numbers of active networks and participants is becoming a significant challenge as the pastors networks movement continues. Networks are becoming more fluid and some are less formal than when networks were supported by individual Lilly grants where certain requirements were in place.
- Feedback on the impact of a person's network experience is shown in the Appendix.
- We have no official data collected but believe that most of the seventy-seven pastors networks with 478 participants have started with the Purposeful Living process.

Trusting God to Provide

"I'm not a radical. I simply believe in the power of God's Word, and I believe very strongly in the call of the RCA—a call from God for such a time as this to revitalization and transformation," says Irving Rivera, pastor of Fordham Manor Reformed Church in the Bronx, New York.

When Rivera started at the church thirty-three years ago, he became discouraged because there were rarely more than twenty people in attendance. Rivera determined to take a few days off to reflect and pray. "After three or four days in prayer I came back to my consistory and told them that we needed to find out if God was truly in our church and commit ourselves to total dependence on him by cutting off all financial assistance that we were receiving. We trusted God to provide, my preaching changed, and within one year we had 200 people coming on Sunday."

Rivera considered planting a new church in response to the growth at Fordham Manor, but then decided that it would be better to reach out to other RCA churches in the Bronx that were experiencing a decline. Today both Highbridge Community Church and the United Reformed Church of Williamsbridge Road are also thriving. Each church has a unique mission and vision, and Rivera often travels from church to church to preach at multiple Sunday services.

He attributes all of this growth, which began in 2006, to God. "When a church realizes that God is with them, it ends inertia. Worship style doesn't matter, and people don't need to be entertained. Church should be another world where the Spirit leads."

Goal for Natural Church Development (NCD): By 2013, two hundred RCA congregations will have completed two cycles of a coached NCD process, and 150 churches will have completed three or more cycles of a coached NCD process.

Outcome:
- By 2013, two hundred RCA congregations will have completed two cycles of a coached NCD process, and 150 will have completed three cycles.

Strategy:
- Train NCD coaches throughout the RCA and promote NCD as a helpful process.

Data:
- Between 2001 and 2004, 107 churches have taken the NCD survey more than once:
  - Eighty-six have taken it twice.
  - Nineteen have taken it three times.
  - Two have taken it four times.
- Since 2004, when the RCA standardized the NCD coach training process, sixty-one congregations have taken the survey more than once:
  - Forty-eight have taken it three times.
  - Nine have taken it four times.
  - Two have taken it five times.

Appendix: Results from RCA Pastors Network Participant Survey

1. How regularly does your network meet?

Weekly: 0.0 percent
Twice per month: 10.3 percent
Monthly: 67.0 percent
Every other month: 8.2 percent
Quarterly: 7.2 percent
Semi-annually: 7.2 percent

Comments:
- We blog twice a month, meet via Skype monthly and meet in person once a year.
- We do not meet the months we have classis meeting.
- I think we would all like to meet twice per month, but our schedules are simply too full to make it happen.
- We recently went from about quarterly to monthly. I found the quarterly meetings to infrequent to really build meaningful relationships or momentum. Even though meeting monthly is better, it's still too infrequent in my opinion, since we don't generally see each other in between meetings.
- We've been doing this for years and it has been a high priority for the members all this time. I think that you can see the difference in the churches we serve.
- I'm actually in 2 networks—one meets monthly, one every other month.
- We do not meet in the summer.
- Except for the summer. So we meet 5 times per year for an afternoon, evening and morning together.
- We meet only once a year in person because of distance. However, we connect weekly via Facebook conversations and provide support for one another. Also we have a monthly conference call via Skype for 60-90 minutes.
- Monthly during the school year.
- Monthly Skype meetings, annual face-to-face retreats.
- We take off during the summer.
- Seems to work well with our busy schedules.

- We do not meet during the summer months.
- Geography makes it difficult for us to meet more regularly.
- In 2 day retreat.
- We look forward to these times together.
- Several of our group have to travel at least 2 hours so meeting more often is difficult.
- It's good for me.

2. How long does your typical network meeting last?

2 hours or less: 35.9 percent
3-4 hours: 46.7 percent
5-6 hours: 6.5 percent
7-8 hours: 2.2 percent
9 hours or more: 8.7 percent

Comments:

- Skype = 1 hour. Yearly retreat = 3 days, 2 nights.
- We meet for lunch and it flows into conversation/study/prayer
- 2 1/2 hours
- It takes longer than it should as we have a hard time getting "to it."
- 2 to 2 1/2 hours
- The time seems to fly by
- 48 hours
- 60-90 minutes for our conference calls. We meet for 3-7 days at our annual in person gathering.
- 4-5 hours
- Three days for our annual retreat.
- Too long for my taste
- about 2 days
- 2 1/2 hours
- An overnight retreat every other month.

3. How regularly did you attend your network meetings in the most recent year that your group met?

Less than half of the meetings: 3.1 percent
A majority of the meetings: 17.5 percent
Virtually all of the meetings: 79.4 percent

4. Do you think your network facilitator does/did a good job leading and facilitating your network?

Poor job: 3.2 percent
OK job: 11.6 percent
Good job: 42.1 percent
Great job: 43.2 percent

Comments:

- I am the facilitator so I won't comment.
- We are doing very well, but also examining how we operate and making adjustments to be even more effective.
- Our network is collapsing right now. Our facilitator, while trained, is not necessarily operating in an area of strength...
- We rotate facilitation.
- I am new to the current network that I am attending currently...so I haven't had much time to understand how this network works.
- Steve Smallegan has done an amazing job facilitating our group.

- Our facilitator lacked focus and did not encourage goal setting or accountability.
- We have a retired therapist from Pine Rest.
- We take turns facilitating and hosting. The group has been meeting so long, we have no problems doing what needs to be done.
- We share leadership and facilitating.
- We have no designated facilitator as we just informally share and converse at will.
- I'm not sure he or we are clear on what is to be accomplished.
- We have an "outside" facilitator...a retired counseling professional...who is doing an outstanding job of leading our group.
- My network is great. My attendance has been low because of caring for a family member that has extensive health issues.
- We've had different facilitators. One does very well and the other does not.
- We take turns leading.

5. Do you (or did you) and other members of your network receive regular one-on-one coaching?

No: 41.7 percent
Yes, a few times per year: 32.3 percent
Yes, we meet regularly: 26.0 percent

Comments:

- Some from the network coach/facilitator and others from other coaches.
- Used to—now it's more loosely structured.
- Are considering more intentional forms like this.
- A few times—not regular.
- Love my coach and our times together...
- Not this past year, we have in the past.
- My coach is not from the network I am in.
- We did talk one on one occasionally.
- There could be greater intentionality about this for all of us. It tends to be a bit "hit and miss."
- Again, very regular coaching sessions would be more helpful to me than occasional meetings.
- I have just started meeting with two other pastors in a coaching "triad."
- I had a coach when I joined the group. I have since lost that coach and so am starting to meet regularly with my network coach.
- Yes I meet monthly with a coach who is not part of this network.
- Not in the most recent year.
- Some members, but not all.
- My coach was not part of my network. Only one other participant received coaching (from an outside source).
- In years past, but not recently.
- I was coached for a time by a Brethren pastor in the area.
- The person who had been coached recently left the group to take a call in another state.
- But we all have coaches outside the network group.
- Others do—I don't get coaching.
- My coaching relationship was established before my network and, as such, is not connected with my network. I am debating making a change in coaches so there is more connection with the network.
- That isn't part of our group now but it was in the past.
- Other members do.

6. Overall, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with your network in the most recent year that you met?

Very dissatisfied: 2.1 percent
Dissatisfied: 2.1 percent
Somewhat dissatisfied: 5.2 percent
Somewhat satisfied: 12.5 percent
Satisfied: 30.2 percent
Very satisfied: 47.9 percent

Comments:

- This group is a major reason I am still serving the church I am at.
- It is a place where the feeling of isolation is defeated.
- I've learned a lot, love the collegial support and accountability.
- The last network I was a part of was vital to the health of my calling in ministry. I expect this network to be a key component for me as well.
- I always look forward to our time together.
- The transformational learning piece was missing from our group. It was more of a share and prayer session.
- Not all participants in the group "pull their weight."
- We're really not "getting into" some of the things I had hoped we would.
- Very supportive offering wise counsel and encouragement.
- Geography makes things difficult—and we allow that to be a problem. We have not been as committed to the network as we should be.
- This is a very high priority. Rarely do any of the six of us ever miss a gathering.

7. Do you consider your participation in a network to be key to your personal, professional, and spiritual development?

Yes: 78.1 percent
No: 21.9 percent

Comments:

- I made a commitment to the network and will see it through but it has been more of a drain than a life giving experience.
- It is one of the keys.
- Hard to answer that. Collegiality is good and important. We sometimes talk about important concerns. I'd miss it if I didn't have it.
- I enjoy it, and am blessed by it thoroughly, but am also a part of 2 other pastors groups, which help a lot.
- Absolutely. I sought this out and feel that it is a necessary piece of my health and effectiveness in ministry.
- It is hard to quantify, but I am fairly sure that it is significant.
- Personal, definitely. Professional somewhat, but spiritual not really.
- Key, not in the sense that I could not do ministry w/o these colleagues, but key in that this group makes me ask the right questions about how I'm leading.
- I look forward to our time together because I am challenged to be a better leader and I am blessed and enriched in our time in God's Word together, the honesty of the group and our prayer for each other.
- It very helpfully combats the isolation of ministry, and provides a great sounding board for new ideas, trial and error, and shared experiences.
- It has been somewhat helpful; but is not a "key" (as in foundational) element.
- I am a better pastor and person because of it!
- I have local clergy who fill this need.
- But it's good for me to be with other pastors.

9. Please check all of the following that your network has/had in place:

Clear network expectations between participants: 95.9 percent
Signed covenant between network participants: 24.7 percent
Signed covenant with my consistory regarding my network participation: 16.4 percent
Signed covenant with my coach: 12.3 percent

Comments:

- My consistory is aware—and pretty sure had a signed agreement at the beginning of the process.
- Nothing in writing, but often discuss parts of this.
- The network was started before I became a part of it. I did not sign anything, but that does not mean the others have not either. I simply don't know if they have.
- None.
- I think this is part of the issue. There isn't really a clear expectation or covenant...
- None of the above. General expectations.
- My consistory is fully aware of my participation, and is very glad that I am part of a network.
- However, all of these are so long ago, I doubt that my consistory and likely some of the group itself has forgotten the signed aspects of this group.
- I now have a new position and I have not signed a covenant with this consistory.
- We had a financial commitment that functioned like a signed contract. When I sent in my check, I said...I'm in.
- My coach was not part of my network.
- Signed covenants were years ago.
- None of these are present. We are very informal and it works great that way for us.
- I am different because I am a missionary.
- Our network does not have any of these in place, and I do not have a covenant with my (out-of-network) coach, either.
- Some of these are outdated because the network has been together so long.

10. Describe the impact that your network experience has had on:

	Little or no impact	Some impact, but not readily noticed by others	Enough impact to be noticed by some people	Great impact, noticed by most people
You	10.4 percent	27.1 percent	**52.1 percent**	10.4 percent
Your family, due to changes in you	30.2 percent	**38.5 percent**	25.0 percent	6.3 percent
Your congregation, due to changes in your leadership	21.7 percent	**43.5 percent**	30.4 percent	4.3 percent
Your community, due to changes in the congregation	**46.7 percent**	38.9 percent	13.3 percent	1.1 percent

Comments:

- I do not serve a congregation so the last two don't apply.
- It is hard to measure the impact, because I have been in some form of regular group of interims almost since my beginning in interim ministry 12 1/2 years ago.
- I answered this over the long term, which for me has been 15 years. I started with the original small group in CA before it went national. It was a Refocusing Group then. It was instrumental in recovering my personal call and commitment to ministry in low-income, high risk areas where the church normally does not plant. Over the last couple of years my experience has not been as profound, but it has been significant in supporting my call.

- The ability to be noticed by others is not in my opinion a true measure of the impact of something.
- It has been a good start for me. I have been serving in Rochester for 11 years. This is only the second time I have been involved in a network since arriving in NY. The first network was more valuable as it had an accountability, openness, and trust element rivaling a 12 step group.
- Again, we really haven't hit some of the areas I had hoped. I'm certain it's been more helpful/impacting to others...and might move there in time (we've just met for a year).
- Some of this is tough to measure even with the fairly broad definitions of "impact level."

Report of the General Synod Council on Discipleship

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:16-17).

Discipleship is the process of spiritual growth, learning more about and growing to become more like Jesus. Discipleship is carried out in many ways throughout the denomination: Sunday school, Children and Worship, triads, small groups, vacation Bible school, mentoring, coaching, youth groups, and more. Many different programs, initiatives, and models can be a part of vital discipleship.

GSC DISCIPLESHIP ENDS MONITORING REPORT

Each spring the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for discipleship follows.

GSC Global Ends Policy

> Empowered by the Holy Spirit and in covenant with the general secretary and staff, the General Synod Council will carry out its responsibilities in order to ensure that the Reformed Church in America will be a denomination where congregations are following Christ in mission, equipped and empowered for faithful and fruitful ministry, which requires all we have and all we are to the glory of God.

Discipleship Ends Policy

> The RCA will be a fellowship of congregations filled with disciples, nurtured inwardly, focused outwardly, becoming like Jesus in all they think, say, and do in order to show the love of God in all circumstances to all people.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION

Disciples making disciples is the clearest and most precise way to state the vision and values of the Discipleship Office. Each disciple of Christ is committed to internalizing the gospel in his or her individual life, and it results in a compelling desire to disciple another

person. Through empowering, connecting, encouraging, and sustaining, leaders, teachers, pastors, youth, and children will be discipled and will disciple others, and this will result in transformed lives, churches, and communities.

This ends policy is also reflected in the mission statement of the discipleship team: "Christian discipleship is the practice of following Jesus Christ, becoming like him in all we think, say, and do, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to be the very presence of Christ in a lost and broken world so loved by God." The Youth Team, the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education, the H.O.P.E. Team, and the Discipleship Team are collaboratively strategizing methods to live into this definition.

Disciples making disciples embodies the inward nature of growing in Christ as an individual and it incorporates the outward focus of discipling others. It is relational in its approach, missional in its nature, educational in its practice, incarnational in its witness, and transformational in its outcome and it is foundational to all we do as the body of Christ. Discipleship is one of the foundations of the ten-year goal, and with that comes the urgency and necessity of working with revitalization and multiplication as we work together to equip and empower disciples for faithful and fruitful ministry.

Working with appropriate GSC staff, I have established the following goals.

Goal: To implement and provide training for a relational model of discipleship, using reproducing triads and small groups.

We believe that discipleship is relational and done best in community. What are the relational techniques and models that help form disciples that emulate Jesus Christ in all they think, say, and do?

Outcomes:

- By 2013, at least one hundred persons will be trained in the triad approach and will in turn provide training in at least three congregations annually.
- By 2013, at least three hundred congregational leaders will have received training in relational models of discipleship.
- By 2013, at least one thousand congregational leaders will be in triads that provide accountability, trust, and biblical engagement as a means to strengthen their discipleship ministry.
- In 2010, regional trainings will be offered via simulcasts sponsored and shaped by the Discipleship Team. These trainings are intentional in helping followers of Jesus to be more like him in all they think, say, and do.

Strategies:

- To design, through the Discipleship Team and Greg Ogden, a training process by which local leaders will be equipped to lead a triad approach to disciple-making.
- Train regional leaders, who can in turn work with and train congregational leaders, in a relational model for discipleship.
- After year two, to gather the Discipleship Team and regional trainers for evaluation, follow-up training, and a possible revision of the process.
- Offer venues and training for small group leadership.
- Collaborate with Christian Reformed Church Home Missions in providing training and resourcing for small group leaders.
- Continue to use the language and practice of people development versus program development.

Data:

- Discipleship staff has designed the triad training process, and it has been offered in numerous settings. The material is reproducible and people who attend the trainings are given the materials to go back to their churches and train others. There are more than forty churches participating, and eight people are equipped to offer triad training. There have been at least twelve triad workshops offered this year in various locations. The material has been reproduced for others to lead; therefore it is likely that more people are equipped and leading triads, which would result in higher numbers of churches participating.
- We have collaborated with CRC Home Missions in offering training and resources for small groups. This year we hosted the third annual discipleship event and offered it on site and in five simulcast locations. Approximately three hundred people were trained in the small-group Apprenticeship Series materials. We have begun planning for the 2012 event by creating discipleship regional groups that will plan and create opportunities for pre- and post-event learning in conjunction with the actual event.
- A triad webinar is ready, but there are some technical challenges to work through before it can be offered on a monthly basis.
- Discipleship coach training is prepared and a coaching journal has been developed for the discipleship-based coaches. Presently we have trained sixty-eight discipleship-based coaches.

Triads Multiply Discipleship Training
By Howard Moths

When three people agree to meet together for 26 weeks to explore what God is saying to them, the group develops a new dimension and vitality that surprised us all.

We started using triads—groups of three that meet to study God's Word and grow in faith together—at Rosewood Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan, after I attended an RCA seminar on reimagining small-group ministry in November 2009. The keynote speaker was Greg Ogden, who talked about the power of triads in discipleship training using his book, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*.

Two months later our church's first triad began with Nancy Halliburton, Larry Vance, and me. We used the *Discipleship Essentials* workbook, which is designed to deepen knowledge of essential Christian teaching and to strengthen faith. We agreed to meet together for one and a half hours per week and invest about 20 minutes a day listening to what God was saying to us through his Word and Spirit.

It started with a desire to grow deeper in our faith walk with Christ, and knowing that we needed something different than the small-group experiences we offered in our church. We discovered that the triad made it easier: easier to ask the hard questions, easier to carry on a balanced conversation, easier to share leadership, easier to schedule a regular time to meet, easier to be vulnerable and to hold each other accountable, and easier to recognize Christ growing in each other. There is wisdom in the number three. "A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12, NIV).

We found this experience to be the highlight of our week and the most rapid period of spiritual transformation in our lives. Two other groups formed in the spring when they heard about our experience.

Goal: To see our consistories, leadership, and congregations transformed as they are challenged to participate in an intentional form of discipleship that results in life change.

We are focusing on transformation. What does life change look like as a disciple, and how is that measured?

Outcomes:

- By 2013, at least 10 percent more RCA congregations and at least 10 percent more non-RCA congregations will provide Children and Worship centers for the nurturing and transformation of young children.
- By 2013, the number of young people exposed to missional leadership opportunities through programs and institutions will be 20 percent higher.
- By 2013, one hundred discipleship leaders will have experienced foundational coach training.
- By 2013, three hundred people will be in discipleship youth and children's ministries networks.
- By 2013, more than one hundred pastors or influencers in discipleship will have taken part in the Discipleship Experience in Washington, D.C., or other parts of the U.S. and Canada.
- By 2013, churches will have received *Back to the Basics* (now called *Discipleship: Deep, Rich, and Rooted*), a resource and process to equip and empower the church with discipleship strategies and methods.

Strategies:

- To encourage the leaders in our churches to invest in the lives of youth and children and new believers as they walk with them in a discipling relationship and as they encourage the leaders and teachers in the church who are teaching Sunday school, Children and Worship, vacation Bible school, or Wednesday night programs, or who are mentoring.
- To develop a spiritual assessment tool for leaders to use as a way to examine their life as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- To work with revitalization staff in developing coaching techniques and strategies for leader-based discipleship.
- To collaborate with the H.O.P.E. (Houses of Prayer Equipping) Team in developing and supporting more RCA congregations as houses of prayer.
- To continue to raise up new leaders who experience transformation and are being called to use their gifts in fruitful and faithful ways and who feel called and equipped to lead discipleship networks.
- To work with the coordinator of multiracial initiatives and social justice in devising methods and ways to live out our discipleship by seeking justice in our churches and communities.
- To design a Discipleship Experience that focuses on the inward and outward journey.
- To put together a task force to look at what a denominational-wide "season of discipleship" would entail.

Data:

- Children and Worship training has been offered to thirteen RCA congregations and thirty-five non-RCA churches in 2010, and 112 people were trained in Children and Worship this past year.
- The Discipleship Team has written a spiritual assessment tool around the six key areas of discipleship, which are in alignment with our definition. The tool assesses how churches and leaders are working toward discipleship that is missional, relational, educational, transformational, incarnational, and foundational. This tool has been piloted in eight congregations and we are exploring methods for making it more accessible for use in the denomination. We have also collaborated with Willow

Creek in the use of the REVEAL assessment. In partnership with Willow Creek and the CRC, we have offered training webinars and tools and resources to help churches discern the data they receive from the assessment. We have four churches who have participated in the process, and we are discerning how to move forward.

- The H.O.P.E. Team is in a time of transition as they seek new ways to equip and empower people to pray. Presently the executive team meets and is planning a nationwide prayer gathering for 2012. We are exploring other initiatives for encouraging prayer as a denomination. In partnership with the Development Office and Global Mission, a prayer calendar is created and distributed each month, and daily prayer requests are being sent to more than 325 users.
- The updated youth website has provided new resources for youth pastors. We now have an annual youth pastor training event. We have encouraged churches to think more broadly about how they incorporate youth and children in worship, service, discipleship, and leadership.
- RCA staff has worked with the R-11 Committee in trying to get younger delegates at General Synod. A proposal has been written to have forty youth participating in the 2012 General Synod. The youth team would provide training and learning opportunities for the participants during the synod.
- Networks are growing; presently we have about 210 people in networks—some for children's ministry and others for youth. We have created youth LYNC (Linking Youth Networks across the Country), and thirty-six youth LYNC leaders are creating youth networks both in the U.S. and Canada.
- The discipleship team has lead two Discipleship Experiences in Washington, D.C., with twenty-four people attending. We are in the process of exploring how to do a Discipleship Experience in New York and other settings.
- The Seasons of Discipleship Task Force has designed a church-wide process called *Discipleship: Deep, Rich, and Rooted* (note the name change: it was originally *Back to the Basics*). This resource will be introduced at General Synod 2011, and updates and resources will be added over a three-year time period. The task force is comprised of eight members from across the denomination. It has worked closely with the commission in designing both a process for communicating about discipleship and resources that will support and encourage the churches' efforts in discipleship. The task force was not funded and the Discipleship Office is providing the funding. The resource will be web-based.

Being Jesus through Mentoring

"A few years ago, we went through a visioning/discernment process, and out of that came the sense that we're not reaching out to our neighborhood enough," says Doris Theune, a member at Hope Reformed Church in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

"At the same time, our interim minister had mentioned Kids Hope U.S.A. as he was giving examples of ways to become more active in the community. Our church has struggled with membership, with financials, with just staying afloat and being more in survivor mode than in mission mode. This seemed to be a perfect fit.

"It just kind of took hold in my heart, and now we're doing it."

Theune is now the church's director of Kids Hope U.S.A., a program that pairs mentors from a church (Hope Reformed) with students at a local school (Grant Elementary, six blocks away). Mentors and students spend one hour together each school week. Students and mentors also have prayer partners from the church.

Theune says mentors can't share their faith with students directly, but the program enables them to have a ministry of presence. "That's how we see ourselves—we're Jesus to these kids by showing up every week, by loving them, by playing a game with them, by helping them with their school work. We're interacting on a very Christian basis without saying that."

"It's been great for us, and it's been great for the kids," Theune says.

Goal: To continue to offer Reformed and missional resources for empowering and equipping local congregations.

We are working toward a form of missional discipleship and engaging the question "How are we preparing disciples to make other disciples?"

Outcomes:

- By 2009, a fully functioning, three-year online training course (Opening Doors to Discipleship) will be available to all RCA congregational leaders in discipleship.
- By 2010, one hundred churches will be participating in Opening Doors to Discipleship.
- Complete and updated resource lists will be provided annually, detailing curriculum for children, youth, and adults that supports our commitment to be Reformed and missional.
- By 2013, youth from every region will be participating in Project Timothy.
- Fifty local leaders will be trained and equipped to be models of lifelong learning and a voice of discipleship in their region through at least two collaborative lifelong learning events.
- By 2013, resource networks will be using discussion forums/blogs so that Reformed disciples may share Reformed and missional resources and best practices with one another that grow disciples, nurture them inwardly, and focus them outwardly.

Strategies:

- To work with Faith Alive and other ecumenical partners on the creation of resources for congregational use that support our commitment to be Reformed and missional.
- To continue to highlight opportunities in the denomination that lead people into mission in a Reformed context.
- To collaborate with Volunteer Services, Project Timothy staff, and Leaders on the Horizon in order to call youth into mission, service, and leadership.
- To work with revitalization, equipping congregational members to engage in incarnational ministries through which they serve people who are not yet disciples of Christ and are trained to engage in spiritual conversations with them.
- To work with the seminaries in providing lifelong learning opportunities that are both Reformed and missional.

Data:

- Opening Doors to Discipleship is complete and currently has 311 users. We have just completed and launched our fourth and last course, on discipleship.
- Through our Presbyterian and Reformed Partnership, we have written a resource on the sacraments called *Gifts of God*, which has been well received by the RCA.
- Regarding our focus on being missional and Reformed, Brian Keepers has written *Where Do I Come In? Joining God's Mission* and Dan Teerman has written *How Do I Begin? Sharing Your Faith*. Both of these pastors are excellent RCA writers who have written for the "In the Works" series produced by Faith Alive.
- The RCA website (www.rca.org/discipleship) has complete and updated resource

lists of curriculum for children, youth, and adults that support our commitment to be Reformed and missional.
- The Discipleship Office has had three successful events in partnership with Journey and Western Theological Seminary. Presently we are working on the youth pastors training event and an annual discipleship training event. A discipleship Journey group is being formed in September 2011.
- The Leaders on the Horizon program had 148 new students in 2010 and twenty-six new leaders. These numbers have doubled from last year—a result, we believe, of getting the curriculum edited, published, and put online for our users and of raising the awareness among our networks.
- Project Timothy continues to be a vital mission program for youth. This year thirty-six students attended and six of the eight regional synods were represented.

Wired to Connect in Christ

Youth pastor Andy Vis wants to help high-school-age students "learn how to follow Christ in the way God has wired them."

One way he does this is through Leaders on the Horizon (LOH), a program that is designed to help young men and women become Christ-centered leaders in their church and beyond. Currently more than 60 young people take part in LOH at the congregation Vis serves, Meredith Drive Reformed Church in Des Moines, Iowa.

"Over time, we increasingly became aware of the need for youth to deepen their relationship with Christ in a more significant way," says Vis. "The LOH model's attractive. We liked the idea of small groups of committed teens sitting down with Christ-centered, committed leaders and 'sharing life' together."

Vis says it is the organic relationships that form between the students and their leaders that make LOH effective. "We have also seen LOH provide space for our teens to break through their school boundaries and form relationships with others who are a part of the church but not of their school. LOH has also helped our youth experience life in a deeper way with our adults, which has in turn provided avenues for deeper sharing of life issues and places for our youth to walk through this journey of faith together."

Goal: To educate and empower our children, youth, and leaders as they seek to grow as disciples of Christ.

We are focused on education and examining how the resources we are presently using are helping us to grow disciples that are nurtured inwardly and focused outwardly. What new and creative resources and methods will help us educate disciples and what present methods are still effective?

Outcomes:
- By 2010, a training session will be offered in every region for children's ministries and adult discipleship.
- By 2010, training events for *I Wonder* and *Following Jesus* will be developed and implemented so that local Children and Worship leaders will be further equipped and empowered for faithful and fruitful ministry.
- By 2011, a Children and Worship introduction workshop will be provided online.
- By 2013, the number of Children and Worship basic trainings, introductions, enrichment, and specialized events will increase by 20 percent in order to strengthen local Children and Worship ministry.
- By 2013, Children and Worship networks will form via discussion forums and blogs

for trainers and local leaders that provide communication and a means for sharing questions and best practices.
- By 2013, there will be a network for discipleship coordinators in each region to keep them connected, revitalized, and sustained.
- By 2010, the Seasons of Discipleship Task Force will bring a proposal to General Synod outlining how disciples can be fully embraced in the life and mission of the local church.

Strategies:
- To gather data about what methods and curriculum are being used to educate our children, youth, and adults.
- To offer a scope and sequence of what adults, children, and youth should be learning.
- To educate leaders, teachers, and pastors on teaching technique, methodology, discipleship training, and spiritual disciplines.
- To develop Christ-centered followers, teachers, and leaders that are connected and sustained in community and who live out their faith in all they think, say, and do.
- A Seasons of Discipleship Task Force will create new resources and methods to help churches engage in developing disciples of Jesus Christ for all ages.

Data:
- In 2010, Children and Worship held events in seven regions. There were also adult discipleship events in six out of the eight regions.
- The Children and Worship Management Team, along with regional trainers, decided it was not necessary to develop a specific training event for *I Wonder*. A training event has been developed for *Following Jesus*.
- An introductory video to Children and Worship, *Helping Children Experience God*, is available for viewing on the RCA website. PowerPoints for training (including online training) are being further enhanced and developed. Additional video is also being pursued.
- A Children and Worship Facebook page has been set up, and people are communicating and networking through this tool.
- In 2008, a consortium of experts in the field of education was brought together to discuss the future and trends in children's ministry; another gathering is planned for the summer of 2011 with our ecumenical partners. Our hope is to dialogue about new methods and models for discipleship for the future. Training tools and resources will be developed by those attending this event.
- The Seasons of Discipleship Task Force has met in person twice and has been meeting via email and written correspondence. Its proposal was shared at the commission meeting, and it is on task for being introduced at General Synod 2011.
- The simulcast event helped discipleship teams form and work together in four of the synods. It is the plan to continue to work at developing regionally based teams. The challenge in creating regionally based teams is that many of our regional synods no longer have paid staff people in discipleship and youth. In the regions that do, there are thriving teams and networks accomplishing this task. We are still exploring methods to improve on this strategy.

Facebook Worship Connects with Teens

On Wednesday nights, First Reformed Church of Hasbrouck Heights is gathered for worship—on Facebook.

Worship at "First Reformed Cyber Church" is a "very Reformed, liturgical process,"

according to pastor Dianna Smith, but in a new format to connect with a younger generation. Facebook is a social networking website with more than 500 million users.

Ahead of time, Smith posts the Scripture passage, music and videos, and any litanies for the service. When the service begins, she guides participants from link to link. She'll direct them to read the Scripture passage on their own; when they have finished reading, some respond by typing "Amen" or clicking "Like," so Smith knows to proceed. Sermons are very abbreviated, usually just a sentence or two.

"The thing that everyone says is most meaningful is the joys and concerns," Smith says. "They will post their joy, and I will respond to it, and others respond to it. People are saying, 'I will keep you in my prayers,' or 'I celebrate that joy.' There's this back and forth that we're able to do that doesn't traditionally happen in church."

The data included in this report is based on the means and ends that were created for 2010.

Report of the General Synod Council on Disability Ministry throughout the RCA

"After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands" (Revelation 7:9).

In 2007, the General Synod Council initiated conversations with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) about a possible partnership in disability ministry. At that time, the RCA had no formal structure for ministry among people with disabilities, but it recognized both a growing demand for such a ministry and an expertise at work in the CRC since 1982. In 2008, the RCA and the CRC entered into a partnership for disability ministry that expressed a commitment to help RCA and CRC churches "become hospitable, inclusive, and healthy communities." According to a working agreement endorsed in 2008 by both the GSC and the CRC board of trustees, "the disability ministries of both denominations can be more effective by sharing knowledge, support, and resources; by building a broader network of relationships; and by allowing disability ministry to be yet another step in the increasingly fruitful shared ministries between our two denominations." The working agreement was understood not as an end, but as a beginning, with the intention of eventually creating one integrated disability ministry to serve both denominations.

Since the hiring of an RCA staff member in September 2009, the disability concerns offices of the RCA and CRC have begun to collaborate on a newsletter, website, training, conferences, and web and print resources for use by their congregations. The partnership already has resulted in cost-saving efficiencies and enhanced ministry. The RCA is benefiting from the CRC's programming and experience as it builds a foundation that envisions accessible, inclusive, missional churches that are engaging and engaged by people with disabilities. The CRC has been generous in sharing resources, and it remains eager to grow a lasting partnership that stretches and expands its ministry while together serving the kingdom of God.

GSC DISABILITY MINISTRY ENDS MONITORING REPORT

Each spring the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC)

on progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for disability ministry follows:

GSC Global Ends Policy

> Empowered by the Holy Spirit and in covenant with the general secretary and staff, the General Synod Council will carry out its responsibilities in order to ensure that the Reformed Church in America will be a denomination where congregations are following Christ in mission, equipped and empowered for faithful and fruitful ministry, which requires all we have and all we are to the glory of God.

Disability Ministry Sub-End Policy

> Congregations and assemblies of the Reformed Church in America will reflect God's vision of the kingdom, embracing complete unity reaching all people (every race, tribe, people, and language, every disability and special need, including those living on the margins) with the love and grace of Jesus Christ; actively engaging in love, acceptance, forgiveness, and justice (John 17:23; Revelation 7:9).

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION

This sub-end policy calls the GSC staff to collaborate with congregations, classes, and regional synods to the end that our life together within the Reformed Church in America more fully reflects the grace, love, unity, reconciliation, and justice of God.

There is a close connection between this sub-end and GSC E-7, the multiracial future policy. Much of the work that has been assigned to staff is reported on in the monitoring report for E-7. It is my interpretation that the area of disabilities is not addressed in other monitoring reports and therefore will be reported here. The overall focus for disabilities is to develop an increasing number of RCA congregations that are accessible, inclusive, and missional churches engaging and engaged by people with disabilities.

Because a staff position for disabilities ministries was just established in October 2009, and it is a two-thirds time position, this ends policy is focused on a long-term time horizon—2013 and beyond. It is my responsibility as general secretary to ensure that measurable outcomes for 2013 and beyond are established and yearly benchmarks beginning with the year 2011 are developed and monitored. To that end I have established the following goals, outcomes, and strategies, and anticipated data.

Goal: By 2013, establish a volunteer network, consisting of at least one hundred church advocates for disability concerns, to assist RCA congregations to engage and be engaged by people with disabilities.

Outcomes:

- By 2013, at least two congregations in each classis will identify and commission a church advocate for disability concerns.
- By 2013, at least two congregations in each classis will include people with disabilities in a leadership role.
- By 2013, at least two congregations in each classis will eliminate a barrier (physical, attitudinal, communication, theological, etc.) to facilitate greater participation among people with disabilities.

Strategies:

- Produce and distribute a quarterly newsletter (*Breaking Barriers*) that educates congregations about disability concerns and serves as a resource for church advocates.
- Encourage congregations, through inserts in a quarterly newsletter (*Breaking Barriers*), to identify a gifted member with a deep interest in disability issues to serve as a church advocate in disability concerns.
- Coordinate and host, in partnership with the Christian Reformed Church Office of Disability Concerns, a two-day training event for church advocates in August 2011.

Data:

- As of January 2011, twenty-five individuals are serving their congregations as disability advocates.
- As of November 2010, with the help of a Hope College intern, churches in designated classes are receiving personalized emails and follow-up telephone calls in an effort to help churches identify disability advocates.
- Planned for August 2011, a two-day leadership training conference will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for RCA and CRC disability advocates.
- As of spring 2010, ten print copies of the RCA-CRC disability newsletter, *Breaking Barriers*, have been sent quarterly to each RCA congregation.
- As of spring 2010, electronic versions of the RCA-CRC disability newsletter, *Breaking Barriers*, have been uploaded quarterly in regular- and large-print format and featured on the homepage of the RCA website. As of fall 2010, email blasts have been sent quarterly.
- As of fall 2010, through an expanding list of email addresses (two hundred as of January 2011), interested RCA members receive occasional alerts from the Disability Concerns Office.

Goal: By 2013, deepen awareness within at least 200 RCA congregations of issues faced by people with disabilities so that congregations can become more accessible, inclusive, and missional.

Outcomes:

- By 2013, at least three congregations in each classis will engage in an educational or advocacy event that enhances inclusion and creates awareness of issues faced by people with disabilities.
- By 2013, at least two congregations in each classis will eliminate a barrier (physical, attitudinal, communication, theological, etc.) to facilitate greater participation by people with disabilities.
- By 2013, at least two congregations in each classis will respond to a community/neighborhood issue faced by people with disabilities.

Strategies:

- Produce and distribute a quarterly newsletter (*Breaking Barriers*) that educates congregations about issues of accessibility and inclusion and promotes participation in God's mission, in a neighborhood/community context, among people with disabilities.
- Provide resources that encourage congregations to promote an annual Disability Awareness Sunday that engages people with disabilities and responds to issues faced by people with disabilities.

Data:

- In January 2011, information about and resources for Disability Awareness Sunday, designated in the RCA Plan Calendar for the first Sunday in March, were provided

to all RCA congregations. If the first Sunday in March is not convenient, churches are urged to observe Disability Awareness Sunday at any time throughout the year.
- In January 2011, the first of several planned study guides ("Spirituality, Hospitality, and Disability") on a General Synod-approved paper, "Spirituality and Hospitality: What the Church Can Learn by Welcoming Persons with Disabilities," was made available on the disability page of the RCA website (www.rca.org/disability).

Adding a Chair Lift, Waiting on the Lord
By Richard A. Morano, preaching elder at Williamson (New York) Reformed Church

Since the time I began my ministry as a preaching elder at Williamson Reformed Church in 2002, it was apparent that the 13 steps to the church's main entrance would become increasingly problematic for a congregation of mostly older members. Indeed, some members stopped attending as steps became more of a barrier.

I worked with the Williamson consistory to look into installing a chairlift from the ground level to the main church floor. After much discussion, the consistory decided not to install a lift at that time. For the next several months I was aware of the growing difficulty people experienced in negotiating the steps each Sunday.

When a member became a regular wheelchair user and the family struggled to negotiate the stairs, I raised the issue again. After much discussion, again the consistory decided not to install a lift.

I sensed that the Lord was telling me to wait—not to push—and sure enough, several months later a consistory member suggested that we needed to look into getting a chairlift for the front steps. I agreed that it was a great idea and volunteered to explore the church's options.

Today, we have an enclosed front entrance with a chairlift; on the first Sunday it was available, six people used it, which was a source of great joy to many. Weeks later another elderly couple came to our church; the wife had found it very difficult to climb steps but was overjoyed that we had a chairlift. Her former church had too many steps for her to attend, and she and her husband now attend our church regularly. Praise the Lord!

Goal: By 2013, the assemblies of the RCA, beginning with the General Synod, provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities.

Outcomes:
- By 2013, General Synod will make reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities a standard operating practice for all sessions.
- By 2013, the General Synod Council will make reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities a standard operating practice for all stated sessions.
- By 2013, all General Synod agencies, commissions, teams, task forces, and committees will make reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities a standard operating practice for all sessions.
- By 2014, at least two regional synods will make reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities a standard operating practice for all stated sessions.
- By 2015, at least four classes will make reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities a standard operating practice for all stated sessions.

Strategies:
- Joint proposals will be considered by the highest assemblies of the RCA and CRC.

As partners in a shared ministry, the RCA and CRC Disability Concerns offices are jointly approaching their respective 2011 (General) Synod gatherings with identical recommendations to move future synod assemblies toward becoming fully accessible.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DISABILITIES CONCERNS PARTNERSHIP

The Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America in their Disability Concerns partnership, have prepared a joint recommendation that makes a commitment that requires future RCA General Synod assemblies to provide reasonable accommodations to participants with disabilities. While many standard accommodations will be provided routinely (ramps, accessible restrooms, hearing assistance devices, etc.), it is understood that other less common or more expensive reasonable accommodations will be provided if known in advance by meeting organizers. (The recommendation adopted by the GSC follows the indented statement presented to the CRC 2011 Synod.)

Disability Concerns Recommendation Presented to the 2011 CRC Synod:

Background

In 1985, the Christian Reformed Church committed itself to "to be the caring community according to 1 Corinthians 12, paying special attention to the needs and gifts of people with physical, sensory, mental, and emotional impairments." At that time we also pledged to overcome barriers of architecture, communication, and attitude that make people with disabilities feel unwelcome in our churches. Subsequent synods approved practical steps for implementing these commitments including a decision in 1993 to "heartily recommend full compliance with the provisions of the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act]…and its accompanying regulations in all portions of the CRC located in the U.S. and Canada." As part of that decision synod suggested "that the provisions of the ADA should…be honored by synod and individual classes when they conduct their business. This implies, for example, that meetings, including committee-level meetings, should be held in architecturally accessible facilities and that accommodation should be made for disabled persons who are synodical or classical representatives or who simply wish to observe synodical or classical proceedings."

The people responsible for the organization and implementation of synod each year have worked hard to abide by this suggestion. We note that synod's 1993 discussion regarding accommodations at meetings included suggestions rather than mandates. Our denomination has never made a firm and clear commitment to accommodate all participants at our synod. By doing so, we give a warm welcome to all delegates and visitors to our highest assembly, thus encouraging a broad spectrum of our membership to participate in leadership of and to be informed about synod's work. Furthermore, accessibility of our highest assembly would serve as a model for delegates and encourage a similar commitment by churches, committees, councils, and classes.

The reasonable accommodations for participants of synod (those who are present in an official capacity such as delegates, advisors, committee members, and staff) must include these:

- Conduct all meetings in fully accessible facilities
- Offer alternative formats for printed material
- Permit the use of service animals
- Ensure that all participants use microphones, in plenary session and, if requested in advance, in committee meetings

If requested in advance by participants, provide accommodations for communication such as hearing loop, C-print captioning, sign language interpretation, closed captioning of videos, or closed audio descriptor of videos.

Our intent with this recommendation is not to create an ADA-specific set of requirements. Our intent also is to allow the office of Disability Concerns to have some discretion in determining if any additional accommodations should be made available to participants at synod in future years.

In this historic year when the Synod of the CRC and the General Synod of the RCA are meeting in the same location and meeting one day for a joint session, the offices of Disability Concerns in the CRC and the RCA are asking our denominations to commit themselves to accessibility of the meetings of their highest assemblies.

In partnership with CRC Disability Concerns, the RCA affirmed its commitment to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities by adopting a parallel recommendation at the General Synod Council meeting held in March 2011:

That future meetings of General Synod provide reasonable accommodations to all participants, including but not limited to people with known hearing impairments, sight impairments, and mobility impairments (GSC 11-7).

Reasons:

1. In the Reformed tradition, we understand the Bible to affirm that all people, disabled and nondisabled alike, are image-bearers of God and that the church is a covenant community with mutual obligations toward one another. A commitment by our highest assembly to provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities applies our anthropology in a clear and practical way with regard to people with disabilities.
2. In many ways, our meetings of General Synod already provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities. Approval of this recommendation would cement our aspiration into a solid commitment.
3. A commitment by our highest assembly to provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities is a clear and consistent application of General Synod concerning the inclusion of people with disabilities in church life.
4. A commitment by General Synod to provide reasonable accommodations establishes a model for other assemblies and agencies to follow in becoming a church that is engaging and engaged by people with disabilities.

Financial implications: In addition to ongoing accessibility accommodations that General Synod staff has provided during the last several years, particularly for those with mobility impairments, this recommendation has additional financial implications for accommodating people with hearing and sight impairments. At minimum, hearing loops would be provided in plenary and committee gatherings (estimated not to exceed $1,000) and real time captioning would be provided during plenary sessions (estimated not to exceed an average of $50 per hour). In addition, upon request, sign language interpretation would be available (estimated not to exceed an average of $50 per hour). Other reasonable accommodations would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The RCA Office of Disability Concerns will resource assemblies, agencies, commissions, teams, task forces, and committees with information and local referrals to assist with efforts to provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities.

Report of the General Synod Council on Leadership throughout the RCA

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'" (Isaiah 6:8).

As the voice of the Lord once spoke to Isaiah, it continues to call people to service in witnessing to the reign of God. The Reformed Church in America joins that work by identifying, forming, deploying, nurturing, and renewing people with gifts for leadership. This happens in several ways:

- Forming a new generation of pastoral leaders.
- Training elders and deacons in their ministry.
- Assisting leaders to discern God's direction.
- Connecting congregations and ministers of Word and sacrament.
- Creating pastoral networks for support and learning.
- Coaching and mentoring pastors in their work.
- Nurturing the unique gifts and ministry of women.

The General Synod Council (GSC) nurtures congregational leadership—deacons, elders, ministers, emerging leaders, and longtime leaders—through programs and ministries around four themes: calling people to ministry, forming people for ministry, nurturing people in ministry, and renewing people for changing ministry.

Calling People to Ministry

The major initiative in this area of focus is Call Waiting, a program that helps men and women discern the call to ministry and nurtures them along the way. Call Waiting includes a cooperative program with RCA camps and conference centers. Call Waiting resulted in the creation of a program of care and nurture for college students who attend General Synod as corresponding delegates, to assist them in their vocational development. It is clear that God's call in the lives of RCA members is at the heart of raising up a new generation of leaders to serve a world in need and a denomination eager to serve.

Forming People for Ministry

Consistory Training: Our congregational leaders are hungry for tools that can move their congregations toward health and growth. In response to this challenge, the coordinator for consistory training and ministry services provides support and training to equip and develop the gifts of pastors, elders, and deacons as they move toward a fuller understanding of being faithful consistories.

Specific training is provided for the effective use of an RCA resource, *Companions on the Way*, which supports the ministry of elders as they tend to the spiritual needs of people who are exploring or rediscovering the Christian faith. This model, led by elders, supported by pastors, and adaptable for any congregation, has the potential to enliven the whole faith community.

In some regions of the RCA clusters of consistories come together for learning, shared ministry, and support. These consistory clusters provide a way for consistories to learn from one another how they shape ministries in their various congregations. In addition as they become aware of one another's ministry goals, they pray for and support one another.

Training Prepares Elders, Deacons

Two-thirds of RCA elders and deacons do not feel adequately prepared for their roles, according to a recent leadership survey. But help is available. RCA Ministry Services holds consistory training events by request. One such training was held at New Brooklyn Reformed Church in May 2010, with leaders from a number of New York churches attending.

"We thought elder Ellen Ratmeyer gave a very clear and practical presentation about the role and duties of elders and deacons," says Gerri Yoshida, who attended the event with five others from her church, Japanese American United Church (JAUC). "Most helpful and energizing was being in a room full of committed Christians who are excited about serving the Lord in their local churches. At JAUC we often feel isolated as a mono-ethnic church, and it was very helpful for us to see and hear that other congregations in different contexts struggle with similar issues and often come up with creative solutions."

"The aim of the workshop was to develop our knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the elders and deacons," says Irma Patterson, elder at First Reformed Church of Jamaica in Queens, and a representative of the African American/Black Council, which cosponsored the event with the Classis of Brooklyn. "Many of the elders and deacons from my church could not attend the training, but Ellen Ratmeyer did such a fine job that the few of us who attended shared the information with those who could not be there."

Nurturing People in Ministry

A primary way the RCA nurtures people in ministry is through a growing emphasis on coaching. Within the RCA, coaching is understood to be the process of coming alongside a person to help her or him discover God's agenda for her or his life and ministry, while seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance to see that agenda become reality. Coaching helps a person listen to God about where change is needed and then equips and empowers a person to make the necessary changes.

The increased awareness and accountability that comes along with coaching will help leaders be more faithful as they participate in and witness to the realm of God. By God's grace, and through the Holy Spirit's power, the outcome will be more fruitful ministry. This is true for at least three reasons:

1. **Coaching is focused on the present.** Coaches help others understand their present situation in order to discover and implement meaningful actions to address that situation.
2. **Coaching helps people discover their own answers.** Coaches assume that the person closest to the issue typically has the best answers, but that she or he will discover those answers with the help of someone skilled in asking the right questions.
3. **Coaching leads to intentional action.** Coaches help people take inventory of their values and desires by listening to them, asking questions, and speaking the truth, and then helping them develop and take intentional steps toward more faithful action in the future.

Coach training has been offered to pastoral leaders in all the regional synods of the RCA and to some congregational leaders as well.

The Call Process within the RCA

The Office of Ministry Services continues to assist search committees and pastoral candidates. Every church profile and ministerial profile is personally handled by the coordinator of pastoral services, who works with candidates and search committees until a call is accepted. The Ministry Services staff is committed to learning and understanding the needs of pastors and churches and to building levels of excellence into every aspect of the call process.

Specialized Interim Ministers

Interim ministry continues to be a useful specialty within the RCA. Ministry Services maintains a roster of qualified interims, monitors their current availability, and provides their names upon request. The specialized interim ministers are invited to an annual gathering which provides time for strengthening ties, sharing stories and resources, as well as rest and renewing an awareness of God's calling.

Chaplains

A large number of RCA ministers do not serve congregations. Their ministry takes place in hospitals, mental health institutions, nursing homes, prisons, and the armed forces. They are endorsed by the RCA to the specialized ministry of chaplain. Every year all who have been endorsed and certified by Ministry Services to exercise the ministry of chaplain by the Reformed Church in America are invited to attend an annual conference. This gathering, which takes place prior to General Synod, provides a nurturing place of mutual support and accountability as well as renewal and networking possibilities for participants. The conference provides a place to experience a variety of learning models through theological reflection, and participants identify the experiences as transformative and challenging. They return to their workplace not only refreshed but better equipped for their various ministries.

Pastors Also Serve as Chaplains

David Leung Kahler and Tim Ippolito are both pastors of RCA churches in New Jersey—and they're also military chaplains.

Leung Kahler and Ippolito agree that while balancing pastoral and military responsibilities is challenging, the roles are complementary. "My job description involves the technical aspects of following military code by doing things like saluting and wearing a uniform, but the heart of chaplaincy is ministry," says Leung Kahler. "My life mission is to build bridges to Christ."

Chaplaincy and pastoral care are equally missional in nature, Ippolito says. "Soldiers are enduring a perfect storm of challenges, from financial to relational. My number is programmed into 400 soldiers' cell phones. It is an honor to speak into their lives."

Commissioned Pastors

"The vision of the Reformed Church in America in the twenty-first century is to see a new reformation of lay people equipped and inspired to serve Christ and his church" (Report on the Summit to Study Lay Pastoral Ministry in the RCA, *MGS 2002*, p. 293).

A commissioned pastor is an elder commissioned by a classis to serve in a specific role

within a congregation, the classis, or a specialized ministry. Commissioned pastors are church planters, Christian educators, youth leaders, and executive pastors, and they are in many other significant ministry roles. They are valuable ministry partners as the RCA identifies, equips, and empowers the leadership necessary to live into Our Call.

The commissioned pastors program works with leaders for whom a seminary education is not practical or possible. A personalized training program is designed around each person's gifts and calling and usually includes mentoring, coaching, college or university classes, distance learning classes through a seminary, and hands-on ministry experiences. The program equips each participant to serve in his or her specific classis. Training programs vary by region and are coordinated and contextualized by classis.

The General Synod Council has created a Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team to facilitate the sharing of learning and best practices, oversight of standards, and coordination of efforts.

Interim Ministers Help Churches Transition

The RCA has been facilitating placement of specialized interim ministers (SIMs), who must be endorsed by their classis, during periods of pastoral transition in churches since 1984. Currently, 62 SIMs serve RCA churches from Texas to Canada.

Almost by definition, it's a tough assignment, as SIMs often go into churches that are experiencing turbulence. Thus, the RCA requires all aspiring SIMs to undergo training with the Interim Ministry Network and looks for ministers with the right personality and seasoning. "Even when it's a good leaving, there's a period of adjustment," says Elaine Tetreault, coordinator of pastoral services for the RCA. "It's a call. It's a gifted set of skills."

Since 2003, Roland Ratmeyer has been a SIM at four different New Jersey churches, and each one presented a different set of challenges. At the first church, a beloved pastor had retired after a long tenure. In the second church, Ratmeyer stepped in after things didn't work out between a congregation and a minister. His third experience was precipitated by the untimely death of a well loved pastor, and his latest interim assignment, which ended in November, followed a pastor getting a call to a new church.

Ratmeyer says he enjoyed each assignment because of the variety of hard-hitting issues he had to face. He learned that it's important to distinguish between long-term goals and short-term tasks and to involve the entire congregation in self-study. This can involve looking back on the church's history and analyzing the good times and the not-so-good ones before developing a new vision for the future.

"Congregations are always changing," he says. "You have to look ahead to see what changes should be made."

Renewing People for Changing Ministry

A major opportunity before the revitalization and leadership staff of the RCA is to listen to God and discern how the powerful and transformative movement of coached revitalizing networks can be extended to more pastors throughout the denomination, and how the benefits of networks can be made available to congregational leaders as well.

Already, throughout the Reformed Church in America, elders, deacons, and other congre-

gational leaders are experiencing the benefits of participating in the Purposeful Living process. Purposeful Living is a primary tool being used by pastoral leaders as they develop personal calling statements in their coached revitalizing networks. As an extension of their work in networks, pastors and network coaches/facilitators are guiding congregational leaders through the same process. The result is a growing group of leaders who have a clearer sense of who God created them to be, what God is shaping them to do, and where God is challenging them to go. In this way, renewed leadership contributes to revitalizing existing congregations and multiplying new ministries and congregations.

GSC LEADERSHIP ENDS MONITORING REPORT

Each spring the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for leadership follows:

GSC Global Ends Policy

> Empowered by the Holy Spirit and in covenant with the general secretary and staff, the General Synod Council will carry out its responsibilities in order to ensure that the Reformed Church in America will be a denomination where congregations are following Christ in mission, equipped and empowered for faithful and fruitful ministry, which requires all we have and all we are to the glory of God.

Leadership Ends Policy

> The RCA will be a fellowship of congregations that are building a healthy, growing future by renewing existing leadership and identifying, calling forth, and training people with gifts for leadership.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION

This ends policy calls the GSC staff to collaborate with congregations, classes, and regional synods in ways specific to each region to make a difference in the experience of three distinct recipients in order that:

- Congregations are resourced for their work of leadership development.
- Existing leadership experiences ongoing renewal.
- Emerging leadership (congregational and pastoral) is identified, called forth, and trained to exercise leadership in the life of the congregation in the world God loves.

This ends policy has a long-term time horizon—2013 and beyond—and therefore requires intermediate benchmarks for the years between 2008 and 2013. Those benchmarks must delineate:

- Specific leadership development processes and tools the GSC offers congregations and a means to account for the use of those processes by leaders.
- The number of congregational leaders intentionally seeking renewal and the impact of those efforts on their lives and leadership.
- The number of emerging pastoral leaders identified, the type of leadership that is needed, and the equipping processes employed to develop, nurture, and support these leaders.

To that end, I and the appropriate GSC staff have identified the following goals.

Goal for congregational leader renewal: By 2013, congregational leaders (whether in

an ordained office or not) in at least 400 RCA congregations have developed and are guided by a personal calling statement and are drawing on training that helps them lead congregations more faithfully and fruitfully.

Outcomes:

- At least ten congregational leaders in each of at least four hundred RCA congregations will have developed their own personal calling statements.
- Consistories and congregational leaders in at least 250 RCA congregations will have a clear plan for nurturing existing leaders and for identifying, calling, equipping, and supporting new leaders.
- Congregational leaders in 250 congregations, in partnership with their pastoral leaders, will have collaboratively led a process through which they discerned their congregation's mission, vision, and values and will have taken specific steps to place God's mission at the center of their life and ministry.
- Consistories in at least 250 RCA congregations will have adopted a governance model that is consistent with their discernment concerning God's mission for their congregation, through which they lead their congregations in missional engagement drawing on an RCA understanding of the parity of the offices.
- Elders and deacons in 50 percent of RCA congregations, when surveyed, will say that they are equipped for their specific role.

Strategies:

- Use the Purposeful Living process in network facilitator training, in annual consistory trainings of 400 congregations, and with regional synod staffs.
- Use existing RCA resources and develop new resources that will assist congregations in identifying, calling, and equipping congregational leaders—especially elders and deacons.
- Develop congregational revitalization processes that will help congregations prayerfully discern God's mission, vision, values, and future story for their congregation and take specific steps to move toward this preferred future.
- Assist congregations as they evaluate existing governance models and employ new ones.
- Survey elders and deacons regularly to assess current levels of training and identify new needs.

Data:

- Thirty-one pastors and roughly 150 congregational leaders are taking part in the Ridder Initiative, a two-year transformational leadership development process. This consists of five learning retreats and subsequent assignments and coaching to ensure the studied concepts are being integrated into each leader's life and context. As part of this initiative, each participant completes a personal calling statement using the Purposeful Living process. The Ridder Initiative is offered through a partnership of the RCA, Western Theological Seminary, and the Regional Synods of Mid-America and the Great Lakes.
- We are exploring ways to multiply the limited leadership development opportunities offered in the Ridder Initiative.
- Retreats for congregational leaders employing Purposeful Living are being held throughout the RCA.
- Elders and deacons who have completed the Purposeful Living process and developed their own personal calling statements are being invited to use this resource within their congregations.
- The coordinator for consistory training and ministry services has had opportunities to nurture and encourage existing leaders throughout the RCA at regional leadership

training events and consistory workshops/retreats, through the resource *Deacons and Elders: Called to Serve*, and by partnering with the coordinator of discipleship around triad discipleship.

- "Churches on the Grow," an RCA initiative designed to help churches achieve both spiritual and numerical growth, continues to engage eleven churches through their three-year commitment of intentional growth. This work is done by way of seven GSC staff members acting as revitalization consultants.
- The coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice is working with congregations throughout the RCA to engage their communities by developing Christian development organizations as a way to missionally impact their communities and revitalize their congregations.
- The coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice collaborated with the coordinator for consistory training and ministry services to develop a new edition of the *Church-Based Community Outreach Resource Guide*, which is available on the RCA's website.
- The coordinator for consistory training and ministry services is working with the newly formed Consistory Empowerment Team in a process of inquiry and evaluation, listening for best practices that might be shared with others in order to propose better ways to select, equip, empower, encourage, and nurture growth in leaders throughout the RCA, and to determine the best governance model for their congregations.
- Elders and deacons have been surveyed concerning their current levels of training and what they still require; survey results are available on the RCA's website in the Consistory Center (www.rca.org/consistorycenter). These results are intended to be an indicator of the depth of interest in training among currently serving elders and deacons as well as a wake-up call to the denomination (if one is needed) on how far we still have to go to fully prepare our church leaders for their roles. Approximately 35 percent of all elders and deacons actively serving an RCA congregation responded to the survey. The Fresh Wind Task Force found it most interesting that, despite the ample resources that are available, only about three of every ten elders and deacons received an orientation to office that fully explained their duties and responsibilities; fewer than two of every ten received any formal training for the office before being ordained; and only about one out of every three felt fully prepared to fulfill all their responsibilities as ordained leaders. Responses to the remaining questions made it clear that this was not the preferred situation—many elders and deacons expressed a desire for more extensive training and preparation for their offices. A repeated theme in the survey was that even those elders and deacons who received initial training for their positions received no follow-up training. In an additional survey of pastors, many noted that they were too heavily burdened and not fully equipped to add leadership development to their job descriptions. The newly formed Consistory Empowerment Team, created through a recommendation by the 2010 General Synod, will be working diligently to address these issues and brought a report to the 2011 General Synod.

Pastors Learn Online

An online classroom is the setting for Leadership Development Journey, a new course that helps pastors dive deep into leadership topics.

Each monthly session lasts two hours, and between classes participants tackle four hours of "homework." Assignments range from reading books on leadership to writing a vision article imagining themselves three years down the road. "Participants are to really live into what could be and really try to see it and write details about it in order to solidify the

vision," says Rodger Price, the RCA's coordinator of revitalization and leader development, who designed the course. So far 19 pastors have gone through the six-month class.

Phil Assink, pastor of Faith Community Church (RCA) in Edmonds, Washington, recently took the leadership development journey. He says one of the most beneficial sessions for him was on constructive conflict resolution. "This offered basic, objective steps that leaders can take to keep an organization current and healthy. It really is an area in many churches that is lacking in being addressed."

Goal for pastoral coach availability: By 2013, every pastor in the RCA who desires a coaching relationship will have available to her/him a choice of coaches who are well equipped and qualified to provide excellent coaching.

Outcomes:

- By 2013, the RCA will have more than 150 well-equipped, qualified, and supported coaches available to come alongside pastors and other key denominational leaders.
- By 2013, more than 400 RCA pastors will be in a coaching relationship that they will self-identify as helping them be more faithful and fruitful in their ministry.

Strategies:

- The Foundational Coach Training (FCT) process is offered on an "as requested" basis for the training of people in basic coaching skills throughout various regions of the denomination.
- The Level II Coach Development process is being instituted to ensure that a significant number of excellent coaches are available to RCA pastors.
- We continue to promote the option of pastoral coaching and offer coach matching.

Data:

- The first part of FCT has been completed by 490 people. The entire FCT process has been completed by 212 people who are now prepared to coach an RCA pastor.
- Twelve people have completed the twelve-month Level II Coach Development process, another eighteen are currently in the middle of it, and another fifteen are to be developed over the next twelve months. This would bring us to forty-five coaches in whose coaching abilities we have high confidence.
- A minimum of 140 requests for coaches have been managed to date by the coordinator for church health and coaching. Additional coach matching efforts are also happening at the classis level. Starting in late 2011, all matches will be self-selecting using the RCA coaching webpage.

Church Uses Coaching to Develop Leaders

New Hope Community Church (RCA) in Gilbert, Arizona, uses coaching as a tool to empower its congregational leaders at all levels of ministry. "In my role at the church as associate pastor of leadership and ministry development, I felt [coaching] was a key piece in supporting our leaders at all levels," says Gary Jarvis. Jarvis has worked with a coach for four years, including on the leadership development process that now includes coaching as a key component.

Jarvis says coaching has many benefits for church leaders. One of the benefits is simply support. It also helps stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving. "When you've got a coach who asks you questions you don't think of asking yourself, it makes you think in different ways; it brings out your creativity, and you find new ideas you never thought were in there," Jarvis says.

Each church ministry at New Hope has two leaders, and each pair of leaders is matched with someone who coaches them specifically on leading that ministry. Nine people from the congregation are currently trained as coaches.

New Hope also plans to match the leaders of its 12 small groups with coaches.

Goal for development of new pastoral leadership: By 2013,

- **At least 100 new ordained or commissioned pastoral leaders will be entering the RCA annually.**
- **Every new leader who desires it will be supported during at least the first five years of ministry with a coach and within a coached revitalizing network.**
- **Pastoral leaders with a clear sense of calling to turn-around ministry or church planting will receive specialized training for those roles.**
- **The RCA's pool of new pastoral leadership will include 35 percent racial/ethnic minorities.**

Outcomes:

- By 2013, we will actively nurture openness to God's call into pastoral ministry in the lives of at least 500 RCA young people from high school through college, and at least 150 of these young people will be racial/ethnic minorities.
- By 2013, of the 150 racial/ethnic minority young adults discerning or answering a call to ministry with whom we are in relationship, at least 50 will come from within the RCA.
- By 2013, every new pastoral leader entering the RCA will have had the opportunity to be assessed as a potential church planter, and at least 25 of these emerging leaders will have received specialized training, coaching, and experience in church planting as part of their preparation for ministry.
- By 2013, every new pastoral leader entering the RCA will have had the opportunity to be assessed as a potential "turn-around" or "re-development" pastor, and at least 50 new leaders, in partnership with their congregational leadership, will have received specialized training and coaching for leading a congregational "turn-around."
- By 2013, at least 25 percent of the new pastoral leaders entering RCA ministry will have specialized training in multicultural ministry, either as a planter or a revitalizing leader.
- The percentage of RCA pastoral leaders leaving the ministry in their first five years in the ministry will be 10 percent or less than the percentage in 2007.
- Seventy-five percent of pastors who accept a second call after four to ten years will be equipped to discern a potential new call through the lens of a personal calling statement and with the increased self-awareness that comes through coaching and participation in a network.
- By 2013 classes training commissioned pastors and commissioning them to ministry will have all of the resources they need to do this with excellence in their varied contexts.

Strategies:

- Continue to improve our Call Waiting program and connect this with initiatives such as Still Small Voice, Leaders on the Horizon, Seminarian Seminar, and the Youth Ministry Team.
- Assist consistories in ways to use the fourth question in the annual Constitutional Inquiry concerning nurturing call in the lives of young people in more faithful, intentional, and fruitful ways.
- Nurture a healthier and more consistent climate for candidate care throughout all the classes of the RCA.

- Discipleship, leadership, and the GSC racial/ethnic council staff will collaborate to develop African American/black, Hispanic, and Pacific-Asian youth as current and future leaders in order to develop more pastoral leaders from within RCA racial/ethnic congregations.
- Work with Western Theological Seminary (WTS) to develop specialized training for church planters and develop specialized tracks for them within the curriculum.
- Work with WTS and New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS) to identify turn-around leaders and develop specialized "tracks" for them within the curriculum, and embed the skills of leading a revitalizing congregation deeply into the curriculum for all candidates.
- Work with NBTS to more fully develop ministry development tracks in multiracial and multicultural ministry and missional urban ministry.
- Deepen our relationship with WTS, NBTS, and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA) students during their M.Div. years and their first five years of ministry.
- Engage pastors in networks, Purposeful Living, and other discernment processes that will deepen self-awareness and lead to increasingly fruitful ministry and second calls.
- Practice continuous improvement in congregational transitions, pastoral placement, and congregational search services so the percentage of pastoral dissolutions that occur under stress or duress is less than 5 percent over the next three years.
- Share best practices for training and developing commissioned pastors throughout the RCA and include them in networks and coaching relationships.
- Work with various partners in the translation and/or program development of commissioned pastor training materials, resources, courses, and processes for people for whom English is not their first or primary language.

Data:

- Call Waiting, Still Small Voice, and Seminarian Seminar have been brought together under the leadership of the coordinator for pastoral services and a more complete database of participants is being constructed.
- The MFCA, NBTS, WTS, and the RCA funded a pilot to study and improve the process of candidate care in ten RCA classes from three regional synods. Also, people involved in care of students in 22 classes were brought together for training, sharing of best practices, and mutual resourcing in February 2010.
- The RCA and WTS have conducted an in-depth survey of all RCA graduates in the past five years (from NBTS, the MFCA, and WTS) and will use the information from that survey to shape future leadership development efforts.
- All WTS juniors have taken an assessment to gauge their gifts for church planting. At least 23 WTS students have completed the Gallup redeveloper assessment.
- WTS is working closely with the Newbigin House of Studies, which will contribute leaders to the multiplication movement.
- The director of congregational mission, the coordinator for revitalization and leader development, and the coordinator for church health and coaching are active team members in the leadership development initiatives being offered at WTS.
- All WTS students were offered the chance to meet three times in spring 2011 with GSC staff to discuss the common challenges experienced in the work of congregational revitalization.
- GSC staff is working with WTS staff on an initiative to invest in the leadership development of students during their M.Div. years and the first five years of their first call. This will also be open to NBTS and MFCA students in some form.
- Progress is being realized around Purposeful Living and pastors networks; see data above and in the GSC report on revitalization.

- The director of congregational mission convenes the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team and has initiated conversations about more complete ways to include commissioned pastors in RCA life and ministry.
- The Commissioned Pastor Task Force has met, and their report is included in the 2010 General Synod minutes. Many actions strengthening the role of commissioned pastors in the RCA came from that report.
- The Miami International Seminary process is fully bilingual in Spanish and English. It is used in California extensively.

RETIRED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

During 2010 forty RCA ministers of Word and sacrament retired from active service. Those who retired are being recognized by a display at General Synod of their photographs and service records as well as by General Synod's endorsement of appreciation for their years of faithful and dedicated ministry in the church.

R-29
To adopt the following resolution:

These have loved Christ and fed his sheep. They have devoted themselves to spreading the Word and equipping the saints for the work of ministry. (ADOPTED)

Their contribution to a needy world is rich beyond measure; their record is on high.

The Reformed Church in America, with admiration, deep affection, and overflowing thanks to God, celebrates their lifelong service.

William Burns
Howell, New Jersey

Stuart Clark
Mobile, Alabama

Stephen Cobb
Dillsburg, Pennsylvania

Dale Cox
Redding, California

John Dabney
Bryan, Texas

Franklin De Graaf
Manchester, Missouri

Harlan De Jong
Sioux Center, Iowa

Roger De Young
Holland, Michigan

David Dethmers
Canadian Lakes, Michigan

Carol Faas
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Mary Fitzgerald
Hillman, Michigan

Ronald Franklyn
Wayne, New Jersey

Phillip Frens
White Cloud, Michigan

Madeline Fuentez
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Thomas Hendricks
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Alan Hofland
Holland, Michigan

Arthur Horst
Ringwood, New Jersey

Walter Jones
Muskegon, Michigan

Peter Maurer
Dagsboro, Delaware

Peter Nordstrom
Tavares, Florida

Gilmore Ott
Newark, Delaware

Dennis Pelley
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Philip Rauwerdink
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Paul Reynen
Holland, Michigan

Donald Ringnalda
Leighton, Iowa

Paul Ruter
New Paltz, New York

Robert Scholten
Annville, Kentucky

Ronald Smith
Victorville, California

Philip Somsen
Fort Dodge, Iowa

Choan-Seng Song
El Sobrante, California

Charles Spencer
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

David Taylor
Neshanic Station, New Jersey

Ronald Van Auken
Whitby, Ontario

Edward Van Kampen
Valatie, New York

Glenn Van Oort
Averill Park, New York

Richard Vander Klok
Jenison, Michigan

Robert Vander Schaaf
Sioux City, Iowa

Richard Westra
Oostburg, Wisconsin

Robert White
Niskayuna, New York

Eildert Zwart
Hudsonville, Michigan

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Gladys Maybelle Kooy

Gladys Maybelle Kooy was born on December 14, 1915, at Munster, Indiana. She studied at Central College, from which she graduated in 1941. She also studied at the Canadian School of Missions and the School for Chinese Language at Iowa State College.

Ms. Kooy entered the mission service of the RCA and served in Annville, Kentucky, from 1941 to 1943. She then served in China from 1946 to 1950 and in India from 1952 to 1981.

Ms. Kooy died on January 1, 2010, at South Holland, Illinois. She was ninety-four years old.

LeRoy Abraham Sandee

LeRoy Abraham Sandee was born on September 20, 1920, at Oostburg, Wisconsin. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1947. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1951.

Mr. Sandee was licensed by the Classis of Wisconsin in 1951 and ordained by the Classis of Dakota the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Sandham Memorial, Monroe, South Dakota, from 1951 to 1953; First, Alton, Iowa, from 1953 to 1957; Alto, Waupun, Wisconsin, from 1957 to 1965; Emmanuel, Clinton, Wisconsin, from 1966 to 1976; Bethel, Abbotsford, British Columbia, from 1976 to 1982; and Elim, Kings, Illinois, from 1982 to 1985.

Mr. Sandee died on January 6, 2010, at Waupun, Wisconsin. He was eighty-nine years old.

Henry J. Vermeer

Henry J. Vermeer was born on March 1, 1913, at Sioux Center, Iowa. He studied at Northwestern Junior College and then completed his undergraduate education at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1937. His theological education began at Westminster Theological Seminary in 1937 and was completed at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1940.

Mr. Vermeer was licensed by the Classis of West Sioux and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon in 1940. He pastored the following congregations: Falmouth, Michigan, from 1940 to 1943; Moddersville, Michigan, from 1940 to 1943; Central Park, Holland, Michigan, from 1943 to 1946; First Roseland, Chicago, Illinois, from 1946 to 1951; Hope, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, from 1951 to 1955; Hope, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1956 to 1961; First, Denver, Colorado, from 1961 to 1966; First, Pella, Iowa, from 1966 to 1973; and First, Hospers, Iowa, from 1973 to 1977. He also served as the president of the Particular Synod of Michigan in 1961.

Mr. Vermeer died on January 24, 2010, at Pella, Iowa. He was ninety-six years old.

Ralph Henry Cordes

Ralph Henry Cordes was born on July 15, 1921, at Titonka, Iowa. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1943. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1946.

Mr. Cordes was licensed by the Classis of Pleasant Prairie in 1946 and ordained by the Classis of Germania the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Bethel, Davis, South Dakota, from 1946 to 1953; First, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, from 1953 to 1959; Freeport, Illinois, from 1959 to 1964; Hope, George, Iowa, from 1964 to 1968; and Second, Pekin, Illinois, from 1968 to 1985. He also served as the stated supply pastor at McKee, Kentucky, and at Raritan, Illinois, following his retirement.

Mr. Cordes died on February 27, 2010, at Pontiac, Illinois. He was eighty-eight years old.

Edward Earle Ellis

Edward Earle Ellis was born on March 18, 1926, at Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He studied at the University of Virginia, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at Wheaton Graduate School, from which he earned a B.D. and an M.A. and graduated in 1953. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh in 1955.

Mr. Ellis was ordained by the Baptist church in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1959. He was an assistant professor at Aurora College from 1958 to 1960 and at Southern Baptist Seminary from 1958 to 1960. He was a visiting professor at Bethel Seminary from 1960 to 1961. He was received into the Classis of New Brunswick in 1970. He served as professor of New Testament at New Brunswick Theological Seminary from 1962 to 1985. He was dismissed to the Baptist church to teach at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1985.

Mr. Ellis died on March 2, 2010, at Dallas, Texas. He was eighty-three years old.

Jack Oliver Boerigter

Jack Oliver Boerigter was born on March 31, 1926, at Holland, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1954. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1956.

Mr. Boerigter was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1957 and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Fourth, Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1957 to 1961; First, Oostburg, Wisconsin, from 1961 to 1966; First, Sioux Center, Iowa, from 1967 to 1976; First, De Motte, Indiana, from 1976 to 1983; and First, Pella, Iowa, from 1983 to 1984. Mr. Boerigter demitted the ministry in 1985.

Mr. Boerigter died on March 3, 2010, at Pella, Iowa. He was eighty-three years old.

John Marvin Smith

John Marvin Smith was born on December 18, 1927, at Grand Rapids, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1949. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1952.

Mr. Smith was licensed by the Classis of Grand Rapids in 1952 and ordained by the Classis of East Sioux the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First, Melvin, Iowa, from 1952 to 1961; Newkirk, Hospers, Iowa, from 1961 to 1971; and Baileyville, Illinois, from 1971 to 1989.

Mr. Smith died on March 20, 2010, at Holland, Michigan. He was eighty-two years old.

Ian Strachan Todd

Ian Strachan Todd was born on April 26, 1937, at Kearny, New Jersey. He began his undergraduate studies at Rutgers University and completed them at Central College, from which he graduated in 1961. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1962.

Mr. Todd was licensed by the Classis of Newark in 1962 and ordained by the Classis of Paramus the same year. He began his ministry as associate pastor at Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey, from 1962 to 1964 and then pastored the following congregations: Hopewell Junction, New York, from 1964 to 1972; High Falls, New York, from 1972 to 1981; Annandale, New Jersey, and High Bridge, New Jersey, from 1981 to 1985; First, Hawthorne, New Jersey, from 1985 to 1996; and Staten Island, New York, from 1996 to 1998.

Mr. Todd died on April 5, 2010. He was seventy-two years old.

Charles Hudson Kamp

Charles Hudson Kamp was born on November 22, 1927, at Highland Park, New Jersey. He began his undergraduate studies at Michigan State University and then Grand Rapids Junior College and completed them at the University of Michigan, from which he graduated in 1950. He completed an M.A. at the University of Michigan in 1952. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958. He also earned a Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary and a D.Min from McCormick Theological Seminary in 1990.

Mr. Kamp was licensed by the Classis of South Grand Rapids in 1958 and ordained by the Classis of Raritan the same year. He pastored South Branch, New Jersey, from 1958 to 1962 and Suydam Street, New Brunswick, New Jersey, from 1964 to 1969. Between those two pastorates he served as a teacher at Christian High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1962 to 1963. Mr. Kamp was dismissed to the Presbyterian Church in 1969.

Mr. Kamp died on April 10, 2010, at Archbold, Ohio. He was eighty-two years old.

Frank J. Shearer

Frank J. Shearer was born on April 20, 1936, at Albany, New York. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1958. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1961.

Mr. Shearer was licensed by the Classis of Albany in 1961 and ordained by the Classis of Chicago the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Calvary, Venice, Florida, from 1961 to 1966; Rea Ave, Hawthorne, New Jersey, from 1966 to 1969; Beechwood, Holland, Michigan, from 1969 to 1974; First, Pella, Iowa, from 1974 to 1982; Faith, Zeeland, Michigan, from 1982 to 1991; and First, De Motte, Indiana, from 1991 to 2000.

Mr. Shearer died on April 11, 2010, at Holland, Michigan. He was seventy-three years old.

Eugene Meerdink

Eugene Meerdink was born on November 3, 1933.

He served the RCA on the mission field in Chiapas, Mexico, from 1966 to 1971 and from 1984 to 1994 and then as coordinator for Mission Stewardship and supervisor of Mission Programs in Africa from 1994 to his retirement in 1998. Prior to his death he was working with Quiet Waters Ministries in Denver, Colorado.

Mr. Meerdink died on April 29, 2010, at Denver, Colorado. He was seventy-six years old.

Lavina Irene Hoekstra

Lavina Irene Hoekstra (nee Hoffman) was born on August 20, 1920, at Holland, Michigan. She studied at Hope College, from which she graduated in 1946. She also studied at the Wycliffe Institute of Linguistics in 1947 and at the Kennedy School of Missions in 1957.

Ms. Hoekstra served the RCA as a missionary in Sudan and Ethiopia with her husband, Harvey, from 1948 to 1977. With Harvey, she began the Audio Scriptures International ministry in Rancho Bernardo, California, in 1989.

Ms. Hoekstra died on May 17, 2010, at Escondido, California. She was eighty-nine years old.

Patrick R. Vostello

Patrick R. Vostello was born on January 27, 1930, at Hackensack, New Jersey. He began his undergraduate studies at the University of Virginia and completed them at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1955. His theological education began at Western Theological Seminary and was completed at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958.

Mr. Vostello was licensed by the Classis of Bergen in 1958 and ordained by the Classis of Ulster the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Comforter, Kingston, New York, from 1958 to 1967; and Hope, Clifton, New Jersey, from 1967 to 1974. He was engaged in specialized ministry for the Classis of Passaic from 1974 to 1987 and then in social work at The Master's Workshop in Hudson, Florida, in 1988.

Mr. Vostello died on May 31, 2010, at Hudson, Florida. He was eighty years old.

Donald Ray Nienhuis

Donald Ray Nienhuis was born on February 7, 1927, at Coupeville, Washington. He studied at Seattle Pacific College, from which he graduated in 1951. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1954.

Mr. Nienhuis was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Cascades in 1954. He pastored the following congregations: First, Conrad, Montana, from 1954 to 1957; First, Harrison, South Dakota, from 1957 to 1961; North Park, Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1961 to 1967; First, Midland Park, New Jersey, from 1967 to 1972; Hope Community, Orlando, Florida, from 1972 to 1977; and Twin Falls, Idaho, from 1977 to 1989.

Mr. Nienhuis died on June 8, 2010, at Zeeland, Michigan. He was eighty-three years old.

William M. Hoffman

William M. Hoffman was born on March 18, 1925, at De Motte, Indiana. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1953. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1956.

Mr. Hoffman was licensed by the Classis of Illiana in 1956 and ordained by the Classis of West Sioux the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Carmel, Iowa, from 1956 to 1960; Trinity, Battle Creek, Michigan, from 1960 to 1965; Hollandale, Minnesota, from 1965 to 1969; First, Fulton, Illinois, from 1969 to 1973; American, Luverne, Minnesota, from 1973 to 1985; and Bayshore Gardens, Bradenton, Florida, from 1985 to 1990. He also served as vice president of the Particular Synod of Chicago in 1973, as vice president of the Particular Synod of the West from 1979 to 1980, and as president of the Particular Synod of the West from 1980 to 1981.

Mr. Hoffman died on June 15, 2010, at Stewartville, Minnesota. He was eighty-five years old.

Joyce Stedge-Fowler

Joyce Stedge-Fowler (nee Kearsing) was born on March 2, 1926, at Spring Valley, New York. She received her undergraduate education at the University of Iowa, from which she graduated in 1947. Her theological education was completed at Union Theological Seminary, from which she graduated in 1972.

Ms. Stedge-Fowler was licensed by the Classis of Rockland-Westchester in 1973 and ordained by the Classis of Mid-Hudson the same year. She was the first woman ordained in the RCA. She pastored Rochester Reformed Church in Accord, New York, from 1973 to 1976. She then undertook clinical pastoral education in Washington, D.C., and was dismissed to the Presbyterian Church in 1979.

Ms. Stedge-Fowler died on June 23, 2010, at Spring Valley, New York. She was eighty-four years old.

Isaac C. Rottenberg

Isaac C. Rottenberg was born on July 11, 1925, at Harrow on the Hill, England. He began his undergraduate studies at the University of Leiden and completed them at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1952. His theological education began at Western Theological Seminary and was completed at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1955. He also did graduate work at the University of Utrecht.

Mr. Rottenberg was licensed by the Classis of Illiana in 1955 and ordained by the Classis of Raritan the same year. He pastored the following congregations: High Bridge, New Jersey, from 1955 to 1958; New Shrewsbury, New Jersey, from 1958 to 1968; and Bushkill, Pennsylvania, from 1989 to 1997. He served as the General Program Council's Secretary for Program Interpretation from 1968 to 1978, and as the executive director of the National Leadership Conference for Israel from 1981 to 1988.

Mr. Rottenberg died on June 28, 2010. He was eighty-four years old.

Marjorie Mae Tanis

Marjorie Mae Tanis (nee Greving) was born on March 9, 1927, in Phillips County, Kansas, near Prairie View. She began her undergraduate studies at Fort Hays Kansas State College and then taught elementary-grade children in Norton, Kansas, for three years. She completed her studies at Central College.

Ms. Tanis served with her husband, Paul, in the RCA's mission in Japan from 1953 to 1958.

Ms. Tanis died on July 7, 2010, at St. Peter, Minnesota. She was eighty-three years old.

Harold F. Leestma

Harold F. Leestma was born on August 9, 1917, at Grand Rapids, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1939. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1942. Mr. Leestma earned his Ph.D. from California Graduate School of Theology in 1972.

Mr. Leestma was licensed by the Classis of Grand Rapids in 1942 and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Laketon-Bethel, Muskegon, Michigan, from 1942 to 1952; Garfield Park, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1952 to 1957; Trinity, Munster, Indiana, from 1957 to 1962; and Lake Hills Community, Laguna Hills, California, from 1973 to 1987. He served as associate pastor at Garden Community, Garden Grove, California, from 1962 to 1973.

Mr. Leestma died on July 30, 2010, at Anaheim, California. He was ninety-two years old.

Charles Tipton Botkin

Charles Tipton Botkin was born on August 24, 1924, at McWhorter, Kentucky. He began his undergraduate studies at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, and then continued at Sue Bennet Junior College in London, Kentucky. He completed his undergraduate education at Central College, from which he graduated in 1948. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1951. He also earned a Th.M. at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1957, an M.A. at New York University in 1962, and an Ed.M. at Columbia University in 1972. He studied at the International Christian University in Japan from 1953 to 1954.

Mr. Botkin was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Grand Rapids in 1951. He began his ministry as the director of religious education at Central Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1951 to 1952. He then served as a chaplain in the United States Navy from 1952 to 1954 and in the naval reserve from 1954 to 1975. He pastored the following congregations: First, New Hyde Park, New York, from 1954 to 1961; Cambria Heights, Queens, New York, from 1961 to 1986; and Christ UCC and Forest Park Reformed, Woodhaven, New York, from 1996 to 1999. He also served as a guidance counselor at Glen Cove High School in Glen Cove, Long Island, New York, from 1973 to 1993.

Mr. Botkin died on August 17, 2010. He was eighty-five years old.

Maynard C. Nieboer

Maynard C. Nieboer was born on June 5, 1934, at Kalamazoo, Michigan. His undergraduate degree was received from Western Michigan University. His theological education was received at Calvin Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1969. He received a Th.M. in 1970 and completed a Ph.D. at Arizona State University.

Mr. Nieboer was ordained in 1970, served several Christian Reformed congregations in the Midwest, and was received from the Christian Reformed Church by the Classis of the Southwest in 1985. He served in specialized ministry in Arizona and California at Grand Canyon Counseling Service in Scottsdale, Arizona, and as chaplain with San Jose Oak Creek Hospital in San Jose, California. Prior to his death he was serving in prison ministry at Folsom State Prison near Sacramento, California.

Mr. Nieboer died on August 18, 2010. He was seventy-six years old.

Paul William Kranendonk

Paul William Kranendonk was born on May 22, 1927, at Oostburg, Wisconsin. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1954.

Mr. Kranendonk was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1954 and ordained by the Classis of Rochester the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First, Marion, New York, from 1954 to 1958; Helderberg, Guilderland Center, New York, from 1958 to 1964; Plainview, New York, from 1964 to 1969; Syracuse, New York, from 1969 to 1974; Old North, Dumont, New Jersey, from 1976 to 1981; Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, from 1981 to 1989; and as associate pastor at Community, Whiting, New Jersey, from 1989 to 1992. He also served as president of the Particular Synod of Albany from 1971 to 1972 and the Particular Synod of the Mid-Atlantics from 1985 to 1986.

Mr. Kranendonk died on August 20, 2010, at Whiting, New Jersey. He was eighty-three years old.

John W. Barrick

John W. Barrick was born on March 1, 1945, at Blaine, Washington. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1996.

Mr. Barrick pastored Jerusalem Reformed Church in Feura Bush, New York, from 1996 to 2004.

Mr. Barrick died on August 23, 2010. He was sixty-five years old.

Bruce Jon Hoffman

Bruce Jon Hoffman was born on February 15, 1939, at Sodus, New York. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1961. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1964.

Mr. Hoffman was licensed by the Classis of Columbia-Greene in 1964 and ordained by the Classis of Schenectady the same year. He pastored Trinity Reformed Church in Schenectady, New York, from 1964 to 1970 and Second Reformed Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey, from 1970 to 2003. He then served several congregations as interim pastor. He also served as chaplain of the Wyckoff Policeman's Benevolent Association and on the board of the Christian Health Care Center.

Mr. Hoffman died on September 19, 2010, at Flemington, New Jersey. He was seventy-one years old.

Paul Dallas Van Elk

Paul Dallas Van Elk was born on October 27, 1931, at New York City. He studied at the City College of New York, from which he graduated in 1961. His theological education

was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1964.

Mr. Van Elk was licensed by the Classis of New York in 1964 and ordained by the Classis of Orange the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Bushkill, Pennsylvania, from 1964 to 1973; Fourth, Raritan, New Jersey, and Bradley Gardens, New Jersey, from 1973 to 1990. He then served as contract pastor at Fourth, Raritan, New Jersey, and Bradley Gardens, New Jersey, from 1990 to 2001. Mr. Van Elk also served as stated clerk of the Classis of Delaware-Raritan.

Mr. Van Elk died on September 26, 2010, at East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. He was seventy-eight years old.

Siebe (Samuel) VanderSchaaf

Siebe (Samuel) VanderSchaaf was born on April 28, 1936, at Trummarum, the Netherlands. He began his undergraduate studies at the University of Utrecht and then Northwestern Junior College. He completed them at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1959. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1962.

Mr. Vander Schaaf was licensed and ordained by the Classis of South Grand Rapids in 1962. He pastored First Reformed Church in Brockville, Ontario, from 1963 to 1972. He then served as a professor at Lawrence College from 1973 to 1996.

Mr. Vander Schaaf died on September 29, 2010. He was seventy-four years old.

Bert E. Van Soest

Bert E. Van Soest was born on July 31, 1921, at Strasburg, North Dakota. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1943. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1946. He also studied at Oberlin School of Theology and was awarded a D.D. by Central College in 1975.

Mr. Van Soest was licensed by the Classis of West Sioux in 1946 and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Calvary, Cleveland, Ohio, from 1946 to 1951; Trinity, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1951 to 1956; Ebenezer, Morrison, Illinois, from 1956 to 1961; Mountain View, Denver, Colorado, from 1961 to 1969; Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, from 1969 to 1981; North Branch, New Jersey, from 1982 to 1986; Faith, Slate Hill, New York, from 1986 to 2004. He was secretary for Christian Discipleship for the General Program Council from 1980 to 1982, vice president of the General Synod in 1974, and General Synod president in 1975.

Mr. Van Soest died on September 29, 2010, at Goshen, New York. He was eighty-nine years old.

Ralph Louis Tartaglia

Ralph Louis Tartaglia was born on December 11, 1948, at Newark, New Jersey. He studied at Seton Hall University, from which he graduated in 1970. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1973.

Mr. Tartaglia was licensed by the Classis of New Brunswick in 1974 and ordained by the Classis of Raritan the same year. He pastored the church in Pottersville, New Jersey, from 1974 to 1977 and in Willingboro, New Jersey, from 1977 to 1986. He then served the RCA as a specialist for information systems from 1986 to 1988. He demitted the ministry in 1988.

Mr. Tartaglia died on October 31, 2010. He was sixty-one years old.

Richard C. Oudersluys

Richard C. Oudersluys was born on November 21, 1906, at Grand Rapids, Michigan. He studied at Calvin College, from which he graduated in 1929. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1932. He was awarded a Ph.D. by the University of Chicago and studied at the University of Basel and Cambridge University. He was awarded a D.D. by Hope College in 1945.

Mr. Oudersluys was licensed by the Classis of Grand Rapids in 1932 and ordained by the Classis of Wisconsin the same year. He began his ministry at First Reformed Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which he served from 1932 to 1941. He then served as a professor of New Testament language and literature at Western Theological Seminary from 1942 to 1977 and as an adjunct professor at the seminary and at Hope College from 1978 to 1988.

Mr. Oudersluys died on November 20, 2010, at Holland, Michigan. He was 103 years old.

Malcolm D. Brown

Malcolm D. Brown was born on July 14, 1927, at Dobbs Ferry, New York. He began his undergraduate education at Kings College and completed it at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1949. He undertook graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania. His theological education was received at Westminster Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1957.

Mr. Brown was licensed by the Philadelphia Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1959 and ordained in 1960. He was received by the Classis of Schenectady in 1986 and served as contract pastor at Bacon Hill Reformed Church in Schuylerville, New York, from 1985 to 1999.

Mr. Brown died on November 20, 2010. He was eighty-three years old.

Blaise Levai Jr.

Blaise Levai Jr. was born on April 17, 1919, at Passaic, New Jersey. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1942. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1945. He received an M.A. from the Unversity of Chicago in 1946 and an Ed.D. from the University of Michigan in 1952. He also studied at Iowa State University.

Mr. Levai was ordained by the Classis of Paramus in 1945. He served the RCA in the mission field in India from 1946 to 1958 and then as a professor at Northwestern College from 1958 to 1960. He worked as managing editor with the American Bible Society from 1960

to 1969 and as director of literature for the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church from 1969 to 1976. He pastored Westwood, New Jersey, from 1976 to 1979 and Community, Fort Meyers, Florida, from 1981 to 1987, where he also worked in church growth from 1979 to 1981. He ended his ministry working in family psychiatry in Jacksonville, Florida.

Mr. Levai died on December 20, 2010. He was ninety-one years old.

Report of the General Synod Council on Global Mission

"Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths'" (Isaiah 2:3).

The church, led by the Holy Spirit, is called to bear witness through God's unconditional love to those who are among the poor, who are strangers, and who have become outcasts.

The vision of RCA Global Mission is to support congregations and members as they personally, prayerfully, and financially support mission personnel, mission partners, and mission teams to do the following:

- Bring the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ to those who have never heard its joyful message.
- Increase the leadership, education, and technology capacities of mission partners.
- Transform the local mission engagement of congregations and members through global connections.
- Respond to disasters and injustice with actions of relief, development, and advocacy.

A Tradition of Mission

RCA Global Mission has engaged in cross-cultural mission for more than 150 years and has a record of excellence that is well known both within the RCA and throughout the ecumenical mission world. Missionaries who sign on for long-term assignments have been the backbone of RCA global mission efforts. These career missionaries make a lasting and sustainable difference in the lives of people, communities, and indigenous churches. Through long-term missionaries, emerging global churches are born, discipled, trained, sustained, and sent in mission. The RCA remains committed to long-term mission assignments as the most effective approach to the sustainable development of indigenous churches around the globe.

Volunteers and Mission Teams

RCA Global Mission is also committed to short-term volunteers and mission teams. In the last thirty years, the sending of short-term mission teams both locally and globally has escalated rapidly. RCA Global Mission is committed to facilitating mission trips that accomplish meaningful and sustainable work but, more importantly, that transform the lives of the participants, the people "on the ground," and the sending church.

In today's world of mission, the two approaches—working with long-term missionaries and with short-term volunteers and mission teams—are not in conflict. Rather, each con-

tributes a distinctive role in God's mission to reconcile the world to himself in Jesus Christ.

Growing Global Mission Opportunities

As Christians we are called to bring the whole gospel to the whole world. We also believe that focus is critical to effective mission work. All new RCA global mission projects must clearly address one or more of the following critical priorities:

- Evangelizing unreached peoples.
- Empowering global partners.
- Equipping RCA churches and leaders for mission.
- Embracing compassion and justice.

Evangelizing Unreached Peoples

RCA missionaries and funding enable the spread of the gospel to unreached peoples around the globe:

- In Chile with the Christian Presbyterian Church.
- In Honduras with the Moravians.
- In Alaska with the services of Mission Aviation Repair Center.
- In Italy with the Waldensians.
- In Niger with the Evangelical Church of the Republic of Niger.
- In Kenya with the Africa Inland Church.
- In China with the China Christian Council and the Yanbian and Rajin Foundation.
- In Myanmar with the Reformed Evangelical Church in Myanmar.
- Through Scripture translation and dissemination by RCA mission personnel assigned to Wycliffe, United Bible Societies, and Audio Scripture Ministries.

Empowering Global Partners

RCA Global Mission most often works in partnership with indigenous churches. The number one priority of our global partners is leadership development. RCA missionaries and mission grants equip leaders:

- In a doctoral program based in Latin America.
- At Bible schools in Honduras; Chiapas, Mexico; and Niger.
- Through worship and discipling of believers of international congregations in Oman and Bahrain.
- At the Al Amana Centre in Oman.
- At St. Paul's United Theological College in Kenya.
- At the Evangelical Theological Seminary and Reformed Christian Church in Croatia.
- With the Ukrainian Center for Christian Cooperation.
- In Albania with the Albanian Evangelical Alliance.
- At Tokyo Union Theological Seminary in Japan.
- In Estonia with the Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia.
- At the Evangelical Seminary of Caracas in Venezuela.
- Through the Quiché Evangelical Church in Guatemala.
- At Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary in Ethiopia.
- At seminaries of the China Christian Council in Heifei and Shenyang.
- At Tainan Theological College and Seminary and Yu-Shan Theological College and Seminary in Taiwan.
- Through the diaconal program of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and the Dutch Reformed churches of southern Africa.
- Through the church planting center of the Reformed Evangelical Church in Myanmar.

Equipping RCA Churches and Leaders for Mission

Mutual mission describes a two-way relationship between mission partners, each of them both sending and receiving. The gifts of the global church are precious treasures for the church in the West as we seek to understand local mission in a racially diverse and religiously pluralistic world. RCA Global Mission facilitates mutual mission in several ways.

For the past several years RCA Global Mission has partnered—first with Western Theological Seminary and later expanding to include the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency and New Brunswick Theological Seminary—in providing seminary students with cross-cultural immersion experiences that develop their skills to communicate the gospel effectively across cultural lines. Global Mission also sponsors experiential journeys for RCA pastors to key mission sites around the world.

Embracing Compassion and Justice

Through Global Mission missionaries and grants to mission partners, the Reformed Church in America participates in the compassion and justice proclaimed by Jesus in Luke 4: "Today this scripture [Isaiah 61] has been fulfilled in your hearing."

- The sick are healed in Nicaragua, Honduras, Chiapas, South India, Niger, Mozambique, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Bahrain.
- The broken and oppressed find wholeness and peace in Hungary, Italy, Egypt, South Korea, the United States, South India, Sudan, Palestine, and Malawi.
- Sustainable development supports brothers and sisters in Christ in Niger, Mozambique, South India, Ethiopia, Malawi, Kenya, and South Africa.
- Children are lovingly cared for and educated in Japan; Nicaragua; Malawi; Argentina; Ecuador; Hawaiian Gardens, California; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Staten Island, New York; Mescalero and Dulce, New Mexico; and Jackson County, Kentucky.
- Through Reformed Church World Service (RCWS), RCA members continue a ministry of compassion and hope throughout our lost and broken world. Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing and in response to crisis appeals provide emergency relief to disaster survivors, grants for rehabilitation, the development of long-term solutions, and advocacy for justice for people who are poor and hungry.

GSC GLOBAL MISSION ENDS MONITORING REPORT

Each spring, the RCA's general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on progress around various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for global mission follows.

GSC Global Ends Policy

> Empowered by the Holy Spirit and in covenant with the general secretary and staff, the General Synod Council will carry out its responsibilities in order to ensure that the Reformed Church in America will be a denomination where congregations are following Christ in mission, equipped and empowered for faithful and fruitful ministry, which requires all we have and all we are to the glory of God.

Mission Ends Policy

> The RCA will be a fellowship of congregations that connect and engage people to what God is doing around the world, through missionary and mission partners that cross boundaries in word and in deed with the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ and

enabled by the Holy Spirit resulting in RCA churches equipped for mission that:

- Evangelize unreached peoples.
- Empower global partners.
- Engage in compassion and justice.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION

This policy calls upon the GSC to make a difference through RCA Global Mission by connecting, engaging, and equipping RCA churches and members in mutuality to the global church through mission personnel, projects, and partners. Global mission is a continuing focus of the RCA with the desire that the mission engagement of congregations and members will be transformed through intentional mission connections. With the support of Global Mission staff, RCA congregations and members have the opportunity to be involved personally, prayerfully, and financially in mission and witness to:

- Bring the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ to those who have never heard its joyful message.
- Increase the leadership, education, and capacities of mission partners through evangelism, health, relief and development, peace and justice, and partner support.
- Respond to disasters, poverty, human need, discrimination, and injustice with actions of relief, development, and advocacy.

Connected, Engaged, and Equipped for Mission

With greater levels of connection between RCA churches and RCA Global Mission personnel, projects, and partners through sister church relationships, support of personnel and projects, or prayer and financial support, together RCA churches can work in God's mission in a greater way than any individual or church can do alone.

Churches will be engaged in mission locally and globally and will develop an awareness of the global church, our relation to the body of Christ, and our missional call to be involved around the world. A deep engagement in mission builds awareness to the contextual challenges of long-term and short-term mission involvement through partnerships. A missionally engaged church or individual is willing to give and receive, transform and be transformed, learn, share, and be a part of God's great kingdom.

Mission has always been challenging, yet despite that, the kingdom is growing around the world. With support from RCA Global Mission, more than one hundred years of mission history, and deep relationships around the world, RCA congregations can come together, equipped to evangelize and disciple, empower partners, and embrace compassion and justice.

Goal: Transform the mission engagement of congregations and members through intentional local and global connections, and equip RCA congregations for mission.

Strategies:

- Facilitate connections between RCA congregations and global partner congregations that will result in sister church relationships, experiential journeys for mutual learning, and mission support to produce a greater understanding of the global church. Global Mission supervisors will be available to work with local RCA congregations and together explore visits to missionaries and global partner congregations. RCA Global Mission will focus on new ways of communication and engagement between personnel, projects, and partners and churches and supporters.
- Through mission partner relationships, RCA congregations have an opportunity to learn and be transformed themselves. There is much to learn about a variety of models of holistic urban and rural ministries that can be gleaned from global partners.

Evangelize Unreached Peoples

Global Mission is presently engaged, through its global partners, in bringing people to an understanding of God's love in the person of Jesus Christ in multiple locations. Evangelism and discipleship is happening from Alaska to Brazil, South Africa to Croatia, and India to Indonesia. There are almost seven thousand unreached people groups, which make up 2.6 billion people. Many of these people groups are found in countries that restrict access to the gospel, but there are also many communities of "unchurched" people in urban, suburban, and rural America, as well as immigrant communities in which "unreached" people are found. Many partners are focused on sharing the gospel in Word and deed and they are experiencing a wonderful harvest of new members, new congregations, and God's people using their gifts and ministries. Besides the current work of evangelism and discipleship, there are several ways we desire to engage with our global partners and RCA congregations to reach areas where there are still many who have not heard the good news of Jesus Christ.

Audio Bibles Quench a Thirst for God's Word

Recently RCA missionaries JP and Katy Sundararajan rode two hours by taxi through a remote area of north India to distribute audio Bibles to a group of tribal people called the Mundaris. The Sundararajans say these people may be the most persecuted Christians in India. "The sacrifices they have made on behalf of the gospel are overwhelming," says JP.

"Many fled into the jungles after being mercilessly targeted by anti-Christian elements. When we got word from them months after the persecution, they expressed how important it was, when they were afraid for their lives, to hear [with their audio Bibles] the God of the universe talking to them in their own language, telling them that he was still on the throne!"

In spite of the 110-degree weather, more than two hundred people gathered for the distribution of the solar-powered audio Bibles. (Electricity is unaffordable for the Mundaris.) "They were all dressed up for the momentous occasion," says JP. "We shared stories with the group, and encouraged them to continue listening to God's Word."

After distributing the audio Bibles, Katy and JP watched people gather in small groups to examine and listen to their new Bibles. "It was a remarkable sight!" says JP. "I have participated in numerous distributions throughout India, but I have never witnessed a thirst for Scriptures quite like what we saw with the Mundaris."

Goal: Bring the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ to those who have never heard its joyful message by mobilizing RCA congregations through global mission partners by using their gifts to reach identified unreached people groups.

Outcomes:

- Celebrate God's gracious harvest among the Gumuz people of Ethiopia and unreached people in the Philippines as we continue to support the establishment of congregations or meeting points among each group. Respond to the needs of these communities with the love of Christ, thereby enabling local believers to manifest love and care for those being reached.
- Recruit at least six RCA congregations to engage in a prayer relationship with the Gumuz and the Filipinos being reached with the gospel.
- Begin an evangelism and discipleship movement among four groups of unreached people, initiated and led by global partners, resulting in people within these four groups becoming followers of Jesus Christ.

- Glean from global partners how outreach happens among "unreached" groups, which will help develop new models of ministry, strengthen relationships, and cause both partners to identify new venues for mission.
- Five RCA congregations in the U.S./Canada will be committed to outreach in their surrounding diaspora communities.
- Focused, intentional, and holistic outreach to Native American and First Nations communities will take place.
- Missional partnerships will develop between RCA judicatories and congregations within the U.S. and Canada.

Strategies:

- Evaluate partners' present outreach to the Gumuz in Ethiopia and outreach to unreached people in the Philippines to gauge and celebrate progress. The outreach of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus to the Gumuz in Ethiopia has already yielded three congregations.
- By requesting studies from both partners, Global Mission will assess future needs and opportunities for growth and expansion, and will prayerfully seek ways to respond to challenges each site presents. These challenges and successes will be shared with RCA congregations.
- Initiate four new outreach projects to unreached people groups by 2014. Global Mission will work with global partners in identifying four new people groups to be reached, set goals and strategies, identify personnel and resources needed, and recruit RCA/national leaders to focus on long-term outreach.
- Mobilize RCA and global partner congregations to pray, give, and become actively involved in this movement according to the needs in the field and the gifts of congregations.
- Partner with the RCA's Church Multiplication Team in identifying geographical areas and populations where the RCA is not present for outreach in Canada and the U.S.
- Engage with the Church Multiplication Team, along with synodical and classical leaders, in focusing outreach.

Empower Global Partners

Involvement in God's mission with the global church is an acknowledgement that the Holy Spirit has equipped and gifted the body of Christ to bear witness to God's love for the nations by sending Jesus Christ to reconcile them through his life, death, and resurrection. Partnership allows the body to pool its resources and use God-given gifts for the proclamation of God's kingdom in word and deed. God's preferable future for the nations is accentuated as visions are shared, strategies are agreed to, and followers of Jesus Christ are discipled and mobilized as God's witnesses to the world.

Since the days of Samuel Zwemer, James Cantine, and Horace Underwood, and the scores of missionaries that followed them, the RCA has been committed to the empowerment of its global partners. Toward this end, we are committed to theological and leadership education, strengthening the capacity of our partners, and resourcing partners for impact in their surrounding communities.

Program in Guatemala Enriches Ministry through Education

A pastor-training program the RCA helps support in Guatemala has led to four new congregations among the indigenous Quiché people. Isaias Colop-Xec, who is himself Quiché and who founded the training program, says that in addition to the new congregations, many established churches are benefiting from a much stronger foundation in the Word of God.

Many Quiché are Christians but need to grow deeper in their faith and their understanding of Christian belief. Many pastors have only a second-grade education. The program Colop-Xec leads, called Rutzij Tijonik ("Teaching His Word"), guides Quiché pastors through three and a half years of studying the Bible, which equips them for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.

Because most Quiché pastors are too poor to travel to attend the program, Rutzij Tijonik is offered in six locations, including one that regularly relocates to an area where people have requested the program. The program's partnership with the Reformed Church allows classes to be offered at no cost to the pastors.

Colop-Xec says it is important for the Quiché people to know that the Reformed Church—with its long tradition, commitment to the Word of God, and commitment to mission—helps support Rutzij Tijonik. "I'm using it as an example to teach them that they also have the responsibility to think of other tribes, other groups," he says. "Hopefully your example of giving to people that you don't know may encourage them to do the same in the near future."

Goal: Increase the leadership, education, and capacities of mission partners while being open to receive from them.

Outcomes:

- RCA Global Mission will have a greater understanding of our partners' God-given vision for life and ministry. This understanding will help Global Mission to gauge whether or not our present mission staff are adequate to help the partner live out its vision, or whether other gifts are needed to help implement the vision.
- RCA Global Mission will respond to requests from our partners, based on their own assessments of needs, for help in specific areas where we have developed some expertise, understanding that everything that we share will have to be contextualized.
- Dialogue opportunities for mutual learning will be intentional, and the priority is to hear from our partners and reflect with them—not to compare, but to be open for how the Spirit is at work in other contexts, and what believers are learning about life and ministry.

Strategies:

- By June 2012, elicit from each Global Mission partner God's vision for their life and ministry. Global Mission will gauge how RCA personnel fit into our partner's vision, and together affirm present relationships or agree on other ways we can flesh out God's vision for joint ministry.
- Through our partner relationships, offer and share what God has been teaching the RCA in the areas of "Our Call"—lessons about new church multiplication, Natural Church Development, parenting congregations, identification of emerging leaders, multiracial ministries, Children and Worship, becoming missional, and more.
- Solicit from global partners information, lessons, teachings, and findings related to the areas of "Our Call" that we might share with RCA leaders and congregations. As the church in the global south grows and matures, the RCA can benefit from their experience by gleaning principles and stories that accompany those principles.

Engage in Ministries of Compassion and Justice

Like evangelism, discipleship, and mercy, justice is central to the gospel. The RCA will continue to stand with our partners in places of urgent need, and will provide a response for long-term recovery programs both financially and through volunteer and work group involvement.

Feeding Program Helps Kids Succeed Academically

"We are so happy and thankful to God for helping us to see eleven children from the feeding program finish their sixth grade in school and pass to the secondary level," says RCA missionary Bernardeth Kelly-Bent. She oversees a program that provides nutritious meals for children of severely impoverished families in Bluefields, Nicaragua.

"These are children who have been part of the program from their preschool time. We saw them grow in the feeding program, so we are all thankful to God for this beautiful event that has taken place in their life."

She adds that support from people across the RCA has been vital in the success of the feeding program.

"We ask God to continue to help [the children] as they grow older and encounter other challenges in life. We also hope that the seed that was planted in them each day during the devotionals and Bible school may grow and become like a mustard tree."

Goal: Respond to disasters, poverty, human need, discrimination, and injustice with actions of relief, development, and advocacy.

Strategies:

- Respond to disasters and needs through established relationships, partners, or organizations.
- Establish partnership relationships with ministries and agencies involved in fighting sexual slavery and human trafficking.
- Recover the biblical teaching of God's purpose for creating women in God's image and likeness. The resources of the RCA will be employed in developing a position paper on the biblical value of women, who are created in God's image, to be shared, discussed, and studied with mission partners. Global Mission will solicit their reactions, feedback, and how they are living out the biblical vision for women, and glean from mission partners how they are addressing issues of domestic violence, sexual slavery, and human trafficking within the church and community. Global Mission will be available to respond to requests from mission partners for clarification on the issues, while also open to request help from them in implementing this vision within RCA congregations.

Supervisor for the Americas

The Rev. Valdir França has accepted the position of supervisor of RCA mission in the Americas. He began his service on June 1. Valdir came to the PCUSA from the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil, and before accepting the position with the RCA, served as director of international partnerships for Latin America Mission in Miami, Florida. He has been engaged in multicultural ministries among Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking people in South Florida, has done NCD work in the Tampa Bay area, and has served as an urban missionary in England. Valdir is married to Maria Eugenia, originally from Argentina. Maria Eugenia is presently involved in providing theological education for Latin American pastors and leaders.

Mission Partner Personnel Changes

Justin Majawa has resigned as director of Save Orphans Ministries (SOM) in Malawi, and SOM's board will be seeking a replacement.

The Retirement of Dick and Maja Westra

Dick and Maja Westra followed in the footsteps of the great missionaries Samuel Zwemer and James Cantine. Dick Westra was born in Canada, and grew up on a farm near Calgary in Alberta. Maja was born in the Netherlands and immigrated to Canada in 1954. They met at Central College in Pella, Iowa. Dick went on to earn a master of divinity degree at New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and Maja a master's degree in education at Rutgers University. Dick and Maja have three daughters, Stephanie, Susan, and Andrea, who now have children of their own.

Dick was well known for his ability as a preacher. He and Maja began their ministry in Mississauga, Ontario. In 1981, Dick and Maja accepted a call to minister at the Protestant Church of Oman in Ruwi, Oman. They served in Oman until 1986, when they returned to the U.S. to pastor a congregation in Firth, Nebraska.

In 1997, the Westras again accepted a call to serve in the Middle East, this time in the small island nation of Bahrain. Dick served as pastor of the English-language congregation of the National Evangelical Church in Bahrain (NEC), while Maja taught English to Bahraini students. Dick and Maja made the NEC a spiritual home for hundreds of people amidst a context that was often challenging.

R-30
Whereas Dick and Maja Westra responded to the call of God to ministry and mission by accepting an appointment as RCA workers to Oman in 1981 and again to Bahrain in 1997; and,

Whereas Dick and Maja gave their energy and love in building up the first Protestant church in Oman and then the National Evangelical Church in Bahrain, earning the appreciation of not only the members but also the wider community of Bahrain; and,

Whereas Maja gave of herself to generations of students in Bahrain who remember her gifted teaching with fondness; and,

Whereas Dick and Maja have reached the age where they would like to retire and return to the U.S. to be with their children and grandchildren;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the two hundred and fifth session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting June 16-21, 2011, at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with gratitude to God for their lives and witness, honors Dick and Maja Westra with a prayer of thanksgiving and a token of our esteem. (ADOPTED)

2012 PIM Shares
In spite of continuing financial challenges, RCA congregations have been faithful in meeting their mission commitments. Some individuals have given way beyond normal to help make up for what others have not been able to do. And some churches have sacrificially paid a portion of their mission shares understanding that Global Mission has made commitments to our partners. This causes us to rejoice and give thanks.

Partnership-in-Mission pledges by congregations and individuals are virtually the only source of revenue to carry Global Mission through these challenging economic times.

Investment interest income has always been a small source of income and it has slowed to a trickle. With great appreciation for the faithfulness of churches and individuals supporting RCA missionaries, and with every intention to be faithful stewards of the gifts of God's people, the following recommendation is offered.

R-31
To retain the Partnership-in-Mission (PIM) share for 2012 at the 2011 value of $6,100; and further,

To encourage all RCA churches—and particularly the RCA churches who do not support RCA missionaries through PIM shares—to take a collection for Global Mission in 2011.
(ADOPTED)

Report of Words of Hope

Begun by Reformed Church in America congregations in the Midwest, Words of Hope operates under the governance of a Board of Direction whose members represent thirty-one supporting classes from across the denomination. A new "Partner Agreement for Mutual Mission," signed this year between RCA Global Mission and Words of Hope, affirms an official relationship established by General Synod in 1986. In the words of the new agreement, our "joint prayers and efforts will strengthen the witness and enrich the life of the worldwide church."

Broadcasting

Albania: Daily Albanian language programming includes a fifteen-minute Bible study broadcast, a two-minute adaptation of the Words of Hope daily devotional, and a five-minute drama addressing life issues. The Words of Hope devotional booklet is now also published in the Albanian language. Roni Prendi, Words of Hope's Albanian director, explains: "In Albania there has been no publication similar to the Words of Hope devotional. This is the first time Albanian Christians can find such daily encouragement in their devotional time with God."

Arab World: The stated objective of the Arabic broadcasts is: "To proclaim the gospel to Arabic-speaking Muslim people through radio, literature, Internet, and SMS text messages; and to build up and encourage Arabic-speaking Christians." The goal of these nightly programs is to attract Muslim listeners. Entitled *Dardasha* ("Chatting"), the programs feature a series of brief segments blending narrated and dramatized elements. A new Arabic language website, Dardasha7.com, complements the radio broadcasts. Programs are jointly produced at studios in Cairo, Egypt, and Beirut, Lebanon. Most recently elements have been added to the programs to address the desire for freedom and justice throughout the Arab world as evidenced in the 2011 uprisings.

Groundwork: Recognizing the changing listening habits of today's audiences and reflecting the growing relationship between Words of Hope and Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) of the Christian Reformed Church, the programs known as *Words of Hope* and *The Back to God Hour* have been reformatted and combined under the new name *Groundwork*, hosted by Dave Bast (of Words of Hope) and Bob Heerspink (of BTGMI). Visitors at GroundworkOnline.com are able to listen to the programs, find local broadcasts and airtimes, and interact further about the content of the programs.

Iran: Because severe restrictions force the Iranian church underground, there is a significant emphasis on biblical training conferences for Persian-speaking believers and seekers as a supplement to the radio and Internet ministry. "Please continue to teach us biblical doctrine," shares a man who with his wife was recently imprisoned for his faith. "We believe that if we Iranians hear the true teaching of Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, we will be able to stand firm in our faith no matter what trials and tribulations come."

Niger: Since Nigerien broadcasts debuted in 2006, the number of stations carrying the Hausa and French programs has grown to thirty-four. From the outset, all project planning has involved direct consultation with the Evangelical Church of the Republic of Niger (EERN). Last year Words of Hope's team leader, Pastor Sani Nomaou, was elected as the denominational president for the EERN. As RCA missionary Tom Johnson observed, the EERN's selection of Pastor Sani indicates the favorable profile that Words of Hope's broadcasting ministry has attained throughout the denomination and it also means that Words of Hope is privileged to work with a very capable national leader. Many reports have come attesting that the broadcasts have helped prepare the way for the EERN's evangelistic efforts.

South Asia: Encompassing the major language of Hindi and six other regional tongues, Words of Hope audiences in South Asia include peoples who are predominantly Hindu (Hindi, Dogri, Garhwali, Nepali), Buddhist (Tibetan, Dzongkha), and Muslim (Kashmiri). Even though letter response has been gradually declining, telephone, email, and mobile text messaging responses are increasing as these electronic options are highlighted on the air. Each language's base of operations is located in the heart of its demographic area. This facilitates direct follow-up among listeners and affords opportunities for partnering with local congregations.

Specialized English: *Spotlight* programs in Specialized English are made for an international audience whose first language is not English. Around the world more than one billion people are learning English. *Spotlight* serves this huge and growing audience on over sixty stations in more than thirty countries. Although *Spotlight* is a general interest program, the topics are chosen to show a Christian worldview. In addition, *Spotlight* English clubs, where people who want to learn English gather to listen to programs and participate in a guided discussion, are an effective ministry outreach. Information on starting a listener club is posted at www.spotlightradio.net and featured at a *Spotlight* table in the display area at General Synod.

Sudan: Since Sudan gained independence in 1956, the people of southern Sudan have experienced persecution, civil war, and famine. On January 9, 2005, peace became a reality with the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Sudan's government. A key provision established a six-year timetable for a Southern Sudan self-determination referendum. This took place in January 2011 and resulted in an overwhelming vote for secession. "North and South have many decisions to make as they work toward officially implementing the separation in July—decisions that will greatly influence the future of the two countries and the lives of their citizens," reports Words of Hope partner Serving in Mission. The Words of Hope broadcasts to the Sudanese people in the Dinka, Nuer, and Bari languages have focused on easing ethnic tensions and encouraging southern Sudanese people to live peacefully and constructively together.

Turkey: Turkey, whose population is 99 percent Muslim, is the only Words of Hope ministry field that has broadcasts on both radio and television. Haluk Bilgen, Words of Hope's director of Turkish ministries, produces the weekly television program, *Umut Dolu Sözler* ("Words Filled with Hope"), in cooperation with SAT-7 TÜRK. According to Haluk, God

is working in Turkey even though there is yet to be much visible response to the gospel. He explains: "The work of Christ is like a submarine going deep and quiet. It is happening. Both radio and television are instrumental in doing this. It is the Spirit of God doing the work. It is a privilege for us to bring the word out to the people."

Uganda: Since beginning in 2006, Words of Hope–Uganda's growth has been remarkable—from early operations in a makeshift recording studio to the dedication in late 2009 of a new facility on the campus of Uganda Christian University. This enhanced production capacity has increased both the quantity and quality of programs in the languages of Bari, Luganda, Lumasaba, Luo, and English. A new microwave link between Words of Hope–Uganda's studios and Spirit FM in Kampala gives the possibility of producing live and call-in programs. According to recent survey research, radio is by far the most important, most used, and most trusted communication medium in Uganda. More than 80 percent of Ugandans listen to religious radio.

Internet Outreach

Resources on the Words of Hope website include: the *Daily Devotional*, *Read the Bible in a Year*, and links to the English-language radio programs (*Groundwork* and *Spotlight*). The site also features an archive of the weekly Words of Hope radio programs dating back to 1988. Visitors can learn about each broadcast language as well as see photos, hear program samples, and gather news about each ministry field.

Resources Available

Each quarter Words of Hope publishes 88,000 copies of the *Words of Hope* devotional booklet for worldwide distribution. Thousands of readers also receive the daily devotional automatically as an email or access it through the Words of Hope website or Facebook page. In a 2009 survey, 88 percent of Words of Hope's donors stated that they read the devotional regularly and 80 percent felt it was important or very important to their lives. Copies, including a large-print edition, are available for individuals and churches. The Words of Hope *Update* newsletter includes news and stories from the various ministry fields and also shares information about the world Christian movement as received from partners in other countries. Twice each year quantities of the *Update* are sent to every RCA congregation for distribution in church bulletins or mailboxes.

Grateful Thanks

Words of Hope is deeply grateful for the support of so many faithful friends and congregations. During 2010 contributions from RCA congregations totaled $637,733. Churches are encouraged to consider adopting one or more project shares designated for a particular Words of Hope ministry field. Ongoing prayer support is also requested with a monthly printed or electronic Prayer Focus available that includes prayer concerns from listeners and ministry partners from around the world.

Conclusion

According to the 2011 "Status of Global Mission" report published by the International Bulletin of Missionary Research, this year some two billion people will tune in at least once a month to Christian radio or television. Words of Hope is doing its best to see that when they do, what they will hear, in their heart language, is the "BBC"—as used by John Stott, this stands for "Balanced, Biblical Christianity," exactly what Words of Hope represents and seeks to communicate.

Report of the General Synod Council on the RCA's Multiracial Future Freed from Racism

"After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands" (Revelation 7:9).

"A multiracial future freed from racism" was added to Our Call at General Synod 2008, following an earnest and heartfelt discussion on the floor of the synod. During that session, delegates highlighted the urgency of the RCA's work to overcome racism and added it to the ten-year goal to increase the priority of that work.

Since this new emphasis was adopted, the RCA has established the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice, whose mission statement is, "Everyone who wants to experience the RCA as home may experience the RCA as home." Multiracial initiatives are guided by three core principles: scripturally grounded, collaboratively strong, and racially and ethnically equitable.

Through this work, the RCA is called to uphold its commitment to unity, reconciliation, and justice.

GSC MULTIRACIAL FUTURE FREED FROM RACISM ENDS MONITORING REPORT

Each spring the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for a multiracial future freed from racism follows.

GSC Global Ends Policy

> Empowered by the Holy Spirit and in covenant with the general secretary and staff, the General Synod Council will carry out its responsibilities in order to ensure that the Reformed Church in America will be a denomination where congregations are following Christ in mission, equipped and empowered for faithful and fruitful ministry, which requires all we have and all we are to the glory of God.

Multiracial Future Freed from Racism Ends Policy

> The RCA will be a fellowship of congregations resisting the sin of racism and committing to a multiracial future engaging all of God's people in mission and ministry.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION

This ends policy is grounded in several General Synod decisions as well as GSC's Global Ends Policy, Sub-End 1.

Global Ends Policy, Sub-End 1

"Congregations and assemblies of the Reformed Church in America will reflect God's vision of the kingdom: embracing complete unity; reaching all people (every race, tribe, people, and language, every disability and special need, including those living on the margins) with the love and grace of Jesus Christ; actively engaging in love, acceptance, forgiveness, and justice (John 17:23; Revelation 7:9)."

Additionally, the 2010 General Synod directed the GSC to incorporate into its ends policy "A Multiracial Future Freed from Racism," a continuing initiative that focuses on transitioning the RCA to become freed from racism and that incorporates the first seven goals outlined below into that transition initiative. The two objectives following the first seven add values to the initiative that otherwise would not be evaluated.

This ends policy calls GSC staff to collaborate with each other, regional synods, classes, congregations, and educational institutions to assist the Reformed Church in America in transitioning to a denomination that is multiracial and freed from racism in all aspects of our mission and ministry. This ends policy has a long-term time horizon—2013 and beyond. It is my responsibility as general secretary to establish goals, outcomes, and strategies needed to effect this transition.

Goal for promoting systems changes to reduce or eliminate institutional racism: To identify and reduce or eliminate systemic and structural barriers that inappropriately limit access to the blessings and benefits of belonging to the RCA.

People often assist others in accessing the blessings and benefits of the RCA. When a person provides one-to-one assistance, normally only some small number of people are helped. When systemic and structural barriers to access are reduced or eliminated, perhaps hundreds of others can be helped. Reducing or eliminating those limits can be achieved in two key ways:

- Change the inappropriately limiting systems and structures, or
- Equip people with knowledge, skills, and relationships needed to access and use the existing systems and structures.

Strategies:

- Develop and improve the relationship between GSC and the racial/ethnic councils, its constitutional advisory committees.
- Increase the access to Our Call resources for people and congregations of color.
- Participate in the process of adoption and integration of the Belhar Confession, which provides the confessional grounds for stimulating, sustaining, and assessing progress toward becoming multiracial and freed from racism, among other goals.
- Assist assemblies and institutions in addressing challenges they face relative to becoming freed from racism.
- Assist the Nominations Commission in increasing the number of potential candidates for service on commissions and boards.
- Investigate and make suggestions about relationships between congregations of color and their classes.

Data:

- The coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice assists GSC with realigning its relationship with the racial/ethnic councils to make that relationship consistent with the expectations in the General Synod bylaws (*BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 2b):

  > The racial/ethnic councils are constitutional bodies of the Reformed Church in America which express the collective vision and voice of racial and ethnic congregants and congregations as they develop ministries and advocate for policies of racial and ethnic inclusion, economic, social, and racial justice, both within the Reformed Church in America and ecumenically.

  Leaders of the racial/ethnic councils, along with senior GSC staff, have participated in educational events and exchanges to understand *BCO* expectations surrounding

the racial/ethnic councils, clarify earlier decisions and actions that diverted focus from this article in the bylaws, and work through ways to move forward. GSC has formed a subcommittee to engage this opportunity. The subcommittee is developing recommendations to GSC about making its relationship consistent with the *BCO*'s mandated relationship.

The data stand against a background of long-standing and ineffective application of Article 3, Section 2b in the General Synod bylaws to the GSC's relationship with the racial/ethnic councils. Consequently, much change is needed in the mental models and processes that link the councils to the governance side of GSC's work. We are off to a good start, but long-term, permanent attention to this relationship is crucial to ensure the expectations of the bylaws are met, beyond annual reports to GSC from councils.

- GSC's Congregational Mission staff has committed to expand the access of Our Call resources to people and congregations of color. For many years, according to General Synod records and other records, people and congregations of color have not had the same access to Our Call resources as white people and congregations. In some cases, inequities arose from methodologies that did not align well with cultural emphases of various groups of people of color; in other cases, people or congregations of color did not know about some of the Our Call resources available to them. The Congregational Mission staff is working to resolve these inequities. In November, they established specific, reasonable, and measureable output targets for multiplication, coaching, and pastor networks. Similar targets can be established for discipleship and mission. In May, the staff assessed progress and determined next steps.

  The data stand against a background of long-term race-based inequities in accessing programming and other Our Call resources. This suggests that "deep change" challenges lie ahead if these near-term advances are to be sustainable. The start described in the data is good. The responsibilities are clear. The targets are measurable. However, authority might be too diffuse throughout our systems to ensure that deep, long-term, positive changes are sustainable. Efforts to focus authority should greatly increase potential for ensuring people and congregations of color fully benefit from Our Call resources.

- The executive assistant in the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice was appointed to serve as staff to the new Belhar Implementation Team, authorized by the 2010 General Synod.

- The coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice visited several classes and regional synods to help them strengthen existing ministry teams that champion becoming more multiracial and freer from racism, and to explore plans for beginning new teams. Mid-Atlantics Synod has an ongoing team, as do two of its classes. Mid-America Synod is exploring the development of a team. One additional synod and a couple of classes are poised to explore formation of teams.

  Also, to strengthen diversity efforts and cross-cultural sensitivities, the coordinator visited both seminaries, Hope College, and Northwestern College to work with leaders, students, and teams. All have ongoing teams with varying levels of authority for moving toward more racism-free futures. In March, the general secretary and the presidents of the RCA colleges met in New York City with the GSC's three racial/ethnic ministry coordinators, the coordinator for discipleship, and the coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice to discuss diversity on RCA college

campuses. Much of this work satisfies the expectations of General Synod 2010's R-61 regarding development of ongoing ministry teams focused on multiracial initiatives in assemblies and educational institutions (*MGS 2010*, p. 182).

New Brunswick Theological Seminary is, constitutionally, an intercultural educational institution. Growing as an anti-racist institution is an element of its strategic plan. The seminary's Anti-Racism Transformation Team is its guiding coalition for ensuring these features in its constitution and strategic plan are met.

The data regarding assemblies suggest more ongoing ministry teams might be established if negotiations between senior GSC leadership and the regional synods create a momentum that other staff could then build on and sustain.

- The Synod of the Heartland decided to develop and expand its ministries to and with Hispanic peoples who live within the region. This decision is their alternative approach to a multiracial ministry team. They are working with the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice to develop a Hispanic Sankofa experience that will help in this effort.

- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice implemented a process with various denomination members that identified nearly 20 new candidates of nearly all races, both genders, and various generations for the Nominations Commission's consideration. (A similar number of new candidates were referred to the commission in 2009.) This increase in the number of potential nominees led the commission to alter a practice. Now, in order for a commission member who is completing a first term to be recommended to General Synod for a second term, she or he and the commission must indicate in writing that the commissioner should stand for a second term. This new practice should result in increased opportunities for additional RCA members to serve the denomination through commissions and boards.

  The data mean that a popular view—that commissions are "essentially closed" to new people—can be reduced or eliminated. Additionally, the data mean that commissions can become entities through which our values for becoming more Reformed and missional and more multiracial and freer from racism can grow.

  Additionally, assistance from the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice might best be viewed as a short-term fix to a systemic challenge about developing and recruiting new candidates for the Nominations Commission's consideration. If that is the case, then a more permanent recruitment solution is needed.

- After considering a recommendation from the African American/Black Council, GSC authorized a committee, comprised of GSC members and leaders of the racial/ethnic councils, to review reports from congregations of color of neglected by their classes. The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice provides staff coordination for that committee. A survey of leaders of congregations of color has been completed and its information analyzed. Additional leaders have been interviewed. The committee uses the *BCO*, the Belhar Confession, and a discernment tool to assist it in its work.

  The data highlight that, though polity does not grant GSC oversight of classis relationships and activities, bringing stories to light on how congregations experience life in classis is a powerful methodology. Painful and frustrating experiences of congregations in classes can be identified and addressed.

Long term, the data can lead to reconsidering how to transition polity that was effective in the RCA's monoethnic history to something that is more effective for its multiracial future, and whether and how to transition ministry models that worked in the RCA's history but might not be well suited for ministry in the twenty-first century.

- The Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries launched its new Asian Resource Center. The resource center is a fresh initiative that provides leadership development and education to Asian leaders and congregations as well as liaison to and interpretation of the Asian communities to the wider RCA and vice versa. The resource center has held its first events and is off to an excellent start.

  The Asian Resource Center is too new to determine the degree to which it is a suitable evolution within racial/ethnic councils to help those associations engage the current challenges for leadership development and inter-cultural engagement. More time is necessary.

- The Church Multiplication Team has accepted adopting existing congregations as a multiplication strategy. Adoption might be a pathway for non-aligned congregations looking for a denominational home to find a place with the RCA, if such a transition is mutually agreeable.

Multicultural Ministry Team Seeks to Educate

A group that was originally formed in response to unfair treatment of minority pastors has refocused its mission. The Multicultural Ministry Team (formerly the Cultural Diversity Team) for the Synod of the Mid-Atlantics is now focusing on revitalization.

"Our thing is awareness through education and action," says chair Marisol Ferrer, pastor of the Congregational Church of Bound Brook in Bound Brook, New Jersey. After revisioning, she says, "The first thing we started to do is to reflect on ourselves. Another thing we're doing constantly is reading books on multicultural ministry and multicultural education."

And now, after beefing up their understanding of multiculturalism in the church, the team is sharing their knowledge with the synod.

"We have started to ask classes to invite us to meetings to do a presentation about multicultural ministry and what it could be," Ferrer says. "Let's look at what you have in your neighborhood and what resources you have. We've done two classes already, and some smaller groups in retreats."

Goal for developing multiracial congregations: To develop 100 RCA multiracial congregations, 25 percent of which are reproducing.

In earlier times, persons and groups often required a global missions partner to serve people of the global community—less so now. The world is here. Its many people groups are near us physically and virtually.

We know from Revelation 5 and 7 that Jesus is at work guaranteeing the church's future to be multiracial. Demographic changes and increased social connectivity greatly expand opportunities for us to pioneer congregations that reflect life in that Jesus-guaranteed future.

Strategies:

- Identify the number, names, locations, and ministries of current RCA multiracial congregations.
- Resource and learn from existing multiracial congregations.
- Nurture current and future leaders of multiracial congregations.
- Expand the number of multiracial congregations throughout the RCA, including helping interested monoracial congregations to transition to becoming multiracial.

Data:

- In consultation with regional synod executives, the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice determined that there are 62 biracial or multiracial congregations in the RCA: two in Albany, three in Canada, three in the Far West, five in the Great Lakes, two in the Heartland, two in Mid-America, fourteen in the Mid-Atlantics, and thirty-one in New York. Several of these congregations are primarily African American/Caribbean congregations. This might be the first time data have been gathered on the number of RCA biracial and multiracial congregations. This data should serve as a baseline.
- Approximately 34 percent—twenty-six churches—of the new congregations developed through the RCA's multiplication ministry between 2008 and 2010 are biracial or multiracial. The data mean the Church Multiplication Team continues to exceed its goal that 33 percent of all new congregations will be multiracial or of color.
- In April 2010, the RCA cosponsored a multiracial congregation conference in New York City with Middle Collegiate Church. In November 2010, the RCA cosponsored a national multiracial congregation conference in San Diego with the Mosaix Global Network.
- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice partnered with Western Theological Seminary's Journey program and the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes to cosponsor a two-year learning community of eight congregations in the Great Lakes region. Together these congregations have twenty-five people participating. The learning community focuses on developing as multiracial congregations and bringing fresh life to congregational mission through church-based community development. (Church-based community development might be the most effective way for predominately or entirely white congregations to engage people, including leaders, of color.) Two retreats have already occurred, led by noted sociologist and author Michael Emerson and D. Darrell Griffin, a leader of the Evangelical Covenant Church (perhaps the only European-rooted denomination to become multiracial). The coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice will lead the two final retreats in May and October. This community will complete its formal learning together in November 2011.
- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice posted an excellent tool on the RCA's website entitled "Welcoming Diversity: An Inventory for Congregations." Developed by the Racial Justice Institute of the Grand Rapids Area Center for Ecumenism, the tool helps congregations and other groups take a deeper look into becoming more diverse in ways that bless and honor all people groups that are present. The tool can be downloaded at www.rca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=6807. Data on use of this tool are not gathered as we do not expect a reporting relationship with assemblies on it. Instead, as many leaders as possible might encourage a creative, sustained use of this tool.

Goal for multiplying congregations of color: To increase the percentage of congregations of color from the current level of about 17 percent of all RCA congregations to 25 percent.

Together with the more established racial and ethnic groups, people groups that migrate to the U.S. and Canada provide extraordinary diversity in cultures and ideas. All bring valuable histories worthy of being honored and influential in the broad life of the RCA.

Diversity alone might naturally lead to increased social distrust and segmentation. However, the cross of Christ promotes unity, reconciliation, and justice, which can lead to what Martin Luther King Jr. and others called "the beloved community."

Congregations of color can contribute and add much to the RCA's commitment to become multiracial and freed from racism. They can:

- Provide meaningful places of worship where cultures and traditions are held in high regard.
- Ensure psychological and emotional comfort and healing from wounds received from experiences of being people of color living in the Americas.
- Speak prophetically to the wider church.
- Help the wider church to know, understand, and blend with the rhythms of life and grace embedded in the experiences of people of color.
- Stimulate the RCA to become more trustworthy and trust-filled as a multiracial, freed from racism family.

Strategy:

- Encourage the multiplication of congregations of color to occur throughout the United States and Canada.

Data:

- There are 156 worshiping communities of color in the RCA representing Asians (seventy), Hispanics (forty-six), blacks (thirty-four), and Native Americans/First Nations peoples (six).
- This might be the first time these data have been officially reported as a whole. The data will become more meaningful if the numbers are tracked annually and if classis trends, increases, and declines are identified.
- Approximately 21 percent of the new RCA church plants between 2008 and 2010 are Hispanic, Asian, or African American.
- Racial/ethnic ministries staff and multiplication leaders have committed to work more collaboratively to plant several new churches of color.
- The Classis of California has established a Hispanic ministries committee. It will help the classis to plant new Hispanic congregations.

Ministry in the "Boundary Areas": Overcoming Divisions in Oakland

The city of Oakland, California, is marked by hills and flats—with equally obvious geographic boundaries along racial and socio-economic lines. But a new church is committed to bringing people together and breaking down the dividing lines.

The church is ministering in what pastor Josh McPaul calls a "boundary neighborhood," a place where divisions are less pronounced and cultures are geographically integrated. "We really wanted to see a church reach people who live in the boundary neighborhoods, who are attracted to a community as diverse as the city they live in," he says.

"Right now, our focus is on creating something that is still pretty unusual—a genuine multiethnic Christian fellowship," he says. "We have three staff who reflect the breadth of Oakland, 'showing' rather than telling the story of multiethnic community." McPaul is Caucasian, copastor Larry Austin is African American, and pastoral assistant Carlos Corro is Hispanic.

"When the gospel is proclaimed, it calls sinners—not black, white, Asian, Latino sinners, but all," Austin says. "All races and cultures, all economic statuses hear the same call on equal footing."

Oakland City Church currently includes 60 to 70 people from a variety of backgrounds and a range of ages. "When we first began meeting together, our meetings looked more like AA meetings," McPaul says. "We got pretty real with each other and kept it simple. We didn't do music or anything like that." Two months ago, the church moved to worship that included preaching and singing as a way to share the gospel with newcomers without first requiring them to fully invest in the church community.

Goal for training for the RCA's multiracial future: To increase cultural sensitivity and anti-racism capacities within assemblies, congregations, and agencies, including the GSC and commissions.

Training, for many, results in short-term increases both in knowledge and in dialogue with persons of other races. When accompanied by post-training, intentional, persistent relationship building and work events, training for our multiracial future can assist us in building lifestyles that are multiracial and freed from racism.

Strategies:

- Encourage local congregations to participate in multiracial training.
- Encourage new GSC members and commission members to complete at least one training event.
- Encourage local follow up after each training experience.
- Develop and provide biblical and theological bases for being multiracial and freed from racism.
- Identify resources used successfully in congregations and help other congregations to benefit from them.

Data:

- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice used in various venues the video called *Racism Is Sin Because It Is an Offense to God*, developed in partnership with the Multicultural Ministry Committee of the Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics. The video is located on the RCA's website at www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6340.

  Data on the broader use of this video are not gathered as we do not expect a reporting relationship with the assemblies on it. However, the more leaders encourage the use of this video, the more creative, biblically rooted discussions might occur about becoming racism-free.

- Sixty-seven people received multiracial training through our programs called "Understanding Racism: Joining the Journey" and "Sankofa." Training participants include congregation members, General Synod officers, new General Synod Council and commission members, and GSC staff. Three congregations have Breakfast Clubs with approximately forty members total. Additionally, approximately sixty administrators, faculty, and students at Hope College received diversity training in two venues from the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice.

  The data reflect a strong decline in the number of people (not at Hope) receiving training between 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, down to 67 from 340. A key assumption in the previous year was that strategic partnerships with assemblies especially would expand opportunities to provide training; those partnerships did not develop

in 2010-2011. Consequently, the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice had to establish all the venues and do all the recruiting. Participant numbers will likely remain low without strong collaboration between GSC and the assemblies.

Additionally, the data suggest a low level of shared institutional passion and commitment to use multiracial training to leverage longer-term change in interpersonal relationships, systems, and operations. This leveraged result requires ongoing attention, decisions, and actions from leadership at all levels.

- With significant input from many RCA members, the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice developed and published a one-page tool to assist individuals, congregations, and groups to learn more about applying the principles of the Belhar Confession to their planning and assessment activities. "Tool for Using the Principles of the Belhar Confession in Planning and Evaluating" is available on the RCA's website at www.rca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=6808. The tool is flexible in use and in its application to relationships and life in any setting, not simply those related to racial justice.

  Data on the use of this tool are not gathered as we do not expect a reporting relationship with assemblies and other entities on it. Instead, as many leaders as possible can encourage a creative, sustained use of this tool.

- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice collaborated with Western Theological Seminary's Journey program to cosponsor a two-year learning community of seven pastors from different regions in the U.S. and Canada, from several races, and from both genders. The community focused on developing multiracial congregations and multicultural living. They, along with two or three members from each of their congregations, took a Sankofa journey in October 2010. The community's two-year cycle ends in May 2011. Bruce Menning facilitated the community's experiences.

  The data demonstrate that this sort of collaboration is very fruitful and positive, and nurtures strong growth and connectivity among participants.

- The executive assistant in the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice has coordinated the development of a devotional/reflection booklet. The reflections are written by members of the RCA reflecting viewpoints from various races, both genders, and different generations. Pairs of writers (many of whom did not know each other) dealt with crucial themes in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Principles of the Belhar Confession are reflected throughout the booklet. The booklet is intended for personal or corporate devotions or for various educational and discipleship situations, and is available in print and download formats.

  The data from the writing team members suggest that strong training and growth opportunities developed for them simply from being paired with someone they had to listen to and learn from. The process of writing reflection pieces together was potent.

  To ensure this excellent resource does not simply sit on shelves, leaders and others must actively encourage people to read the booklet and share about the lessons learned from it.

  Leadership might find this sort of process to be an excellent, replicable, short-term learning opportunity.

- The Anti-Racism Transformation Team of New Brunswick Theological Seminary and the RCA's Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice have collaborated to produce a series of three video-recorded panel conversations on the Belhar Confession: The Belhar Confession and Anti-Racism, The Belhar Confession and Everyday Life, and the Belhar Confession and the Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. Panel members include RCA members and people from the seminary community. The recorded conversations can be used in assembly meetings, educational groups, and in discipleship processes, and are available on DVD and online. For the entire series, six people served as moderators, eighteen people served on panels, and approximately sixty people were in the audiences witnessing the conversations and asking questions.

  The moderators, panelists, and audiences all received training-type benefits from experiencing the conversations firsthand. As the DVDs and website resources developed from these conversations are used, the training benefits can be extended to many others. Use can be encouraged among individuals, families, education classes, and at ministry and governance meetings.

  Leaders might find this sort of process to be an excellent, replicable, short-term learning opportunity.

- Over the last year, the RCA has sent seven young leaders to Duke Divinity School's Foundations of Christian Leadership program. The program strengthens and develops leaders to help grow vibrant institutions. Three participants are white and four are of color. Six are women and one is a man.

Congregations Worship Together

A mission gift led to a combined worship service between three very different RCA congregations.

In October, Park Hills Community Church in Los Angeles hosted a joint worship service with Bethany Reformed from Redlands, California, and the R.O.C.K., a church plant that shares Park Hills' facility. "This created a wonderfully diverse group of Christians, culturally and in their respective worship styles," says Anna Gonzales, an elder at Park Hills. The congregations at Park Hills and the R.O.C.K. are predominately African American, while Bethany Reformed is predominately white.

"The act of coming together, finding more in common than staying apart and dwelling on differences, puts into action what the Belhar [Confession] preaches," says Gene Fisher, another Park Hills elder. "I give thanks to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit." The service included praise teams and a joint choir, and a pastor from each church played a role. Following the service, the group ate lunch together and had an ice cream social.

The invitation to worship together came when Bethany Reformed sent Park Hills a mission donation. While attending a classis meeting at Park Hills, Bethany pastor Leon Fikse noticed new energy and excitement there. "They had done much repair of the facility and were doing some really good ministry," he says. "It was apparent to us, also, that there was more to do, so two elders suggested to our consistory that we include Park Hills in our annual donation.

"It was a wonderful day of God's people united in worship; people ceased to be aware of skin color differences and instead, a sense of unity replaced any concern or anxiety that may have been there."

Goal of revitalizing congregations through church-based community development: To assist development of fifty local community development efforts that bring transforming life to congregations and their communities, including the forging of creative, transformative cross-racial relationships.

Reformed thinking teaches us that:
- The world belongs to God.
- The world has fallen because of sin.
- The world is being reconciled to God through the action of the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit partners with the body of Christ to assist in the holistic restoration of communities.

As congregations engage communities, they themselves can become revitalized through:
- New relationships with people in the community being served.
- New matters to pray about.
- Freshened reasons for worship.
- Renewed zeal to link worship with justice as required by God in Isaiah 58.

Additionally, an active church-based Christian community development ministry might be the only way many white congregations can grow meaningful long-term relationships with persons of other races. If done correctly, these will be honorable and peer relationships, not falling into paternalistic or power-oriented patterns.

Strategies:
- Provide training on the relationships between church revitalization and church-based community development.
- Assist congregations and classes to "exegete," interact well with, and develop transformational neighborhood plans with their neighbors and other community stakeholders, including communities experiencing demographic changes.
- Utilize "Church-Based Community Ministry: Stories, Principles, and Strategies to Help Congregations Launch Church-Based Community Ministries that Make a Difference in Their Communities" (www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6031) and other pertinent resources.

Data:
- The executive ministers of the Classes of New Brunswick and Greater Palisades partnered with the RCA's Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice to facilitate four workshops on church-based community development:
  - "Bringing Fresh Life to Your Congregation's Mission through Church-Based Community Development"
  - "Assisting Individuals, Families, and Communities to Develop through Powerful, Fresh Understandings about Being Image-Bearers of God"
  - "Developing a Diversified Funding Strategy"
  - "Developing Healthy Networks and Collaborations"

  Twenty-five people participated, representing nine congregations and two faith-based nonprofits. The executive ministers of the Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics and the Classes of New Brunswick and Greater Palisades were among them.

  Based on information from participants, church-based community development might serve well as a fourth revitalization strategy for the RCA (in addition to coaching, pastors networks, and Natural Church Development). Participants reported they learned about ways of becoming more missional and transformational in their out-

reach, learned new things about networking for resources, developed an effective common language applicable to outreach, and gained easy-to-use tools for teaching, planning, and assessing ministry.

- The coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice gave a keynote address at the Regional Synod of New York's annual mission and outreach conference. The topic was "Bringing Fresh Life to Your Congregation's Mission through Church-Based Community Development." Approximately 70 people were present for this address.

- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice collaborated with New York Faith and Justice to engage several New York City congregations in three events of its Faith Leaders for Environmental Justice network. Food and climate security are key emphases of this network. Five congregations participated in this project.

- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice and the Office of Ministry Services collaborated to produce the second edition of the Church-Based Community Resource Guide, a compendium of outreach ministries in RCA congregations. The guide is located on the RCA's website at images.rca.org/docs/witness/CommunityOutreachGuide.pdf.

  We do not gather data on the use of this resource as we expect no reporting relationship with assemblies on it. We do know that some use this resource to write ministry stories that appeared on the RCA's website and in other modes of communication. Others use its contacts and other information to enhance their own ministries. To ensure this excellent resource does not simply sit on shelves, leaders and others might actively encourage people to use the booklet and share about the lessons learned from it.

- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice sponsored participation of nine people at the September annual conference of the Christian Community Development Association. Participants learned various biblical and theological bases as well as methodologies for growing effective church-based community transformation ministries.

- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice assisted the chairs of the mission and outreach committees of the three New York City classes (Brooklyn, New York, and Queens) in partnerships to nurture increased response to justice matters by RCA congregations in those classes. They anticipated cosponsoring a tri-classis justice conference in April 2011.

  This is an innovative partnership. Additional time and data are needed to understand the greater opportunities for nurturing justice because of classis collaborations.

Goal of learning with the global church: To increase the RCA's knowledge of and contributions to developing multiracial and freed from racism societies and churches through engagements with the global church.

The prophet Isaiah wrote that God "sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; [God] stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them like a tent to live in" (Isaiah 40:22). Isaiah meant that God is not local or tribal, not concerned largely with one swath of land or its people. Rather, God is engaged globally, keeping the whole planet in view, making serious judgments and decisions about it.

God's world is multiracial and multiethnic, and its peoples' struggles for unity, reconciliation, and justice are profound, persistent, and contextual. God knows this and is actively engaged in these very human challenges. The RCA should be in some of those places, learning what God is doing there and sharing what God has taught us here.

Strategies:

- This list of ministry possibilities was developed in conjunction with the leadership of RCA Global Mission.
- South Africa: Build on our history and existing partnerships with the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, which works toward reconciliation after apartheid.
- Kenya: Build on Global Mission relationships in locations where conflict exists between ethnic and tribal groups.
- Hungary: Partner with the Reformed Church in Hungary in its work with the marginalized Roma people.
- Italy: Support the Waldensian Church in its work to enfold Christians who are immigrants from Africa.
- Work with ecumenical groups that add to our learning and are consistent with the RCA's commitment to a multiracial future freed from racism.

Data:

- The RCA participated in the World Council of Churches (WCC) consultation on peace. The consultation was part of the council's Decade to Overcome Violence initiative and was held to prepare for the WCC's major gathering in 2011.

- The RCA participated in August in the World Council of Churches consultation on combating racism and practices of excluding communities of people. The coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice served on the consultation's drafting team, helping to develop a report that provided theological underpinnings for the continued combating of racism and other exclusionary practices as well as roviding strategies that congregations and denominations can use to move forward in this struggle. The report is available at images.rca.org/docs/multiracial/WCCClevelandStatementOnRacism.pdf.

  We do not gather data on the use of this resource as we expect no reporting relationship among its potential users. Additionally, as with particular other examples of ecumenical work, integrating many ecumenical outcomes into Our Call activities can be challenging. That integration might become a suitable leadership opportunity, thereby expanding the RCA's capacities to learn with the global church.

- The Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice continued to work with RCA Global Mission to assist their ministry partners in Hungary (the Reformed Church in Hungary and Roma peoples) and Italy (the Waldensian Church) with antiracism/diversity ministry.

- The RCA participated in the annual ecumenical gathering of Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT) in January 2011 in Birmingham, Alabama. CCT is the only group that gathers together leadership from all the faith "families" that comprise Christianity in the U.S.—Roman Catholic, evangelical, Pentecostal, historic Protestant, Orthodox, and the historic black church. The 2011 gathering focused on poverty as seen through the lens of racial justice. CCT's participants developed a critical statement that is a current-day response to Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Reportedly, this statement is the first of its sort developed

ecumenically. The statement is available on CCT's website at www.christianchurchestogether.org/events/2010/CCT%20-%20A%20letter%20from%20Birmingham%2001-14-11.pdf.

We do not gather data on the use of this resource as we expect no reporting relationship among its potential users. Additionally, as with particular other examples of ecumenical work, integrating many ecumenical outcomes into Our Call activities can be challenging. That integration might become a suitable leadership opportunity, thereby expanding the RCA's capacities to learn with the global church.

- The National Council of Churches has reconstituted its Racial Justice Working Group on which the RCA has a seat. Benjamin Rivera represents the RCA in that initiative. The group's work officially began in March 2011.

Welcoming Italy's Immigrants

Protestant churches in Italy are opening their doors to welcome immigrants fully into their congregations.

"The church is called to express vividly the unity in Christ and the fact that ethnic, linguistic, and cultural divides aren't relevant in the perspective of the kingdom of God," says Paolo Naso, national coordinator for Being Church Together (BCT), a program that helps Italian congregations welcome immigrants. The RCA supports Naso and his work with mission shares.

"We have to witness how the gospel compels us to bridge ethnicities, languages, and cultures to celebrate our oneness in Christ. This is the vision moving us, but of course we have to adapt it to the real situations: it's a process, sometimes complicated and demanding, but we do feel this is the vocation we are called to answer in a society discriminating against and marginalizing the immigrants."

Immigrants make up about 8 percent of the Italian population, a higher percentage than in other European countries. "BCT works with different tools," Naso says. "We assist congregations that want to explore the possibility to reach out to immigrant brothers and sisters. At the same time we offer training courses for pastors or elders and offer analysis and tools for cross-cultural programs.

"The strategy is integration—a bilateral process involving both the nationals as well as the immigrants. In this sense, to welcome the immigrants isn't enough. The real challenge is to be ready to change, to become a more inclusive and pluralistic congregation, capable to recognize and celebrate different gifts and traditions."

Goal for developing leaders of color: To increase the number of pastors and other leaders of color who are knowledgeable about Reformed theology and skillful in the implementation of the RCA's polity.

Too often, pastors of color who join the RCA receive inadequate orientation, training, and coaching to help them thrive in the RCA. Too often, congregations of color appear not to be well aware of RCA polity, especially in terms of their rights, privileges, benefits, and responsibilities provided in the *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*). Too often, leaders of color report they feel like outsiders in their classes and other leadership circles.

Strategies:

- Identify knowledge and skills that leaders of color need to be effective in a variety of settings in the RCA.
- Develop intermediate and long-term methods for delivering identified knowledge and skills to leaders of color.
- Recruit and engage leaders in this system for developing their knowledge and skills.

Data:

The RCA held a 2011 Multiracial Strategy Coalition gathering in Chicago in February. Thirty-one people participated, including leaders from the racial/ethnic councils. The general secretary and staff from the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice facilitated this gathering. This guiding coalition for our multiracial future freed from racism made recommendations regarding this objective of developing leaders of color. Specifically, the coalition recommended these areas for increasing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of leaders of color:

- Know the dynamics of the RCA's structure and polity well, and know how to use them.
- Become competent in at least one culture other than their own and that of the majority culture, and fruitfully help others understand the value of understanding and valuing cultures—including how others live, work, worship, and make decisions—all through a wide variety of strategies engaged in over a long time period.
- Model leadership in the development of multiracial congregations or in building relationships among monoracial congregations of different races.
- Recognize own pains and hurts are painful and real, but use that pain as positive motivations for going forward, and for helping others to understand that pain is to be empathized with and not ignored.
- Guide and facilitate the learning and understanding of stories that shape the lives and worldviews of people of different cultures and generations.
- Assist classes in the use of tools to diagnose, assess, and remedy certain aspects of organizational development as well as race-based disparities in treatment of congregations, ministers, preaching elders and commissioned pastors, and students.
- Develop a deep reliance on Scripture as the key source of their personal journeys to become more like Jesus in all they think, say, and do.
- Develop strong personal skills in the areas of strategic thinking, scenario planning, systems thinking, and networking for resources.
- Guide and facilitate the exploration of values, benefits, and preferred ways of living across cultural and generational lines

Goal for widening our circles: To include women and young adults at all levels of the Reformed Church in America's transition to being multiracial and freed from racism.

The Holy Spirit gives a wide range of spiritual gifts for the purposes of building up the church and equipping it to do its work of reconciling the world to God. Nowhere in Scripture do we read that the Holy Spirit treats men preferentially over women or older people preferentially over younger people in the matter of giving gifts. Failure to adequately include women and young adults might violate the actions of the Spirit to mature the body of Christ for its work of reconciling the world to God. This kind of violation might assure we will not become freed from racism.

Strategies:

- Ensure that critical masses of people of color, women, and young adults contribute to discussions, decisions, and actions.

- Outreach intentionally through colleges and seminaries, among emerging leaders, and through Call Waiting.
- Work closely with GSC coordinators for racial/ethnic and women's ministries, with other Our Call leaders, and with congregational, classical, regional, and institutional groups that share our mission.

Data:

- The February 2011 Multiracial Strategy Coalition meeting is a clear example of "widening our circle." Sixty-three people from all eight of the regional synod areas were invited to participate. Thirty-one people from around the RCA accepted the invitation and participated. Ten were women and six were young adults. Equivalent numbers of whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians participated along with one Native American. Participants came from seven of the eight regional synod areas.

  The data indicate that RCA meetings can look more like the church God intends us to be when the values for being multiracial, supporting gender equity, and ensuring the place of young adults are carried through to result.

- The coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice visited Hope College, Northwestern College, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, and Western Theological Seminary, participating in classes, speaking in chapel, leading workshops and retreats, meeting with and encouraging students, and meeting with faculty and administrators who support them.

  These data indicate that there is potential to build on the relationships the general secretary has with the presidents of the RCA colleges and seminaries. Students, faculty, and staff report they value such relationships with GSC staff and see them as speaking into their quality of life and education on their campuses. For the RCA's part, these relationships are also investments in the lives of future RCA leaders and members as well as students from other denominations.

- In March 2011, the general secretary and college presidents met in New York with the coordinator of discipleship, the racial/ethnic council executives, and the coordinator of multiracial initiatives and social justice; their executive assistants; and several pastors. Together they explored opportunities for moving forward in their efforts to make RCA colleges more diverse. This conversation may be unique in our denomination's history and might set the stage over time for similar discussions.

Goal for making communications strategic: To create strategic partnerships that result in democratizing information about becoming multiracial and freed from racism and resourcing decentralized initiatives.

Transitioning an organization as large and widespread as a denomination is not possible if communication is weighted toward one-to-one conversations, small groups, conferences and events, or email. Communications must become contagious, with messages spreading far beyond what one person, a small group, or a single medium can manage. The spreading of the word must use people's preexisting social networks so that people share with and grow with people in their own face-to-face and virtual groups.

Information is democratized. Initiatives are decentralized.

Strategies:

- Form strategic partnerships with communications teams.

- Take advantage of various social media, platforms, and technologies.
- Use redundant communications efforts and multiple forms of technology as each medium might have its own particular following.
- Disseminate to classes and ministers up-to-date information regarding being multiracial and freed from racism.

Data:

- The partnership between the RCA's Communication and Production Services department and the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice continues to be strategic, and not merely service, in nature.
- Various social and media platforms continue to be used to convey messages about being multiracial and freed from racism: the RCA website, Facebook, Twitter, a blog, and various Google capacities.
- Published three Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice e-newsletters annually, emailing them widely through the RCA and posting them on websites.
- Continued to develop, often in conjunction with the Communication and Production Services department, various stories, meditations, sermons, and prayer requests for sharing and posting.

Report of the Board of Benefits Services

Introduction

The Board of Benefits Services is an agency of the General Synod delegated by the synod to provide, manage, and administer retirement income, supplemental pensions, assistance grants, and insurance benefits for all ordained ministers and their families, and for other employees of agencies, assemblies, and institutions of the Reformed Church in America. The board is subject to all provisions of the Reformed Church in America *Book of Church Order*. The Board of Benefits Services is separately incorporated from the General Synod. It is a corporation as defined in subparagraph (a) (5) of Section 102 of the New York not for profit corporation law, and is a Type B corporation under Section 201 of the same law.

The board and its personnel are subject to strict regulations governing insurance and retirement programs. It and participating RCA churches, assemblies, and agencies must adhere to the tax code of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the rules established and enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services. Within this regulatory environment the board and its staff are committed to fulfilling the mandates from the General Synod. The board and staff strive to respond pastorally to the needs of participating pastors and church workers, and try to assist participants, churches, and other employers in clarifying and simplifying the often complex rules that frame insurance and retirement programs.

The sixteen-member board is comprised of active and retired RCA ministers, insurance professionals, retirement professionals, financial planners, attorneys, and the officers of the General Synod. It is also supported by the Investment Advisory Committee and the Audit Committee, standing committees of the General Synod Council that include representatives from the Board of Benefits Services and the Church Growth Fund. The board's responsibilities are carried out by a staff team of eleven (11) full and part-time personnel and an adjunct staff of seventeen (17) part-time retired calling pastors (Senior Pastors) who provide a visitation ministry among all RCA retirees. The board is also supported by the various departments of the General Synod Council including finance, communications, development, personnel, and legal services.

The board met in regular session on October 5-6, 2010. It is the practice of the board to coordinate its fall meeting with a pre-meeting of its seventeen "Senior Pastors" who meet with the board to address their observations and concerns for the more than four thousand retired ministers, spouses, and dependents of retirees. The board held its annual meeting on March 6-8, 2011.

In the fall of 2010 the Board of Benefits Services concluded a two-year process of revising its internal governance to become, like the General Synod Council, a policy board utilizing the principles of "Policy Governance"[1] to guide its work and to guide its oversight/supervision of the personnel assigned to it. The transition was accomplished with the full support and involvement of the General Synod Council in its capacity as the General Synod's executive committee, and included external consultants and legal advisors. The change was initiated two years ago to clarify the board's full fiduciary responsibility for the work assigned to it by the General Synod. The challenge for the General Synod Council and the board, not anticipated by the developers of the principles of policy governance, was to retain, strengthen, and clarify the General Synod's long-standing commitment to

[1] Carver, John, *Boards That Make a Difference: A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organizations*, Second edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

operate with a unified mission, and a unified staff, and to share common supporting services (e.g. finance, communications, personnel, etc.) all within the polity of the RCA and the provisions of the *Book of Church Order.* The board's policy document may be viewed on the RCA website (www.rca.org/BOBSPolicies).

Key to its transition to policy governance was the task of restating the reasons the Board of Benefits Services exists. In policy governance the reasons are stated as "ends." The Board of Benefits Services defined its "ends" by interpreting its responsibilities as these were delegated to it by the General Synod. The board's "ends" are:

1. Participants and eligible participants have a means to wisely set aside funds at a rate commensurate with other church plans with a reasonable expectation of financial well-being in retirement.
2. Reasonable health and wellness, life, and disability benefits at rates commensurate with other church plans are available to participants and eligible participants.
3. Active and retired participants and spouses might have access to an assistance fund that may be made available based on demonstrated need and is limited by available funds.
4. Participants and eligible participants have access to and are encouraged to use information and educational resources that allow them to make timely financial decisions regarding their retirement and their health-, life-, and disability-related benefits.

The following motion was made from the floor:

> To instruct BOBS staff to delay implementation of the coaching and networks aspects of the wellness program until the completion of an independent evaluation of these programs can be completed and reviewed by the Benefits Services board.
>
> VOTED: To not adopt the motion.

Revised and Amended Bylaws

As part of the transition of its internal governance to policy governance the Board of Benefits Services engaged in a full review of its bylaws to ensure that this document and the policies developed by the board and approved by the General Synod Council were consistent with each other. The amended bylaws were prepared for the board by board member and attorney John DeKoster and RCA corporate counsel Paul Karssen. The board extends its appreciation to John and Paul for their work. The amended bylaws are below for review by the General Synod delegates.

R-32
To adopt the following revision of the Constitution and Rules of the Board Of Benefits Services of the Reformed Church in America, effective July 1, 2011 (additions underlined; deletions stricken out): (ADOPTED)

THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE BOARD OF BENEFITS SERVICES OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

FOREWORD

The Board of Pensions of the Reformed Church in America was established by the General Synod of the Reformed Church <u>in America (General Synod)</u> and incorporated by Act of

the Assembly of the State of New York, approved April 16, 1923, under the original name of "The Ministers' Fund of the Reformed Church in America, Inc." In June 1923, the General Synod designated the Ministers' Fund as one of the regular boards of the Reformed Church.

The original charter was amended by Act of the Assembly, approved March 23, 1938, so that a retirement fund could be established for the benefit of lay workers of the Reformed Church. Under date of March 19, 1954, the name of the board was changed to "The Board of Pensions of the Reformed Church in America" in order to conform to the names of the other boards of the Reformed Church and pursuant to Section 40 of the General Corporation Law of the State of New York.

In order to reflect more accurately the duties and responsibilities of The Board of Pensions, it will be known as "The Board of Benefits Services of the Reformed Church in America" (The Board of Benefits Services) as of the effective date of this amendment to the Constitution.

The ~~purpose of~~ General Synod has delegated to The Board of Benefits Services ~~is~~ the responsibility to provide, manage, and administer retirement income, supplemental pensions, assistance grants, and insurance benefits for all ordained ministers and their families, and for other employees of agencies, assemblies, and institutions of the Reformed Church in America. Fulfilling that responsibility is the purpose of The Board of Benefits Services, and it does so in accordance with the rules prescribed herein.

The Constitution and Rules of The Board of Benefits Services set forth~~given~~ herein~~, and the rules prescribed in each department of the two divisions~~ are the official constitution and rules adopted by The Board of Benefits Services and approved by the General Synod and supersede the constitutions and rules of the following funds and departments which heretofore comprised the Ministers' Fund of the Reformed Church in America, Inc.:

The Widows' Fund, organized 1837
The Disabled Ministers' Fund, organized 1855
The Ministerial Pension Fund, established 1928
The Widows' Department of the Ministerial Pension Fund, established 1932
The Contributory Annuity Fund, organized 1936
The Retirement Fund for Lay Workers, organized 1937
The Children's Christmas Fund (Orphans' Fund)

This Constitution as amended is effective July 1, 20__~~08~~.

I. THE CORPORATION

1.1 The Board of Benefits Services of the Reformed Church in America (hereinafter "The Board of Benefits Services" or the "Board" or the "Corporation") is a corporation as defined in subparagraph (a) (5) of Section 102 of the New York not for profit corporation law, and is a Type B corporation under Section 201 of the New York not for profit corporation law. As such, the Corporation shall have no members. The Corporation is not a "private foundation" as that term is defined in Section 509 of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (as amended).

1.2 The Board of Benefits Services is an agency of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America (General Synod), and as such is subject to all provi-

sions of the Reformed Church in America *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*), as the same may be amended from time to time,) applicable to such agencies.

1.3 Without limiting or modifying any other provision of this document or the Corporation's act of incorporation (or any amendments thereto), the purpose of The Board of Benefits Services is to provide, manage, and administer retirement income, supplemental pensions, assistance grants, and insurance benefits for all ordained ministers and their families, and for other employees of agencies, assemblies, and institutions of the Reformed Church in America.

1.4 The principal office of tThe Board of Benefits Services shall be located in the City, County, and State of New York.

II. MANAGEMENT; RELATIONSHIP TO GENERAL SYNOD; SUBMISSION TO *BCO*

2.1 The supervision of the retirement and benefit plans of the Reformed Church in America shall be vested in a board of directors of The Board of Benefits Serviceswhich shall consist of seventeensixteen directors, all of whom are members of the Reformed Church in America. The composition of the board of directors of tThe Board of Benefits Services shall be as follows: the president and vice president of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, a New York not for profit corporation ("General Synod"), the moderator of the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America, a New York not for profit corporation ("General Synod Council"), the general secretary of the General Synod, and thirteen directors at-large who shall be nominated by the General Synod Commission on Nominations and elected in the manner set forth in *BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 4. Eligibility for at-large membership on the board of directors of The Board of Benefits Services, the method for election or appointment to such at-large membership (including the filling of vacancies occurring by reason of death, resignation, or otherwise), and the term of office for such at-large membership shall be as provided for General Synod agencies in the *BCO*. The terms of office on the board of directors of The Board of Benefits Services of the president and vice president of the General Synod shall be limited to their terms of service as such president and vice president, respectively, of the moderator of the General Synod Council shall be limited to his or her term of service as such moderator, and of the general secretary of the General Synod shall limited to his or her term of service as such general secretary. by the General Synod to terms of three years and may be re-elected for a second three year term. The Commission on Nominations willshould strive to assure that no more than 1/3 of the at-large member terms expire annually. Members shall be ineligible for two years after they have served two consecutive terms. The at-large directors shall have such experience, qualifications and professional backgrounds as are necessary or appropriate to ensure that the board of directors is properly equipped to monitor the performance of the Executive Director and effectively represent the various constituencies in the RCA that have an interest in the proper and effective functioning of The Board of Benefits Services, and may include one or more be professionals qualified as follows: three in the field of finance; two in the field of employee retirement benefits; two in the field of health care services; one in the field of law. Also, three at-large positions shall be filled by ordained ministers who are participants in the plan at the date of their nomination. The general secretary of the General Synod shall be an ex officio director without vote. The general secretary shall use every opportunity to bring the work of The Board of Benefits Services before the Reformed Church in America.

~~2.2 The Board of Benefits Services shall have power to fill vacancies on The Board of Benefits Services occurring by reason of death, resignation, or otherwise.~~

2.2~~3~~ The Board of Benefits Services shall have and exercise all the power necessary to receive, accumulate, manage, invest, and dispose of the funds and property entrusted to it and otherwise fulfill its purpose as described in Section 1.3 of this Constitution, consistent with the laws under which it has been incorporated, and the *BCO*, this Constitution, and~~or with~~ any action of the General Synod of the Reformed Church.

2.3 The *BCO* (as the same may be amended from time to time) is incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth. Any amendment to the *BCO* shall be effective and applicable to The Board of Benefits Services immediately upon its effectiveness. The Board of Benefits Services, as an "agency" of the General Synod (solely as the term "agency" is defined in *BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 6), is and at all times shall be subject to the *BCO*. If at any time any conflict or inconsistency exists between the *BCO* and these bylaws, the *BCO* shall control.

2.4 The Board of Benefits Services may fulfill its purposes and responsibilities by delegating to its Executive Director (as provided in Section 3.1, below) in writing such power and authority as the Board may from time to time deem necessary or appropriate~~is empowered to make rules for the administration of its work in accord with plans approved by the General Synod and consistent with this Constitution~~.

2.5 All members of the board of directors of The Board of Benefits Services shall possess fiduciary responsibilities toward the Board, including but not limited to the fiduciary duties of care and loyalty. By serving as such, individuals elected as members of the board of directors agree that their personal interests must at all times be subordinated to the best interest of the Board. Each member is prohibited from using his or her position as a member to advance any personal interest or the interest of any third party or constituency.

~~2.5 (a) To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, the Corporation may indemnify any person made, or threatened to be made, a party to an action or proceeding other than one by or in the right of the Corporation to procure a judgment in its favor, whether civil or criminal, including an action by or in the right of any other corporation of any type or kind, domestic or foreign, or any partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, which any director or officer of this Corporation served in any capacity at the request of this Corporation, by reason of the fact that he or she, or his or her testator or intestate, was a director or officer of the Corporation, or served such other corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise in any capacity, against judgments, fines, amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees actually and necessarily incurred as a result of such action or proceeding, or any appeal therein, if such director or officer acted in good faith, for a purpose which he or she reasonably believed to be in, or, in the case of service for any other corporation or any partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, not opposed to, the best interests of this Corporation and, in criminal actions or proceedings, in addition, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.~~

~~(b) To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, this Corporation may indemnify any person made, or threatened to be made, a party to an action by or in the right of this Corporation to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that he or~~

~~she, or his or her testator or intestate, is or was a director or officer of this Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of this Corporation as a director or officer of any other corporation of any type or kind, domestic or foreign, of any partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, against amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and necessarily incurred by him or her in connection with the defense or settlement of such action, or in connection with an appeal therein, if such director or officer acted in good faith, for a purpose which he or she reasonably believed to be in, or, in the case of service for any other corporation or any partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, not opposed to, the best interests of this Corporation, except that no indemnification under this paragraph shall be made in respect of (a) a threatened action, or a pending action which is settled or otherwise disposed of, or (b) any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable to this Corporation, unless and only to the extent that the court in which the action was brought, or, if no action was brought, any court of competent jurisdiction determines upon application that, in view of all the circumstances of the case, the person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such portion of the settlement amount and expenses as the court deems proper.~~

III. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

3.1 All officers of The Board of Benefits Services shall be either a member of the board of directors or staff employed by the General Synod Council. The Board of Benefits Services shall elect annually a president, vice president, ~~a~~secretary, treasurer, and such other officers of the Corporation as the board of directors may from time to time deem appropriate, the terms of which shall commence on July 1 of each year and terminate on June 30 of the following year. The president and vice president of the Corporation shall be elected from the membership of the board of directors. The secretary of the Corporation need not be a member of the board of directors. The treasurer of the General Synod and the General Synod Council shall be the treasurer of The Board of Benefits Services, and shall not be a member of the board of directors. ~~The secretary need not be a member of the board of directors. The president and vice president shall be elected from the membership of the board of directors.~~

3.2 The Board of Benefits Services may appoint such committees and engage such additional assistance as may be necessary for the fulfillment of its purposes and responsibilities~~performance of its work~~.

~~3.3 The Board of Benefits Services shall appoint such committees as may be necessary to carry out its work.~~

3.3~~4~~ The Board of Benefits Services shall, upon request, provide representation to~~appoint a delegate to serve as an ex officio member, without vote, of~~ the Board of Trustees of the Registered Pension Plan for the Employees of the Regional Synod of Canada, Inc. ~~Said delegate shall attend the annual meeting of the Plan Trustees and report to The Board of Benefits Services on the status of the plan, the adequacy of retirement benefits provided by the plan, and the annual audit of the plan.~~

IV. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

4.1 The president shall preside at all meetings of the board of directors of The Board of Benefits Services and shall perform such other duties as are usually required of that

officer, or as may be requested by ~~T~~the Board ~~of Benefits Services~~. The president shall be a member, ex-officio ~~with full privileges~~, of all committees of ~~T~~the Board ~~of Benefits Services~~, with such rights, responsibilities, and privileges as may be established at the time of the formation of the committee.

4.2 The vice-president shall, in absence of the president, perform the duties of the president.

4.3 The secretary shall attend the meetings ~~of the board of directors~~ of The Board of Benefits Services and ~~of the regular committees, and~~ such other meetings as may be prescribed by The Board of Benefits Services; shall have custody of the minutes and other records and papers of The Board of Benefits Services and the corporate seal, and shall also perform the duties ordinarily required of a recording and corresponding secretary; and shall be responsible for the preparation of an annual report for The Board of Benefits Services to act upon and present to the General Synod.

V. EMPLOYMENT AND TERMINATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director shall be employed by the Board. The Executive Director shall be an officer of the Corporation, but not a member of its board of directors. The Executive Director shall have such duties, responsibilities, power, authority, and limitations as the board of directors of the Board of Benefits Services may establish from time to time.

VI. MEETINGS

6~~5~~.1 The Board of Benefits Services shall hold at least two regular meetings of the board of directors each year or as called by the president of The Board of Benefits Services. Nine members present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum. An affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members of the board of directors shall be necessary to take any action, but a lesser number present may adjourn the meeting to a later date.

6.2 Special meetings may be called by the president of the Board from time to time, and shall be called by the president of the Board upon written request made to the president of the Board by any four members of the board of directors.

6.3~~5.2~~ A written notice of each regular and special meeting, together with an agenda, background information, and proposed actions shall be mailed to each director at least ten days before each regular meeting or five days before a special meeting of the board of directors. The location of each regular or special meeting of the board of directors shall be specified by the president of the Corporation in the notice of the meeting. A meeting may be held without notice if all members of the board of directors are present or if those not present waive due notice of the meeting and those who are present do not protest their failure to have received such notice.

6.4~~5.3~~ At the meeting of The Board of Benefits Services preceding the annual meeting of the General Synod, the reports prepared by the secretary and the report of the auditors shall be considered and adopted for presentation to the General Synod.

6.5~~5.4~~ The annual meeting of The Board of Benefits Services shall be the meeting immediately preceding the annual meeting of the General Synod, at which time the ~~members and~~ officers shall be elected ~~and any committees appointed~~.

~~5.5 Any written or electronically transmitted (including email or facsimile transmission) consent by any director of the Corporation to any action taken at a meeting of the board of directors of the Corporation shall for all purposes (including determining the effectiveness of the action and determining the presence of a quorum for such meeting) be treated in the same manner as if the director providing the written or electronically transmitted consent had in fact attended the meeting and cast a vote in favor of the action consented to.~~

6~~5~~.6 Any one or more members of the board of directors of this Corporation or of any committee of this Corporation may participate in a meeting of such board or committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.

6~~5~~.7 Any action required or permitted to be taken by the board of directors of this Corporation or of any committee of this Corporation may be taken without a meeting if all directors or committee members consent in writing or by electronic transmission (including email and electronic transmission) to the adoption of a resolution authorizing the action. The resolution and the written or electronically transmitted consents thereto by the directors or committee members shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of such board or committee.

VII. INDEMNIFICATION

7.1 To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, the Corporation may indemnify any person made, or threatened to be made, a party to an action or proceeding other than one by or in the right of the Corporation to procure a judgment in its favor, whether civil or criminal, including an action by or in the right of any other corporation of any type or kind, domestic or foreign, or any partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, which any director or officer of this Corporation served in any capacity at the request of this Corporation, by reason of the fact that he or she, or his or her testator or intestate, was a director or officer of the Corporation, or served such other corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise in any capacity, against judgments, fines, amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees actually and necessarily incurred as a result of such action or proceeding, or any appeal therein, if such director or officer acted in good faith, for a purpose which he or she reasonably believed to be in, or, in the case of service for any other corporation or any partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, not opposed to, the best interests of this Corporation and, in criminal actions or proceedings, in addition, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

7.2 To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, this Corporation may indemnify any person made, or threatened to be made, a party to an action by or in the right of this Corporation to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that he or she, or his or her testator or intestate, is or was a director or officer of this Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of this Corporation as a director or officer of any other corporation of any type or kind, domestic or foreign, of any partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, against amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and necessarily incurred by him or her in connection with the defense or settlement of such action, or in connection with an appeal therein, if such director or offi-

cer acted in good faith, for a purpose which he or she reasonably believed to be in, or, in the case of service for any other corporation or any partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise, not opposed to, the best interests of this Corporation, except that no indemnification under this paragraph shall be made in respect of (a) a threatened action, or a pending action which is settled or otherwise disposed of, or (b) any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable to this Corporation, unless and only to the extent that the court in which the action was brought, or, if no action was brought, any court of competent jurisdiction determines upon application that, in view of all the circumstances of the case, the person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such portion of the settlement amount and expenses as the court deems proper.

VIII. EARNINGS AND ACTIVITIES

No part of the net earnings of The Board of Benefits Services shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the Board shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of its purpose. No substantial part of the activities of the Board shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Board shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, The Board of Benefits Services shall not exercise any power or carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation (a) exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

~~V~~IX. DISSOLUTION/LIQUIDATION

~~6.~~1 Subject to an order of a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, in the event of a liquidation, dissolution, termination or winding up of the corporation (whether voluntary, involuntary, or by operation of law), the property and assets of this Corporation shall be distributed to the General Synod Council or its successors or designee so long as it or they qualify as exempt from income tax under Section 501(a) as organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) in the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as the same may be amended from time to time. In the event that said corporation(s) is not then in existence and has not been succeeded by a qualifying corporation, then none of the property or assets of this Corporation shall be made available in any way to any individual, corporation, or other organization except to corporations or other organizations located within the United States, that are specifically designated by the General Synod, and that qualify as exempt from income tax under Section 501(a) as organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as the same may be amended from time to time, all subject to an order of the Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York. The board of directors shall designate any such qualifying organization in the plan for the dissolution of this Corporation and distribution of its assets. If the board of directors is unable to designate such qualifying organization then its designation shall be made by a court of competent jurisdiction in the State of New York.

XVII. AMENDMENTS

107.1 The Constitution and Rules of the Board may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regularly constituted meeting of The Board of Benefits Services, provided that the proposed amendment has been presented in writing at a previous regularly constituted meeting. The amendment shall become effective only after approval by the General Synod, by a majority vote of those present and voting at any regularly constituted meeting.

107.2 The Constitution and Rules of the Board may be amended by the General Synod by a majority vote of those present and voting at any regularly constituted meeting., provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to The Board of Benefits Services for its consideration at least three calendar months before the meeting of the General Synod in order that the Board may be able to present its views on the matter.

Covenant of Grace/Covenant of Care—2001-2011

1. 2001-2005

A review of the history of the former Board of Pensions and its successor, the Board of Benefits Services, will show that for perhaps the past fifty years the board and its personnel spoke of its service to the church as providing "a covenant of care" to express the mutual obligations we share as congregations and as a denomination with those who earn their living in service to the church and with their families. In the economic downturn of 2001 the board was confronted, as were all providers of group medical insurance, with a need to implement dramatic increases in premiums that, for the RCA, amounted to 30 percent over a period of few months. Participants were also confronted with instability in their retirement savings and faced deep losses. Recognizing the social and economic pressures on pastors, other church workers, and churches to seek more individualistic insurance and retirement savings options that might help some but would undermine the ability to provide insurance, retirement income, and the assurance of an assistance program for those retirees and active church workers facing special needs, the board determined to express to the church the core theological convictions that undergird the comprehensive benefits programs. The board called upon the Rev. Dr. James Cook, professor emeritus at Western Theological Seminary and a past president of General Synod, to assist it and its staff in a time of biblical and theological reflection regarding its mandates from the General Synod. The fruit of the board's work with Dr. Cook was a study paper, "Covenant of Grace/Covenant of Care." It provided the faith foundation that articulated the board's understanding of its mission and the church's ongoing commitment to provide for its ministers and other church workers quality comprehensive medical, life, and disability insurance, a high quality retirement program, and a continuation of the longstanding assistance ministry for active and retired ministers and church workers and their dependents.

The 2002 meeting of the General Synod received the theological paper titled "Covenant of Grace/Covenant of Care." It was described as a "compelling biblical and theological rationale for a comprehensive and covenantal provision of benefits for ministers, their families, and lay employees of the church" (*MGS 2002*, pp. 358-363). The full paper is appended to the end of this report for reference. In receiving the paper in 2002 the General Synod took two actions:

a) Synod affirmed the paper "Covenant of Grace/Covenant of Care" (see pp. 231-236) as a foundational statement for the life and work of the church and commended the paper to the General Synod's boards and agencies, regional synods, classes, consistories, and congregations of the RCA for study and application to their life and ministry (*MGS 2002*, R-111[amended], p. 363).
b) Synod directed the Board of Benefits Services to apply the biblical and theological principles of the paper "Covenant of Grace/Covenant of Care" to the policies, programs, ministries, and services of the board (*MGS 2002*, R-112, p. 363).

In 2003 the Board of Benefits Services returned to the General Synod with a proposal to provide a financially viable and stable medical insurance program for ordained ministers, families, and lay workers clearly grounded in its continuing study of the "Covenant of Grace/Covenant of Care" paper. In its report in 2003 the board stated: "Biblical stewardship is covenantal care for creation, the faithful management of all that is entrusted to us by God. It cannot simply be equated with the cheapest option or the greatest cost savings available to a congregation or a denominational agency or institution" (*MGS 2003*, p. 277).

The board went on to say:

> In place of individualism and special interests, the church's covenantal stewardship requires that the board provide a medical insurance plan in which all participate in order to best meet the needs of each servant of the church. The board, as a covenant partner, recognizes its responsibility to provide quality medical insurance at a reasonable and competitive cost. The board asks consistories, agencies, and institutions for their part to recognize that the premiums they pay provide not only for their own ministers or staff, who may be younger and in good health. They also help to bear the burdens of the elderly, retired, or ill servants of the church who are also our responsibility under the covenant of care. Faithful stewardship requires no less and offers a powerful witness to the competing interests and individualism that mark the medical insurance crisis of our time (*MGS 2003*, p. 377).

The board continued in its report to make a compelling case to the delegates for the implementation of a full participation, quality, group health plan for pastors and their immediate families, non-ordained church workers, and missionaries. In addition to being grounded in the theological study "Covenant of Grace/Covenant of Care," providing a high quality group insurance plan was seen as an important component of the RCA's new Statement of Mission and Vision, which includes the phrase "to equip congregations for ministry," recognizing that a covenant to provide affordable, high quality medical care needed to be embedded in the call by consistories to those committed to a life of service in the church if the RCA was going to continue to attract the gifted leaders it needs. In that same year a study of denominational services conducted by the Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research at Hope College ranked the provision of insurance benefits to pastors and other church workers consistently high across all RCA regional synods.

The synod adopted for recommendation to the several classes changes to the *Book of Church Order* to provide for a full insurance program. The changes included provisions regarding the responsibility of consistories, classes, and in the case of General Synod professors of theology, the General Synod, to fulfill provisions of the call form (Formulary 5). All ministers serving the church full-time under call or contract were to participate in the retirement and insurance programs of the Reformed Church in America, unless the minister was covered through the Canadian portion

of the RCA plan. The amendments, including a revision of the call form (Formulary 5) were adopted by the classes and incorporated into the *Book of Church Order* in 2004. The order of the church was firmly grounded in the church's theology of covenant and the benefits to protect ministers, families, lay church workers, and those in retirement would be assured…or would they?

2. 2006-2010 Covenant of Care Contribution and Full Participation

In response to the request of several classes that noted that in some cases ministers were eligible for medical insurance through a spouse's employer, and in those cases where the RCA plan was continuing to find it difficult to negotiate satisfactory contracts with service providers, the Board of Benefits Services revised the definition of full participation under the Covenant of Care. As of January 1, 2006, an RCA church with a full-time minister of Word and sacrament under call or contract can meet the full participation requirement by paying a contribution of one-half the single annual medical premium. This contribution protected the "group" nature of the plan, helped to maintain the viability of the RCA medical program, and also allowed the minister of Word and sacrament to participate in the wellness programs provided through Benefits for Life. The revision also served to protect ministers and consistories by making it possible for an ordained minister to reenter the RCA medical program should circumstances change and health coverage be needed. Thus, a minister who serves a congregation in a region where the best coverage is available through a spouse's group plan could reenter the RCA plan upon accepting a call to a church in a region where the RCA plan is the better option. A consistory in a calling situation would not be faced with purchasing high cost coverage for a minister who was not previously an RCA plan participant. If a minister whose spouse's employer determines that it can no longer provide coverage to family members who are eligible for another group plan—as is happening with increased frequency during the current economic downturn—the minister and family could reenter the RCA plan without penalty.

As of January 1, 2007, in order to comply with the requirement of Formulary 5 as outlined in the *Book of Church Order*, the Board of Benefits Services has included all full-time ministers of Word and sacrament in the medical program or Covenant of Care contribution, basic life insurance, and long-term disability insurance. The board provides these benefits according to its responsibility as an agency of the General Synod and to meet requirements of its insurance contracts. BOBS is called by the denomination to provide benefits to all full-time RCA ordained pastors serving under call or contract. BOBS must establish benefits, policies, and rates based on this directive. BOBS does not have authority over the actions of churches and consistories and therefore cannot force the collection of contributions for the benefits required by the *BCO*. Non-compliance with Formulary 5 at the local level creates 1) the potential loss of benefits to the entire denomination, and 2) a potential inability to fully fund benefits due to non-payment at the local level. These two potential concerns became a reality with the loss of long-term care coverage in 2008 due to lack of full participation. A third consequence was the premium increase for medical insurance for 2009—which would not have been necessary if all Covenant of Care premiums had been paid. The board reported to the 2010 General Synod that as of 12/31/2009 there was over $522,000 in arrearages. That number continued to climb through the first three quarters of 2010.

3. 2010-2011

Delegates to the 2010 General Synod, utilizing the synod's "all-synod advisory committee" process, discussed the implications of the 2002 biblical/theological paper "Covenant of Grace/Covenant of Care" as it applied to the current context of a continuing rise in the cost of health insurance and as the Board of Benefits Services reported a growing and untenable problem with unpaid Covenant of Care premiums as well as premiums for group life and long-term disability insurance. The delegates reviewed the provisions of the *Book of Church Order* that had been agreed to by previous General Synods and the several classes. As a result of its deliberations in advisory committees and in its plenary sessions the delegates to the 2010 General Synod reaffirmed that, "the covenant of care is exactly that—a covenant—and as such, there was strong agreement that Formulary 5 should be reaffirmed" (*MGS 2010,* p. 271).

The General Synod directed the Board of Benefits Services to restart a program of premium forgiveness that had been initiated in the last of half of 2009. The forgiveness program was directed at churches that were current in their Covenant of Care premium payments in 2010 but had outstanding obligations from prior years. The board was also directed to prepare an incentive program that would reduce the cost of insurance premiums in 2011 "for those churches and ministers in classes that demonstrate 100 percent faithfulness to the constitutional requirements of participation in RCA medical insurance or the payment of the 'Covenant of Care' premium, and all retired ministers including those in classes in non-compliance." Lastly, the synod voted "to increase the assessments of those classes in which consistories that as of December 31, 2010, are in arrears in the payment of premiums for the benefits required in Formulary #5 (Call to a Minister of Word and Sacrament) or the payment of the 'Covenant of Care' premium for all of its ministers serving full-time in congregations under call or contract, unless the minister is covered through the Canadian health care plan, with one-third of the arrears assessment due by May 31 in each of the subsequent three years" (*MGS 2010*, R-71, p. 272-273).

Benefits Services staff, with the cooperation of classis clerks and various classis committees, restarted a premium forgiveness program in August 2010 as directed by the General Synod. In many cases classes came alongside churches that owed significant premiums back as far as 2007 and were unable to pay even their portion of the amount after forgiveness was applied. As of December 31, 2010, the Board of Benefits Services forgave approximately $400,000 in unpaid premiums and has collected or is collecting through repayment programs approximately $84,000 from churches, ministers, and classes throughout the United States. (Note: The program did not impact the congregations and three RCA classes in Canada.) Approximately $38,000 was written for due to errors in the reported status of ministers (e.g. part- vs. full-time, end of service issues, etc.). Further, the board is able to report to this General Synod that as of December 31, 2010, all but one of the eligible U.S. classes has participated in the forgiveness program. As of the time of preparing this report the one outstanding classis has been given a grace period due to circumstances involving one of its congregations that had unresolved questions about the premiums owed. The board and its staff are hopeful that they will be able to report 100 percent participation in the forgiveness program by the time synod is called to order in mid-June.

In accord with the General Synod's directive, the 2010 forgiveness program was linked to a 2011 incentive program that would have the effect of reducing actual premium costs for medical insurance in 2011 for all ordained ministers serving full or

part time under call or contract. Based on a review of its financial condition at the close of the 2010 fiscal year (September 30, 2010) the staff proposed and the board agreed to offer an incentive equal to the cost of the monthly premiums for medical, group life, and long-term disability insurance (the *BCO* mandated programs as stated in Formulary 5) and further, agreed to extend this to all participants rather than only the ordained ministers, in classes reporting 100 percent faithfulness, provided that premium payments or repayment agreements were current through May 31, 2011. The board has set aside $1.2 million from its insurance reserve in anticipation of paying the premiums for the constitutionally required insurance programs for all eligible participants including retirees in July 2011.

The board notes that the premium holiday, when coupled with participation in the various wellness incentive programs offsets the 5 percent increase in medical insurance premiums in 2011, making the 2011 premium for medical insurance for RCA ministers of Word and sacrament lower than the 2010 premium. The board and its staff have been unable to find another group plan in the United States that reported a medical premium reduction in 2011. Indeed, the average premium increase for group medical insurance plans in 2011 was 11 percent, with many plans increasing premiums by more than double that amount. The board is also able to report that following an analysis of costs, the staff reduced the premium for long-term disability insurance for its participants by 33 percent in 2011.

Review of Board of Benefits Programs 2010-2011

1. Retirement Programs

"Participants and eligible participants have a means to wisely set aside funds at a rate commensurate with other church plans with a reasonable expectation of financial well-being in retirement" (BOBS Ends Policy E-1).

The Board of Benefits Services administers two defined contribution retirement programs, a "frozen" non-qualified plan and a more recent 403(b) plan. Participant contributions since 2005 have all been placed in the 403(b) plan. The non-qualified plan rules have become increasingly difficult to administer due to rules changes designed to protect plan participants. The administrative oversight of the plan adds costs to participants and the rules governing the plan create limitations on the options available to participants in retirement (e.g. certain distributions and annuity options).

Through its attorneys, benefits staff and the board continued to dialogue with the Internal Revenue Service to re-state the non-qualified RCA Retirement Program to be a 403(b) program. The IRS, in what we now regard as a final decision, has refused to allow the board to re-state the plan on the grounds that this would establish a precedent for other plans, a step it is unwilling to take. At this writing the staff and the board continue to review other options that will make it possible for participants to transfer funds from the nonqualified plan into the 403(b) plan without incurring additional taxes or penalties.

Participants who have been in the retirement plans prior to January 1, 2005, have assets in two programs: the non-qualified Retirement Program and the 403(b) Retirement Program. Currently, the RCA 403(b) Retirement Program consists of participant money already deferred and invested in the 403(b) employee plan and contributions that have been made by churches, or other eligible employers, as of January 1, 2005. The RCA 403(b) Retirement Program plan document, Summary Plan Description, and forms are available on the RCA website.

The board reminds churches and other employers of RCA participants in the retirement plan of the requirement to provide to Benefits Services an "adoption agreement" indicating the "adoption" of the RCA 403(b) plan as the retirement plan for the church (or other employer). This is a U.S. federal government requirement. Efforts on the part of the benefits staff to gather "adoption agreements" continues to be a difficult challenge. The staff reports ongoing resistance from churches and other employers to provide this required documentation.

The board has partnered since 2000 with Fidelity Investments. The company provides certain administrative services to complement and support our internal staff team, and serves as the record keeper for the non-qualified and 403(b) plans. In 2010 management fees charged by Fidelity Investments to plan participant accounts invested in the target date ("Freedom") funds were reduced by an overall $328,000 due to a change in the investment class (no change in the underlying investments in the funds). Additional administrative savings of $64,250 have resulted from direct negotiation with the Fidelity relationship manager assigned to the RCA account. Fidelity Investments has also agreed to make available $50,000 for direct internal administrative or other ERISA approved expenses (e.g. cost of external consultant, legal counsel, etc.) In the current year the board and staff are anticipating a successful transition in the investment classes of other funds in the plan that will result in an additional fee reduction of over $80,000. In 2010-2011 the RCA plans continued to rank in the top quartile when compared with other retirement programs in the United States.

Based on the mid-February 2011 plan review with Fidelity Investments, the vast majority (65.5 percent in the 403(b) and 76.1 percent in the non-qualified plan) of participants are invested in a single life-cycle (Freedom) fund. Eighty-nine (89) percent of 403(b) and 82 percent of non-qualified plan assets are invested in the Freedom Funds meaning that the vast majority of participants are invested in funds managed according to age criteria. These percentages are considerably higher than our faith based plan peer group and the "industry peer group" we are measured against. We are currently seeking additional data to better determine if participants are invested in the appropriate fund for their age group. Fifteen (15) percent of participants are invested in more than one Freedom Fund.

In mid-April 2011 the executive director and a board appointed review team concluded a search for a consulting firm that will oversee a comprehensive review of the RCA's retirement programs inclusive of plan design, investment options, management and administrative fees, communication and participant education services, and internal staff. This will be the first full and comprehensive review carried out with the support of external consultants in the history of the plans. As noted above, the cost of the review will be offset (entirely) with $50,000 in administrative support provided by our record keeper, Fidelity Investments. The review will be conducted with the support of Lockton Financial Advisors, LLC, one of the largest retirement consulting firms in the United States.

2. Insurance and Wellness Programs

"Reasonable health and wellness, life, and disability benefits at rates commensurate with other church plans are available to participants and eligible participants" (BOBS Ends Policy E-2).

Benefits Services continues to strive to provide benefits that meet the needs of active and retired participants and their families at a cost that is as reasonable as possible

in a very costly and difficult market. The insurance programs (medical, drug, dental, disability, long-term care, and life) are on solid financial footing. Following the premium forgiveness write-off and including the anticipated credit to participant accounts in July 2011 of about $1.2 million, the medical program will continue to be fully reserved and able to pay all incurred but not reported (INBR) claims. The policies of the board require the executive director to retain a reserve significantly greater than the IBNR and to hold a minimum of nine months reserve for operational costs. As noted above, Benefits Services increased the medical insurance premium in 2011 by 5 percent. However, this has been offset for most participants by the one-month premium holiday set to be credited to accounts in July and the increased incentives offered in conjunction with the expanded wellness programs. (It needs to be noted that other denominational, non-profit, governmental, and private/public sector employers across the U.S. have been seeing double-digit increases from 11 percent to 25 percent.) In addition, long-term disability insurance premiums were reduced by over 30 percent in 2011.

Benefits Services provides medical, life, disability, and long-term care coverage as well as a growing wellness program designed to counter the widely reported concerns about the overall health of ministers and their families reported by all denominations and faith groups in the U.S. and Canada. The wellness program has been significantly expanded in 2011 in an effort to directly impact RCA claims experience and in response to the General Synod 2010 encouragement (*MGS 2010,* R-72, p. 273) to offer these programs to plan participants and to those who pay the Covenant of Care premium.

The RCA's programs summarized below are designed to provide quality medical care through United Healthcare and Medco and to offer comprehensive wellness and prevention services to promote health and well-being. Participants can benefit from the following services:

- Access to large physician, hospital, and prescription drug networks through United Healthcare and Medco.
- Online access to benefits, with the ability to update indicative data immediately.
- Web-portal access to health resources related to wellness, health management, medical providers, and prescription drugs.
- One hundred percent coverage for most preventative and diagnostic procedures.
- Health and well-being assessment surveys and biometric screening.
- Wellness programs: "Naturally Slim," a behavioral eating program for all active participants and spouses; "Amazing Pace," a pedometer based walking program, for active and retired participants; the HeartMath program, which helps participants and their spouses deal with the negative impact of stress and improve cognitive performance; and on a limited enrollment basis in 2011, coaching and pastoral networks through the RCA's revitalization and leadership ministries.

In response to an instruction (*MGS 2010*, R-73, p. 273) from the 2010 General Synod "to engage in a comprehensive review of the current RCA insurance plan in light of the new U.S. health care legislation adopted by the U.S. Congress [spring 2010] to adjust the RCA plan as may be necessary and beneficial for plan participants…" the benefits staff completed a health care reform impact analysis. This analysis is ongoing as the Department of Health and Human Services continues to announce the administrative rules to support the legislation. The RCA health benefits plan had to make minimal changes in 2011 and anticipates few required changes to its plan design in 2012. The RCA health benefits plan conforms to, and in many instances exceeds, the requirements of the health plan legislation.

The Board of Benefits Services and its staff can do little to impact the high costs of medical care in the United States. However, the board and the staff continue to explore ways to modify the RCA health benefits plan in response to consistories, pastors, and classes. Currently the executive director and staff are actively exploring expanding the health plan options for 2012 (open enrollment in the fall of 2011) to include a high deductible plan and, if feasible, a high deductible plan linked to a Health Savings Account (HSA). Additional information regarding these new options will be provided as soon as it becomes available. All additional plan options will meet the requirements of the *Book of Church Order* mandates regarding the provision of medical insurance to ministers of Word and sacrament.

The staff has also engaged in conversations with other denominational plan providers during the past year to explore various partnerships that could reduce costs. Based on our analysis, and the analysis of our insurance broker, at the present time mergers with other plans or other cooperative arrangements would have little or no positive impact on RCA insurance costs. Ours is a non-profit plan and our administrative costs are modest. Our premium costs are driven almost fully by our actual claims experience. In a cooperative arrangement with another plan RCA premiums would continue to be governed by the RCA insured claims experience. In some cases the RCA would be worse off in a cooperative arrangement due to the higher administrative costs of other comparable plans. The benefits staff continues to explore these options with other plans with the support of our attorneys and insurance broker.

3. Assistance Programs

"Active and retired participants and spouses might have access to an assistance fund that may be made available based on demonstrated need and is limited by available funds" (BOBS Ends Policy E-3).

The Board of Benefits Services assistance program for active and retired participants, spouses, and dependents provides approximately $450,000 in grants annually to those experiencing financial distress. About 56 percent of the cost is made possible from an annual General Synod assessment implemented in the early 1970s. The current $1.50 assessment to support the assistance program has remained unchanged for over twenty years. The remainder of the funds required to sustain this program are provided through annual gifts to the Benefits Services Christmas offering, occasional special gifts, and the Benefits Service General Fund. The General Fund monies are generated from the administrative fees in the retirement program. A bequest to the board several years ago continues to generate a small discretionary fund utilized exclusively for emergency needs encountered by active ministers of Word and sacrament.

The "eyes and ears" and the personal pastoral care dimension of the assistance program are provided by seventeen retired RCA ministers of Word and sacrament and their spouses who comprise the Benefits Services Senior Pastors program. These pastors make over three hundred visitations throughout the United States annually and make phone calls to many more of our retirees. The primary recipient population of this personalized care and calling ministry are our older retirees and surviving spouses, many of whom have limited mobility.

The Senior Pastors provide to the benefits staff information that is utilized to determine the need for financial assistance. This often involves the assistance of the Senior Pastor in completing a simple application form that helps staff ascertain

financial need. Assistance extends to items such as hearing aids, other medical devices not covered by insurance or Medicare, medical insurance premium payments, and sometimes modest contributions to living expenses. Full monthly medical premiums and retirement contributions are made for disabled ministers of Word and sacrament. Assistance is also provided in the form of a funeral grant to the surviving spouse of an RCA minister of Word and sacrament.

In 2011 the board and the benefits staff express their deep appreciation to Cornie Keunen, Peter Mondeel, Roger Leonard, and Will De Forest, senior pastors who after years of service in active RCA ministries gave untold hours and days and traveled extensively to provide pastoral care, prayer, and support for RCA retirees. Their service and the service of the spouses who served alongside of them is deeply appreciated by the board and staff, but mostly by those whom they served.

In 2011 the benefits staff began implementing on a trial basis a program to more fully engage the classis of membership as a pastoral care partner when it became aware of extraordinary pastoral needs that far exceeded the ability of Benefits Services, its senior pastor team, or its staff to provide the support and/or intervention that was required. This program has exceeded the staff's expectations. Classes have become supportive partners and have expressed appreciation for additional help Benefits Services personnel have brought to some difficult pastoral situations.

Benefits Services has provided three matching grants programs to active ministers of Word and sacrament. In 2011 the staff refined these programs and began promoting them more widely in the church. In May 2011 these programs were expanded to include RCA commissioned pastors. They are:

1. New Church Start Assistance – Annual Matching Grant
   Purpose—This fund is available to help provide medical benefits for eligible ministers of Word and sacrament and commissioned pastors who are working to start a new RCA church and are in need of medical benefits or are transitioning in to the RCA insurance program after a new church plant has been formally organized. It is available to full-time ministers of Word and sacrament and commissioned pastors leading new church starts (with a denominational plan) and ministers of Word and sacrament and commissioned pastors serving in newly organized churches within the first three years after organization. The board matches any amount paid by the classis, up to $2,000 per participant annually, renewable for up to three years, to cover insurance costs as stipulated in the *Book of Church Order*.

2. Pastoral Assistance – Annual Matching Grant
   Purpose—This fund is available to help provide the insurance benefits stipulated in the *Book of Church Order* for ministers of Word and sacrament and commissioned pastors in churches and ministries facing financial distress. It is available to ministers of Word and sacrament under call or contract (required to participate in the RCA insurance program by the *Book of Church Order*), specialized interim ministers, part-time ministers, and commissioned pastors who are in need of medical benefits and are participating in the RCA medical insurance plan. The board matches any amount paid by the classis, up to $2,000 per participant annually, renewable for up to three years, to cover insurance costs as stipulated in the *Book of Church Order*.

3. Pastoral Assistance – Hardship Matching Grant
   Purpose—This fund is available to assist ministers of Word and sacrament and

commissioned pastors in providing uninterrupted basic medical coverage for ministers and their families in times of hardship. Ministers of Word and sacrament and commissioned pastors in the RCA medical insurance program are eligible if they are paying for their own medical coverage due to their status of being specialized, part-time, or without charge (within the first six months of their effective without charge date) and are experiencing financial hardship. The board will match half of the cost of medical insurance paid monthly by the classis or the participant based on the following schedule: a) participant medical coverage only for up to six months, b) participant medical coverage plus one for up to five months, c) participant medical coverage plus family for up to four months.

4. Communication and Education Programs

"Participants and eligible participants have access to and are encouraged to use information and educational resources that allow them to make timely financial decisions regarding their retirement and their health-, life-, and disability-related benefits" (BOBS Ends Policy E-4).

Benefits staff implemented several enhancements to its communication efforts with plan participants, churches, and other RCA employers throughout the year. The printed and online newsletter (*Benefits for Life*) was redesigned and expanded to four annual issues beginning in the fall of 2010 with the cooperation of the staff of RCA communication and production services. Other forms of direct (RCA) communication to active insurance and retirement plan participants, retirees, and persons eligible to participate was also redesigned, upgraded, and expanded beginning in the fall of 2010. The executive director authorized Fidelity Investments to add to its communication with participants age appropriate targeted mailings, outbound calling, and additional age appropriate planning tools. Circulation of these resources began in November 2010.

In April 2011 the benefits staff, communication and production staff, and representatives from Fidelity Investments and the RCA's insurance broker, Holmes Murphy, convened for a three day communications strategic planning meeting. As a result of this time together participants, churches, and other RCA employers can expect to see:

- A fully redesigned, simplified, and user friendly Benefits for Life website.
- The introduction of targeted webinars for participants at different life stages and for treasurers and others with responsibility for oversight of benefits.
- Fuller coordination with Fidelity Investments, United Healthcare, and other Benefits Services partners in making available print resources and online tools for insurance, wellness, and retirement.
- The introduction of Benefits Workstation, an online service that will make it easier for plan participants and churches and other employers to keep track of premium payments and review and adjust insurance coverage.
- Onsite workshops and consultations for active and retired plan participants in the retirement plans.

The retirement program and Fidelity Investments are in the early stages of planning a workshop for delegates to be held during this synod. Direct announcements will be made to delegates and active and retired plan participants in West Michigan when plans are finalized. During the General Synod meeting the retirement program and Fidelity Investments will offer on-site consultation for active participants and retirees attending synod and throughout the West Michigan area. This service will be in addition to a Fidelity information table and representative in the display area

and a retirement program workshop for delegates and guests during the synod meeting.

The insurance and wellness programs will be sponsoring a health fair during the 2011 General Synod meeting in the display area. RCA insurance personnel along with personnel representing our various wellness programs will be present to provide program introductions and overviews. An insurance workshop will be offered during the synod meeting for delegates and guests.

Board and Staff Transitions

The Board of Benefits Services expresses its deepest gratitude and appreciation to the following board members who are completing their terms at the end of June 2011:

Bud (Paul) Pratt, president, 2009-2011
Michelle Chahine
Don Poest
Gerald VanderWal

The board invites the General Synod to extend heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the service of the following staff who have concluded or will conclude their service of support for the active and retired participants in the RCA's insurance and retirement programs:

L. Wood (Woody) Bedell, director
Lorena Cuevas, manager of retirement services
Joanna Hasell, retirement plan administrator
Marilin Maldonado, administrative assistant
Vanessa Rios-Reyes, insurance plan representative

The board welcomed the following personnel into its service to the church this year:

Kenneth Bradsell, executive director
Lynn Mitchell, administrative assistant and communications coordinator
Annette Padilla, insurance plan representative

APPENDIX

MGS 2002, pp. 358-363

COVENANT OF GRACE/COVENANT OF CARE

A church whose faith and life are drawn from the word of God finds every form of its ministry in that word. The several assemblies of the Reformed Church in America—consistory, classis, regional synod, and General Synod—are not administrative or legislative gatherings based on civic or corporate models without biblical or theological foundation. Rather, each of their meetings belongs to a tradition reaching back to the Jerusalem Council of the first century. Now as then, representatives of the church equipped by the Holy Spirit discuss and determine how the church can best carry out its life and mission.

Similarly, the evangelistic outreach of the Reformed Church, from local congregations to world mission, is not motivated by models of corporate growth or marketing techniques, but rather by the Spirit-filled words of Jesus: "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world"; by his post-resurrection commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations"; and by his pre-ascension promise: "But you will receive

power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The often lower-profile "inreach" of the Board of Pensions, now the Board of Benefits Services, is also rooted in the word of God. Its mandate is drawn not from the occasional New Testament text but from the very centerpiece of God's self-revelation that spans the testaments, namely, the covenant. Its perspective views the Scriptures as the story of God's remarkable love affair with the human race. It recognizes that what really made Eden Eden in the beginning was that on any given day, the first man and woman could hear the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze. When the sin of Adam and Eve replaced that mutual affection with alienation, the couple and their descendents learned that God loved them with a love that would not let them go. And so God came again, this time walking in the fields of Haran. There God made a covenant with Abram and Sarai that began with the promise to be God to them and to their children, and ended with the assurance that in them all the families of the earth would be blessed!

From there, the long story of God's people that culminates in the renewal of the covenant through the coming of Jesus is the story of how God's enduring love makes us one with God and with each other. God's loving, persistent concern to be in relationship with us is always expressed in the covenant of grace that not only binds the Old and New Testaments into one, but also makes those testaments God's gracious invitation to covenant life. This covenant life is from first to last a gift of God's unmerited love.

I. The Covenant of Grace

As the apostle Paul reminded his Jewish and Gentile Christian readers at Rome, Abraham is the father of all who trust God as Abraham did. With a single stroke of his pen, Paul takes us back to Genesis, the book of beginnings, where God's covenant with Abraham is hinted at in chapter 12, clarified in chapter 15 ("On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham"), and had its heart laid bare in chapter 17: "I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to your offspring after you." And centuries later when God assured Moses that there was an exodus and a destiny in his people's future, it was because God was remembering the covenant made with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel—the covenant to take them as his people and be their God.

Throughout the unfolding drama of Old Testament history, God's people broke the covenant from their side with tragic regularity. Appropriate discipline followed, but the covenant itself was never broken from God's side! In fact, the Old Testament moves to a hope-filled close with Jeremiah's bright word for the future, a text that focuses on covenant renewal:

> The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

For Christians, that promised covenant renewal was realized in the coming of Jesus.

Although the New Testament does not complete any of Jesus' "I am" sayings with the words, "a new" or "renewed" covenant, it does make clear connections between Jesus and the covenant of grace. Paul's witness to the institution of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians—the earliest record in the New Testament—is a shining example. There the bread saying is followed by this significant word about the cup: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." The letter to the Hebrews makes the point again, for what is implicit in the comparison made in chapter 8:

> But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted through better promises (v. 6).

becomes explicit in the next chapter:

> For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant (9:15).

Both of these texts bring Jesus and the new covenant together in the context of his death, his promises, and his deliverance from sin, without explicitly identifying him as the new covenant. That identification is made by attending to the Old Testament witness to what was essential to the old covenant, and then observing how those essentials are effectively incarnated in Jesus, the new covenant.

As we have seen, the heart of the covenant is the gift of God's self in a relationship of enduring love. In Jeremiah's splendid vision, even the promise of land, historically significant as it was, merits no mention. With unerring insight, the prophet points to the inner life where the heart of the covenant is laid bare: "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: ...I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31:33). Above all else, then, covenant means a personal relationship with God!

That a gracious renewal of the covenant is precisely what God is about in Jesus received definitive confirmation in the prologue of John's Gospel: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth" (1:14). That the incarnation is the full and final enactment of God's declared desire, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Jer. 31:33), is plain enough. But how is the testimony that Jesus was "full of grace and truth" to be understood? Once again, this new covenant language about Jesus points us to the old. Behind John's words "grace and truth" stands a pair of Hebrew words. "Grace" translates the first one well enough, but to translate the second one as "truth" invites misunderstanding. It can lead us to think that Jesus champions some abstract truth over against falsehood or that Jesus is above all else the repository of all true knowledge and right thinking. But the Hebrew word used is a covenant word, a relational word that means truth in the sense of fidelity. It means being true or faithful to the covenant partner. The evangelist John, therefore, is not witnessing to Jesus as the embodiment of every kind of objective truth, but as the incarnation of God's covenant of grace and covenant fidelity. Israel's long experience of divine grace and faithfulness under the old covenant was now fully and finally manifested in Jesus, the new covenant. Jesus Christ is overflowing with God's enduring love. In him, the new covenant, we reach the supreme good of the old: "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them" (Revelation 21:3).

This is the covenant of grace celebrated repeatedly in Reformed Church worship. Setting

out the meaning of the sacrament of baptism our liturgy declares:

> In baptism, God reveals and seals to us his covenant of salvation, given first to Noah and his whole family whom God saved from the waters of the flood, and renewed time after time through the patriarchs and prophets until it reached perfection in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. We participate in this covenant through faith in Christ, and in him become a new creation.

At the heart of the meaning of the Lord's Supper lies this thrilling confession about the work of the Lord Jesus Christ: "By his death, resurrection, and ascension he established a new and eternal covenant of grace and reconciliation that we might be accepted of God and never be forsaken by him."

And the language of covenant runs like a refrain through the order of worship for Christian marriage, underlining the enduring joy of this most intimate human relationship. The minister declares that the wedding party and their guests

> are gathered here to praise God for the covenant of grace and reconciliation made with us through Jesus Christ, to hear it proclaimed anew, and to respond to it as we witness the covenant of marriage [the man and woman] make with each other in Christ's name. Christian marriage is a joyful covenanting between a man and a woman in which they proclaim, before God and human witnesses, their commitment to live together in spiritual, physical, and material unity. In this covenant they acknowledge that the great love God has shown for each of them enables them to love each other.

Nor is it surprising, given this order's powerful witness to the covenant of grace, that the ceremony climaxes in vows to live together in a covenant of care: The man and woman take each other

> to have and to hold from this day forward,
> for better, for worse
> for richer, for poorer,
> in sickness and in health
> to love and to cherish
> as long as they both shall live.

Not surprising, indeed, for God's covenant of grace always carried within itself a covenant of care!

II. The Covenant of Care

Primary as the vertical relationship with God was in the old covenant, it was never separated from the horizontal relationship with other members of the covenant community. The Book of Exodus records God's strong covenant care for his people suffering as slaves in Egypt. In response to their groaning God remembered the covenant made with the patriarchs, looked down upon the Israelites, and took notice of them. That notice in turn motivated God to appear to Moses at the burning bush, complete with a full explanation:

> Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians

> oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:7-10).

Exodus also specifically names the widow and the orphan as of special concern to the covenant community (22:22). In fact, these fatherless and unprotected members of the community could rest in the knowledge that "Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his habitation" (Psalm 68:5).

More than any other Old Testament witness, the Book of Deuteronomy declares that God's own care and compassion for the covenant people were to be mirrored in their covenant care and compassion for one another. Sample instances from that book alone serve to demonstrate that that care was both concrete and personal. No one was to be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward needy members of the community. Their needs were to be met liberally and ungrudgingly (15:7-11). When a bondman or bondwoman was set free, they were not to be sent out empty-handed but were to be provided for liberally from the harvest or flock, thus giving to them some of the bounty with which God had blessed their masters (15:12-14). (Israel was to remember how good it was to leave Egypt with the gifts of their masters.) During the harvest festivals, the slaves, the orphans, and the widows were to share in the joy and the abundance of food of the prosperous (16:11, 14).

Throughout these expressions of covenant care, God showed great concern for the rights and the dignity of those whose poverty had forced them into borrowing. Witness these remarkable Torah lines:

> When you make your neighbor a loan of any kind, you shall not go into the house to take the pledge. You shall wait outside, while the person to whom you are making the loan brings the pledge out to you. If the person is poor, you shall not sleep in the garment given you as the pledge. You shall give the pledge back by sunset so that your neighbor may sleep in the cloak and bless you; and it will be to your credit before the Lord your God (Deut. 24:10-13).

The lender, said God, is not to invade the poor man's house and help himself to whatever pleased him as collateral. Rather, the poor man is to decide which of his things to offer as a pledge, and the lender is to wait on the porch until the poor man brings it out to him. And if the borrower is so destitute that his only collateral is his cloak, the lender must return it when the day's temperature goes down with the sun, so he can use it as his blanket through the night. Thus does the covenant God who inhabits eternity and dwells in the high and holy place make it a matter of personal concern to be sure a poor man sleeps warmly!

No wonder then that covenant privileges with God were always joined to covenant responsibilities toward covenant partners. Old covenant law and prophets were at one in demanding care for the needy, justice for the oppressed, and love for the stranger. In this way too, our Lord Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the new covenant. Jesus promised the blessing of God and inheritance in God's realm to all who care for the physical and material well-being of the needy. To care for the least of those who are members of my family, he said, is to care for me (Matthew 25). And to the covenant commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself," Jesus not only added the parable of the Good Samaritan but also his own concern for covenant care: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

The book of Acts testifies that the covenant of care was close to the heart of the church from its inception. All who believed were not only together but had all things in common. They sold their possessions and distributed the proceeds to all according to need (chap. 2). The apostle Paul laid his understanding of the gospel before the leaders of the Jerusalem

church, and when those church pillars had recognized the grace that had been given to him, they offered him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship and blessed their gentile mission asking only one thing: that they remember the poor (Galatians 2). And when the apostle John needed to remind his readers that the covenant of grace and the covenant of care are a seamless whole he simply raised the inescapable question for every Christian then and now: "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help?" (1 John 3:17).

Texts like those remind us of the moment in Jesus' earthly ministry when a Pharisee asked him which commandment in the law, the Torah—God's instruction for covenant life—is the greatest (Matthew 22). Remarkably, although the request was for one ("which commandment"), Jesus gave him two ("and a second is like it")! Apparently, Jesus thought it impossible to say the one without the other. Love of God is inseparable from love of neighbor. This suggests that like the seamless wholes—covenant of grace/covenant of care and love God above all/love your neighbor as yourself—the second commandment may also be a seamless whole: love your neighbor as yourself/care for your neighbor as yourself.

Report of the Commission on Christian Action

What does social justice advocacy look like? How is it currently happening in the RCA? How could it happen better? Why should it? These are just some of the questions that the Commission on Christian Action has been dealing with over the last year as it works toward a denominational strategy for social justice advocacy—not a small challenge!

The Commission on Christian Action (CCA) met October 14-16, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois, during the joint meeting of the General Synod Council and commissions. Unfortunately, the CCA was not able to meet in person again in a winter meeting, as is their custom and the practice of many of the commissions, due to being under-budgeted. Instead, the CCA attempted to process its work in a variety of electronic formats including multiple conference calls. While greatly appreciating the current financial situation in which we find ourselves and also respecting the immense responsibility to be good stewards of all our resources; and further, exploring and entertaining the use of other means of communications, the CCA nonetheless experienced considerable impediments in accomplishing the task and obligation that General Synod has given to it. Again, this is expressed understanding the RCA's fiscal predicament and the need to be prudent stewards, but also, in light of the financial capacity of all the commissions being able to meet their constitutional responsibility and in particular, the Commission on Christian Action's ability to "inform and advise the church concerning current social issues and the scriptural and Christian principles by which critical evaluation may be exercised on those issues and proper action taken" (*Book of Church Order* 3.I.5.2b). To that end, the CCA has experienced something akin to an unfunded mandate.

Social Justice Advocacy

The General Synod of 2010 adopted the following recommendation, R-59, in reaction to the proposal, P-2, offered in the report of the president, James Seawood:

> R-59
> To refer P-2 to the Commission on Christian Action with a progress report to General Synod 2011. (ADOPTED)
>
> Reasons:
> 1. This responds to the need for justice domestically and around the world.
> 2. This allows the commission to process the intent of this recommendation while considering its fiscal impact.
>
> *MGS 2010*, R-59, p. 182

P-2, from the Report of the President, is as follows:

> To direct the Commission on Christian Action, in consultation with at least one representative from the Commission on Christian Unity, at least one member of the General Synod Council (GSC) representing the GSC's Global Mission programs, and one member of each racial/ethnic council, to develop a strategy for social justice advocacy for the RCA. The strategy should review and consider the social justice ministries of at least the following: the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, Sojourners, Bread for the World, the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches [World Communion of Reformed Churches], Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A., and the Global Christian Forum, and is to consider other efforts of the Reformed Church in America itself. The strategy should include the following features:

1. Recommend critical social justice issues and methods other than merely signing on to letters.
2. Promote and emphasize the engagement of RCA congregations, consistent with the RCA's mission statement, in social justice advocacy.
3. Balance between North American and global social justice needs.
4. Address communications methods to get critical social justice information to people in the pews.
5. Recommend a structure for implementing the strategy, recognizing that the RCA has a limited capacity to lead multiple, centralized social advocacy initiatives; and further,

to direct the commission to provide 1) an interim report with recommendations to the General Synod Council by January 10, 2011, with a copy to the Commission on Christian Unity, the Commission on Race and Ethnicity, and the racial/ethnic councils and 2) a final report by January 10, 2012, with the same distribution; and further,

to direct the Commission on Theology, in consultation with the Commission on Christian Action, to present a paper to General Synod 2012 that gives guidance to congregations and our denomination on responding to human need through social justice advocacy that reflects biblical and theological considerations, including insights from the Belhar Confession.

MGS 2010, p. 26

The commission is both humbled and excited by the challenge "to develop a strategy for social justice advocacy for the RCA." While we are not yet able to report that we've developed one, let us share a little of our discussion questions, and perhaps it will spur discussion and feedback in the months ahead.

What is the role of justice in the RCA? What is the role of social justice? As the presidential proposal above indicates, there is already a hodgepodge of relationships and ministries—both within and outside of the denomination—in which the RCA is involved. However, what is the importance given to social justice, generally speaking, within the RCA? And how can we do better?

When we speak of social justice advocacy, who is advocating? Are we to focus on a network of passionate church members or churches? What role does communications play? Are there simple ways to enhance our information sharing that could broaden and inform for social justice advocacy?

Is social justice advocacy, like unto the biblical model of the prophets, about speaking truth to power, and if so, how do we speak to the sources of power—corporate and governmental? Should we have advocates on the ground, say in Washington, D.C., Ottawa, New York City? Is social justice advocacy too political? Is that good or bad? And finally, as the denomination moves beyond Our Call, what role does social justice have in our future?

The questions abound and the strategy is not yet designed. Over the last few months and in the months ahead, the Commission on Christian Action is working closely with the Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice conducting listening sessions in various regions of the church. The commission will continue to process its findings and hopes to deliver a report to General Synod 2012 with its conclusions.

Gratitude to Departing Members

Finally, the Commission on Christian Action would like to express sincere gratitude to

Terry Provance, Cora Nicky Solomon, and Thomas C. Goodhart as they complete their terms on the commission. Nicky has served the last three years. Serving two terms over six years, Terry served as the Reformed Church's ecumenical delegate. Tom has also served six consecutive years, the last four as moderator. Each brought unique gifts to the commission and it is thankful for their work and the years of service they have provided to the RCA.

Report of the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education

The poetry of Psalm 1 compares the life of a disciple to that of a tree that is rooted and growing alongside life-giving waters. Four years ago, the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education (CCDE) cast a vision for the denomination to go deeper and richer in discipleship to live out this image. The vision imagines people engaging in prayer together, talking about difficult issues, and modeling faithful living and lifelong learning as disciples who actively proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are captives of poverty, blindness, and oppression. Gathered like groves of living trees planted by flowing waters and nurtured through Spirit-filled discipleship, their faith is deeply rooted. Strong and tall, their wide branches protect, shelter, and nurture those around them. They are of all ages, from all walks of life, and they are alive in Christ Jesus.

This vision for the denomination continues to inspire the commission. The CCDE has three significant initiatives underway to move and support the RCA in discipleship that is deep and rich:

1. **Seasons of Discipleship**—The Seasons of Discipleship resource "Discipleship: Deep, Rich, and Rooted" is in the final design stages and will be posted to the RCA website in September 2011. Its purpose is to encourage, equip, and empower congregations to embrace discipleship as a way to live in their unique time and place. "Deep, Rich, and Rooted" was produced by the Seasons of Discipleship task force and RCA staff, with the guidance of the commission. Users of "Deep, Rich, and Rooted" will find fresh ways to hear, connect, believe, live out, and share the basic tenets of the Christian faith. Topics covered include baptism, belonging, and being built up and building others up in the way of Christ. Individuals who want to engage "Deep, Rich, and Rooted" on their own and leaders looking for resources for study groups or worship will find plenty to connect with on the site. The format will allow users to interact with the material and link to resources both within and beyond the RCA site. The online format will also allow new resources and links to be added over time, and it will make a host of discipleship resources widely available at a minimal cost.

2. **Belhar Implementation**—The commission intends to be vigilant in the implementation of the Belhar Confession, so that its principles of unity, reconciliation and justice can be better understood by all congregations and lived out with purposeful and heartfelt intent. To that end, the commission stays connected with the Belhar Implementation Task Force and supports its ongoing work through its representative to that group and with prayer.

3. **Discipleship, Revitalization, and Multiplication Discussions** (*MGS 2010*, R-78, p. 300)—These discussions, which explore strategies for discipleship growth in new

and existing RCA churches, are a work in progress. Participants from the three groups are committed to meeting and discerning how to work more collaboratively.

The Missing Generation

Because the commission realizes that it needs to be a voice for all of the people of the RCA, it has now turned its focus to the church's so-called "missing generation"—Christians who are in their late teens and twenties. Many of these young adults graduate from high school and then leave the church when they head off to college or the work force. Some eventually return to the church when they have a child and they want to have that child baptized and raise him or her in the faith.

Through research and anecdotally, members of the commission have learned that the greater church is missing the gifts and talents of these young people and that, regretfully, the welcome of the kingdom of God is dimmed by their absence. It is the desire of the CCDE to foster conversations in congregations and across the denomination about and including this missing generation. These conversations can begin by providing a way for the RCA to hear the voices of these young people. The members of the commission recommend:

R-33
To invite forty high-school-age RCA youth from grades 9 through 12 to attend General Synod 2012 as Student Synod Participants.

R-33 was presented to the house. Delegates were informed that adoption of R-33 would result in an increase of $34,000 to the General Synod Council's budget (which equals an increase in assessments of $.22 per confessing member).

A motion was made to amend R-33 as follows (deletions are stricken, additions are underlined):

To invite ~~forty~~ten high-school-age RCA youth from grades 9 through 12 to attend General Synod 2012 as Student Synod Participants.

VOTED: To not amend R-33.

R-33
To invite forty high-school-age RCA youth from grades 9 through 12 to attend General Synod 2012 as Student Synod Participants. (NOT ADOPTED)

Doing so will allow interested and talented young congregants to experience the work of General Synod firsthand and add the insights of young people to the work and conversations of General Synod.

The commission, with input from the RCA's Denominational Youth Team, will plan a program for these students that will involve them in plenary and advisory settings, have them participate in worship, and give them lots of opportunities for reflection with their peers—all in an environment that will support learning and provide encouragement.

Participants will be chosen through an application process conducted by members of the commission and the Denominational Youth Team. A group of forty students assumes approximately five participants from each regional synod.

In the months ahead, the commission will continue to fully participate in the RCA's discovery and discernment process. With eyes to see, ears to listen, and hearts to govern, we will continue to seek to be the voice of a fully engaged denomination of discipleship that truly reflects its depth and spiritual wealth. In the meantime, the commission is committed to strive to engage the leaders of the younger generation in order to include them in the future of the church. We want to see all of Jesus' followers securely rooted beside the waters of faithful living.

Report of the Commission on Christian Unity

The General Synod is responsible for the ecumenical relations of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) (*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 2, Sec. 5). In response to Christ's prayer that we may all be one (Jn. 17:21) and to fulfill its constitutional responsibility, General Synod has constituted the Commission on Christian Unity to oversee ecumenical commitments, to present an ecumenical agenda to the church, and to carry out ecumenical directives given by the General Synod. Since its creation in 1974 (*MGS 1974*, R-6, pp. 201-202) and its adoption by General Synod in 1975 (*MGS 1975*, R-4, pp. 101-102), this commission has served General Synod by coordinating a range of ecumenical involvements reaching all levels of mission in the RCA. The commission advises General Synod on ecumenical matters and communicates with other denominations, ecumenical councils, and interdenominational agencies. The commission educates the RCA on ecumenical matters and advocates for actions and positions consistent with RCA confessions and ecumenical practices as outlined in "An Ecumenical Mandate for the Reformed Church in America," adopted by General Synod in 1996 (*MGS 1996*, R-1, p. 197). General Synod refers ecumenical matters to the commission for study and implementation.

ECUMENICAL APPOINTEES OF THE RCA

The RCA is represented at ecumenical tables and events by persons elected or appointed who willingly give of their ecumenical gifts and time to promote a greater witness to the unity we have in Christ. Following participation in events or meetings, these appointees provide brief reports to the Office of the General Secretary and to the Commission on Christian Unity. This commission assumes the task of synthesizing this material into its own comprehensive report, which it presents each year to General Synod.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The World Council of Churches (WCC) brings together 349 churches in 110 countries representing over 560 million Christians worldwide. The primary purpose of the WCC, the largest organized expression of the modern ecumenical movement, is to be a servant to the churches who are engaged in calling one another to "visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe" (Harare 1998).

The WCC conducts its business at its assembly, its highest legislative body, which meets approximately every seven years. The Central Committee is the continuation body that meets about every eighteen months between assemblies. Its purpose is to implement WCC policies enacted at the assemblies, review and approve programs, establish the budget and secure financial support. It also elects the non-ex-officio members of the Executive Committee (which ordinarily meets twice a year).

The RCA is a charter member church of the WCC. Currently, the Rev. Gretchen Tanis represents the RCA by serving as a member of the WCC's Central Committee. The Rev. Dr. Renee House also represents the RCA by participating as a member of the Faith and Order Commission, a worldwide forum for theological study and dialogue that is integrated into the structure of the WCC.

The WCC held its last assembly at Porto Alegre, Brazil, in February 2006 under the theme "God, In Your Grace, Transform the World." In that same year the Central Committee issued a call to member churches to respond to a statement on ecclesiology adopted by this assembly, "Called to Be One Church." The churches were instructed to read this statement in conjunction with a Faith and Order document called "The Nature and Mission of the Church." The purpose of these texts is to invite member churches to reflect on what they can say together about the church of Jesus Christ as well as to open up renewed conversation about the issues that continue to divide them. All WCC member churches were mandated to respond officially to the texts by the next WCC assembly, which is scheduled to meet at Busan, South Korea, in October 2013 under the theme "God of Life, Lead Us to Justice and Peace."

The invitation to read and reflect on "Called to Be One Church" and "The Nature and Mission of the Church" was received in 2007 by the RCA, which referred the documents to its Commission on Christian Unity. This commission later understood its task to focus on the "The Nature and Mission of the Church," which as the longer of the two contains within itself the themes of the other document. The commission facilitated the process of working through and responding to "The Nature and Mission of the Church" by recruiting a number of theology professors, pastors, and denominational leaders to address the ecclesiological issues that the document raises. Subsequently, a small ad hoc committee was formed and a teleconference scheduled. The report consists of an ordered account of the discussion conducted during this teleconference. The complete text of this report in the form in which the commission submitted it to the WCC with the approval of General Secretary Wesley Granberg-Michaelson appears below:

> The ad hoc committee read and discussed the Faith and Order paper "The Nature and Mission of the Church" (TNMC). It commends the drafters of TNMC for presenting to the churches a paper in which common ecclesiological convictions are articulated with clarity and depth. The committee also appreciates the careful precision with which the drafters represent positions on historically controversial topics that continue to divide the churches. The consensus of the committee is that Faith and Order has produced a statement on ecclesiology that has substance and integrity.
>
> As a church that acknowledges the scriptural witness, confesses the ecumenical creeds, and embraces its own doctrinal standards (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of the Synod of Dort, and the Belhar Confession), the RCA affirms that the Church has its origin, basis, and goal in the overflowing love of the triune God. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16; cf. Canons of Dort [CD] 2). What the Son accomplished in his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension has to be proclaimed and heard by peoples in all times and places. Therefore, the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit both to empower the witnesses of these events to testify about them in the world (Acts 1:8; 2:11; Rom. 10:14-15) and to open the minds and hearts of their hearers to receive the message of God's love in Jesus Christ by faith (Heidelberg Catechism [HC] 65, 21; cf. CD 11, 14). Thus, as the Father has sent the Son and the Father and Son the Holy Spirit, so the Spirit sends the Church into the world, so that what God has done in Christ to reconcile the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:11) may achieve its effect (Isa. 55:10-11; Col. 1:6).

"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). "The Son of God through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith" (HC 54; cf. Belhar Confession [Belhar] 1). The Church as the community of the faithful is itself creature of the Word and Spirit (*creatura verbi et spiritus*). By the action of the Word and the Spirit the faithful are constituted as one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, which in Pauline language is Christ's own body (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4). As members of this body, the faithful have communion (*koinonia*) with Christ their head and with one another by the Holy Spirit. This same Spirit also gives gifts to the members of Christ's body, appointing them to specific tasks "for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13, cf. Belhar 2). The faithful are to make every effort to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Only insofar as this unity is made visible does the Church serve effectively as "sign" and "foretaste" that indicate God's final purposes for the world: the restoration of unity, peace, and justice among all God's creatures in a "new heaven and new earth in which righteousness dwells" (Belhar 3). Conversely, when the Church allows "sinful separation" among persons and groups to persist, it undermines the credibility of this apostolic message, according to which "separation, enmity, and hatred...is sin which Christ has already conquered" (Belhar 2).

In the New Testament, the Church is also portrayed under the covenantal image of the "people of God" and the cultic image of the "temple of the Holy Spirit." In addition to these biblical images discussed in TNMC, the committee also affirms the privileged place accorded the concept of "koinonia" in ecumenical reflection about the Church. The committee notes, however, that in the New Testament the term applies to the communion the faithful have with God and one another in Christ by the Holy Spirit in the Church. TNMC extends the term, however, to apply to the relationships among God, humanity, and the whole creation. Thus "koinonia" is realized in part in "natural relationships of family and kinship, of tribe and people" (25). The biblical language of "covenant" to denote the relationships into which God enters especially with Israel, the nations, and indeed the entire created order (Gen. 9) has been a theme characteristic of Reformed theology. Therefore, by no means does the RCA deny that relatedness is at the heart of the universe that God in overflowing love created, sustains, and ultimately will renew. But the committee asks whether TNMC here is engaging in an imprecise use of the term "koinonia," which may result in confusion about what it is meant to convey about the nature and destiny of the Church. The consensus of the committee is that the concept of "koinonia" ought to be grounded christologically and eschatologically to ensure clarity about its specific content.

As has already been stated, the RCA confesses one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In regard to the last, the RCA affirms an understanding of the doctrine of "apostolicity" as the handing on of apostolic teaching rather than succession of office. The RCA ensures the preservation of apostolic teaching and practice through an ordered ministry consisting in the three offices of minister of Word and sacrament, elder, and deacon (Belgic Confession [BC] 30-32). A fourth office, General Synod professor of theology, is employed in the seminaries of the church for the training of students for ministry. The RCA is organized and governed according to a presbyterial order. That means that governing and judicial authority is invested in assemblies and judicatories (synodal forms). The consensus of the committee is that there is an inadequate appreciation in the RCA of the theology and function of church office. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the issue of "episcope" (oversight) is currently receiving attention in the larger family of Reformed churches. The Christian unity and ecu-

menical engagement section of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) has challenged the Reformed churches to raise a number of critical questions about the relation of episcope and current Reformed understanding and practice, including, *inter alia*: Is there any sense of binding teaching authority within a Reformed church? What is the relation between personal episcope and collegial episcope (classis, synod)? The committee contemplated with the drafters of TNMC a "universal ministry of Christian unity" to which Pope John Paul II alluded in his encyclical on ecumenism *Ut Unim Sint* (TNMC 104).

The RCA affirms that the Church can be recognized if it has the following marks (*notae ecclesiae*): the pure preaching of the gospel and the pure administration of the sacraments according to Christ's institution (BC 29). There is a third mark, church discipline, but historically it has been closely associated with the administration of the sacraments, especially insofar as it has the function of safeguarding the integrity of the holy community assembled for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In addition to this sacrament, the RCA acknowledges that of baptism. This sacrament is understood as the sign of the covenant, the pledge of the forgiveness of sins, and the promise of sanctification as members of Christ (BC 34; HC 68-75). The RCA insists that the *materia* of this sacrament is indispensable to its proper administration, since it is by water that "God intends to assure us...that the washing away of our sins spiritually is as real as physical washing with water" (HC 73). It is the consensus of the committee that the practice of omitting water as the instrument of baptism is rightly recognized in TNMC as an ecumenical problem.

The committee notes that in the section titled "Eucharist" (Lord's Supper) TNMC uses language that is not entirely in line with the language the RCA would use (78-81). For example, the term "Mass" (81) is not used in the RCA. Moreover, for "Christians receive the body and blood of Christ" (79) the RCA would substitute "Christians receive communion in the body and blood of Christ." Thus the RCA affirms a real sacramental communion in the body and blood of Jesus Christ through the activity of the Holy Spirit. But the directionality of this communion would be grasped differently. It would not be conceived as an earthly action by which Christ is drawn down into the elements of the bread and wine, but as one whereby Christ through the power of his Spirit draws the faithful upward to communicate himself to them "in the heavenly places" where Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20; 2:6). In the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the faithful are both spiritually nourished and united more and more to Christ's body by the Holy Spirit, who is the bond between Christ and them (HC 76). It is important to add that in the RCA the form of invitation to the Lord's Table extends to those who are baptized and are communicant members in a Christian church.

The committee concluded its discussion by asking whether the final section of the document "In and For the World" (TNMC 109-118) is adequately developed. Absent here is an extended analysis of the nature and character of evangelism. It is the opinion of the committee that the drafters ought to acknowledge that the relationship between social justice and political advocacy on the one hand and the proclamation of the gospel on the other is one fraught with controversy, especially in our contemporary context. The committee recommends that drafters create a "box" in this section (as they have in others), in which they can highlight areas where differences exist here within and between the churches.

In behalf of the RCA, the committee wishes again to express its profound appreciation to Faith and Order for skillfully synthesizing the advances made thus far in ecumenical ecclesiology, as well as for producing a paper that itself no doubt will give impetus to

even further progress. The RCA has been deeply committed to the ecumenical movement from its early stages to the present day. And with the WCC member churches and all the partners God provides, the RCA will faithfully continue to carry out its ecumenical witness toward the fulfillment of the prayer of its Lord: "that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn. 17:21).

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) merged to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) at the Uniting General Council (UGC), held from June 18 to 28, 2010, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This new fellowship of Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Waldensian, United, and Uniting churches marks the culmination of a journey that began with each organization at the global level in Accra in 2004 (WARC) and in Utrecht in 2005 (REC).

Almost a thousand delegates, guests, visitors, volunteers, and staff representing 80 million church members from 230 denominations in 108 countries assembled on the campus of Calvin College to respond to God's call to give visible expression to the unity of Reformed Christians worldwide. The theme of the UGC came from Ephesians 4:3: "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace." Seventy-two delegates were prevented from participating in this historic event because U.S. government officials, including in the State Department, denied them visas to enter the United States.

The location was significant not only because it is a major world center of Reformed Christianity, but also because it is the traditional territory of the Odawa, Ojibway, and Potowatomi Native American peoples. UGC participants learned that the U.S. government's treatment of the Native American peoples is a blemish on the historical record of the United States. Yet despite a history of devastation and loss—in which the churches sadly have been complicit—tribal leaders extended a gracious welcome to the delegates. This welcome was dramatized in a combined Reformed worship service and Pow Wow held on the banks of the Grand River at Ah-Nab-Awen Park in downtown Grand Rapids. UGC participants and tribal leaders gathered here in peace and unity to celebrate the formation of the WCRC. Together they dared to hope that this new departure in the ecumenical movement would contribute to the healing of the relationships between the churches and the indigenous peoples of North America, as well as those of the Global South.

This event gave concrete expression to the broader themes of the WCRC: unity (communion), mission, and justice. Reflection on the institutional abuses committed against the Native Americans on the North American continent impressed on the participants that in their histories Christians have sometimes exploited and dispossessed others even as they have participated in God's life-giving mission. With renewed conviction, the UGC delegates affirmed that mission without justice is not mission at all.

To give specific content to these broader themes, each of the delegates was appointed to a section organized to address one of nine sub-themes. These included the following: 1) Reformed identity, theology, and communion; 2) Christian unity and ecumenical engagement; 3) justice in the economy and the earth; 4) worship and spiritual renewal; 5) leadership development and nurture; 6) gender justice; 7) youth empowerment; 8) mission; and 9) peace and reconciliation. These nine sub-themes were taken up in nine section groups, to which all delegates were dismissed at various times during the Council for the purpose of reviewing and discussing prepared material. The section groups then reported on their respective sub-themes with proposals to the plenary sessions of the UGC.

The section most germane to this commission is that of Christian unity and ecumenical engagement. The purpose of this section was to examine the role that the WARC and the REC have played in past ecumenical relations and to make recommendations for further work. The study paper distributed to the section members in advance of the UGC contains several topics for discussion. An important one concerns whether ordinary ecumenical dialogue should even continue. Are churches wasting their time on sixteenth-century discussions that do not concern the churches in the Global South? Are not interfaith issues more pressing than interconfessional disagreements? Should not theological focus shift to relevant questions with which churches struggle in their own contexts? At the same time, the study paper highlights for the section members what the Reformed churches would lose if dialogues were discontinued. Through dialogue churches engage in a self-critical process necessary for clarifying confessional identity. Dialogues are necessary for developing contextual understanding. And a commitment to justice demands sharing and cooperation with the wider community of churches. Nevertheless, considerable results have already been harvested through more than forty years of dialogue. In view of this fact, the study paper recommends that local and regional dialogue consultations be organized to facilitate a reception process simultaneously with promoting ongoing dialogues. The regional councils of the WCRC could be involved in the organization of these consultations.

Topics proposed for future rounds of dialogue include the understanding of the church and episcope. A theme proposed for a new round of Roman Catholic/Reformed dialogues is "justification and sacramentality: Christian communities as agents for justice." There was the observation that justice is close to the heart of Reformed theology. In Jesus Christ God justifies us. The God who justifies also sanctifies us to do justice in the world. In our commitment to justice we are living out what God has gifted and entrusted to us. In this connection, there was interest in exploring what it might mean for the Reformed churches to associate with the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" (1999). This statement could serve as a theological foundation of the commitment to justice.

Almost all of these topics were taken up in the actual recommendations presented to the UGC. The theme of justice was never far from the surface. For example, future ecumenical engagements should focus on the implications of theological positions for social justice and action. This recommendation was made even more explicit by a later one according to which the WCRC should have "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth" (Accra Confession 2004) as the horizon against which future ecumenical engagements are enacted. The confession would constitute an invitation to ecumenical partners to give witness to the common concern for global economic and ecological justice as a matter of faith.

Accra was a watershed moment in the history of the worldwide Reformed family. A brief review of this event here will help in understanding the desire of the UGC to make the Accra Confession central to the life and witness of the WCRC. The WARC delegates to the 24th General Council in Accra, Ghana, in 2004 were shocked by a visit to two slave castles in the country's southeastern coast where human beings were beaten, raped, and shipped out as slaves. The experience stimulated profound reflection on the connections between the transatlantic slave trade and contemporary forms of human trafficking, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation that brutalize and displace untold millions of the world's poor today. The root cause of this environmental destruction and economic injustice is a system that Accra identifies as "neoliberal economic globalization." The term "neoliberal" does not refer to a member of a new left-wing political ideology. It refers rather to the liberation of capital, which freely crosses political borders and extends into every domain in the unending search of opportunities in which to invest with the expectation of unlimited profits. Despite its promises to save the world through wealth creation and accumulation, this system has plundered the earth, devastated the environment,

and enriched the industrialized countries at the expense of the poor ones.

What has turned out to be the most controversial assertion in the Accra Confession is that this economic system is defended by "empire." By empire the confession understands "the coming together of economic, cultural, political, and military power that constitutes a system of domination led by powerful nations to protect and defend their own interests" (art. 10). Accra fleshes out this abstract definition by explicitly identifying the "United States of America and its allies" as these powerful nations, which both advance and defend their interests through international finance and trade institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization) and through military operations waged to enforce compliance with the global economic order (art. 12).

These pronouncements occasioned conflict within and between member churches. Eastern European churches were suspicious of the perceived Marxist language in Accra's critique of global capitalism, a form of economic organization to which they credit an improvement in their countries' standard of living after the deprivations endured during the era of Soviet Communism. Some churches resented the equation of "empire" without remainder with concrete regimes in the Global North like the United States. It seemed insensitive to particular contexts, including in the North, in which it is far from apparent that current economic policies benefit anyone except the smallest sliver of the population. The United States, for example, has witnessed in recent years the greatest wealth transfer since before the Great Depression. In 2007 one percent of Americans claimed no less than 23.5 percent of nation's total income. Clearly, there are victims as well as perpetrators in the Global North. Other critics complained that the term is too ideologically loaded, contributes nothing to a scientific analysis of a complex reality, and lacks in theological substance.

The Johannesburg Declaration, "Global Dialogue on the Confession of Accra" (2009), forged by the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) and the Evangelical Reformed Church in Germany (ERK) sought to clarify the concept of empire in response to these criticisms. It succeeded in formulating a definition of empire that largely overcame the polarizations and that has since gained broad-based support.

> We speak of empire, because we discern a coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power in our world today. This is constituted by a reality and a spirit of lordless domination, created by humankind. An all-encompassing global reality serving, protecting, and defending the interests of powerful corporations, nations, elites, and privileged peoples, while exploiting creation, imperiously excludes, enslaves, and even sacrifices humanity. It is a pervasive spirit of destructive self-interest, even greed—the worship of money, goods, and possessions; the gospel of consumerism, proclaimed through powerful propaganda and religiously justified, believed, and followed. It is the colonization of consciousness, values and notions of human life by the imperial logic; a spirit lacking compassionate justice and showing contemptuous disregard for the gifts of creation and the household of life.

The feature that distinguishes this definition from the original one is the explicit use of theological categories through which to view the reality of "empire." To characterize this reality as a "spirit of lordless domination" is to shift the terms of discussion into a theological register.

This theological insight suggests that the member churches assembled at Accra viewed their struggle against empire in essence as a spiritual struggle. In this perspective, it is clear that the delegates decided that the systemic injustices they discerned in global patterns of economic production, distribution, and consumption could not be reduced to political, social, or moral terms only. Because these patterns were perceived to stem from a total sys-

tem that insists "there is no alternative," claims "sovereignty over life," and demands an "endless flow of sacrifices from the poor and creation" (art. 9), the delegates chose to confess: There is one God, the "creator and sustainer of all life." And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, who came into the world so that all may have life in its fullness (Jn. 10:10) (art. 16). "Guided and upheld by the Holy Spirit," Christians follow in public mission this Jesus who champions the poor and the marginalized and calls his followers to "put justice 'for the least of these' at the center of their community life" (art. 19, 27). Christians therefore reject unjust economic systems that "exclude the poor, the vulnerable, and the whole of creation from the fullness of life" (art.18). The "signs of the times" (art. 15) demand that the churches take a stand: human beings cannot serve both God and Money (Matt. 6:24) (art. 21).

Accra encouraged churches to covenant together for justice by bringing the Accra Confession into local and regional contexts with the intent of forming partnerships within and between congregations, as well as with other churches and civic institutions. Two churches, the ERK in Germany and URCSA in South Africa, deserve special mention for their cooperation on what was called the "globalization project." So far these are the only churches from the Global North and the Global South to have partnered to address the issues raised by Accra. It is perhaps significant that these two churches are bound together by a common theological legacy in the Barmen Declaration and the Belhar Confession, both of which emerged in response to critical historical situations that constituted a *status confessionis* for ERK and URCSA, respectively. The globalization project issued a remarkable study, *Dreaming a Different World: Globalization and Justice for Humanity and the Earth* (2010). This publication provides all WCRC member churches with a model by which to guide responses to the confession's invitation to engage in the process of "education, confession, and action" (art. 38).

There has been some activity in North America around the Accra Confession. In November 2005, the RCA, the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA) held a meeting to develop resources for use in congregations. The North American Covenanting for Justice Working Group, which in addition to these churches includes also representatives from the Presbyterian Church of Canada, United Church of Canada, CANAAC, WARC (now WCRC), and the WCC, produced a five-module curriculum for use in local congregations titled *Globalization We Can Grasp*. This curriculum is available at www.canaac.org/resources/accra-confession. The website of the WCRC is www.wcrc.ch.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.

Delegates gathered November 9-11, 2010, in New Orleans for the annual meeting of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCCUSA), marking one hundred years of ecumenical mission on the occasion of the anniversary of the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, a historic event universally regarded as initiating the modern ecumenical witness. Under the theme "Witness of These Things: Ecumenical Engagement in a New Era," the assembly reviewed what the churches in the United States have said and done together during the past century. Delegates participated in critical reflection about the ecumenical movement in a world in transition to determine ways in which the movement might continue to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Five vision papers, specifically written for the assembly, provided the context in which delegates engaged in conversation over five pressing issues of our day. The topics of these papers included radical diversity, interfaith relations, environmental issues, terrorism, and growing economic disparity. Discussions were organized around "World Café Tables"

where delegates from Orthodox, Evangelical, Mainline Protestant, Historic African American, and Living Peace churches engaged in reflection and conversation about ideas as to how the churches might live and work together to give a unique Christian witness in an uncertain future.

RCA delegates to the NCCCUSA General Assembly include the Rev. David Baak, the Rev. Anna Bogertman, the Rev. Michael Edwards, the Rev. Edith Lenz, and the Rev. Sophie Mathonnet-Vanderwell. The RCA's general secretary, the Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, and associate for ecumenical relations, the Rev. Douglas Fromm, are delegates ex-officio. Granberg-Michaelson and Fromm also serve as the RCA representatives to the Governing Board of the NCCCUSA, which meets between annual meetings of the General Assembly.

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TOGETHER

The annual gathering of Christian Churches Together (CCT) was held in Birmingham, Alabama, from January 11 to 14, 2011. Formed in 2007, CCT is the broadest Christian fellowship in the United States. It represents members from the Catholic, Orthodox, historic Protestant, historic Black, Evangelical, and Pentecostal families of Christian churches. In addition, its membership includes six national organizations: the American Bible Society, Bread for the World, Evangelicals for Social Action, Habitat for Humanity, Sojourners, and World Vision.

The gathering in Birmingham experienced the worst weather the city could remember, including unusually low temperatures in the teens, snow, and ice. Undeterred by the weather, members focused on the churches' response to the issues of racism and poverty at the epicenter of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s. They visited the Civil Rights Institute and the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, where four young girls were killed in a Sunday morning bombing in l963.

Members read and reflected on the famous letter of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. titled "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Gathered in small discussion groups, members read, reflected on, and prayed over the content of the letter. A response to Dr. King's letter was composed by the members under the title "Letter from Birmingham."

Another focus of the meeting was the real challenges in assisting the needs of hungry children within the United States. (One in five does not have enough to eat.) Albert Raboteau, an African-American professor at Princeton University, gave a presentation titled "Seeing Christ in the Poor," in which he drew on Christian faith traditions practiced by the slaves and the writings of the church fathers from the fourth and fifth centuries. Joshua Dubois, director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, also addressed the members. Worship in the style of each of the five families of churches represented at the gathering is a key feature of CCT meetings. This practice allows for new experiences and understandings to emerge, which build new bonds of fellowship in Christ's body, thereby strengthening its witness in the world. The website of CCT is www.christianchurchestogether.org.

GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM

The Global Christian Forum (GCF) is a promising initiative that is drawing world leaders from Evangelical, historic Protestant, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Catholic, and African Instituted churches into a new place of fellowship. Begun quietly in the 1990s, it is responding to the rapid shift in global Christianity marked by new vitality and growth in

the churches in the Global South, often in pentecostal and evangelical expressions that have no links to broader ecumenical bodies. From the start, the WCC, the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the World Evangelical Alliance, and others have been supportive of the GCF's work. In November 2007, the GCF gathered 240 Christian leaders from throughout the world at Limuru, Kenya, for days many described as a watershed in modern Christian history. That gathering, and the nine years of preparation and regional encounters that led to it, provided a fresh vision of how the global church could build a unity of fellowship and witness that reflected the new realities of world Christianity. The RCA has been an active supporter of the GCF since its beginning. The Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, general secretary of the RCA, serves actively on its steering committee and has participated in several regional meetings.

From November 12 through 16, 2010, the GCF convened for the Asia Regional Meeting in Seoul, South Korea. Participants represented national councils of churches and Christian councils, national Catholic bishops' conferences, national Evangelical and Pentecostal alliances and fellowships, regional ecumenical, Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal bodies, and churches from several Asian countries. The meeting was held on the premises of the Fasting Prayer Mountain of Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul. This was the first time that a GCF meeting was accommodated by a Pentecostal church. The Rev. Dr. Young-hoon Lee—who succeeded the founder of Yoido Full Gospel Church, the Rev. Dr. David Yonggi Cho, as senior pastor in 2008—addressed the Asia Regional Meeting on the subject "The Holy Spirit Movement and the Ministry of the Yoido Full Gospel Church."

With its role in Christian Churches Together (CCT) in the United States, the RCA's active support of the GCF places it at the frontier of work for the unity of Christ's body that holds fresh and hopeful promise for the church's global witness and mission. More information can be found at www.globalchristianforum.org.

ROMAN CATHOLIC/REFORMED DIALOGUE

The seventh round of the Roman Catholic/Reformed dialogue concluded its final plenary from October 6 to 8, 2010, in Henryville, Indiana. Churches participating in the dialogue include the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA), the Reformed Church in America (RCA), the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). RCA dialogue members include the Rev. Dr. Renee House, the Rev. John Paarlberg, and the Rev. Douglas Fromm.

The dialogue produced two important documents: one on baptism and the other on the Eucharist or Lord's Supper.

"These Living Waters"

"These Living Waters," which is the final version of the dialogue's report on baptism, is the culmination of a process of study and deliberation that extended from 2003 to 2007. It is intended to serve as the basis for the "Common Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Baptism" proposed to the participating churches. The document begins by providing a comprehensive historical overview of sacraments and sacramentality in the Roman Catholic and Reformed traditions. It then explores the baptismal rites of the two traditions, highlighting historical developments in their structure and content. It also includes statements containing the distinct theologies of baptism of the two traditions. To these it adds a series of common statements reflecting what the Roman Catholic and Reformed churches can say together about baptism as a result of the degree of consensus achieved through

ecumenical dialogue. The document concludes by offering some pastoral recommendations for giving tangible expression to the mutual recognition of baptism between the Roman Catholic and Reformed churches.

The "Common Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Baptism" has been ratified by the PCUSA. On November 17, 2010, the USCCB approved the agreement by an overwhelming majority of 204 votes to 11, thereby recognizing as valid the baptism of the four Reformed churches. Archbishop Wilton Gregory, chairman of USCCB Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, heralded it as a "milestone on the ecumenical journey." According to the Roman Catholic reception statement, the agreement "signifies a renewed dedication to theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the historic Protestant communions." While such agreements have been approved around the world, this document is unprecedented in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States.

The "Common Agreement" is before General Synod 2011. The CRCNA and the UCC also will be voting on it at their respective General Synods this year. The final and non-amendable version of the text of this document appears below.

COMMON AGREEMENT ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF BAPTISM
Reformed–Roman Catholic Dialogue, Round VII

Together we affirm that, by the sacrament of Baptism, a person is truly incorporated into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13 and 27; Ephesians 1:22-23), the church. Baptism establishes the bond of unity existing among all who are part of Christ's body and is therefore the sacramental basis for our efforts to move towards visible unity.

Together we affirm that Baptism is the sacramental gateway into the Christian life, directed toward the fullness of faith and discipleship in Christ.

Together we affirm that incorporation into the universal church by Baptism is brought about by celebrating the sacrament within a particular Christian community.

Together we affirm that Baptism is to be conferred only once, because those who are baptized are decisively incorporated into the Body of Christ.

Together we affirm that Baptism is a sacrament of the church, enacted in obedience to the mission confided to it by Christ's own word. For our baptisms to be mutually recognized, water and the scriptural Trinitarian formula "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19-20) must be used in the baptismal rite.

Together we affirm that the validity of Baptism depends on its celebration according to the apostolic witness by the church and its authorized ministers.

Together we affirm, as a sign of our unity and as a witness to ecumenical commitment, the practice of inviting the presence and, where appropriate, the participation of members of our respective communions in the celebration of Baptism. At the same time, we affirm our responsibility to respect the integrity of the distinct baptismal practices of the communions in which the rite of Baptism is administered.

Given our mutual recognition of Baptism, we encourage using baptismal registers in the

local church community and, when requested by another church for a pastoral need in the life of an individual, providing written attestations of Baptism, including the liturgical formula used. Such cooperation and mutual accountability honors the dignity of the sacrament of Baptism.

We rejoice at the common faith we share and affirm in this document. We understand that the journey toward full, visible unity depends on openness to the grace of God and humility before the initiatives of God's Spirit among us. Because of these convictions, we encourage Roman Catholic and Reformed pastoral leaders to continue their commitment to regular dialogue about theology and pastoral practice from local to international settings. Pastoral leaders engaged in such dialogue embody our hopes for unity, collaborative effort, and common witness. We believe that respectful dialogue can provide a strong witness to the wider church about our commitment to a relationship in Christ and can stand as a safeguard against the unreflective judgments that have, at certain times in our history, diminished and distorted our relations.

The Common Agreement goes into effect for any two of the undersigned bodies as soon as the second body in any pair adopts it according to its respective polity.

Christian Reformed Church in North America:
To be signed by the Executive Director
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):
To be signed by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Reformed Church in America:
To be signed by the General Secretary
Roman Catholic Church (USCCB):
To be signed by the President
United Church of Christ:
To be signed by the General Minister and President

In response to the outcome of the seventh round of the Roman Catholic/Reformed dialogue, this commission makes the following recommendation:

R-34
To approve the Common Baptism Agreement between the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Reformed Churches (RCA, PCUSA, CRC, UCC) and to encourage its use by boards of elders in congregations of the Reformed Church in America as an ecumenical witness to the unity we have in Christ and to offer pastoral support to inter-church families. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. The Common Agreement and Certificate are the results of a five year dialogue with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) that resulted in the document: "These Living Waters."
2. It offers a witness to the gift of unity we have in Christ as expounded by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

3. The Agreement and Certificate were approved by the USCCB on November 16, 2010, by a vote of 204-11, the first such agreement between Roman Catholic and Reformed churches in the Unites States.

"This Bread of Life"

"This Bread of Life" is the second of the two documents that emerged from the seventh round of dialogues between the Roman Catholic Church and the four Reformed churches.

What is distinctive about this document is the novel approach adopted by the dialogue participants toward their subject matter. Rather than framing the discussion about the Eucharist or Lord's Supper in terms drawn from systematic theology, the dialogue teams chose to present their respective church's understanding of this sacrament in liturgical terms. Thus the topic was developed in relation to five themes: Epiclesis/Action of the Holy Spirit; Anamnesis/Remembering; the Presence of Christ; Offering and Sacrifice; and Discipleship. The document is careful to note convergences, divergences, and areas of mutual appreciation. In this regard, the dialogue teams discovered more convergences than divergences, even on the nature of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. One of the Catholic participants noted: "We may not be on the same page, but we are a lot closer to the same page than we thought."

The participants came to a renewed appreciation of the nature of ecumenical dialogue. It is not confrontational, as if one side challenges the other to explain why it believes the way it does. Rather, each accepted in good faith that the other had a theologically acceptable account of the doctrine. The doctrine was thereby clarified so that convergences were discovered. Then the participants were able to explore differences to see if they were church dividing.

At the conclusion of the seventh round, participants suggested "ecclesiology" as a possible topic for the next round, to begin sometime in 2012.

RCA DIALOGUE WITH THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

At General Synod 2010 the following recommendation was approved: "To direct the Commission on Christian Unity to initiate and engage in a dialogue with representatives from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in the spirit of "mutual affirmation and admonition" called for in the Formula of Agreement, in order to discuss and explore with them the recent social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" adopted by the ECLA and to express the RCA's concern over the ELCA's action to allow the possibility of service in church office by persons in "publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same sex relationships"; to report on the progress of this dialogue to General Synod 2011; and to make a final report to the 2012 General Synod."

The Commission on Christian Unity, through the general secretary's office, communicated this action to the ELCA, with the request for a dialogue. RCA associate for ecumenical relations Douglas Fromm met with his counterpart in the ELCA to set the framework for such a dialogue. Each church agreed to invite at least two participants along with the ecumenical staff person representing each church, to comprise the dialogue teams. The limited size of the dialogue teams is due to financial constraints in both churches. It was further agreed that one meeting would be held in fall 2011 and two meetings in 2012 with the goal of complying with the RCA's request for a report prepared for the 2012 General Synod.

CONSULTATION ON SCRIPTURE

General Synod 2010 approved a recommendation: "To direct the Commission on Christian Unity to invite the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, and the Christian Reformed Church in North America to join the RCA to engage in a consultation on the interpretation and use of Scripture in moral discernment and ethical decision making, and to report on the progress of consultation to General Synod 2011; and to make a final report to General Synod 2012."

RCA associate for ecumenical relations Douglas Fromm met with representatives from each of the named churches. Each agreed to join in the consultation. It was further agreed to expand the consultation by inviting churches who are in full communion with the named churches. As such the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in full communion with the United Church of Christ, will have a participant in the consultation. The Moravian Church Northern Province, in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), will participate in the consultation. It was further agreed that each church will have at least two participants along with the ecumenical staff person. A conference call of ecumenical staff reviewed the prospectus and discussed the range of participants and number of potential meetings. The first meeting will be held in fall 2011 with second and third meetings in 2012. Should there be a need to extend the dialogue beyond the 2012 reporting date, a request will be made to the RCA to extend the reporting date by an additional year.

BELHAR CONFESSION IMPLEMENTATION

Neither Calendar nor Clock is a recently published book by Piet J. Naude, professor of ethics and director of the Business School at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The book is subtitled *Perspectives on the Belhar Confession*. In the book there is a chapter titled "A Gift from Heaven: The Reception of the Belhar Confession in the Period 1982-2007." The following is an excerpt from that chapter.

> A third church (1986 confession adopted by the DRMC and the DRCA to form the URCSA…1998 the Verenigde Protestantse Kerk in Belgie adopted the confession) to confess Belhar was the Reformed Church in America (RCA). Already at the General Synod of 2000, their Commission on Christian Unity was instructed "to commend the Belhar Confession to the church over the next decade for reflection, study, and a response as a means of deepening the RCA's commitment to dealing with racism and strengthening its ecumenical commitment to the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA) and other Reformed bodies." After a careful explication and reflection with successive reports to the General Synods between 2002 and 2005, a congregational guide on Belhar, *Unity, Reconciliation, and Justice*, was introduced in 2006. The groundbreaking proposal to adopt the Belhar Confession provisionally, for two years, testing it in worship and teaching and discerning its theology, was overwhelmingly accepted at the General Synod in Pella, Iowa, in June 2007. It is expected that Belhar will be endorsed as a confession of the RCA at its General Synod of 2010, confirming its message for the North American church (p. 137).

In a thesis for a graduate degree at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, Tess Drijfhout-Rosier recently completed an ecclesiological investigation into the practice of the adoption of confessions among Reformed churches. In a detailed and documented analysis of the ten year process, she used the RCA as a case study for adopting a confession from one part of the world to another.

Following the adoption of the Belhar Confession and the Liturgical Celebration of the adoption at the 2010 General Synod, an Implementation Committee was formed by the

synod to continue the process of reception into the life and ministry of the RCA.

INTERFAITH INITIATIVE: "Stories from the Streets"

In recent years, ecumenical dialogue and collaboration among Christian churches have given rise to the question about interfaith dialogue and collaboration. Churches, including the RCA, have become increasingly aware that Christian faith exists in a world of religious pluralism. Many RCA congregations live in communities in which encounters between Christians and members of other religious faiths are commonplace.

To respond to these realities, this commission has resolved to invite RCA congregations to share their stories about interactions and joint activities with other non-Christian religious groups in their communities. The devising of a means by which to solicit these stories from congregations is now in the beginning stages.

Report of the Commission on Christian Worship

The Commission on Christian Worship met in Chicago, Illinois, October 14-16, 2010, in conjunction with the joint meeting of all General Synod commissions and the General Synod Council. The commission met again four months later in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, February 16-17, 2011.

The commission discussed the direction and scope of its work. It has discerned a special commitment among its members to the responsibility of creating and disseminating worship resources that are both Reformed and missional, that reflect:

- A deep sacramental awareness
- A hospitable missional impulse
- A keen pastoral sensitivity
- An appreciation for the scriptural foundation of our worship life
- An eager pursuit of the multicultural mission of the church

Toward this end, the commission is pleased to present two liturgies in this report: an order for commissioning a commissioned pastor, and an order for celebrating baptism and professing and reaffirming faith (a combined order).

Order for Commissioning a Commissioned Pastor

The 2010 General Synod adopted R-34 from the Commissioned Pastor Task Force. R-34 directs the worship commission "to create a liturgy for the commissioning of commissioned pastors to be developed in consultation with the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team" (*MGS 2010*, p. 145). The commission crafted the liturgy at the October 2010 meeting and submitted it to the advisory team for its feedback. A few minor edits were suggested, and these were implemented by the commission at the February 2011 meeting.

"A commissioned pastor is an elder who is trained, commissioned, and supervised by a classis for a specific ministry within that classis that will include the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments" (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, Section 1). He or she is an elder commissioned to serve in a specific role within a congregation, the classis, or a specialized ministry. Their leadership roles are wide and varied—church planters, executive pastors, Christian educators, youth leaders, etc. The new liturgy is not an ordi-

nation service—these elders have already been ordained. The purpose of the new liturgy is to commission them into specific ministries.

The commission based its new commissioning liturgy on the "Order for Commissioning a Minister of Word and Sacrament into a Specialized Ministry" (*Worship the Lord: The Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America*, pp. 163-169). It is essentially an adaptation of an approved liturgy for commissioning an ordained person to a specific ministry. The commission made editorial changes for the commissioned pastor liturgy that reflect two important differences:

1. A difference in office: this liturgy is intended for the commissioning of an elder, not a minister of Word and sacrament.
2. A difference in the terms of the commission: the commissioned pastor's commission is valid for the period of assigned service, is under contract, and is subject to annual review by the classis (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, Sections 1, 5, and 9).

This will hopefully bring clarity and consistency to the act of commissioning ordained leaders for ministry in the RCA.

R-35
To approve the "Order for Commissioning a Commissioned Pastor" and commend it for use in the church. (ADOPTED)

ORDER FOR COMMISSIONING A COMMISSIONED PASTOR

When an elder has been approved by a classis to serve as a commissioned pastor and a commissioning to a specific form of service within the classis is deemed appropriate (*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14), the classis shall appoint a time and place for the commissioning service. Prior to the service the classis shall satisfy itself that the person being presented for commissioning is an ordained elder.

The service shall be conducted with praise to God and in a spirit of joy and solemnity. A brief sermon suitable to the occasion shall be preached. The presiding officer of the classis shall begin, following the proclamation of the Word in the Response to God. The presiding officer appropriately presides at the font, which signifies the common ministry given to all Christians at baptism.

PRESENTATION

Beloved in the Lord,
we have come to commission
(an elder or elders)
into a specific form of service within Christ's holy church
as a commissioned pastor.
Christ alone is the source of all Christian ministry,
through the ages calling women and men to serve.

By the Holy Spirit all who believe
and are baptized receive a ministry
to witness to Jesus as Savior and Lord, and
to love and serve those with whom they live and work.
We are ambassadors for Christ,
who reconciles and makes whole.

We are the salt of the earth;
we are the light of the world.

Following his resurrection and ascension
Christ gave gifts to the church.
These gifts were "that some would be apostles, some prophets,
some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,
to equip the saints for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ."
We stand within a tradition
where deacons, elders, and ministers of Word and sacrament
are called and empowered to fulfill an ordained ministry
which enables the whole mission of the church.

The Classis of *N*_____
has approved the specific form of commissioned service given to *NN* (*using full name*),
(*the name of the position to which the elder is to be commissioned is publicly named*).

N (*Christian name only, no surname*), we invite you to come forward
as a sign that you accept this ministry.

The candidate comes and stands by the baptismal font, facing the presiding officer,
before the classis and gathered people; the presiding officer continues:

Commissioned pastors are elders who are trained,
commissioned, and supervised by a classis
for a specific ministry within a classis.
They are called to build up Christ's church,
to proclaim God's Word,
to declare forgiveness through Jesus Christ,
to call publicly on the name of the Lord
on behalf of God's people, and
to celebrate Christ's holy sacraments,
baptizing and presiding at the Lord's Supper.

They are to build up and equip those with whom they work,
show the gospel of God's grace in word and deed,
share people's joys and sorrows,
encourage the faithful,
recall those who fall away,
help the sick and the dying,
and serve with the whole church
in its ministry to the world.

VOWS

N (*Christian name only, no surname*),
so all may know you are both willing and able
to accept this ministry of Christ's church,
the classis asks you to speak your vows publicly as you enter this ministry.

Do you confess together with us and the church throughout all ages
your faith in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Yes, truly, with all my heart.

The presiding officer shall invite the congregation to stand:

Let us all stand with *N*_____, confessing our faith
in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.

The congregation is seated; the candidate shall remain standing.

Do you believe in your heart
that you are called by Christ's church,
and therefore by God,
to this specific form of commissioned service?

Yes, truly, with all my heart.

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 contrary beliefs?

Yes, truly, with all my heart.

Will you proclaim the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
upholding the witness of Holy Scripture against all schisms and heresies?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you be diligent in your study of Holy Scripture and
in your use of the means of grace?
Will you pray for God's people and
lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you accept the church's order and governance,

participating in an annual evaluation of your performance by the classis, and submitting to ecclesiastical discipline
should you become delinquent in either life or doctrine?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you be loyal to the witness and work
of the Reformed Church in America,
using all your abilities to further its Christian mission
here and throughout the world?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you strive to fulfill faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully
the duties required of you in the work to which you are being commissioned,
following our Lord's example of humble service?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

DECLARATION

N (*Christian name only, no surname*)
The classis asks you to declare publicly
your commitment to commissioned ministry among us.

At this point in the service the elder to be commissioned reads the "Declaration for Commissioned Pastors." (The declaration is found in the appendix to the *Book of Church Order*, The Formularies of the Reformed Church in America.)

COMMISSIONING

The person designated by the classis shall deliver the charge to the commissioned pastor. The charge which follows shall be read. Additional brief counsel, if authorized by the classis, may be made before it.

Beloved servant in Christ,
be attentive to yourself and to all the flock
given to your care by the Holy Spirit.
Love Christ: feed his lambs, tend his sheep.
Be an example in speech, in conduct,
in love, in faith, in purity.
Attend to reading, prayer, study,
preaching, and teaching.
Do not neglect the gift that is in you.

Put these things into practice,
devote yourself to them,
so that all may see your progress.
Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching;
continue in these things,
for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.
*N*_____, guard what has been entrusted to you.
And when the chief shepherd appears,

you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.

The presiding officer shall continue, addressing the representatives of the specific service to which this person is being commissioned. 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.

Will the representatives of *N* (*congregation name or place of commissioned service*)
rise to affirm their acceptance of (*name of the person*)
whom God has given them?

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ,
do you receive in the name of the Lord,
this servant *N*_____
to be your commissioned pastor?

We do.

Do you promise to
honor *her/his* authority, and
welcome *her/his* service
as a representative of Jesus Christ?

We do.

Do you promise to encourage and pray for *her/him*
as you labor together
for the welfare of the world?

We do.

Do you promise *her/him*
such financial and personal support
that s*he/he* may serve among you
with joy and not with grief?

We do.

The presiding officer shall continue.

In the name and by the authority of the Classis of *N*_____,
I now declare that elder *N*_____ is duly
commissioned to service as (*name of position*) at (*name of congregation or other area of service*).
Thanks be to God.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

The following prayer may be used, intercessions may be selected from other sources, or the person assigned to pray may do so in her or his own words. The intercession shall conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

Almighty and ever loving God,

you taught us to pray
for ourselves and for others,
and to give thanks for all of life.

May every grace of ministry rest on *N*_____,
keep *her/him* strong and faithful,
may *she/he* herald the joy of your kingdom,
serving rather than being served.

Give your grace to (*name of ministry/agency*),
strengthen it in service,
preserve it in harmony,
use it to extend your reign of justice and peace.

Inspire your whole church
with your Spirit of power, unity, and peace.
Grant that all who trust you
may live together in love.

Lead all nations in the way of justice.
Direct those who govern,
that they be fair, maintain order,
support those in need, and defend the oppressed,
that the world may know true peace.
Give grace to all who proclaim the gospel
through Word and sacrament and deeds of mercy,
that by teaching and example
others may come to live for you.

Comfort and deliver, O Lord,
all who are in trouble…
sorrow…poverty…sickness…grief…
Heal them in body, mind, spirit, or circumstance,
working in them, by your grace,
wonders beyond their dreams and hopes,
through Jesus Christ our Savior,
who taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

The service may conclude with a hymn of thanksgiving.
The benediction will be given by the commissioned pastor.

Order for Celebrating Baptism, and Professing and Reaffirming Faith: A Combined Order

The commission reported to the 2010 General Synod that it was at work preparing a "multi-purpose baptismal liturgy" combining the celebration of infant baptism, adult baptism, profession of faith, and reaffirmation of faith. Theologically, the pastoral rites of profession of faith and reaffirmation of faith are anchored in and built upon the Order for the Sacrament of Baptism. The heart of the commission's concern in creating a combined order is the post-Christian missional context of the RCA. In the Christianized society of medieval Europe infant baptism was virtually universal and adult baptism was rare. The evangelization of post-Christian North America presents a very different situation. In the current context all these actions—infant and adult baptism, and profession and reaffirmation of faith—take on a newfound missional significance.

1. The importance of adult baptism
   Many of the people embracing Christian faith today have little or no prior exposure to the church. They enter the church through baptism and profession of faith and in many of our churches the number of adult baptisms is equal to or greater than the number of infant baptisms. This combined order assumes adult baptism to be as normative as infant baptism.

2. The importance of a meaningful rite for profession of faith
   There are an increased number of conversions among those who, though they were baptized as children, did not come to faith until later in life. Maybe their parents made promises at the font that they had no intention of keeping and faith was not a significant factor in their upbringing. For any number of reasons they did not embrace the faith into which they were baptized. Many of these people express a desire to be "re-baptized," i.e. they long for a meaningful way to express their new life in Christ. This presents a significant pastoral challenge to our churches. We want to celebrate the significance of the new thing that has occurred in the convert's life while at the same time enabling them to rejoice in the gift of their baptism, to recover its significance and see God's faithfulness to the covenant promise that has come to fruition in their newfound faith. Profession of faith therefore becomes an important rite of passage by which the convert is enabled to claim and celebrate her or his baptismal vocation. This liturgy invites converts into a rich and meaningful remembrance of their baptism (which calls them to faith), while affording them the opportunity to publicly profess the faith they now have. They are invited to touch the water at the font, to kneel and be signed with the cross, and to be prayed for by name by the minister. This enables the candidate to meaningfully express the "new thing" that has happened, while at the same time anchoring it in their baptism.

3. The importance of infant baptism
   Infant baptism is not a vestige of dying Christendom, but a crucial expression of the church's apostolic mission. On the day of Pentecost, the day the church was empowered by the Holy Spirit for its mission, Peter explicitly stated that "the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, for everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him" (Acts 2:39). As a reformed and missional church the RCA joyfully hears God's call to bring our children to Jesus (Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:14) as

surely as we invite our neighbors to the great feast God is preparing for all people (Luke 14:15-24). This combined-order liturgy shows the missional seamlessness of God's invitation to all people in baptism—to believers, to their children, and to their neighbors.

4. The importance of committing to mission: transfers
   When someone transfers their membership to another church he or she is not simply finding another place to "park." This combined order liturgy invites people who transfer membership to remember the call of their baptism and to recommit themselves to the mission of God in a new place and a new community.

5. The importance of Scripture
   The commission added Scripture passages that are appropriate for this service. This is both to enrich the service with a greater breadth of biblical witness, and also in hope that these services will be so frequent that diversity is needed.

6. The importance of pastoral care for candidates
   There was one final missional consideration: the first part of the liturgy, the time with the elders. It seemed to the commission that the liturgy was overly formal for a time that is more intimate and personal. It adjusted the rubrics to be more flexible and simplified the liturgy.

It is hoped that this combined-order liturgy will be helpful to those who have tried to piece together services from different orders on their own (a cumbersome task). It is the commission's desire that our baptismal celebrations will be increasingly filled with all these expressions.

R-36
To adopt "Order for Celebrating Baptism and Professing and Reaffirming Faith: A Combined Order," for recommendation to the classes for approval.

The advice of the Special Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance was to amend the recommendation:

R-36
To ~~adopt~~ approve for provisional use and study the "Order for Celebrating Baptism and Professing and Reaffirming Faith: A Combined Order." ~~for recommendation to the classes for approval~~.

Reasons:
1. The church needs to be able to use a new liturgy as quickly as possible.
2. This will allow for feedback from the churches and for improvements to be made to strengthen the missional imagery.

R-36
To approve for provisional use and study the "Order for Celebrating Baptism and Professing and Reaffirming Faith: A Combined Order." (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)

The Special Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance proposed a new recommendation:

R-37
To direct the Commission on Christian Worship to review all current RCA baptismal liturgies, both constitutional and provisional, and to propose changes that may strengthen the emphases on repentance, forgiveness of sin, cleansing, and other missionally related themes, and to submit needed changes, along with a final version of the provisional "Order for Celebrating Baptism and Professing and Reaffirming Faith: A Combined Order" no later than the 2013 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Reason:
In a missional context where more adults are being converted, being baptized, and reaffirming their faith, our baptismal liturgies need a stronger emphasis on these themes referenced in this recommendation.

ORDER FOR CELEBRATING BAPTISM AND PROFESSING AND REAFFIRMING FAITH
A Combined Order

In the Reformed Church in America, the board of elders receives people into the life and work of the congregation (*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 5, Sec. 2). Reception of confessing members is based on a candidate's profession of faith, a reaffirmation of such a profession, or a previous profession in another Christian congregation (*BCO*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 5, Sec. 2b).

This order is anchored in and builds upon the RCA Order for the Sacrament of Baptism. The order integrates the varied components of receiving confessing members into a congregation: those persons seeking adult baptism, those baptized as infants and making initial profession of faith, those reaffirming faith, and those transferring from another Christian church. The order also provides for the baptism of children.

Part I of this order may be used by the elders. Part II is for use in celebration with the congregation.

PART I: WITH THE ELDERS

At the meeting of the elders, the presiding minister of Word and sacrament or the presiding elder presents each person by name. The promises of God may then be spoken as found in one or more of these passages of Scripture: John 1:12-13; Acts 2:39; Galatians 3:27-28; Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 4:4-6; Romans 6:3-4; Romans 10:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12: 2-13, 27; 1 Peter 2:9.

This or a similar prayer may be offered:

O Lord, you have loved us first,
you called us by name,
you bless us with your presence, and
you lead us into your future.

We are grateful for your promises to us, and
we ask you to empower these disciples

as they make their promises to you,
that they may walk in your grace and
faithfully live for you all their days.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FAITH SHARING

The elders may engage in a conversation with the people concerning their acceptance of the Christian faith and the sincerity of their desire to live as confessing members of the congregation. If personal credos (written faith statements) have been prepared, they may be presented at this time.

THE QUESTIONS

The minister or presiding elder continues:

Friends in Christ, whatever our journey to this point
we remember that
in baptism God claims us and
seals us to show that we belong to Jesus Christ;
God frees us from sin and death;
God unites us to Jesus in his death and resurrection;
God makes us members of the church, the body of Christ; and
God empowers us by the Spirit to join Christ's mission in the world.

You have come now before God and the church
to profess your faith in Christ.

The following questions are written for unison response. If individual responses are desired, the minister or presiding elder may ask all of the questions, and then address each person, asking, "What is your response?" All persons seeking membership are asked these questions.

Do you believe in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and
do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?

I do.

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
as the only rule for faith and life?

I do.

Do you, relying on the grace of God, promise
to confess Christ publicly before others,
to serve Christ daily, and
to walk in Jesus' way?

I do.

Do you promise to exhibit the joy of new life in Christ;
to share fully in the life of the church;
to be faithful in worship and service; and
to offer your prayers and gifts?

I do.

Do you promise to accept the spiritual guidance of the church;
to walk in a spirit of Christian love with this congregation; and
to seek those things which make for unity, purity, and peace?

I do.

BLESSING

Be assured that as you declare your faith,
God will be faithful
to strengthen you, and
to renew you by the Holy Spirit,
that you may grow in grace and knowledge, and
may keep your promises faithfully all your days.

The meeting shall conclude with prayer and may include all joining in the Lord's Prayer.

PART II: BEFORE THE CONGREGATION

The public celebration of baptism, profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or reception from another congregation is ordinarily celebrated during worship on the Lord's Day. It is appropriately celebrated following the reading and proclamation of the Word.

PREPARATION

The minister addresses the congregation from the font:

Hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:
"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit, and
teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.
And remember, I am with you always,
to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

Hear also these words from Holy Scripture:
"There is one body and one Spirit,
just as you were called
to the one hope of your calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all."

Ephesians 4:4-6

And/or John 1:12-13; Acts 2:39; Galatians 3:27-28; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 6:3-4; Romans 10:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:2-13, 27; 1 Peter 2:9

Baptism is the sign and seal of God's promises to this covenant people.
In baptism God promises by grace alone:

to forgive our sins,
to adopt us into the body of Christ, the church,
to send the Holy Spirit daily to renew and cleanse us, and
to resurrect us to eternal life.

This promise is made visible in the water of baptism.

Water shall be poured into the font at this time.

Water cleanses,
purifies,
refreshes,
sustains;
Jesus Christ is living water.

Through baptism Christ calls us to new obedience:
to love and trust God completely,
to forsake the evil of the world, and
to live a new and holy life.

Yet, when we fall into sin,
we must not despair of God's mercy,
nor continue in sin,
for baptism is the sign and seal
of God's eternal covenant of grace with us.

PRESENTATION

An elder shall present the candidates using the following statements as appropriate.

The elders of (*name of congregation*) have welcomed these persons who appeared before them and made profession of their Christian faith. We ask them now to declare their faith before God and Christ's church, that we may rejoice together and welcome them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Candidates shall come forward as their names are read.

For reception from another congregation:

*NN/s*_____ is/are received from (*church name and location*).

Other means of recognition and/or reception may also be used at this point.

For reaffirmation of faith:

NN/s (*using full name/s*) come/s before us to publicly reaffirm *her/his/their* faith.

For profession of faith by those previously baptized in a Christian church:

NN/s (*using full name/s*) *has/have* been baptized into the body of Christ.
In making public this profession of faith *she/he/they* affirm/s the meaning of *her/his/their* baptism.

For initial profession of faith and baptism:

NN/s (using full name/s) come/s before us to make public profession of *her/his/their* faith and to receive the sacrament of baptism.

For the baptism of children:

NN/s (using full name/s) come/s before us to present *her/his/their daughter(s)/son(s), NN/s, (using full name/s)* to receive the sacrament of baptism.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The minister addresses the candidates:

Beloved of God,
I ask you before God and Christ's church
to reject evil,
to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, and
to confess the faith of the church.
Do you renounce sin and the power of evil
in your life and in the world?

I renounce them.

Who is your Lord and Savior?

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, and,
through worship and service,
seek to advance God's purposes
here and throughout the world?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

If children are being baptized the parents are asked:

Do you promise
to instruct *these children/this child*
in the truth of God's Word,
in the way of salvation through Jesus Christ;
to pray for *them*, to teach *them* to pray; and
to train *them* in Christ's way by your example,
through worship, and
in the nurture of the church?

I do, and I ask God to help me.

The congregation shall rise; the minister or elder addresses the members of the congregation:

Do you promise to love, encourage, and support
these brothers and sisters
by teaching the gospel of God's love,

by being an example of Christian faith and character, and
by giving the strong support of God's family
in fellowship, prayer, and service?

We do.

The minister or elder addresses the candidates:

Do you promise
to accept the spiritual guidance of the church,
to walk in a spirit of Christian love with this congregation, and
to seek those things that make for unity, purity, and peace?

I do.

The congregation and the candidates shall join in confessing the faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed. The questions may be omitted.

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

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.

The congregation may be seated; the minister continues.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We give you thanks,
O holy and gracious God,
for the gift of water.

In the beginning of creation your Spirit moved over the waters.
In the waters of the flood you destroyed evil.
You led the children of Israel through the sea
into the freedom of the promised land.
In the river Jordan, John baptized our Lord
and your Spirit anointed him.
By his death and resurrection
Jesus Christ, the Living Water,
frees us from sin and death
and opens the way to life everlasting.
We thank you, O God, for the gift of baptism.
In this water you confirm to us
that we are buried with Christ in his death,
raised to share in his resurrection, and
are being renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pour out on us your Holy Spirit,
so that those here baptized
may be washed clean and receive new life.

To you be all honor and glory, dominion and power,
now and forever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

For reception from another congregation:

Standing at the font the minister addresses the person professing faith. If the person is able, she or he is invited to kneel. The candidate may touch the water before kneeling.

The minister may mark the sign of the cross on the forehead with a gesture or using oil and shall say:

N (Christian name only, no surname), remember that you are baptized,
you are sealed by the Holy Spirit
and marked as God's own forever.

The minister may continue by laying hands on the head of each candidate offering one of the following prayers of blessing.

Defend, O Lord, this your servant *N* (*Christian name only, no surname*)
with your heavenly grace,
that *he/she* may continue yours forever, and
daily increase in your Spirit more and more,
until *he/she* comes to your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or

O Lord, stir up in *N* (*Christian name only, no surname*)
the gift of your Holy Spirit,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,
the Spirit of joy in your presence,
both now and forever. **Amen.**

Or

Father in heaven, for Jesus' sake,
stir up in *N* (*Christian name only, no surname*)
the gift of your Holy Spirit.
Confirm *her/his* faith,
Guide *her/his* life,
Empower *her/his* serving,
Give *her/him* patience in suffering,
And bring *her/him* to everlasting life,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

For those making reaffirmation of their faith:

Standing at the font the minister addresses the person professing faith. If the person is able, she or he is invited to kneel. The candidate may touch the water before kneeling.

The minister may mark the sign of the cross on the forehead with a gesture or using oil and shall say:

N (*Christian name only, no surname*), remember that you are baptized,
you are sealed by the Holy Spirit
and marked as God's own forever.

The minister continues by laying hands on the head of each candidate, offering a prayer of blessing. (Use one of the prayers of blessing offered above.)

For those making a profession who have been previously baptized:

Standing at the font the minister addresses the person professing faith. If the person is able, she or he is invited to kneel. The candidate may touch the water before kneeling.

N (*Christian name only, no surname*), remember that you are baptized,
you are sealed by the Holy Spirit
and marked as God's own forever.

The minister continues by laying hands on the head of each candidate, offering a prayer of blessing. (Use one of the prayers of blessing offered above.)

For those making a profession of faith and requiring baptism:

The baptismal covenant shall be repeated for each person receiving baptism.

Standing at the font the minister addresses the person professing faith. If the person is able, she or he is invited to kneel.

Using Christian name/s, omitting surname/s, the minister shall immerse, pour, or sprinkle water visibly and generously at the declaration of each name of the person of the Trinity, saying:

N (*Christian name only, no surname*), I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The minister may mark the sign of the cross on the forehead with a gesture or using oil, saying to each:

N (*use Christian name; omit surname*),
in baptism, you are sealed by the Holy Spirit and
marked as Christ's own forever. **Amen.**

The minister continues by laying hands on the head of each candidate, offering a prayer of blessing. (Use one of the prayers of blessing offered above.)

For the baptism of children:

If children are to receive baptism, the minister may ask the parents of each child:

What is the name of this child?

The parents shall give the Christian name; the minister may hold infants or small children, addressing each:

N (*Christian name only, no surname*),
for you Jesus came into the world;
for you he died and conquered death;
all this he did for you, little one,
though you know nothing of it as yet.
We love because God first loved us.

Using Christian name/s, omitting surname/s, the minister shall immerse, pour, or sprinkle water visibly and generously at the declaration of each name of the person of the Trinity, saying:

N (*Christian name only, no surname*), I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The minister may mark the sign of the cross on the forehead with a gesture or using oil, saying to each:

N (*Christian name only, no surname*), child of the covenant,
in baptism, you are sealed by the Holy Spirit and
marked as Christ's own forever. **Amen.**

DECLARATION AND WELCOME

When all have been baptized, the minister may make the following declaration:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the only King and Head of the Church,
these sisters and brothers are now
received into the visible membership of the holy catholic Church,
engaged to confess the faith of Christ, and
to be God's faithful servant/s until life's end.

The minister invites the congregation to stand:

By the Holy Spirit all who believe and are baptized receive a ministry
to witness to Jesus as Savior and Lord, and
to love and serve those with whom they live and work.
We are ambassadors for Christ,
who reconciles and makes whole.
We are the salt of the earth;
we are the light of the world.

The minister says:

Welcome our brothers and sisters in Christ.

An appropriate gesture of welcome or the following words may be used:

Joyfully we receive you.
Join with us as we give witness in the world to the good news,
for we are all one in Christ Jesus.
Alleluia.

Future Work of the Commission

As the commission looks to the next year it will continue to focus its efforts on creating and disseminating worship resources that are both reformed and missional. Here are some of the projects we have identified:

- To write a longer "pastoral letter" to accompany the new liturgies when they are sent to the churches—a letter that articulates their purpose and guides pastors in their use.
- To more clearly identify and annotate the deep scriptural sources in our existing liturgy. Very few of these sources are notated—either with footnotes or with hospitable acknowledgement. The commission thinks this may be helpful for congregations suspicious of "liturgy."
- To develop a contemporary liturgy (in conjunction with the Commission on Theology) for baptismal remembrance for use in missional settings—especially for those who come to the church wanting re-baptism—in essence to expand on the work that has already been done here.
- To develop a collection of eucharistic liturgies, possibly in collaboration with the RCA's ecumenical partners, to commend to the churches.

Report of the Commission on Church Order

The Commission on Church Order met October 14-16, 2010, in Rosemont (Chicago), Illinois, and again on January 28, 2011, in New York City. Additional communication occurred from time to time by way of email. While in recent years there have been one or two issues that consumed most of the time and energy of the commission, this year there was no one issue that did that.

Commissioned Pastors

Early in 2010 a Commissioned Pastor Task Force was convened to "review the training for and clarify the role of commissioned pastors in the RCA, and to bring a report and whatever recommendations they deem necessary to the next meeting of the General Synod" (*MGS 2009*, R-41, p. 135). The work of that task force resulted in several requests communicated directly to the commission. Some of those requests produced recommendations from this commission to the 2010 General Synod, namely an amendment regarding the discipline of a commissioned pastor and clarification about temporary members of classis counting toward a quorum (commissioned pastors are one example of temporary members).

The task force report to the 2010 General Synod resulted in additional referrals to the Commission on Church Order that were considered during this past year.

The 2010 General Synod directed the commission "to propose an addition to the *Book of Church Order* that provides for the regional synod to annually review the processes used by its classes for commissioned pastor selection, preparation, commissioning, and supervision" (*MGS 2010*, R-35, p. 146). While these responsibilities for commissioned pastors fall to the classes, the task force believes that there needs to be a method of accountability for the classes. The General Synod correctly indicated that accountability of classes lies with the regional synods. Therefore the commission makes the following recommendation:

R-38
To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, Section 12, for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined):

Sec. 12. **The classis shall submit to an annual review by its regional synod of the processes used by the classis for commissioned pastor selection, preparation, commissioning, support, and supervision. (ADOPTED)**

The 2010 General Synod directed the Commission on Christian Worship to create a liturgy for the commissioning of a commissioned pastor. Its report to this General Synod shows what is proposed by the Commission on Christian Worship. That same General Synod approved a declaration for commissioned pastors; that declaration is now before this General Synod for its declaratory vote. Given the liturgy coming to this General Synod for approval and the declaration approved by the 2010 General Synod, the Commission on Church Order believes that a *Book of Church Order* change is appropriate to instruct their usage. Therefore it makes the following recommendation:

R-39
To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, Section 6, for recommendation to

the classes for approval (additions are underlined, subsequent sections are renumbered):

Sec. 6. **After a classis approves a candidate for commission to an authorized ministry, the classis shall appoint a time and place for a commissioning service at a regular or special classis session. The service shall utilize a liturgy approved by the General Synod. The Declaration for Commissioned Pastors shall be made orally by the candidate in the presence of the classis as part of that order for commissioning. (ADOPTED)**

In its report to the 2010 General Synod, the Commissioned Pastor Task Force addressed the issue of alignment of the *BCO*'s ten competencies for commissioned pastor candidates (*BCO* 1.II.14.3) with the General Synod Council's eight standards that are to be used in determining the competencies (*BCO* 1.II.14.4). Besides this alignment issue there is confusion about the instruction to use the standards as it is currently stated in the *BCO*. The Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team, which worked on this issue, requested that the Commission on Church Order consider suggested language to clarify that instruction and propose a change. The commission accepts that suggestion and proposes:

R-40
To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, Section 4, for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out):

Sec. 4. **In satisfying itself concerning a candidate's ministry competence, ~~T~~the classis shall employ ~~standards~~ criteria established by the General Synod Council ~~in determining a candidate's ministerial competence~~. (ADOPTED)**

As the commission worked on the various commissioned pastor issues within that article of the *BCO* (1.II.14), it noticed that the title of the section is not consistent with the form of similar articles. Therefore the commission proposes:

R-41
To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined):

Article 14. Commissioning and Supervision of Commissioned Pastors **(ADOPTED)**

The commission addressed two additional items regarding commissioned pastors. It reviewed the liturgy for commissioned pastors that is being proposed by the Commission on Christian Worship and found no order issues that needed to be addressed. It also reviewed the potential need to list commissioned pastors in the responsibility sections for classes as an additional classis responsibility; it determined that nothing specific needs to be stated in those sections given the authority specified elsewhere in the *BCO*.

Constitutional Inquiry Questions

A task force was authorized by the 2008 General Synod to "review the constitutional inquiry questions (*BCO* 1.II.7, Section 1) for their contemporary theological and ecclesiological relevance, practical usefulness, and missional focus, for report to the General Synod of 2010" (*MGS 2008*, R-28, p. 125). The task force's report was presented to the 2010 General Synod.

Out of that report the 2010 General Synod took action "to instruct the Commission on Church Order to edit the following proposed changes to Chapter 1, Part II of the *Book of Church Order* with regard to any inconsistencies it finds in the Government of the Reformed Church in America, before presenting it to the General Synod for approval in 2011" (*MGS 2010*, R-28, p. 122). The specific proposed changes to Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 1 followed those words. The commission reviewed the proposed changes and found no inconsistencies. It therefore presents to this General Synod the changes exactly as recommended by the task force.

R-42
To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 1, for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out):

Article 7. Superintendence of the Churches

Sec. 1. **The ~~president of~~ classis~~, at the same meeting at which delegates to the synods are appointed,~~ shall ~~address the following inquiries to~~ annually engage the ministers and elder delegates ~~of each church~~ in a review of the ministry of the separate congregations by addressing the following questions. The answers shall be entered in the minutes of classis for the information of the synods:**

a. Are the doctrines of the gospel preached in your church ~~in their purity~~ in conformity with
- **i. the Word of God?**
- **ii. the Standards of the Reformed Church in America?**

b. Are the points of doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism explained in your church ~~from time to time,~~ as required by the ~~Government of the Reformed Church in America~~ *Book of Church Order*?

c. Has your consistory considered the nature and extent of the ministry of the congregation in accordance with Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 1 of the *Book of Church Order*?

~~j.~~ d. Is your church engaged in significant, regular activities which faithfully witness to the gospel and which ~~challenge~~ encourage others to respond to God's Spirit in ~~a faith~~ commitment to Jesus Christ as ~~personal Savior and~~ Lord and Savior?

~~i.~~ e. Does your church contribute annually and significantly in its prayers, gifts, and service to the mission of the Reformed Church in America?

~~Is your church fulfilling its stewardship obligation by contributing annually and significantly to the mission programs of~~

~~i. the denomination?~~
~~ii. the regional synod?~~
~~iii. the classis?~~

f. Does the consistory provide for worship, including the celebration of the sacraments, in accordance with the requirements of the *Book of Church Order* (Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 11)?

g. Does the consistory regularly review the activities of the church in order that the congregation and those whom it serves may become more faithful in their walk as disciples of the Lord Jesus?

~~e.~~ h. Is the education of the young people in the essential truths of the Word of God ~~carried on by catechising, or is it otherwise~~ faithfully attended to in your congregation?

~~d.~~ i. Has the consistory prayerfully considered persons within the congregation, ~~especially the~~ particularly young people, in order to identify with them their spiritual gifts, especially the gift for ministry of Word and sacrament; to encourage the development of these gifts; and to pray for those individuals on a regular basis?

~~f.~~ j. Does the board of elders fulfill its responsibilities of supervision and discipline as set forth ~~the requirements contained~~ in the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 5~~, Sections 3 and 4~~?

~~c.~~ k. Does the board of deacons fulfill its responsibilities in mercy, service, and outreach as set forth in the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 6?

~~Is care and visitation faithfully performed in your congregation by~~

~~i. elders?~~
~~ii. deacons?~~
~~iii. minister/s?~~

~~h.~~ l. Does the consistory regularly engage its minister/s in a mutual reflection on the ministerial needs and challenges of the congregation?

~~Does the consistory regularly review the performance of~~

~~i. the consistory?~~
~~ii. the board of elders?~~
~~iii. the board of deacons?~~
~~iv. the installed minister/s?~~

~~g.~~ m. Do the salary, housing, arrangements for professional development, and all other benefits received by the minister/s meet the terms of the original call or contract, subsequent revisions thereof, and the minimum standards of the classis? (ADOPTED)

Ministerial Candidates Applying Directly to Classes

The following instruction to the Commission on Church Order from the 2010 General Synod came out of a recommendation from the general secretary's report:

> To instruct the Commission on Church Order, in consultation with the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency, to consider a provision in the *Book of Church Order*, in the article "Supervision of Students of Theology" (Chapter 1, Part II, Article 8), that under certain circumstances a candidate may apply directly to a classis to be enrolled as a candidate for the ministry, for report to the 2011 General Synod (*MGS 2010*, R-65, p. 184).

The commission spent significant time considering this instruction that included time with Cornelius Kors of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency as a resource person. Out of this discussion came concerns and questions about the theology of a call, of membership, and of assemblies. Given the theological issues tied to this proposal the commission asked for a consultation and advice from the Commission on Theology before making any decisions.

Communication requesting that input was made to the Commission on Theology. However, due to the timing of the meetings of the two commissions, a response was not received that will allow the Commission on Church Order to complete its report to the 2011 General Synod. This issue will remain on the agenda of the commission anticipating that the two commissions will be able have the consultation that will allow for a report to the 2012 General Synod.

Use of "governing body" in *BCO* Superseding Consistory Section

The Classis of Albany overtured the 2010 General Synod to amend *BCO* 1.II.7.13 to clarify the use of the term "governing body" to make it clear that "only a consistory is a governing body of a local church." The overture was denied with the understanding that the Commission on Church Order would review the use of the words "governing body" in that section.

The substance of *BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 13 is instruction to the classis in the supersession of a consistory. This section had recently been updated with the words in question being a part of that update, saying "...the classis shall...summon the governing body to show cause why the consistory should not be dissolved." The commission chose "governing body" because the nature of the content of this section gives rise to the possibility that there is no functioning consistory, that being one of the reasons that a classis is superseding the consistory. An effort needs to be made to summon someone to the classis even if it is not the *BCO* defined governing body of the church.

The commission concurs that the only valid governing body of a church is the consistory. The definition of a consistory is found in *BCO* 1.I.1.1 where it states "A consistory is the governing body of a local church." Retaining the words "governing body" would therefore include consistories, but additionally would cover any situation where there is no sitting consistory—and thus a potential reason for supersession.

***BCO* Use of the Term "Church" as a Member of a Classis**

The attention of the commission was drawn to one place in the *BCO* where it refers to a church as a member of a classis. Enrolled ministers are members of a classis. Elder delegates who represent churches within its bounds are members of a classis. However,

churches are not "members" of a classis nor are churches part of the definition of a classis. The church-classis relationship is one of authority: "The classis shall exercise a general superintendence over its enrolled ministers and over the interests and concerns of the churches within its bounds, and shall enforce the requirements of the Government of the Reformed Church in America" (*BCO* 1.II.2.1).

Four places in the *BCO* were identified as using this language. The Commission on Church Order proposes the following to correct this usage:

R-43
To adopt the following amendments to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out):

Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2

Sec. 13. **The consistory shall have the care and supervision of the church's property and financial interests. They are the trustees of the church's property, unless the act of incorporation of the church, or the statutes of the state in which the church is incorporated, make other provision. The consistory shall not sell, transfer, lease, mortgage or otherwise alienate or encumber any real property of the church on which there stands a building designed for worship or religious instruction, or as a residence for the minister, unless the approval of the classis with jurisdiction over the ~~of which the~~ church ~~is a member~~ has been secured. Further, the consistory shall not incur a total indebtedness which exceeds two-thirds of the prior year's expenditures for congregational purposes, as reported to the General Synod, without the approval of classis.**

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7

Sec. 16. **Whenever a church is disbanded and the corporation or other legal entity through which its consistory functions is dissolved, all real and personal property shall thereupon become vested in the classis with jurisdiction over ~~of which~~ the church ~~is a member~~, upon the assumption by the classis of all that church's outstanding obligations, provided the laws of the state in which the church is located do not prohibit this procedure. If the classis is not legally capable of owning real property, all such real and personal property shall become vested in the next higher assembly legally capable of owning real property, upon the assumption by that assembly of all outstanding obligations of the church. The assumption of obligations shall be limited to the value of such property.**

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10

Sec. 6. **A licensed candidate who seeks ordination in a classis other than the classis with jurisdiction over ~~that in which~~ the candidate's church ~~is a member~~ shall apply for a certificate of dismission as a licensed candidate to that classis. The certificate shall be granted if the candidate is in good standing.**

Formulary 15

15. Provision for Articles of Incorporation for Congregations

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this [insert description of organizational document], this [corporation/organization] is a member church in the Reformed Church in America; is (and at all times shall be) subject to and governed by the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America; and agrees that the provisions of this [article/chapter/paragraph] shall not be amended or modified in any manner without the prior written consent of the classis with jurisdiction over ~~of which~~ this [corporation/organization] ~~is a member~~. (ADOPTED)

Exam-to-Ordination Waiting Period

Classes examine for ordination candidates for minister of Word and sacrament. The *BCO* calls for a waiting period of fifteen days from the last examination before that candidate can be ordained. The commission received a request from a classis to examine this waiting period requirement and consider a change in it. That classis was running into issues with its candidates for minister of Word and sacrament in this length of time; it asked that consideration be made to shorten it.

The commission found no historical rationale for a fifteen-day waiting period for a candidate's ordination except to note that the classis should not set the ordination on the same day as the exam because it would give the impression that it was a forgone conclusion that the exam would be sustained. It is noted that a ten-day notice is required to call a special session of classis. Additionally, with the improvement in the speed of communications, a ten-day notice would seem sufficient.

R-44
To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 5, for recommendation to the classes for approval (addition is underlined, deletion is stricken out):

***Sec. 5*. The classis shall appoint a time for the ordination service of the candidate. An interval of at least ~~fifteen~~ ten days following the candidate's examination is required before the service of ordination. That service shall be conducted by the classis in regular or special session with proper solemnity. A sermon suitable to the occasion shall be preached, and the promises, directions, explanations of duty, and prayer with the laying on of hands shall be according to the office for ordination in the Liturgy. A certificate of ordination (Formulary #4), signed by the president and the stated clerk of the classis, shall be given and the minister so ordained shall be enrolled as a member of the classis. (ADOPTED)**

Historical Note Incorporating the Belhar Confession

Within the Preamble of the *Book of Church Order* there is a section titled "A Historical Note." That section contains what the title indicates: a very brief historical sketch of the Reformed Church in America. Mentioned in that section are our Doctrinal Standards. With the recent adoption of the Belhar Confession as the fourth Doctrinal Standard, the section titled "A Historical Note" needs to be updated.

This section is not constitutional. That means that changes here do not require ratification by the classes. However, action of the General Synod is needed to make the necessary change.

R-45
To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order,* "A Historical Note," pages 5 and 6, specifically the final two paragraphs of that section, as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out):

The three doctrinal statements named above, together with the Belhar Confession (see below), are ~~have continued to this day as~~ the Standards of the Reformed Church in America. The Netherlands liturgy was adopted by the American church and has retained much of its original character. The rules of church government of 1619 were translated into English in 1792. "Explanatory Articles," adapting the rules to American conditions, were added. In 1833 the rules and explanatory articles were formed into a single document organized into appropriate articles. Several general revisions of this "Constitution" (actually only part of the Constitution) have been made since then, notably in 1874, 1910-1916, 1958-1959, and 1965-1968. The amendment of the church's document of government is an almost annual process.

On the American continent, what began as the Reformed Dutch Church in the 1620s became the "Reformed Church in America" in 1867. While most Scottish Reformed Churches are known as "Presbyterian," and many German Reformed congregations became the "Reformed Church in the United States" (later to become part of the United Church of Christ), the change of name reflected that congregations with Dutch, French, Hungarian, Swiss, Italian, and German Reformed roots had become part of the RCA. The RCA incorporates churches in Canada as well as the USA. In 2010 the Belhar Confession was adopted as a Standard. The Belhar Confession originated in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church of South Africa (later to become part of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa).
(ADOPTED)

Time Limits for Charges and Exceptions Allowed

When a charge is filed with a classis against a person, it is referred to a committee appointed by the judicatory (classis) to determine whether there is sufficient merit to the charge to warrant further consideration. There are specific instructions within the *BCO* that instruct the committee, among other things, about timeliness issues to ensure that if charges are being brought, they are coming in a timely manner. The instructions also give some latitude for exceptions to be made.

Specifically the instructions state that a charge must be brought within two years of an alleged offense, and that if the charge has not been brought within that time period that the charge "shall" be dismissed. However, in spite of the use of the term "shall," which implies an action that must be taken without exception, the following sentence provides that an exception to this strict two-year time requirement can be made if the committee determines that circumstances prevented that accusation from being brought forward earlier. A foot-

note to this section instructs that the accuser bringing the charge bears the burden of showing what circumstances resulted in the charge not being brought within the two-year time period.

The commission was informed of circumstances in a specific case where the wording in this instruction was not helpful. The commission noted that the *BCO* exception to the time limit is allowed without any specific evidence needed for that allowance. It was also noted that the two-year time frame was too small a window for certain charges to be brought under certain circumstances; the commission believes a longer time period is appropriate.

The commission further believes that if reasons must be stated and communicated to support an exception, that such a requirement will cause careful consideration before giving the exception, and also allows the judicatory to consider those reasons as it considers the charge when it moves forward.

The commission brings the following recommendation that reflects these improvements:

R-46
To adopt the amendment revision to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 2, Part I, Article 4, for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out):

***Sec. 4*. If filed by an individual, the charge shall be referred to a committee appointed by the judicatory to determine whether there is sufficient merit to the charge to warrant further consideration. If a charge is filed by the committee designated by the judicatory, that same committee shall continue its proceedings to determine whether there is sufficient merit to the charge to warrant further consideration. In either case, in making this determination, the committee:**

a. May interview the accuser, the accused, or any witnesses.

b. Shall consider the number and credibility of witnesses and the length of time between the occurrence of the alleged offense and the date when allegations were made.

c. If the alleged offense occurred more than ~~two~~ five years prior to the date of the charge, the charge shall be dismissed by the committee ~~except when~~ unless the committee concludes that circumstances prevented the accusation from being brought earlier.~~13~~ In considering whether such circumstances exist, the burden is on the accuser to provide the committee with information sufficient to support why the charge was not brought earlier. If the decision of the committee is that such circumstances exist, the committee shall state the reasons why it believes such circumstances exist in its report to the judicatory. If the committee fails to provide the reasons for such a decision in its report to the judicatory, the judicatory shall dismiss the charge.

~~c.~~d. Shall determine whether efforts to resolve the matter short of trial would be appropriate. Such efforts may include mediation, admission by the accused that the charge is true and acceptance of appropriate sanctions, or any other disposition to which the committee and the accused may agree. Any demission, suspension, deposition, or excommunication must be approved by the appropriate judicatory.~~1413~~ * (ADOPTED)

* The proposed changes to *Book of Church Order* Chapter 2, Part I, Article 4 would result in the deletion of footnote 13 and the renumbering of the remaining footnotes.

Editorial Deletion of "Rev. ___" in Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship Formulary

The *BCO* contains a number of formularies that are used as needed. One of those, Formulary #8, is a formulary that is used when a classis ends the pastoral relationship between a called minister and a church. The instructions for use of this formulary are found in *BCO*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 12 as follows:

> *Sec. 8*. When the termination of an installed minister's relationship to a church is in view, a minister of the classis having jurisdiction shall be invited by the church to be present at a meeting of the consistory for the purpose of superintending the application for such action. The supervising minister shall attest such application and shall deliver it to the classis with a written report (Formulary #8). The latter shall serve as the basis upon which the action of the classis shall be made. If either the minister or the consistory shall not join in the application, that fact shall be plainly stated in the report. In such case no termination of the relationship shall be made by the classis until a hearing of both minister and consistory has been conducted in open classis. The president of the classis shall give ten days' notice of such hearing to both parties. The warrant for the notice and for the call of classis shall be the report of the supervising minister. A vote for the termination of the minister's relationship to a church shall be by two-thirds of the members of the classis present.

Clearly this written report (the formulary) is being delivered to the classis. The greeting line of Formulary #8 reads as follows:

> To the Rev. _____, Classis of _____:

The commission has investigated this greeting line. There is no indication that there is any specific person to whom this formulary should be delivered. The *BCO* use of "Rev." only appears in the formularies and then is used to refer to specific ministers of Word and sacrament. It is the commission's conclusion that the appearance of this language evolved from the older language that would refer to "The Reverend Classis of _____." If that is correct, that is language no longer used within the *BCO*. Additionally, there is no evidence when or why it was changed to the abbreviation and the fill-in blank was added. The commission believes that an editorial change is in order.

R-47
To editorially change the greeting line of Formulary #8 as follows (deletions are stricken out):

8. Application for the Dissolution of a Pastoral Relationship

To the ~~Rev.~~ _____, Classis of _____: (ADOPTED)

Other Work of the Commission

During the course of the meetings of the Commission on Church Order a number of additional items were considered and discussed. In some cases advice on interpretation of the *Book of Church Order* was given as is the responsibility of the commission. Some of the more significant items are listed here.

The commission has for the last several years reported on work and communication involving the Church Multiplication Team (CMT) and the document commonly referred to as the CMT Conviction. While in agreement with the spirit of the document, the commission has taken issue with the wording of that document. The document describes the relationship between parent churches and church plants. The commission has made a commitment to monitor the usage of the CMT Conviction document. It will continue to do so.

The commission spent significant time with representatives of the Board of Benefits Services as those representing the board sought advisory interpretations of their policies as they related to the RCA Constitution.

The commission reviewed a flowchart for use by classes on how to administer churches after a consistory is superseded.

The commission looked at possible *BCO* language to give some flexibility for the Commission on Nominations to stagger terms of office as might be needed. That language will be reviewed by the Commission on Nominations for both usefulness and potential issues before the Commission on Church Order moves forward with it.

The moderator for the Commission on Church Order for 2011-2012 will be Joshua Bode.

Report of the Commission on History

This coming September will mark the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 9-11. The date will be 9-11-11, as if echoing and amplifying this painful remembrance. The 2000s began with such promise—the Cold War fading from memory, dot-com prosperity for all, and worldwide celebration of a new millennium. How quickly confidence and euphoria evaporated. This new decade has witnessed two lengthy wars, terrorism expanding worldwide, and most recently the Great Recession. Yet the election of the first African-American president of the United States reveals progress and growth. Perhaps at some future date our descendants will look back at the early 2000s and ask, “How did Christians long ago respond to an era of great promise, anxiety, and suffering?” These future disciples will find hope and inspiration, if someone takes the time to know and write our stories, our history.

Likewise, believers from places and times past may offer today’s church fresh direction and enduring hope. But where can we learn of the courage, devotion, and wisdom of our faithful forebears? There is very good news. For over forty years the Commission on History (COH) has been attending to the heritage of the RCA. The commission was established in 1966, and is responsible for advising the General Synod on the collection and

preservation of official denominational records. Through the oversight of the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America, review of historical resources, and the creation of a "virtual history center" (in cooperation with the Office of Historical Services), the commission promotes research and reflection on the history of the RCA, its classes, and its congregations in order to help the denomination learn from its past and grow into the future God has in mind.

Those seeking to discover and remember RCA history may turn not only to the many fine Historical Series volumes in print (see the RCA website), but also to the four new volumes, which are for sale online and at this General Synod meeting: *Supporting Asian Christianity's Transition from Mission to Church: A History of the Foundation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia* (Samuel C. Pearson, Ed.), *The American Diary of Jacob Van Hinte,* (Peter Ester, Nella Kennedy, Earl William Kennedy, Eds.), *A New Way of Belonging: Covenant Theology, China, and the Christian Reformed Church, 1921-1951* (Kurt Selles*),* and *Envisioning Hope College: Letters Written by Albertus C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps, Jr., 1857 to 1875* (Elton J. Bruins and Karen G. Schakel, Eds.). These welcome additions to the series not only shed light on the RCA itself, but also on the history of important ecumenical organizations in which RCA personnel have played a crucial leadership role. Further ecumenical relations with our sister denomination, the Christian Reformed Church, have resulted in the inclusion of the above volume on the CRC's mission in China.

Moreover, as an invaluable tool for communicating an essential knowledge of the RCA's heritage both to new members and to those who would wish renewed pride in our past, take time to explore *By Grace Alone: Stories of the Reformed Church in America*, by Donald J. Bruggink and Kim Nathan Baker. Peruse all the titles of the RCA Historical Series online at www.rca.org/series or by typing "Historical Series" in the search box at www.rca.org. The commission counts with special joy this ongoing work of the Historical Series under the able leadership of founding general editor Donald Bruggink. The series has now reached an astounding seventy-one volumes.

The Commission on History met on October 13-15, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois (in conjunction with the other commissions and the General Synod Council), and consulted online in early 2011. Going forward, the commission will continue to fulfill its calling in part by reviewing manuscripts for future publication in the Historical Series and encouraging persons who are contemplating RCA research projects and new volumes to contact the commission for guidance and possible collaboration.

For resources, including photographs and bulletin inserts, see the Resources link on the Archives page at www.rca.org/archives.

Report of the Commission on Judicial Business

The RCA's Commission on Judicial Business has eight members—one from each regional synod. The membership must consist of at least three ministers and three laypersons. Legal training and experience is required for those members who are laypersons.

The responsibilities of the commission are to carry out the responsibilities assigned to it in the RCA's Disciplinary and Judicial Procedures (*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 2).

Since the 2010 General Synod the Commission on Judicial Business has received no

charge, notice of intent to complain, or notice of intent to appeal. Accordingly, the commission has conducted no hearings and only one meeting. The meeting was conducted by conference call for the sole purposes of 1) approving this report, 2) electing a moderator and secretary for the annual period from July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012, and 3) selecting a corresponding delegate to the 2011 General Synod.

An appeal was received by the Office of the General Secretary less than thirty days prior to the 2011 General Synod and forwarded to the Commission on Judicial Business. In accordance with *BCO* Chapter 2, Part III, Article 2, Section 4, the Commission on Judicial Business will make a report and recommendation regarding the appeal to the 2012 General Synod.

The General Synod receives this report for information only.

Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnicity

Commission members:
Mark S. Kellar, moderator, Santos Gonzalez, So Ae Heintzelman, Kevin McMahan, recorder, Kenneth B. Petty Jr., Keith Ross, Lois (Holly) Schut, Lewis T. Tait Jr., Earl James, staff

Meetings:
The commission met October 14-16, 2010, at the InterContinental Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, and February 25-26, 2011, at the LaGuardia Marriott Hotel in Flushing, New York.

Task Force to Plan and Implement R-97

In June of 2007 the General Synod adopted R-97 (*MGS 2007*, p. 336), which instructed the General Synod Council (GSC) to develop and hold a youth conference on anti-racism and other forms of social justice. However, no monies were allocated to carry out this recommendation.

In light of recent racial incidents on college campuses including Hope College our call to engage our young people in an intentional dialogue around anti-racism and social justice is all the more affirmed.

On January 24-26, 2008, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on the Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas, the denomination held a three-day event entitled "One Thing." This event was to offer an opportunity for a wonderfully diverse group from across the RCA to:

- Strengthen existing relationships
- Build new relationships
- Deepen our commitment to seek first the kingdom of God

One of the glaring omissions of this event was the voices of our youth. It is in this same spirit and scale that we offer this recommendation:

> **R-48**
> **To instruct the General Synod Council to develop a task force to plan, develop, and provide funding for a youth conference as instructed in R-97, which was adopted by the General Synod of**

June 2007, and to be held on the same scale as the "One Thing" event. (ADOPTED)

Developing Leaders of Color in Financial Resource Development

Goal number seven of the 2010 General Synod plan to transition the RCA to become more multiracial and freer from racism states: "Too often, pastors of color who join the RCA receive inadequate teaching and coaching to help them thrive in the RCA. Too often, congregations of color appear not to be well aware of RCA polity, especially in terms of their rights, privileges, benefits, and responsibilities provided for in the *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*). Too often, leaders of color report they feel like outsiders in their classes and other leadership circles" (*MGS 2010*, p. 261).

The Multiracial Strategy Coalition (MSC) has made nine recommendations for critical knowledge and skills necessary to developing leaders of color (see the Our Call report's Multiracial Future Freed from Racism section on pages 305-331). Two of these recommendations frame a basis for the commission's recommendation below: 1) MSC recommendation number one, which states, "Know the dynamics of the RCA's structure and polity well, and know how to use them," and 2) MSC recommendation number eight, which states, "Develop strong personal skills in the areas of strategic thinking, scenario planning, systems thinking, and networking for resources."

The Commission on Race and Ethnicity (CORE) focused its attention on inequities in awareness of and access to financial resources such as those available for implementation of Our Call. Commission member Santos Gonzales reports, "Over a number of years in ministry as a pastor in the RCA, our Hispanic congregations have not received information about how to access available financial resources. If that information could be made available in Spanish then we could improve the RCA ministry to our Hispanic community."

CORE believes it is critical to help RCA leaders of color to learn tools for accessing financial resources for ministry in their communities from both inside and outside RCA structures. The commission recommends that the GSC be charged to present regional instructional workshops to leaders of color to help them connect community needs to available resources. We believe these workshops should both empower these leaders to access RCA resources and to solicit grants from outside sources. They should offer tools in the first language of the leaders being trained, and enable these leaders to train others within their communities in the use of these tools.

R-49 was presented to the house. Delegates were informed that adoption of R-49 would result in an increase of $28,000 to the General Synod Council's budget (which equals an increase in assessments of $.18 per confessing member).

R-49
To direct the General Synod Council to incorporate into goal seven of the RCA's ongoing transition plan to become more multiracial and freed from racism—developing leaders of color—a training capacity for leaders of racial/ethnic congregations to better access financial resources for community ministry, resources both internal to the RCA and from grant development with external foundations. (ADOPTED)

Russell L. Gasero, archivist for the Reformed Church in America, offered some background when he noted in February 2011 email exchanges with the commission:

> [U]rban ministry began primarily as an eastern effort with a strong focus in the Synod of New York. Initially, it was inner-city work and tended to the larger eastern cities and Chicago. Urban ministry became the accepted term in the 80s, but it never gathered the support of other ministries since we tended to be a rural/suburban denomination. As the twentieth century ended, the concept of urban ministry expanded to include mid-western regions, e.g. Kalamazoo and Muskegon, and it was noticed more.

In the 2000-2002 grant cycle urban ministries awarded $180,000 dollars to six congregations. There were $30,000 grants to six congregations, which included four racial-ethnic congregations. Not one of the six grants was awarded to an African American congregation.

The Commission on Race and Ethnicity is asking classes and all denominational bodies to analyze and become conscious of the actual distribution of resources to insure that all ethnic congregations have equal access to them.

To this end the commission offered recommendation R-50.

R-50 was presented to the house. Delegates were informed that adoption of R-50 falls within the current budget and therefore adoption of the recommendation would have no financial effect on the General Synod Council's budget.

R-50
To instruct the General Synod Council (GSC) to develop tools for discerning race-based disparities in the distribution of financial resources, embedding principles of the Belhar Confession of unity, reconciliation, and justice into the factors of these tools; and further,

to direct the GSC, and urge assemblies, to use these tools. (ADOPTED)

Report of the Commission on Theology

The Commission on Theology (COT) met October 15-16, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois, in conjunction with the annual joint meeting of all General Synod commissions and the General Synod Council (GSC), and on February 4-5, 2011, in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The commission has had a fruitful year and is glad to include in this report: 1) a study paper on deacons in higher assemblies (*MGS 2007*, R-18, p. 103); 2) a brief paper in response to R-43 recommending the development of a policy and process for the reception of new confessional standards and new translations of the RCA's existing doctrinal standards (*MGS 2010*, R-43, p. 160); 3) new translations of our doctrinal standards prepared by a joint RCA/CRC task force; and, 4) a progress report on a referral from the 2010 General Synod requesting that the commission "study and review the appropriateness of classes ordaining elders" (*MGS 2010*, R-37, p. 147).

The commission continues to be committed to the conversation on Ephesians 4:11 and "apostolic ministry" that began two years ago with members of the Church Multiplication

Team, but was unable to devote time to it this year. We plan to resume this discussion at our fall 2011 meeting.

The commission wishes to thank two persons from beyond our membership who have aided our work on "The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church." Paul Fries wrote the section of this paper that provides a missional frame within which to consider the participation of deacons in all the RCA's assemblies, and Allan Janssen contributed to the commission's work on a theology of assemblies in the RCA.

THE OFFICE OF DEACON AND THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE CHURCH

Introduction

The 2007 General Synod of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) defeated a recommendation made by the Missional Structures Task Force seeking to grant full membership in all the assemblies of the church to the office of deacon.[1] The synod did, however, adopt a motion referring the matter to the Commission on Theology (COT) instructing the commission to produce a study determining "whether there is a theological basis, within a Reformed and missional ecclesiology, for the inclusion of deacons as full members of classes, regional synods, and the General Synod."[2] This paper is offered in response to that motion. It will argue that there are compelling reasons to move toward full inclusion of the office of deacon in all the assemblies of the church.

History Concerning Deacons in the Broader Assemblies of the RCA[3]

Determining the role and authority of the office of deacon in church assemblies has a long and complex history in the Dutch Reformed tradition. Deacons, John Calvin taught, are of two kinds: those who care for the poor and those who administer the church's financial accounts established on behalf of the needy.[4] While the deaconate worked powerfully in Geneva on behalf of the poor and needy, deacons were not members of the consistory, although Calvin clearly teaches that this office is apostolic and that the deacon holds an office in the church.[5] At the same time, Article 30 of the Belgic Confession, a document approved by Calvin, specifies that deacons are part of the council of the church and participate in its governance, as does *The French Confession*, written by Calvin himself.[6]

Ambiguity concerning the office may also be observed in the early decades of the history of the continental Dutch Reformed Church.[7] A comprehensive study of the office of deacon presented to the 1967 Christian Reformed Church Synod indicates as much when it notes that at the Conference of Wesel (1568) the council of the church included only ministers and elders, while three years later, at the Synod of Emden (1571), deacons were identified as members of the consistory.[8] The church order developed at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) made diaconal membership on the consistory contingent; the consistory is composed of ministers and elders, but may include deacons if an insufficient number of elders are available.[9] While the first published constitution (1793) of what is now the RCA retained this stipulation, in its Explanatory Articles provision is made for the full inclusion of the deacon in the consistory, assuming that most consistories would in fact require diaconal membership.[10] Indeed, in the American context, owing to the fact that colonial congregations were often small, deacons were needed for the good functioning of consistories.[11] On the basis of the RCA's polity deacons have served on consistories in the American context for more than two hundred years; however, it appears that we have been struggling for nearly one hundred years to arrive at a theological consensus concerning the

participation of deacons in the overall governance, ministry, and mission of the church through all its assemblies.

Beginning in 1923, General Synod has considered multiple overtures calling for the inclusion of deacons in the broader assemblies of the RCA, theological study papers that explore the office of deacon in relation to the other offices and assemblies, initiatives, and programs designed to recover and develop a solid theological understanding of the office of deacons, as well as practical proposals for how the inclusion of deacons in assemblies beyond the consistory might be implemented. And yet, the matter remains unresolved. A brief review of this nearly 100-year history provides a frame within which to place the argument made here that a missional understanding of the offices and assemblies of the church requires that deacons be included in all the assemblies of the church.

In 1923, an RCA classis asked that the General Synod "appoint a committee with reference to having deacons as well as elders represented in the classes, the particular synods, and General Synod" to report to the 1924 General Synod.[12] Such report was not made, but nearly forty years later, the matter was revived in a 1960 report to the General Synod from the Special Committee to Study the Nature of Offices and Ministries and Their Respective Functions.[13] Among other things, the report argues that by definition, "presbyterian government is government by elders…chosen by the people…and ordained to administer the Church of Jesus Christ from the local congregation to the denominational synod."[14] This 1960 report distinguishes the offices of elder and deacon, stating that the function of the elder is to rule the church while the deacon is to serve the church in local ministry.[15] The report laments that at the level of consistory, the functions of these distinct offices have been combined "into virtually one" with the result that "neither one is able to do its best work."[16] The committee recommends that, in order to recover the proper functioning of both offices, the RCA "return to the older Reformed understanding of the consistory as composed of the minister(s) and elders of the congregation" with responsibility for governing the "welfare and work" of the church, and that "…an order of deacons, subordinate to and responsible to the consistory" be created to "assist the consistory in caring for the temporal needs of the congregation and implementing the congregation's service in the community and in the world."[17] This recommendation was not adopted by the RCA, and concern for the office of deacon and the RCA's assemblies continued to be expressed.

In 1971, two identical overtures came to the General Synod asking that deacons be delegates to classis with "full voting powers equal to elders and ministers," and, given that such an action would also make them eligible to be "regular voting" delegates to the particular and General Synods, that "a system for such representation" be created.[18] The reasons given in support of the overture are grounded in the RCA's Government and Liturgy. First, deacons, as members of the consistory "share in the governmental powers of the consistory in the supervision of the local church (Government, Part I, Article 1, Section 2)."[19] As members of the consistory, deacons and elders have distinct responsibilities, but at the same time share responsibility "for the maintenance of the ministry of the church, and a great many of the ongoing functions of the church… (Government, Part I, Article 2, Sections 1-13)."[20] On this basis, the framers of the overture conclude, "Since deacons are expected to take full responsibility in such broad matters as members of the consistory, they ought also to have a full part in the government of the church at the other levels of the judicatories."[21] Further support of the overture is made through appeal to the ordination liturgy of the RCA, which states concerning the three offices of minister, elder, and deacon: "Since there is a unity of these offices in Christ himself, so also in the church the one office is not to be separated from the others" in any of the RCA's assemblies, from consistory to the General Synod.[22] Concerning the specific office of deacon, the Liturgy states that "As ministers of God's love and mercy in Jesus Christ, their task is to continue our

Lord's manifold deeds of mercy" and to gather and distribute gifts from "the Lord's treasury" to those in need.[23] Given the specific responsibilities of the deacon, the reasons given in support of the overture end by arguing: "Since the missions, outreach, and service programs of the classis, particular synod, and General Synod certainly are concerned with the work of 'our Lord's manifold deeds of mercy,' the deacons…ought to be involved in" these assemblies.[24] The overture was adopted and referred to the Theological Commission for study.

In its report to the 1972 General Synod, the Theological Commission affirms three key points. First, that the reasons given in support of the original overtures point to "sound concerns for the responsible functioning of the church…" Second, that "…neither the New Testament nor the doctrinal standards, nor the history of Reformed Church order contains theological grounds on which to oppose the concept of deacon delegates to higher judicatories." Third, that since the Scripture and doctrinal standards do not oppose the concept, "the implementation or non-implementation of the concept depends upon how the church chooses to order itself." The commission then recommends that the matter be referred to the Committee on Church Government.[25] In combination, the 1971 overture and the Theological Commission's report concur that there are sound theological reasons in the RCA's Government and Liturgy, which are not opposed by Scripture or the standards, for considering the inclusion of deacons in broader assemblies. The question of whether this change in government should be made depends on the RCA's discernment of whether this would contribute to the "responsible functioning of the church."[26]

Again, the 1973 General Synod received an overture requesting that "deacons be allowed full participation as voting delegates to classes and higher judicatories of the church," citing the "favorable report" of the Theological Commission to the 1972 General Synod.[27] In response, the Review Committee on Overtures recommended that no action be taken for these reasons:

> We feel the adoption of this overture would blur the distinction between the offices of elder and deacon, a distinction the constituency recognizes in electing men to office. Moreover, it would either create practical problems in terms of size, cost, location, etc., for a judicatory double its present size, *or*, it would necessitate a lower percentage of elders attending these judicatories, thus doing injustice to the Presbyterian form of church government.[28]

Practical concerns along with a desire not to confuse the "ruling" function of elders and the "serving" function of deacons are the central reasons given for denying the overture. The review committee did not address the 1972 Report of the Theological Commission. That report had confirmed that although ministers, elders, and deacons have distinctive functions, as members of consistory all three offices *together* share in Christ's own ministry and governance of the church. On this basis, the commission had concluded that the RCA could choose to include deacons as full participants in all assemblies.

An overture requesting that deacons be voting members of classis came to the 1976 General Synod, but again, no action was taken because the Theological Commission was already considering the matter.[29] Two overtures were made to the General Synod in 1977 requesting an amendment to the *BCO* that would make it possible for deacons to be official and voting delegates to classis, particular synod, and General Synod.[30] The first two reasons given in support of the overtures argue that Scripture shows that "true leadership within the Church of Jesus Christ consists of 'serving,'" and that Jesus used the term "*diakonon* in Luke 22:24-27 as a description of leaders."[31] The implication is that the distinction between the "serving" function of deacons and the "ruling" function of ministers

and elders should give way to an understanding of all office bearers as *servant* leaders who must function together, in all assemblies, to lead Christ's church. The matter was again referred to the Theological Commission for study and report.

The importance of the deacon's office was highlighted in the 1980 Theological Commission study paper, "The Nature of Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry."[32] Building on the RCA's understanding of the interrelationship of all the offices, the paper argues:

> …the deacon stands alongside the minister and elder, and represents the compassion and liberation of 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 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 Savior.[33]

The paper establishes that the purpose of all of the offices, each of which has its particular responsibilities, is together to equip the whole church to share in the ministry of Christ. While providing a strong theology of the office of deacon in its own right, and establishing the one purpose of the offices together, the paper recommends that the "ruling function of the elder and the serving function of the deacon" not be confused.[34] In support of this intention, the 1980 General Synod adopted this recommendation: "To affirm the present policy of deacons holding membership in consistory but not in the other assemblies of the church."[35]

But again in 1983, General Synod received an overture to include deacons in the broader assemblies. The reasons given cite the RCA's Liturgy for Ordination which states concerning the offices of minister, elder, and deacon: "…since there is a unity of these offices in Christ himself, so also in the church; the one office is not to be separated from the others. The elder does not serve without the minister of the Word and neither without the deacon."[36] The overture argued that by disallowing deacons to participate in assemblies beyond the consistory, "we have in effect, divided the offices and have relegated the ministry of mercy and material oversight to second place in the church."[37] Deacons may carry out their functions primarily at a local level, but their office is critical to the theology and practice of the whole church.

The 1989 General Synod received a report from a special Committee on Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry which includes a section titled, "The Office of Deacon: A Ministry of Mercy."[38] Having reviewed the diaconate in the New Testament, post-apostolic, and Reformation periods, the report stresses the need to "revitalize the diaconate."[39] Highlighting the role of deacons as "Christ's ministers of compassion, justice, healing, and liberation," called to serve locally, nationally, and globally in ministries of mercy, the paper drives toward the conclusion that "deacons should be included at every level [of the church] where mission and outreach is addressed."[40]

> …this committee sees no practical reason to restrict their [deacons'] representation. It has been argued that deacons are chosen for their expertise in finance, mission, and administration. These are major skills needed by classes and synods as well as consistories, so why keep people with these gifts absent? It may be argued that to be "presbyterian," we must be ruled by elders only; however, the RCA has long accepted deacons on consistories.[41]

While maintaining the distinctive role of deacons in the life of the church and recommending that deacons meet together as separate boards at the local church level, the committee's report recommends a series of changes to the *BCO* to provide for the participation of deacons in all assemblies of the RCA, since each and all address the church's mission and ministry, and, since the offices together represent the full ministry of Christ. In recommending changes to the *BCO* the committee preserves the distinction between the offices by specifically limiting the deacon's participation to the legislative and not the judicial functions of the various RCA assemblies. A proposed summary statement in the Preamble of the *BCO* reads: "Ministers, elders, and deacons, therefore, supervise the ministry of the church. Each office has its own responsibilities with respect to the message, the membership, and the ministry of the congregation."[42] The 1989 General Synod adopted a whole series of changes to the *BCO* that opened the way for deacons to be regular delegates to all assemblies of the RCA; however, the classes failed to ratify these proposed changes.

The matter was placed back on the 1990 General Synod agenda by its president, Sylvio Scorza, who asked synod "to approve the principle of diaconal representation for RCA classes, particular synods, and the General Synod."[43] The synod again referred the matter back to the COT asking it to review the Report of the Special Committee on Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry, and if appropriate to refer it to the Commission on Church Order "to create…a workable plan for diaconal representation at each assembly level of the RCA…"[44] The COT concluded that both the 1988 and 1989 General Synods had approved the "principle of diaconal representation at higher assembly levels of the RCA" and recommended that the Commission on Church Order move toward implementation, which it did through proposed changes to the *BCO*.[45] These proposed changes were presented to the 1991 General Synod, but they were not adopted.

Nevertheless, the desire for such change and efforts toward it did not go away,[46] and the amount of denominational energy surrounding the office of deacon in general increased. From 1994 to the present, denominational resources have been dedicated to the creation of diaconal programs, educational resources, and revised liturgies for ordination—all in support of a revitalized understanding of the office of deacon and the practices of diaconal ministries. Diaconal conferences have been formed by several classes and deacons are participating in the work of some classes, although not formally delegated to the assembly. As called for in the 1989 report to General Synod, the office and work of the deacon have been revitalized. During this same period, the RCA adopted the "Faithful Consistories" paper which places each of the offices and all of the offices together within a missional frame of reference.[47] Together all of the offices participate in the three-fold pastoral office of Jesus Christ, in service to the kingdom of God. This theology will be elaborated below.

In addition to the perspective offered in "Faithful Consistories," the General Synod of 2005 recommended for study in the church a paper from the COT titled, "Elder-Pastors and Deacon-Evangelists: The Plurality of Offices and the Marks of the Church."[48] The paper was written in response to a request from the General Synod to consider the creation of a new office for evangelist in the RCA. The paper states that the ordained offices "are centrally concerned with the task of governing the church and keeping it faithful to its mission," and that there is a complementarity among the offices.[49] Ministers, elders, and deacons are responsible for the proclamation of the Word (a central "mark" of the church), and this proclamation takes place in both word and deed.[50] The latter form of proclamation "in deed" is centrally linked to the office of deacon and is an essential means by which the good news of God's kingdom is announced and enacted.[51] For this reason, the paper suggests, Scripture links the office of deacon with the role of evangelist, a correlation that the RCA might also make. The point here is not to argue for deacon-evangelists, but rather to provide specific examples of how the RCA has begun to have a fuller, less restrictive

understanding of the office of deacon in itself, and in relation to the other offices. The theological perspectives expressed in "Faithful Consistories" and "Elder-Pastors and Deacon-Evangelists" are part of the larger frame within which we once again explore the matter of including deacons in the broader assemblies of the RCA.

The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church in a Missional Frame

As shown above, there has been a persistent call, now for almost a century, for a further expansion of the deacon's involvement in the church by bringing the office into the other assemblies of the church, the latest occasioning this study.[52] The re-visioning of the place of the deacon in the ministries of the church, the development of educational and training programs to invigorate the office, and the formation of diaconal conferences over the past decades have heightened the hope that the deacon will be given a larger role in the governance of the church. Like the importunate widow of the gospels, advocates for diaconal inclusion continue their appeal.

It is noteworthy that while this appeal has been refused in the RCA, our sister church in the Netherlands, the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN), *requires* the inclusion of deacons in all the major assemblies of the church. It is also worth noting that deacons in the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (NHK), one of the precursor churches of the PKN and the parent church of the RCA, have participated in all the assemblies of the church since 1951. While the practice of another church does not and should not determine the church order of the RCA, we may nevertheless benefit from the thought and experience of a denomination with a similar history as it considers the inclusion of the office in the assemblies of the church. Indeed, the abridged English version of the *kerkorde* of the PKN provides an apt and useful description of the deacon in a missional church:

> The deacons are especially called to the ministry at the Table of the Lord and to collect and distribute the gifts of charity, the ministry of compassion and justice in the congregation and the world, the training of the congregation to fulfill its diaconal vocation and the administration of diaconal financial affairs.[53]

The RCA *BCO* identifies some of the same diaconal responsibilities and adds others:

> The board of deacons shall serve those in distress and need. The deacons shall minister to the sick, the poor, the hurt, and the helpless, shall aid the victims of the world's abuse, and shall express the social concerns of the church. They shall oversee and carry out their work as those concerned with the redemption of humankind. Their focus is turned toward service and ministry both to the world and in the church.[54]

The PKN understands that such a diaconal charge warrants the full participation of the office in all the assemblies of the church, while the RCA, despite a similar theology of the diaconal office, has not moved toward participation of deacons in all the church's assemblies.

Perhaps this is because the RCA has yet to embrace a fully missional ecclesiology. The recovery of an understanding over the past decades of the pivotal role of the kingdom of God in the biblical promise of salvation has been salutary, and the RCA has been deeply engaged in conversations about what it means to be Reformed and missional. A missional ecclesiology portrays every aspect of the church, from the congregation to the denomination, from the local to the global, in terms of mission.[55] Within the church's mission, the place of the deacon is central.

While the word mission appears infrequently in Scripture, the concept is thoroughly biblical.[56] This becomes evident when the etymology of the term is examined: "mission" comes from the Latin *mittere*, "to send, to launch."[57] If Scripture is sparse in its use of the word mission, it abounds in its language of sending.[58] A missional church is one that has been called and sent, and sent for a purpose. But the sending of the church and its members is derivative and dependent: it derives from the double sending of Christ and the Holy Spirit and it is completely dependent on God's mission realized through the Son and Spirit.

The mission of the church is thus grounded in the trinitarian acts of God for the salvation of the world. The Father sends the Son and the incarnate and ascended Son in concert with the Father bestows the Holy Spirit.[59] In the Christian lectionary, Christmas and Pentecost mark divine interventions in history of cosmic magnitude. The first sending of the New Testament occurs when the Word "became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14),[60] a sending celebrated in the evangelical promise of John 3:16-17.[61] The second sending happens when the ascended Jesus according to the loving will of the Father bestows the Holy Spirit on the company of believers gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-13).[62] The mission of God is accomplished through the mission of Christ and historicized and temporalized in the mission of the Holy Spirit. The tripartite mission of God embraces a single goal: the salvation of a fallen creation in "bondage to decay" and "groaning in labor pains" as Paul eloquently writes (Romans 8:21-22).

The coming of Christ is the coming of the kingdom. Jesus is himself the kingdom (*autobasileia*), as Origen taught, a doctrine the Dutch theologian A.A. van Ruler made a foundation of his trinitarian theology. But the historic life of Jesus is limited by the conditions of human existence, occupying a short period of time and inhabiting a small geographical area; thus the presence of the kingdom in his person is also circumscribed. The second sending, the sending of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' ascension, changes this dramatically. The indwelling Spirit moves across space and through time, from Jerusalem to "all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), ensuring "the good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world" (Matt. 24:14). The kingdom is now present through the action of the Spirit, as the Spirit calls and indwells the church, the body of Christ, in its myriad forms (1 Cor. 12:12-27). Obviously, the kingdom now is not fully present and will not be until the return of Christ in glory. Yet the new creation is a present reality (2 Cor. 5:17) and the church serves as a portal through which the kingdom enters lives of men and women and the life of the world.

The kingdom of God, then, ultimately embraces the whole creation, bringing it into perfect conformity with the loving will of God. Thus its reach before the consummation is also broad and penetrating. As "Faithful Consistories" states:

> The kingdom of God is a new creation, for the old, fallen, creation waits to be "set free from its bondage to decay" and to "obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). The call of individuals to faith and repentance, their regeneration and incorporation into the community of faith, is certainly an essential transaction through which men, women, and children are joined to Christ and his mission, but the mission is larger and broader than personal salvation. In God's kingdom there will be no hunger, no warfare, no disease, no oppression, no injustice, no poverty. In this kingdom God will be reconciled with all humanity, and in Christ's domain all that divides one person from another will be broken down.[63]

The scope of the kingdom is such that it enfolds persons, families, societies, peoples, and cultures; the new creation makes *all things* new, a new heaven and a new earth, human and non-human alike (Rev. 21:1). When in the Lord's Prayer we pray for the coming of the kingdom, we pray for that ultimate state when God will be all in all.[64]

This is not to say that the church and the kingdom are coterminous. The kingdom reaches beyond the church, and within the church there are activities and occurrences that clearly do not carry the dynamic of the kingdom and may even be antithetical to it. But the church is the primary sign of the kingdom, understanding that a sign bears the reality it signifies, although the signified necessarily exceeds the sign. An example of this is the passing of the peace that is a feature of worship in many Reformed churches. This liturgical action signifies the reconciliation and peace promised by Christ and effected by the Spirit, and is at the same time an actual instance of that reconciliation and peace. But the church is more than a sign of the kingdom; it is also an agent of the Holy Spirit called to bring figurations of the kingdom into the world, in this case, of reconciliation and peace. Those moved by the Spirit of Christ to embrace one another in worship are sent into the world by that Spirit to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation. The handshake on Sunday morning ideally flows seamlessly into the rejection of injustice and discrimination on Monday and through the week. The mission of the church is both personal and corporate, individual and systemic. "Calling the sinner to repentance is vital kingdom work, but so is feeding the hungry, liberating the oppressed and reconciling enemies."[65]

The offices of the church play a unique and critical role in this mission according to Reformed theology. The offices, as stated in the Preamble of the *BCO*, represent Christ and their authority is delegated authority. Christ himself sums up the offices of the church; he is their source and content. Representative office as understood in Calvinistic ecclesiology differs sharply from the popular understanding of representation in American society. Representation is not democratic but *Christocratic*. The offices do not represent the members of the congregation, as say in the governmental system of the United States a member of the House of Representatives represents a congressional district. They represent—or better, re-present—Christ to the people so that the people are prepared to carry out the mission of Christ, that is, to present Christ and his kingdom to the world.[66]

The three offices of the church, then, are invested by Christ through the Spirit with ambassadorial authority, each representing the Lord and his mission according to the mandates of the office. No office stands alone; each complements and fortifies the others.[67]Although distinct, each having designated responsibilities, they work in concert, each participating in the purposes of the others: the minister of Word and sacrament offers diaconal sermons calling the people of God to servant ministries; the deacons in effect proclaim the gospel as they prepare members of the congregation for such ministries within and beyond the walls of the church; the elders in fulfilling their charge to empower "…all members to live out their Christian vocation in the world…" nurture a faith turned outward in mission, thus fortifying the mandate of the deacons.[68]

Interestingly, Calvin did not assign the deacon responsibility for the finances of the church, the task most closely associated with the office today. As noted above, he taught that there are two kinds of deacons: those who care for the poor and those who administer the church's financial accounts established on behalf of the needy.[69] Elsewhere he speaks of the deacon's responsibility for the care of the poor and indicates that the distribution of alms, not the treasury of the church, is the area of diaconal concern.[70] The *BCO*, as quoted above, amplifies the description of the duties of the office when it speaks of the board of deacons serving those in distress and need, ministering to the sick, poor, hurt, and helpless, aiding victims of abuse and expressing the social concerns of the church. Further, "they shall oversee and carry out their work as those concerned with the redemption of humankind. Their focus is turned toward service and ministry both to the world and in the church."[71] A broad mandate, indeed, and one brimming with implications for the mission of the church, which is to be a Spirit-empowered sign and agent of the kingdom of God. Poised on the boundary of church and world, dynamically interactive with both, the office of deacon is the quintessentially missional office.[72]

Thus understood, the diaconal office may also be seen as the office with the greatest scope—the office that serves as the eyes and ears of the church, viewing the fallen world with all its needs and hearing the cries of the suffering and oppressed. It alerts the people of God to the wounds that divine love, justice, and mercy seek to address even as it prepares the church to become an instrument of the Spirit in addressing them.

Those who continue to insist that the authority and function of the office is exclusively local authority thus overlook the missional dynamic of the office and fail to realize that there are no biblical or historical grounds for the contention that the diaconate's authority is exclusively local. The assertion that the office is *inherently* local, that it is *constituted* by locality, simply cannot be supported by Scripture. Acts 6:1-6, the passage from which this judgment is drawn, offers no basis for it. In this passage the twelve apostles appoint and lay hands on seven men charged with attending to the hunger of the Hellenist widows in the Christian community. To conclude that because the mandate of these men was exercised locally and therefore the office is by definition local is an unwarranted inference. What this passage establishes, along with those New Testament verses specifically speaking of the deacon's office, is that the deacon is one who serves.

Arguments for the locality of the diaconal office from historical precedent are equally unconvincing. In Calvin's Geneva, so the argument goes, the mandates of the diaconal office were exclusively directed toward service within the community and this practice defines the nature of the office. But the religious, cultural, and political situation in 16th century Northern Europe so differs from that of twenty-first century America that it is impossible to extrapolate from the practice of that day to determine how Calvin and other Reformers would understand the function of the office today. Biblically and theologically, as argued above, the office is constituted by service, but how it would serve in our world cannot be established by historical precedent. And if Genevan historical precedent were to be determinative, modern deacons would find themselves engaged in practices strikingly different from those they currently assume. In an engaging study of the deacon's activities in Calvin's Geneva, Jeannine E. Olsen writes that deacons not only controlled and administered the welfare funds, but also visited on a weekly basis the homes of the poor and the sick, providing sick families medical assistance. They hired medical workers, wet nurses, and a doctor on behalf of the needy, provided foster care for orphans, found employment for the indigent and sometimes offered hospitality for refugees in their own homes.[73] Moreover, the Genevan diaconate, while ministering in the city and being in this sense local, could claim international affiliation.[74]

Finally, if there ever was a time when ministry and mission could be exclusively local, that time has long passed. While some argue that in its essential nature the office of deacon is local, and hence that to broaden its responsibilities would necessarily result in less attention to local concerns, this view does not take into consideration what constitutes locality today. The clichéd phrase "local-global" and its reverse "global-local" express the reality in which we live at the beginning of a new century. Local concerns cannot be addressed in isolation. Global issues impact, sometimes with dizzying speed, the localities in which our churches minister. An oilfield in the Middle East is bombed yesterday and the price of gas rises in our hometown today. Predatory financial schemes in New York a month ago result in next week's foreclosure of our neighbor's home. Rapacious consumption in thousands of cities across the United States drains global resources, inflicting serious wounds on the poor nations of the world. Americans eat too much while in East Africa millions starve. With television, radio, Internet, cell phones, social networks, and the like, what is local can become global in a matter of seconds, and what is global is instantly registered locally. The call of the kingdom simply cannot be addressed by initiatives that are exclusively local. Pain, suffering, injustice, and oppression are systemic and need to be responded to at every level of church life from the consistory to the General Synod.

As the commission invites the RCA to consider carefully the theology and practices commended here, we conclude this section by noting that the adoption of the Belhar Confession as a fourth standard of the RCA adds further weight to the appeal for diaconal membership in all of the assemblies of the church. This confession, which has now been scrutinized and broadly discussed across the denomination, will inevitably influence the life and thought of the church. While the three historical confessional standards were written in and for European Christendom and are more attentive to faith than practice, the Belhar Confession was drafted in and for the church in a secular society and is distinguished by its concern for the modern world. The kingdom in the world is the burden of the compelling Article Five:

> …God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people…God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged…God calls the church to follow him in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry…for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering…the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice…in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.[75]

The prophetic cry of the Belhar Confession is the call of the kingdom, an appeal that we would give ourselves to the work of Christ and the Spirit as God moves through creation making all things new. All Christians are summoned by this call and invited to respond according to the gifts imparted by the Spirit. In such response the deacon is given a special and vital role. Concerning mission, of the three offices this is the first among equals. By granting the deacon voice and vote in all of the assemblies of the church, the COT is certain that the RCA will strengthen the mission of the church and extend the reach of God's kingdom.

Church Order and Governance by the Offices in Assemblies and Judicatories

We have argued that the office of the deacon is the quintessentially missional office, intended to work in parity and complementarity with the other offices through the church's several assemblies. What remains is to explore the RCA's theology of assembly, as well as to clarify the difference between assemblies and judicatories.

The distinction made by some between the "ruling" function of the elder and the "serving" function of the deacon, which was used as basis for excluding deacons from the broader assemblies and governance of the church, no longer obtains. The Preamble of the *BCO* establishes that all the offices share a "spiritual authority" which is defined as the "right to govern the life and activity of the church and to administer its affairs."[76] The Preamble goes on to say,

> The spiritual authority given to office-holders is exercised in the assemblies of the church. The offices meeting together represent the fullness of Christ's ministry. No office functions apart from the other offices.[77]

Of interest here is what the Preamble teaches about the nature of assemblies in the RCA. The assemblies of the church are not simply engaged in the administration of an organization. Consisting of offices, the assemblies gather to discern the will of God for the church and the world. Assemblies are engaged in the *ministry and mission of the church*. Their governance is *spiritual* and *communal*. In Reformed governance, Christ's own rule as

Head of the Church is not accomplished by individual persons but through the gathering, the assembly of those persons who hold office in the church. The Spirit works in and through the assemblies to govern the church.

Church government at every level aids "the church in the development of its own life, in order that it may carry out the mission of its Head—to announce the good news of his Saviorhood and extend his Lordship throughout the world."[78] Government and office are defined by service, and express that service in the following ways: they serve the mission of the church and thus empower the whole church to develop a life conducive to the mission of Christ extending his Lordship (kingdom) throughout the world. Mission drives the government of the church even as ecclesial government mobilizes, organizes, and enables the church in its multifaceted missional ministries. The office of deacon is essential to the whole life of the RCA.

On the basis of a Reformed missional ecclesiology we have established the necessity of including deacons in all the assemblies of the church. We have shown that this missional ecclesiology is reflected in the *BCO* and places the *BCO* at odds with itself in limiting deacons to participation in only one of the RCA's assemblies, the consistory. However, in urging the RCA to welcome deacons with voice and vote into the work of classes, regional synods, and the General Synod, the commission believes it is important to keep faith with the *BCO*'s distinction between the legislative and judicial functions of church government, that is, between the church meeting as an assembly versus its meeting as a judicatory. This distinction is related to the specific responsibilities of the individual offices in RCA order that the commission judges should not be blurred.

Thus the commission believes that on those occasions when classes, regional synods, and General Synod enter judicial session, participation in that work must be limited to elders and ministers. It is fair to ask why we would limit in this way the inclusion of deacons. Having opened the door, why close it so soon? If a deacon is considered, for example, a member of the classis at its meeting, why would that deacon be excluded from a judicial session of the classis?

To answer these questions we must start with the distinction our polity draws between an assembly and a judicatory, a distinction that is entirely focused on the different roles played by each. When a classis, for example, goes into judicial session, and thus is properly called a judicatory and not an assembly, its work is then focused on matters of discipline. The exercise of discipline is what distinguishes a judicatory from an assembly.

The work of a classis as an assembly, then, may include a broad range of salutary endeavors: for example, the establishment of new congregations, the development of mission projects, the formation and ordination of new ministers. However, the work of a classis as a judicatory specifically concerns discipline, and includes those matters that are rightly considered in the *BCO* also to be "disciplinary," namely, complaints and appeals.

This distinction between assembly and judicatory might seem arbitrary. To the contrary, the commission finds that it usefully articulates a fundamental responsibility of the church, that of discipline, a responsibility that is distinct from the other responsibilities the church has been given. Moreover, the responsibility for discipline has been given expressly only to ministers and elders, and not to deacons. Elders are "to maintain loving discipline."[79] A minister of Word and sacrament "exercises Christian love and discipline in conjunction with the elders."[80] There is no parallel statement regarding discipline in the description of the office of deacon, which instead is given "a ministry of mercy, service, and outreach."[81]

In short, the specific function of the judicatory is tied to the offices charged with exercis-

ing that function. The work of discipline proper to a judicatory is given to elders and ministers. Their calling by Christ has prepared them for this work, as it has given them this responsibility. The judicatory's work of discipline is distinct from the work of the assembly. Many actions of an assembly welcome, and even require, the participation of the three offices. Discipline, however, calls on only two of the offices, those for which discipline is specifically named as an integral part of their responsibility. For this reason, a judicatory should have as its members only ministers and elders, and not deacons.

The Delegation of Deacons, Elders, and Ministers to RCA Assemblies

In the history of the RCA's discussion of deacons participating in the broader assemblies, the question of how to balance minister, elder, and deacon delegates has been a sticking point for both theological and practical reasons. This paper provides clear theological warrant for including deacons in the broader assemblies of the RCA—most notably the missional essence of the diaconal office, the uniqueness and complementarity of the offices which requires their working in concert, and the parity of the offices which establishes their equality in governing the church. Some might argue on the basis of the parity or complementarity of the offices that equal numbers of ministers, elders, and deacons must be delegates to the broader assemblies. However, the commission can find no absolute theological basis for establishing a particular pattern of delegation among the offices.

Fully aware that the inclusion of deacons in the broader assemblies of the RCA raises important questions about the balance of power among the offices and practical concerns about time and money, the commission invites the church to accept the missional challenge before us—deacons must be welcomed with voice and vote into all our assemblies so that we might more faithfully participate in the mission of the Triune God. The central concern is to ensure that all the offices participate in governance at all levels of the church. Were the church to accept this challenge, the Commissions on Theology and Church Order would work together toward implementation. At this point, the COT offers one possible way of creating missional assemblies:

1) On a classis level, each congregation would send at least one deacon delegate to classis;
2) On a regional synod level, each classis would send at least one deacon to regional synod;
3) On the General Synod level, each classis would send one deacon to General Synod.

If the goal is to integrate the distinctive diaconal concerns for mission at all levels of the church's assemblies, we think that this approach could do so. This would enable deacons to have an important voice and vote in all the assemblies of the RCA, thus empowering the church to be missional in the fullest sense.

The commission believes that the RCA as a whole has become convinced of the necessity of viewing the church's ministry, from the local congregation to the highest assembly, as a participation in the mission of the Triune God. We offer this entire paper, and this particular proposal concerning the possible delegation of deacons with elders and ministers to all the RCA's assemblies, in order more fully to align the church's practice with its missional convictions.

In recommending this significant change in the RCA's order, the commission urges the church to require and provide the education and formation necessary for persons in all the offices to fulfill their shared and distinct responsibilities. The General Synod, regional synods, classes, and consistories should continue to work together to provide the resources needed to fulfill this mandate.

Next Steps

In view of the long history of debate on the matter of including deacons in all the assemblies of the church, the COT believes that the wisest way for the church to proceed is to engage in conversation on the matter before us. The COT is eager to hear from the church and is requesting that the RCA's various assemblies, and deacons as a distinct group, discuss this paper and provide written feedback to the COT. We are especially interested to hear the church's response to the theological rationale provided here, but we also welcome feedback related to practical concerns. Based on the feedback received, and in consultation with the Commission on Church Order, the COT will bring an interim report to the 2012 General Synod, and anticipates bringing a final report to the 2013 General Synod.

Endnotes

1 *The Acts and Proceedings of the 201st Regular Session of the General Synod: 2007,* R17, 102. Hereinafter, *The Acts and Proceedings* of the RCA's General Synod will be cited as *MGS*, followed by the year and page number.

2 *MGS 2007*, 103.

3 The commission has chosen to refer to classis, regional synod, and General Synod as the "broader" assemblies of the church, although in quoting previous reports to the General Synod the language that refers to these bodies as "higher" assemblies has not been changed.

4 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 1061-1062.

5 Ibid., 1068-1069.

6 Jan Rohls, *Reformed Confessions: Theology from Zurich to Barmen* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 240-241.

7 Wes Bredenhof (yinkahdinay.wordpress.com/2010/01/12/laying-on-of-hands-the-belgic-confession) holds that the in the 1561 Lyons edition of *The Belgic Confession*, and in the 1562 Dutch translation of the confession, Article 31 calls for the ordination of ministers, elders, and deacons. This is a strong indication that early in the history of the Reformed tradition, the office of deacon was seen as comparable to that of the minister of Word and sacrament and the elder.

8 *Acts of Synod 1967* (Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed Publishing House, 1967), 238.

9 "Rules of Church Government Established at the National Synod"…Section II, Articles 37 and 38, in Daniel Meeter, *Meeting Each Other in Doctrine, Liturgy and Government* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 74-75.

10 "Articles Explanatory of the Government and Discipline of The Reformed Dutch Church in the United States of America," Section 3, Article 27, in Daniel Meeter, *Meeting Each Other,* 113-115.

11 Demarest, William H. S. *Notes on the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America.* 2nd rev. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: [Printed at Thatcher-Anderson Co.], 1946 [c.1928]), 83.

12 *MGS 1923*, 171-172.

13 "Report of the Committee to Study the Nature of Offices and Ministries and Their Respective Functions," *MGS 1960*, 307-324.

14 Ibid., 309.

15 Ibid., 312-313.

16 Ibid., 310.

17 Ibid., 311-312.

18 *MGS 1971*, 101.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 101-102.

21 Ibid., 102.

22 Ibid., 102.

[23] Ibid., 102, quoting the RCA Liturgy, 110.
[24] Ibid., 102.
[25] *MGS 1972*, 197-199.
[26] *MGS 1972*, 198.
[27] *MGS 1973*, 109.
[28] *MGS 1973*, 109.
[29] *MGS 1976*, 105.
[30] *MGS 1977*, 114-115.
[31] *MGS 1977*, 115.
[32] "The Nature of Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry," *MGS 1980*, 98-108.
[33] Ibid., 104.
[34] Ibid., 111.
[35] *MGS 1980*, 111.
[36] *MGS 1983*, 215-216.
[37] Ibid., 216.
[38] "Report from the Committee on Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry: The Office of Deacon: A Ministry of Mercy," *MGS 1989*, 200-209.
[39] Ibid., 204.
[40] Ibid., 204.
[41] Ibid., 205.
[42] Ibid., 207.
[43] Sylvio Scorza, "President's Report," *MGS 1990*, 29-30.
[44] *MGS 1990*, 257.
[45] Minutes of the commission, October, 1990; "Report of the Commission on Theology," *MGS 1991*.
[46] New overtures came to the General Synods of 1993 (*MGS*, 291); 1994 (*MGS*, 124, 246); 1996 (*MGS*, 282); 2001 (*MGS*, 370-371). In response to the 1994, the Commission on Church Order was asked to develop a plan for including deacons as delegates to the classis. The proposed plan was presented to the 1995 General Synod and referred back for further clarification. That clarification came from the Commission on Church Order to the 1996 General Synod at which a plan for deacon delegates to classis was presented as an option (not mandated) and with the provision that deacons could participate in both legislative and judicial matters, except in cases of discipline (*MGS 1996*, 233-239). The proposed changes were not adopted by the General Synod.
[47] "Faithful Consistories," (www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=1919).
[48] James Brownson, "Elder-Pastors and Deacon-Evangelists: The Plurality of Offices and the Marks of the Church," from the Report of the Commission on Theology, *MGS 2005*, 331-342.
[49] Ibid., 336.
[50] Ibid., 336.
[51] Ibid., 336.
[52] RCA archivist Russell Gasero identifies nine such overtures between 1923 and 1980.
[53] www.protestantchurch.nl/site/uploadedDocs/CHURCH_ORDER.pdf.
[54] Reformed Church in America *Book of Church Order* (2010), 1.I.6.2. Hereinafter cited as *BCO*. All references are to the 2010 edition of the *BCO*.
[55] The following discussion of mission draws extensively from "Faithful Consistories," no pagination.
[56] See, for example, 1 Sam. 15:18, 20; Acts 12:25; 2 Cor. 11:12; Gal. 2:8.
[57] For the religious associations, see Eric Partridge, *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (New York: Greenwich House, 1983), 408.
[58] "When the Dutch language identifies mission as *zending* (sending), a mission church as a *zendingskerk* (sending-church), missionary activity as *zendingswerk* (sending work) and a missionary as a *zendling* (sent one), it captures more exactly than the English term

'mission' the tone and meaning of biblical language." "Faithful Consistories," no pagination.

[59] This formulation assumes the *Filioque* of the Western version of the Nicene Creed. See Luke 24:49, John 14:26. Other New Testament passages describe the sending of the Spirit as directly from God, without mention of the agency of Christ. For example, Gal. 4:6 states: "And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts." While not the agent of sending here, Christ is both the condition for the sending of the Spirit (4:4) and the reality that is sent ("the Spirit of his Son").

[60] All biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

[61] The Gospel of John is particularly rich in the language of sending. There are multiple references to Jesus as the sent one and the Father who sends him in chapters 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 17 of the gospel. The synoptic gospels also know Jesus as the sent one, see Matt. 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 10:16. The same is true for Paul. He writes of God "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), and in the fullness of time sending "his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

[62] There is a prior sending of the Spirit in the New Testament. Jesus receives the Holy Spirit at his baptism, an anointing to which he refers when he comments on the passage from Isaiah read at the Nazareth synagogue (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). The Spirit sent by the Father to guide and empower Jesus' earthly ministry is sent at its completion to continue that mission through the church.

[63] "Faithful Consistories."

[64] The Heidelberg Catechism, Question and Answer 123.

[65] "Faithful Consistories."

[66] John Calvin wrote: "'Christ ascended on high,' Paul says, 'that he might fill all things' (Eph. 4:10). This is the manner of fulfillment: through the ministers to whom he has entrusted this office and has conferred the grace to carry it out, he dispenses and distributes his gifts to the church; and he shows himself as though present by manifesting the power of his Spirit in this his institution, that it be not vain or idle…For neither the light and heat of the sun, nor food and drink, are so necessary to nourish and sustain the present life as the apostolic and pastoral office is necessary to preserve the church on earth." *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1055. Calvin is speaking here only of the office of minister of Word and sacrament; the RCA's understanding of the parity of the offices indicates that the three offices of the church are equally, if differently, involved in the Lord's showing himself "as though present by manifesting the power of his Spirit."

[67] The order of the RCA makes provision for what is commonly referred to as the "fourth office," that of professor of theology. This office is not part of the pastorate but exists to serve it, particularly through providing education to support the ministry of Word and sacrament. See *BCO*, 1.IV.8.

[68] *BCO*, Preamble.

[69] Calvin, *Institutes,* 1061-1062. And thus the responsibility of the deacon is not, as is the common understanding in the church today, attending to the finances of the church *per se*.

[70] Ibid., 1068-1069.

[71] *BCO*, 1.I.6.2

[72] Renee House, in a paper written on behalf of the Commission on Theology of the RCA, approved by the 2009 General Synod for distribution and study, also argues for a missional understanding of the office of deacon. In this study House relates the three marks of the church to the offices of the church.

[73] Jeannine E. Olsen, *Calvin and Social Welfare: Deacons and the Beurse Français* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press), 173.

[74] Ibid., pp. 172-173.

[75] The Belhar Confession, Article 4 (reformatted and abridged, www.pcusa.org/resource/belhar-confession)

[76] *BCO*, Preamble, 3.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] *BCO*, 1.I.1.8.
[80] *BCO*, 1.I.1.4.
[81] *BCO*, 1.I.1.10.

R-51
To commend the paper "The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church" to the church, distribute it for study and discussion, and request written feedback from the various assemblies of the RCA, and from deacons, between September 1, 2011, and January 31, 2012; and further,

to direct the General Synod Council, in cooperation with the Commission on Theology, to create a mechanism for gathering this feedback and to communicate it to the church no later than August 1, 2012.

The Commission on Theology offered recommendation R-51 for the consideration of delegates in the all-synod advisory committee process. The report of the committees follows.

Report of the All-Synod Advisory Committees on the Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church

As the all-synod advisory committees on The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church, we were given the task of discussing the paper "The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church" with the intention of offering to the Commission on Theology theological reactions and practical insights for possible implementation. The committees were also asked to provide advice on R-51.

All-synod advisory committees strive to listen, summarize, and make recommendations based on committee discussions. This process required us to review 109 sheets of newsprint with your feedback, and identify common themes. You worked hard, and we value your effort.

Here are some affirmations we heard of the paper's theology so far:
- Values the parallelism between the Trinity and the offices
- Endorses the office of deacon as missional
- Acknowledges that the office of deacon is more than a stepping stone to the office of elder
- Recognizes the equality, parity, and dignity of the office
- Acknowledges that "Deacons bring so much to the table at the local consistory level, and they need to be able to do the same at higher assemblies"
- The advisory committees celebrate deacons, elders, and ministers "working in concert with one another"

In further dialogue, the advisory committees hope for more clarity on these questions of the paper's theology:
- Does the paper's theology mirror the biblical role of deacons?
- Does the theology expressed in our constitution allow for deacons to engage in governance (i.e., formation and ordination of ministerial candidates)?
- How can we more deeply explore the tension between "parity" and "distinct roles

and gifts"?
- Does this threaten to de-emphasize the missional character of the offices of minister and elder?
- Does the missional character of the office of deacon necessarily imply leadership in an assembly?
- How does this fit the preamble's assertion that "we are governed by elders"?

Although advisory committees expressed widespread ambivalence about the implementation strategy suggested in the paper, they expressed a number of creative approaches for incorporating deacons in higher assemblies. Some groups stressed the importance of achieving true parity by including equal numbers of delegates from each office. Other groups wondered if costs and the size of the assembly could be kept to a minimum by offering consistories and classes the option of sending either a deacon or an elder to an assembly. And though it may not be fully compatible with the theological rationale of the paper, some suggested sending deacons as corresponding delegates, perhaps as a transitional step.

Therefore, the all-synod advisory committees offer the following amendment:

R-51:
To ~~commend~~ distribute the paper "The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church" to the church~~, distribute it~~ for study and discussion, and request written feedback from the various assemblies of the RCA, and from deacons, between September 1, 2011, and January 31, 2012; and further,

to direct the General Synod Council, in cooperation with the Commission on Theology, to create a mechanism for gathering this feedback and to communicate it to the church no later than August 1, ~~2012~~ 2011.

Reasons:
1. Some in the all-synod advisory committees found that the word "commend" implies a greater degree of certainty than was observed in the feedback to date.
2. There is a desire to continue the kind of open and fruitful discussion that characterized all-synod advisory committees.
3. The committee acknowledges the typographical error in the date.

VOTED: To adopt the amendment.

The amended R-51 was further amended from the floor:

R-51
To distribute the paper "The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church" to the church for study and discussion, and request written feedback from the various assemblies of the RCA, and from deacons, between September 1, 2011, and January 31, ~~2012~~ 2013; and further,

to direct the General Synod Council, in cooperation with the Commission on Theology, to create a mechanism for gathering this feedback and to communicate it to the church no later than August 1, 2011.

VOTED: To adopt the amendment.

R-51
To distribute the paper "The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies

of the Church" to the church for study and discussion, and request written feedback from the various assemblies of the RCA, and from deacons, between September 1, 2011, and January 31, 2013; and further,

to direct the General Synod Council, in cooperation with the Commission on Theology, to create a mechanism for gathering this feedback and to communicate it to the church no later than August 1, 2011. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)

The all-synod advisory committees offer the following new recommendation:

R-52
To encourage the Commission on Theology to develop a brief study resource for the paper "The Office of Deacon and the Assemblies of the Church" and to include it with the paper. (ADOPTED)

Reason:
The advisory committees suggested that such a resource would make the paper more accessible and increase the likelihood of gathering the feedback sought by the Commission on Theology.

POLICY AND PROCESS FOR ADOPTING NEW TRANSLATIONS OF EXISTING DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

The commission offers this brief paper and recommendation in response to R-43, referred by the 2010 General Synod:

> To instruct the Commission on Theology to examine the current process of adopting standards and new translations, and to clarify theological questions about the current process, in consultation with other commissions as appropriate (*MGS 2010*, p. 160).

The commission believes that the RCA's process for adopting new doctrinal standards is abundantly clear, as was demonstrated in the church's recent adoption of the Belhar Confession. Because the addition of a new doctrinal standard represents a change to the RCA's constitution, it requires that the synod recommend such a change to classes for vote. If two-thirds of the classes vote in favor of the change, a subsequent General Synod declares that the new standard is adopted as part of the constitution.

In contrast to the process followed in adopting new standards, the RCA has no official policy and process for the adoption of new *translations* of existing standards. However, a review of the RCA's practice of adopting new translations over roughly the last one hundred years shows that we have established a body of precedent that provides a good basis for creating an official policy and process.

Recent History

In 1963 the General Synod adopted new translations of the doctrinal standards prepared by Eugene Osterhaven, and in 1989 adopted a revision of the Christian Reformed Church's translations of the standards which the RCA's Commission on Theology prepared. In both cases the synod voted to approve the translations "for use and study" within the RCA. Neither set of translations was adopted as the "official" translation of the RCA, nor were

they sent to the classes for ratification. Prior to 1963, the translation included in the 1952 publication of *Reformed Standards of Unity*, edited by Leroy Nixon, is Philip Schaaf's translation of all three standards. In this case, the records of the General Synod do not show that the synod took any action to adopt the Schaaf translations in 1952. In fact, a review of Mildred Schuppert's *Digest and Index of the Synod Minutes* shows no approval of translations as far back as 1906.

Precedent as Basis for a Policy and Process

This review of the RCA's recent history reveals a clear precedent in the church: we do not have an "official translation" of each of the doctrinal standards, but rather have a variety of translations that, if approved by the General Synod at all, have been approved *for use and study* by the church. Of course, precedent alone does not provide a sufficient basis for establishing policy and process for the future, on this or any matter. Therefore, the commission has thought carefully about the precedents found in our history of adopting translations of our standards. These precedents reflect the fact that new *translations* of the standards are not constitutional and therefore do not require the review and vote of the classes. The commission has concluded that there are good reasons, stated below, for accepting certain aspects of past practice as a basis for developing a policy and process. At the same time, there are aspects of past practice that the commission believes should be changed, namely, the acceptance of new translations without sufficient review by the Commission on Theology and classes, and without the review and vote of General Synod. In short, we are recommending that the General Synod *affirm* that it has the authority to adopt, for use and study in the church, new translations of existing standards. We are also recommending that such translations be reviewed and commended by the Commission on Theology, and be made available to classes for discussion prior to the meeting of synod at which they will be considered.

Rationale for and Elaboration on the Recommendation

1) It supports the RCA's recognition of the doctrinal standards as "historic and faithful" witnesses. Our standards are rooted in particular times and places and expressed in language appropriate to their historic origins. The authority of each standard is rooted in a specific context, and cannot be divorced from it. This means that appeals to the standards in their original languages and in fidelity to their original intent will always be of primary importance, even were the RCA to adopt "official" translations. In a real sense, the RCA's first three official standards are those adopted by the Synod of Dort, and, in the case of the Belhar Confession, the translation that was adopted at the 2010 General Synod. Their ongoing usefulness to the church requires that they be translated into languages which the RCA in the United States and Canada continues to use. This means that we will need translations not only in English, but also in Korean, Taiwanese, Japanese, and Spanish, just to name a few of the languages currently spoken in the RCA.

2) It recognizes that any translation is to some degree an interpretation, and that greater insight can sometimes be gained by appeal to more than one translation.

3) By establishing that the RCA's Commission on Theology is responsible to carefully review and commend new translations to the synod for use and study, we free the church from arguing over details of new translations that have little substantial impact on the church's faith and practice. The commission is responsible to preserve the core theological intent of the standards as it reviews and recommends new translations. In cases where we adopt translations prepared in cooperation with other Reformed denominations, we will be faithful to the RCA's historical dealings with each standard (e.g., the RCA would not adopt the CRC's way of treating Article 36 of the Belgic Confession);

4) Because the new translations would *always* be presented to the General Synod for discussion and adoption for use and study in the church, the policy and process recommended by the commission provides assurance that the church will always have voice and vote in the process. As we have seen in the history reviewed above, this has not always been the case. Further, when new translations of the standards are being recommended to the synod, there must be ample opportunity for classes to discuss the new translations prior to the meeting of synod at which new translations will be voted on, and for classical delegates to bring the perspectives of their classes to the General Synod. If there are issues of substance related to new translations of the standards, these can be raised and addressed by the General Synod.

Based on the rationale presented above that draws from and improves on past practice in the RCA, the Commission on Theology offers two recommendations.

R-53
To affirm that the General Synod has the authority to adopt, for use and study in the church, new translations of existing doctrinal standards. (ADOPTED)

R-54
To adopt the policy that new translations of existing doctrinal standards be reviewed and commended by the Commission on Theology, and be made available to classes for discussion prior to their adoption by the General Synod. (ADOPTED)

COMMON TRANSLATION OF THE DOCTRINAL STANDARDS WITH THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

In the fall of 2008, the commission approved a set of criteria to be used by a joint RCA/CRC task force for preparing of new translations of our shared doctrinal standards—the Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and Canons of Dort. These new common translations will be included in the joint RCA/CRC hymnbook to be published in 2013. Eugene Heideman and Commission on Theology member Todd Billings were the RCA's representatives on this task force. In 2009 representatives from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joined in the process of producing a common translation of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Details concerning the basic principles followed in preparing these translations, including matters of Scripture citations, inclusive language, and substantive differences between previous RCA and CRC versions of the doctrinal standards (e.g., Article 36 of the Belgic Confession; the "Rejection of Errors" in the Canons of Dort) are addressed in the "General Introduction for the Reformed Confessions Translation."

The commission is recommending that the General Synod approve these new translations for use and study in the RCA. The approval of new translations of the standards is not a constitutional change, nor does this approval preclude the use of previous translations of the RCA's standards. We believe that having common translations with the CRC and, in the case of the Heidelberg, with the PC(USA) as well, is a great help to us as we engage these ecumenical partners in theological dialogue and share in other joint ventures. We also believe that it will be a great gift to have the standards published in the new RCA/CRC hymnal.

General Introduction for the Reformed Confessions Translation

This translation is the result of the work of a joint task force formed by the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The task force was commissioned to produce a common text for the Reformed confessions, building upon the work of the previous translations from both denominations. Since a separate introduction will introduce each confession, this general introduction gives a statement of principles used for coming to a common translation.

The task force did not attempt a wholesale retranslation of the confessions, but used the texts of previously approved RCA and CRC translations as a starting point. When the translations diverged, or where subsequent scholarship called into question both previous translations, the task force returned to the original language documents to resolve the differences. Sometimes this resolution involved opting for the previous RCA or CRC translations; at other times, the task force developed a fresh translation from the original text.

In addition, for the Heidelberg Catechism translation, the task force cooperated with a third party: a translation committee from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This task force gave a detailed examination of the translation in light of the original German, and presented some refinements that were accepted by the joint CRC-RCA task force.

Some divergences in previous translations were based around the rendering of gender for humanity and God. The task force has used the following approach in these cases: in references to humankind, all references to "men" or other exclusive terms have been changed to "human," or a similar gender inclusive rendering. With regard to language about God, the task force sought to reduce the number of male pronouns for God when it could be done with felicity, but it did not attempt to eliminate them altogether. There were several principles guiding this. On the one hand, excessive repetition of the male pronoun for God was avoided. On the other hand, excessive repetition of the word "God" as a substitute for the pronoun "him" was also avoided. In addition, when the elimination of a male pronoun for God would obscure the theological point of the passage, the pronoun was retained where a lucid alternative was not available.

For direct quotations from Scripture, the task force uses the New Revised Standard Translation for the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. With the Canons of Dort, translations of its own seventeenth century versions of the Bible are given. For the Canons, in particular, the text of the confessions depends upon the particular seventeenth century versions being used at the synod.

This joint translation does not erase the differences remaining between the denominations about the confessions. For example, wherever an action of the General Synod of one denomination has made a modification of the confession (as with the Belgic Confession, Article 36), it is noted in the text; the discrepancy is not resolved, but simply preserved. Also, the biblical source texts for the confessions are retained from the CRC translations in the past, and are included here as a study aid for all readers of the confessions. Overall, for the CRC, RCA, and the PC(USA) this translation represents a step forward in cooperation and partnership.

Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism

The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) was composed in the city of Heidelberg, Germany, at the request of Elector Frederick III, who ruled the province of the Palatinate from 1559 to 1576. The new catechism was intended as a tool for teaching young people, a guide for preaching in the provincial churches, and a form of confessional unity among the several

Protestant factions in the Palatinate. An old tradition credits Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus with being the coauthors of the catechism, but the project was actually the work of a team of ministers and university theologians under the watchful eye of Frederick himself. Ursinus probably served as the primary writer on the team, and Olevianus had a lesser role. The catechism was approved by a synod in Heidelberg in January 1563. A second and third German edition, each with small additions, as well as a Latin translation were published the same year in Heidelberg. The third edition was included in the Palatinate Church Order of November 15, 1563, at which time the catechism was divided into fifty-two sections or Lord's Days, so that one Lord's Day could be explained in an afternoon worship service each Sunday of the year.

The Synod of Dort approved the Heidelberg Catechism in 1619, and it soon became the most ecumenical of the Reformed catechisms and confessions. It has been translated into many European, Asian, and African languages and is still the most widely used and warmly praised catechism of the Reformation period.

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

Introduction

Lord's Day 1

Q&A 1
Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?
A. That I am not my own,[1]
but belong—
body and soul,
in life and in death[2]—
to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.[3]

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,[4]
and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.[5]
He also watches over me in such a way[6]
that not a hair can fall from my head
without the will of my Father in heaven;[7]
in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.[8]

Because I belong to him,
Christ, by his Holy Spirit,
assures me of eternal life[9]
and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready
from now on to live for him.[10]

1 1 Cor. 6:19-20
2 Rom. 14:7-9
3 1 Cor. 3:23; Titus 2:14
4 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:2
5 John 8:34-36; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:1-11
6 John 6:39-40; 10:27-30; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:5
7 Matt. 10:29-31; Luke 21:16-18
8 Rom. 8:28

[9] Rom. 8:15-16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14
[10] Rom. 8:1-17

Q&A 2
Q. What must you know to
live and die in the joy of this comfort?
A. Three things:
first, how great my sin and misery are;[1]
second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery;[2]
third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance.[3]

[1] Rom. 3:9-10; 1 John 1:10
[2] John 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43
[3] Matt. 5:16; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:8-10; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:9-10

Part I: Misery

Lord's Day 2

Q&A 3
Q. How do you come to know your misery?
A. The law of God tells me.[1]

[1] Rom. 3:20; 7:7-25

Q&A 4
Q. What does God's law require of us?
A. Christ teaches us this in summary in Matthew 22:37-40:

"'You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind.'[1]
This is the greatest and first commandment.

"And a second is like it:
'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'[2]

"On these two commandments hang
all the law and the prophets."

[1] Deut. 6:5
[2] Lev. 19:18

Q&A 5
Q. Can you live up to all this perfectly?
A. No.[1]
I have a natural tendency
to hate God and my neighbor.[2]

[1] Rom. 3:9-20, 23; 1 John 1:8, 10
[2] Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:23-24; 8:7; Eph. 2:1-3; Titus 3:3

Lord's Day 3

Q&A 6
Q. Did God create people
so wicked and perverse?
A. No.
God created them good[1] and in his own image,[2]
that is, in true righteousness and holiness,[3]
so that they might
truly know God their creator,[4]
love him with all their heart,
and live with God in eternal happiness,
to praise and glorify him.[5]

[1] Gen. 1:31
[2] Gen. 1:26-27
[3] Eph. 4:24
[4] Col. 3:10
[5] Ps. 8

Q&A 7
Q. Then where does this corrupt human nature come from?
A. The fall and disobedience of our first parents,
Adam and Eve, in Paradise.[1]
This fall has so poisoned our nature[2]
that we are all conceived and born
in a sinful condition.[3]

[1] Gen. 3
[2] Rom. 5:12, 18-19
[3] Ps. 51:5

Q&A 8
Q. But are we so corrupt
that we are totally unable to do any good
and inclined toward all evil?
A. Yes,[1] unless we are born again
by the Spirit of God.[2]

[1] Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:4; Isa. 53:6
[2] John 3:3-5

Lord's Day 4

Q&A 9
Q. But doesn't God do us an injustice
by requiring in his law
what we are unable to do?
A. No, God created human beings with the ability to keep the law.[1]
They, however, provoked by the devil[2]
in willful disobedience,[3]
robbed themselves and all their descendants of these gifts.[4]

[1] Gen. 1:31; Eph. 4:24

[2] Gen. 3:13; John 8:44
[3] Gen. 3:6
[4] Rom. 5:12, 18, 19

Q&A 10
Q. Does God permit
such disobedience and rebellion
to go unpunished?
A. Certainly not.
God is terribly angry
with the sin we are born with
as well as the sins we personally commit.

As a just judge,
God will punish them both now and in eternity,[1]
having declared:
"Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey
all the things written in the book of the law."[2]

[1] Ex. 34:7; Ps. 5:4-6; Nah. 1:2; Rom. 1:18; Eph. 5:6; Heb. 9:27
[2] Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:26

Q&A 11
Q. But isn't God also merciful?
A. God is certainly merciful,[1]
but also just.[2]
God's justice demands
that sin, committed against his supreme majesty,
be punished with the supreme penalty—
eternal punishment of body and soul.[3]

[1] Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 103:8-9
[2] Ex. 34:7; Deut. 7:9-11; Ps. 5:4-6; Heb. 10:30-31
[3] Matt. 25:35-46

Part II: Deliverance

Lord's Day 5

Q&A 12
Q. According to God's righteous judgment
we deserve punishment
both now and in eternity:
how then can we escape this punishment
and return to God's favor?
A. God requires that his justice be satisfied.[1]
Therefore the claims of this justice
must be paid in full,
either by ourselves or by another.[2]

[1] Ex. 23:7; Rom. 2:1-11
[2] Isa. 53:11; Rom. 8:3-4

Q&A 13
Q. Can we make this payment ourselves?
A. Certainly not.
Actually, we increase our debt every day.[1]

[1] Matt. 6:12; Rom. 2:4-5

Q&A 14
Q. Can another creature—any at all—pay this debt for us?
A. No.
To begin with,
God will not punish any other creature
for what a human is guilty of.[1]
Furthermore,
no mere creature can bear the weight
of God's eternal wrath against sin
and deliver others from it.[2]

[1] Ezek. 18:4, 20; Heb. 2:14-18
[2] Ps. 49:7-9; 130:3

Q&A 15
Q. What kind of mediator and deliverer should we look for then?
A. One who is a true[1] and righteous[2] human,
yet more powerful than all creatures,
that is, one who is also true God.[3]

[1] Rom. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:17
[2] Isa. 53:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26
[3] Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Jer. 23:6; John 1:1

Lord's Day 6

Q&A 16
Q. Why must the mediator be a true and righteous human?
A. God's justice demands
that human nature, which has sinned,
must pay for sin;[1]
but a sinful human could never pay for others.[2]

[1] Rom. 5:12, 15; 1 Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:14-16
[2] Heb. 7:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:18

Q&A 17
Q. Why must the mediator also be true God?
A. So that the mediator,
by the power of his divinity,
might bear the weight of God's wrath in his humanity
and earn for us
and restore to us
righteousness and life.[1]

[1] Isa. 53; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:21

Q&A 18
Q. Then who is this mediator—
true God and at the same time
a true and righteous human?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ,[1]
who was given to us
to completely deliver us
and make us right with God.[2]

[1] Matt. 1:21-23; Luke 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:5
[2] 1 Cor. 1:30

Q&A 19
Q. How do you come to know this?
A. The holy gospel tells me.
God began to reveal the gospel already in Paradise;[1]
later God proclaimed it
by the holy patriarchs[2] and prophets[3]
and foreshadowed it
by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law;[4]
and finally God fulfilled it
through his own beloved Son.[5]

[1] Gen. 3:15
[2] Gen. 22:18; 49:10
[3] Isa. 53; Jer. 23:5-6; Mic. 7:18-20; Acts 10:43; Heb. 1:1-2
[4] Lev. 1-7; John 5:46; Heb. 10:1-10
[5] Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:4-5; Col. 2:17

Lord's Day 7

Q&A 20
Q. Are all people then saved through Christ
just as they were lost through Adam?
A. No.
Only those are saved
who through true faith
are grafted into Christ
and accept all his benefits.[1]

[1] Matt. 7:14; John 3:16, 18, 36; Rom. 11:16-21

Q&A 21
Q. What is true faith?
A. True faith is
not only a sure knowledge by which I hold as true
all that God has revealed to us in Scripture;[1]
it is also a wholehearted trust,[2]
which the Holy Spirit creates in me[3] by the gospel,[4]
that God has freely granted,
not only to others but to me also,[5]
forgiveness of sins,
eternal righteousness,
and salvation.[6]

These are gifts of sheer grace,
granted solely by Christ's merit.[7]

[1] John 17:3, 17; Heb. 11:1-3; James 2:19
[2] Rom. 4:18-21; 5:1; 10:10; Heb. 4:14-16
[3] Matt. 16:15-17; John 3:5; Acts 16:14
[4] Rom. 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21
[5] Gal. 2:20
[6] Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:10
[7] Rom. 3:21-26; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-10

Q&A 22
Q. What then must a Christian believe?
A. All that is promised us in the gospel,[1]
a summary of which is taught us
in the articles of our universal
and undisputed Christian faith.

[1] Matt. 28:18-20; John 20:30-31

Q&A 23
Q. What are these articles?
A. I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come 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.

Lord's Day 8

Q&A 24
Q. How are these articles divided?
A. Into three parts:
God the Father and our creation;
God the Son and our deliverance;
and God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.

Q&A 25
Q. Since there is only one divine being,[1]

why do you speak of three:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
A. Because that is how
God has revealed himself in his Word:[2]
these three distinct persons
are one, true, eternal God.

[1] Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6
[2] Matt. 3:16-17; 28:18-19; Luke 4:18 (Isa. 61:1); John 14:26; 15:26; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:6; Titus 3:5-6

God the Father

Lord's Day 9

Q&A 26
Q. What do you believe when you say,
"I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth"?
A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who out of nothing created heaven and earth
and everything in them,[1]
who still upholds and rules them
by his eternal counsel and providence,[2]
is my God and Father
because of Christ the Son.[3]

I trust God so much that I do not doubt
he will provide
whatever I need
for body and soul,[4]
and will turn to my good
whatever adversity he sends upon me
in this sad world.[5]

God is able to do this because he is almighty God,[6]
and desires to do this because he is a faithful Father.[7]

[1] Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11; Ps. 33:6; Isa. 44:24; Acts 4:24; 14:15
[2] Ps. 104; Matt. 6:30; 10:29; Eph. 1:11
[3] John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:5
[4] Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:25-26; Luke 12:22-31
[5] Rom. 8:28
[6] Gen. 18:14; Rom. 8:31-39
[7] Matt. 7:9-11

Lord's Day 10

Q&A 27
Q. What do you understand
by the providence of God?
A. The almighty and ever present power of God[1]
by which God upholds, as with his hand,
heaven

and earth
and all creatures,[2]
and so rules them that
leaf and blade,
rain and drought,
fruitful and lean years,
food and drink,
health and sickness,
prosperity and poverty—[3]
all things, in fact,
come to us
not by chance[4]
but by his fatherly hand.[5]

[1] Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-28
[2] Heb. 1:3
[3] Jer. 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; John 9:3; Prov. 22:2
[4] Prov. 16:33
[5] Matt. 10:29

Q&A 28
Q. How does the knowledge of God's creation and providence help us?
A. We can be patient when things go against us,[1]
thankful when things go well,[2]
and for the future we can have
good confidence in our faithful God and Father
that nothing in creation will separate us from his love.[3]
For all creatures are so completely in God's hand
that without his will
they can neither move nor be moved.[4]

[1] Job 1:21-22; James 1:3
[2] Deut. 8:10; 1 Thess. 5:18
[3] Ps. 55:22; Rom. 5:3-5; 8:38-39
[4] Job 1:12; 2:6; Prov. 21:1; Acts 17:24-28

God the Son

Lord's Day 11

Q&A 29
Q. Why is the Son of God called "Jesus," meaning "savior"?
A. Because he saves us from our sins,[1]
and because salvation should not be sought
and cannot be found in anyone else.[2]

[1] Matt. 1:21; Heb. 7:25
[2] Isa. 43:11; John 15:5; Acts 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 2:5

Q&A 30
Q. Do those who look for their salvation in saints,

in themselves, or elsewhere
really believe in the only savior Jesus?
A. No.
Although they boast of being his,
by their actions they deny
the only savior, Jesus.[1]

Either Jesus is not a perfect savior,
or those who in true faith accept this savior
have in him all they need for their salvation.[2]

[1] 1 Cor. 1:12-13; Gal. 5:4
[2] Col. 1:19-20; 2:10; 1 John 1:7

Lord's Day 12

Q&A 31
Q. Why is he called "Christ,"
meaning "anointed"?
A. Because he has been ordained by God the Father
and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit[1]
to be
our chief prophet and teacher[2]
who fully reveals to us
the secret counsel and will of God concerning our deliverance;[3]
our only high priest[4]
who has delivered us by the one sacrifice of his body,[5]
and who continually pleads our cause with the Father;[6]
and our eternal king[7]
who governs us by his Word and Spirit,
and who guards us and keeps us
in the freedom he has won for us.[8]

[1] Luke 3:21-22; 4:14-19 (Isa. 61:1); Heb. 1:9 (Ps. 45:7)
[2] Acts 3:22 (Deut. 18:15)
[3] John 1:18; 15:15
[4] Heb. 7:17 (Ps. 110:4)
[5] Heb. 9:12; 10:11-14
[6] Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24
[7] Matt. 21:5 (Zech. 9:9)
[8] Matt. 28:18-20; John 10:28; Rev. 12:10-11

Q&A 32
Q. But why are you called a Christian?
A. Because by faith I am a member of Christ[1]
and so I share in his anointing.[2]
I am anointed
to confess his name,[3]
to present myself to him as a living sacrifice of thanks,[4]
to strive with a free conscience against sin and the devil
in this life,[5]
and afterward to reign with Christ
over all creation
for eternity.[6]

[1] 1 Cor. 12:12-27
[2] Acts 2:17 (Joel 2:28); 1 John 2:27
[3] Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10; Heb. 13:15
[4] Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9
[5] Gal. 5:16-17; Eph. 6:11; 1 Tim. 1:18-19
[6] Matt. 25:34; 2 Tim. 2:12

Lord's Day 13

Q&A 33
Q. Why is he called God's "only begotten Son" when we also are God's children?
A. Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God.[1]
We, however, are adopted children of God—
adopted by grace through Christ.[2]

[1] John 1:1-3, 14, 18; Heb. 1
[2] John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-17; Eph. 1:5-6

Q&A 34
Q. Why do you call him "our Lord"?
A. Because—
not with gold or silver,
but with his precious blood[1]—
he has set us free
from sin and from the tyranny of the devil,[2]
and has bought us,
body and soul,
to be his very own.[3]

[1] 1 Pet. 1:18-19
[2] Col. 1:13-14; Heb. 2:14-15
[3] 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Tim. 2:5-6

Lord's Day 14

Q&A 35
Q. What does it mean that he "was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary"?
A. That the eternal Son of God,
who is and remains
true and eternal God,[1]
took to himself,
through the working of the Holy Spirit,[2]
from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,[3]
a truly human nature
so that he might also become David's true descendant,[4]
like his brothers and sisters in every way[5]
except for sin.[6]

[1] John 1:1; 10:30-36; Acts 13:33 (Ps. 2:7); Col. 1:15-17; 1 John 5:20
[2] Luke 1:35
[3] Matt. 1:18-23; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14

[4] 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Matt. 1:1; Rom. 1:3
[5] Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:17
[6] Heb. 4:15; 7:26-27

Q&A 36
Q. How does the holy conception and birth of Christ benefit you?
A. He is our mediator[1]
and, in God's sight,
he covers with his innocence and perfect holiness
my sinfulness in which I was conceived.[2]

[1] 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:13-15
[2] Rom. 8:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4-5; 1 Pet. 1:18-19

Lord's Day 15

Q&A 37
Q. What do you understand by the word "suffered"?
A. That during his whole life on earth,
but especially at the end,
Christ sustained
in body and soul
the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race.[1]

This he did in order that,
by his suffering as the only atoning sacrifice,[2]
he might deliver us, body and soul,
from eternal condemnation,[3]
and gain for us
God's grace,
righteousness,
and eternal life.[4]

[1] Isa. 53; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18
[2] Rom. 3:25; Heb. 10:14; 1 John 2:2; 4:10
[3] Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 3:13
[4] John 3:16; Rom. 3:24-26

Q&A 38
Q. Why did he suffer "under Pontius Pilate" as judge?
A. So that he,
though innocent,
might be condemned by an earthly judge,[1]
and so free us from the severe judgment of God
that was to fall on us.[2]

[1] Luke 23:13-24; John 19:4, 12-16
[2] Isa. 53:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13

Q&A 39
Q. Is it significant that he was "crucified"

instead of dying some other way?
A. Yes.
By this I am convinced
that he shouldered the curse
which lay on me,
since death by crucifixion was cursed by God.[1]

[1] Gal. 3:10-13 (Deut. 21:23)

Lord's Day 16

Q&A 40
Q. Why did Christ have to suffer death?
A. Because God's justice and truth require it:[1]
nothing else could pay for our sins
except the death of the Son of God.[2]

[1] Gen. 2:17
[2] Rom. 8:3-4; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 2:9

Q&A 41
Q. Why was he "buried"?
A. His burial testifies
that he really died.[1]

[1]Isa. 53:9; John 19:38-42; Acts 13:29; 1 Cor. 15:3-4

Q&A 42
Q. Since Christ has died for us,
why do we still have to die?
A. Our death does not pay the debt of our sins.[1]
Rather, it puts an end to our sinning
and is our entrance into eternal life.[2]

[1] Ps. 49:7
[2] John 5:24; Phil. 1:21-23; 1 Thess. 5:9-10

Q&A 43
Q. What further benefit do we receive
from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?
A. By Christ's power
our old selves are crucified, put to death, and buried with him,[1]
so that the evil desires of the flesh
may no longer rule us,[2]
but that instead we may offer ourselves
as a sacrifice of gratitude to him.[3]

[1] Rom. 6:5-11; Col. 2:11-12
[2] Rom. 6:12-14
[3] Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:1-2

Q&A 44
Q. Why does the creed add,
"He descended to hell"?

A. To assure me during attacks of deepest dread and temptation
that Christ my Lord,
by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul,
on the cross but also earlier,
has delivered me from hellish anguish and torment.[1]

[1] Isa. 53; Matt. 26:36-46; 27:45-46; Luke 22:44; Heb. 5:7-10

Lord's Day 17

Q&A 45
Q. How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?
A. First, by his resurrection he has overcome death,
so that he might make us share in the righteousness
he obtained for us by his death.[1]

Second, by his power we too
are already raised to a new life.[2]

Third, Christ's resurrection
is a sure pledge to us of our blessed resurrection.[3]

[1] Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:16-20; 1 Pet. 1:3-5
[2] Rom. 6:5-11; Eph. 2:4-6; Col. 3:1-4
[3] Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:12-23; Phil. 3:20-21

Lord's Day 18

Q&A 46
Q. What do you mean by saying, "He ascended to heaven"?
A. That Christ
while his disciples watched,
was taken up from the earth into heaven[1]
and remains there on our behalf[2]
until he comes again
to judge the living and the dead.[3]

[1] Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11
[2] Rom. 8:34; Eph. 4:8-10; Heb. 7:23-25; 9:24
[3] Acts 1:11

Q&A 47
Q. But isn't Christ with us until the end of the world as he promised us?[1]
A. Christ is true human and true God.
In his human nature Christ is not now on earth;[2]
but in his divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit
he is never absent from us.[3]

[1] Matt. 28:20
[2] Acts 1:9-11; 3:19-21

[3] Matt. 28:18-20; John 14:16-19

Q&A 48
Q. If his humanity is not present
wherever his divinity is,
then aren't the two natures of Christ
separated from each other?
A. Certainly not.
Since divinity
is not limited
and is present everywhere,[1]
it is evident that
Christ's divinity is surely beyond the bounds of
the humanity that has been taken on,
but at the same time his divinity is in
and remains personally united to
his humanity.[2]

[1] Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 7:48-49 (Isa. 66:1)
[2] John 1:14; 3:13; Col. 2:9

Q&A 49
Q. How does Christ's ascension to heaven
benefit us?
A. First, he is our advocate
in heaven
in the presence of his Father.[1]

Second, we have our own flesh in heaven
as a sure pledge that Christ our head
will also take us, his members,
up to himself.[2]

Third, he sends his Spirit to us on earth
as a corresponding pledge.[3]
By the Spirit's power
we seek not earthly things
but the things above, where Christ is,
sitting at God's right hand.[4]

[1] Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1
[2] John 14:2; 17:24; Eph. 2:4-6
[3] John 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5
[4] Col. 3:1-4

Lord's Day 19

Q&A 50
Q. Why the next words:
"and is seated at the right hand of God"?
A. Because Christ ascended to heaven
to show there that he is head of his church,[1]
the one through whom the Father rules all things.[2]

[1] Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18
[2] Matt. 28:18; John 5:22-23

Q&A 51
Q. How does this glory of Christ our head benefit us?
A. First, through his Holy Spirit
he pours out gifts from heaven
upon us his members.[1]

Second, by his power
he defends us and keeps us safe
from all enemies.[2]

[1] Acts 2:33; Eph. 4:7-12
[2] Ps. 110:1-2; John 10:27-30; Rev. 19:11-16

Q&A 52
Q. How does Christ's return "to judge the living and the dead" comfort you?
A. In all distress and persecution,
with uplifted head
I confidently await the very judge
who has already offered himself to the judgment of God
in my place and removed the whole curse from me.[1]
Christ will cast all his enemies and mine
into everlasting condemnation,
but will take me and all his chosen ones
to himself
into the joy and glory of heaven.[2]

[1] Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:22-25; Phil. 3:20-21; Titus 2:13-14
[2] Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:6-10

God the Holy Spirit

Lord's Day 20

Q&A 53
Q. What do you believe concerning "the Holy Spirit"?
A. First, that the Spirit, with the Father and the Son,
is eternal God.[1]

Second, that the Spirit is given also to me,[2]
so that, through true faith,
he makes me share in Christ and all his benefits[3]
through true faith,
comforts me,[4]
and will remain with me forever.[5]

[1] Gen. 1:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4
[2] 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:6

[3] Gal. 3:14
[4] John 15:26; Acts 9:31
[5] John 14:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:14

Lord's Day 21

Q&A 54
Q. What do you believe concerning "the holy catholic church"?
A. I believe that the Son of God
through his Spirit and Word,[1]
out of the entire human race,[2]
from the beginning of the world to its end,[3]
gathers, protects, and preserves for himself
a community chosen for eternal life[4]
and united in true faith.[5]
And of this community I am[6] and always will be[7]
a living member.

[1] John 10:14-16; Acts 20:28; Rom. 10:14-17; Col. 1:18
[2] Gen. 26:3b-4; Rev. 5:9
[3] Isa. 59:21; 1 Cor. 11:26
[4] Matt. 16:18; John 10:28-30; Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-14
[5] Acts 2:42-47; Eph. 4:1-6
[6] 1 John 3:14, 19-21
[7] John 10:27-28; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; 1 Pet. 1:3-5

Q&A 55
Q. What do you understand by "the communion of saints"?
A. First, that believers one and all,
as members of this community,
share in Christ
and in all his treasures and gifts.[1]

Second, that each member
should consider it a duty
to use these gifts
readily and joyfully
for the service and enrichment
of the other members.[2]

[1] Rom. 8:32; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:4-7, 12-13; 1 John 1:3
[2] Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:20-27; 13:1-7; Phil. 2:4-8

Q&A 56
Q. What do you believe concerning "the forgiveness of sins"?
A. I believe that God,
because of Christ's satisfaction,
will no longer remember
any of my sins[1]
or my sinful nature
which I need to struggle against all my life.[2]

Rather, by grace
God grants me the righteousness of Christ
to free me forever from judgment.[3]

[1] Ps. 103:3-4, 10, 12; Mic. 7:18-19; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; 1 John 1:7; 2:2
[2] Rom. 7:21-25
[3] John 3:17-18; Rom. 8:1-2

Lord's Day 22

Q&A 57
Q. How does "the resurrection of the body" comfort you?
A. Not only will my soul
be taken immediately after this life
to Christ its head,[1]
but also my very flesh will be
raised by the power of Christ,
reunited with my soul
and made like Christ's glorious body.[2]

[1] Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:21-23
[2] 1 Cor. 15:20, 42-46, 54; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2

Q&A 58
Q. How does the article concerning "life everlasting" comfort you?
A. Even as I already now
experience in my heart
the beginning of eternal joy,[1]
so after this life I will have
perfect blessedness such as
no eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
no human heart has ever imagined:
a blessedness in which to praise God forever.[2]

[1] Rom. 14:17
[2] John 17:3; 1 Cor. 2:9

Lord's Day 23

Q&A 59
Q. What good does it do you, however, to believe all this?
A. In Christ I am righteous before God
and heir to life everlasting.[1]

[1]1 John 3:36; Rom. 1:17 (Hab. 2:4); Rom. 5:1-2

Q&A 60
Q. How are you righteous before God?
A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.[1]

Even though my conscience accuses me
of having grievously sinned against all God's commandments,
of never having kept any of them,[2]
and of still being inclined toward all evil,[3]
nevertheless,
without any merit of my own,[4]
out of sheer grace,[5]
God grants and credits to me
the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ,[6]
as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner,
and as if I had been as perfectly obedient
as Christ was obedient for me.[7]

All I need to do
is accept this gift with a believing heart.[8]

1 Rom. 3:21-28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil 3:8-11
2 Rom. 3:9-10
3 Rom. 7:23
4 Titus 3:4-5
5 Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8
6 Rom. 4:3-5 (Gen. 15:6); 2 Cor. 5:17-19; 1 John 2:1-2
7 Rom. 4:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:21
8 John 3:18; Acts 16:30-31

Q&A 61
Q. Why do you say that through faith alone you are righteous?
A. Not because I please God
by the worthiness of my faith.
It is because only Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness
make me righteous before God,[1]
and because I can accept this righteousness and make it mine
in no other way
than through faith.[2]

1 1 Cor. 1:30-31
2 Rom. 10:10; 1 John 5:10-12

Lord's Day 24

Q&A 62
Q. Why can't our good works be our righteousness before God, or at least a part of our righteousness?
A. Because the righteousness
which can pass God's judgment
must be entirely perfect
and must in every way measure up to the divine law.[1]
But even our best works in this life
are imperfect
and stained with sin.[2]

[1] Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:10 (Deut. 27:26)
[2] Isa. 64:6

Q&A 63
Q. How can our good works
be said to merit nothing
when God promises to reward them
in this life and the next?[1]
A. This reward is not earned;
it is a gift of grace.[2]

[1] Matt. 5:12; Heb. 11:6
[2] Luke 17:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8

Q&A 64
Q. But doesn't this teaching
make people indifferent and wicked?
A. No.
It is impossible
for those grafted into Christ through true faith
not to produce fruits of gratitude.[1]

[1] Luke 6:43-45; John 15:5

The Holy Sacraments

Lord's Day 25

Q&A 65
Q. It is through faith alone
that we share in Christ and all his benefits:
where then does that faith come from?
A. The Holy Spirit produces it in our hearts[1]
by the preaching of the holy gospel,[2]
and confirms it
by the use of the holy sacraments.[3]

[1] John 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:10-14; Eph. 2:8
[2] Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23-25
[3] Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:16

Q&A 66
Q. What are sacraments?
A. Sacraments are visible, holy signs and seals.
They were instituted by God so that
by our use of them
he might make us understand more clearly
the promise of the gospel,
and seal that promise.[1]

And this is God's gospel promise:
to grant us forgiveness of sins and eternal life
by grace

because of Christ's one sacrifice
accomplished on the cross.[2]

[1] Gen. 17:11; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 4:11
[2] Matt. 26:27-28; Acts 2:38; Heb. 10:10

Q&A 67
Q. Are both the word and the sacraments then intended to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?
A. Yes!
In the gospel the Holy Spirit teaches us
and by the holy sacraments confirms
that our entire salvation
rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross.[1]

[1] Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 3:27

Q&A 68
Q. How many sacraments did Christ institute in the New Testament?
A. Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.[1]

[1] Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26

Holy Baptism

Lord's Day 26

Q&A 69
Q. How does holy baptism remind and assure you that Christ's one sacrifice on the cross benefits you personally?
A. In this way:
Christ instituted this outward washing[1]
and with it promised that,
as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body,
so certainly his blood and his Spirit
wash away my soul's impurity,
that is, all my sins.[2]

[1] Acts 2:38
[2] Matt. 3:11; Rom. 6:3-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Q&A 70
Q. What does it mean to be washed with Christ's blood and Spirit?
A. To be washed with Christ's blood means
that God, by grace, has forgiven our sins
because of Christ's blood
poured out for us in his sacrifice on the cross.[1]

To be washed with Christ's Spirit means
that the Holy Spirit has renewed
and sanctified us to be members of Christ,
so that more and more
we become dead to sin
and live holy and blameless lives.[2]

[1] Zech. 13:1; Eph. 1:7-8; Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:5
[2] Ezek. 36:25-27; John 3:5-8; Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 6:11; Col. 2:11-12

Q&A 71
**Q. Where does Christ promise
that we are washed with his blood and Spirit
as surely as we are washed
with the water of baptism?**
A. In the institution of baptism, where he says:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit."[1]

"The one who believes and is baptized will be saved;
but the one who does not believe will be condemned."[2]

This promise is repeated when Scripture calls baptism
"the water of rebirth"[3] and
the washing away of sins.[4]

[1] Matt. 28:19
[2] Mark 16:16
[3] Titus 3:5
[4] Acts 22:16

Lord's Day 27

Q&A 72
**Q. Does this outward washing with water
itself wash away sins?**
A. No, only Jesus Christ's blood and the Holy Spirit
cleanse us from all sins.[1]

[1] Matt. 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 John 1:7

Q&A 73
**Q. Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism
the washing of rebirth and
the washing away of sins?**
A. God has good reason for these words.
To begin with, God wants to teach us that
the blood and Spirit of Christ take away our sins
just as water removes dirt from the body.[1]

But more important,
God wants to assure us, by this divine pledge and sign,
that we are as truly washed of our sins spiritually
as our bodies are washed with water physically.[2]

[1] 1 Cor. 6:11; Rev. 1:5; 7:14
[2] Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27

Q&A 74
Q. Should infants also be baptized?
A. Yes,
Infants as well as adults
are included in God's covenant and people,[1]
and they, no less than adults, are promised
deliverance from sin through Christ's blood
and the Holy Spirit who produces faith.[2]

Therefore, by baptism, the sign of the covenant,
they too should be incorporated into the Christian church
and distinguished from the children
of unbelievers.[3]
This was done in the Old Testament by circumcision,[4]
which was replaced in the New Testament by baptism.[5]

[1] Gen. 17:7; Matt. 19:14
[2] Isa. 44:1-3; Acts 2:38-39; 16:31
[3] Acts 10:47; 1 Cor. 7:14
[4] Gen. 17:9-14
[5] Col. 2:11-13

The Holy Supper of Jesus Christ

Lord's Day 28

Q&A 75
Q. How does the holy supper
remind and assure you
that you share in
Christ's one sacrifice on the cross
and in all his benefits?
A. In this way:
Christ has commanded me and all believers
to eat this broken bread and to drink this cup
in remembrance of him.
With this command come these promises:[1]

First,
as surely as I see with my eyes
the bread of the Lord broken for me
and the cup shared with me,
so surely
his body was offered and broken for me
and his blood poured out for me
on the cross.

Second,
as surely as
I receive from the hand of the one who serves,
and taste with my mouth
the bread and cup of the Lord,
given me as sure signs of Christ's body and blood,
so surely
he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life
with his crucified body and poured-out blood.

[1] Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25

Q&A 76

Q. What does it mean
to eat the crucified body of Christ
and to drink his poured-out blood?

A. It means
to accept with a believing heart
the entire suffering and death of Christ
and thereby
to receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.[1]

But it means more.
Through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us,
we are united more and more to Christ's blessed body.[2]
And so, although he is in heaven[3] and we are on earth,
we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone.[4]
And we forever live on and are governed by one Spirit,
as the members of our body are by one soul.[5]

[1] John 6:35, 40, 50-54
[2] John 6:55-56; 1 Cor. 12:13
[3] Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 11:26; Col. 3:1
[4] 1 Cor. 6:15-17; Eph. 5:29-30; 1 John 4:13
[5] John 6:56-58; 15:1-6; Eph. 4:15-16; 1 John 3:24

Q&A 77

Q. Where does Christ promise
to nourish and refresh believers
with his body and blood
as surely as
they eat this broken bread
and drink this cup?

A. In the institution of the Lord's Supper:

"The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed,
took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and said,
'This is my body that is [broken]* for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying,
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood;
do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.'

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes."[1]

This promise is repeated by Paul in these words:

"The cup of blessing that we bless,
is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?
The bread that we break,
is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?
Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body,
for we all partake of the one bread."[2]

[1] 1 Cor. 11:23-26
[2] 1 Cor. 10:16-17

*The word "broken" does not appear in the NRSV text, but it was present in the original German of the Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 29

Q&A 78
Q. Do the bread and wine become
the real body and blood of Christ?
A. No.
Just as the water of baptism
is not changed into Christ's blood
and does not itself wash away sins
but is simply a divine sign and assurance[1] of these things,
so too the holy bread of the Lord's Supper
does not become the actual body of Christ,[2]
even though it is called the body of Christ[3]
in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments.[4]

[1] Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5
[2] Matt. 26:26-29
[3] 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:26-28
[4] Gen. 17:10-11; Ex. 12:11, 13; 1 Cor. 10:1-4

Q&A 79
Q. Why then does Christ call
the bread his body
and the cup his blood,
or the new covenant in his blood,
and Paul use the words,
a participation in Christ's body and blood?
A. Christ has good reason for these words.
He wants to teach us that
just as bread and wine nourish the temporal life,
so too his crucified body and poured-out blood
are the true food and drink of our souls for eternal life.[1]

But more important,

he wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge,
that we, through the Holy Spirit's work,
share in his true body and blood
as surely as our mouths
receive these holy signs in his remembrance,[2]
and that all of his suffering and obedience
are as definitely ours
as if we personally
had suffered and made satisfaction for our sins.[3]

[1] John 6:51, 55
[2] 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:26
[3] Rom. 6:5-11

Lord's Day 30

Q&A 80*
Q. How does the Lord's Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?
A. The Lord's Supper declares to us
that all our sins are completely forgiven
through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ,
which he himself accomplished on the cross once for all.[1]
It also declares to us
that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ,[2]
who with his true body
is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father[3]
where he wants us to worship him.[4]

But the Mass teaches
that the living and the dead
do not have their sins forgiven
through the suffering of Christ
unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests.
It also teaches
that Christ is bodily present
under the form of bread and wine
where Christ is therefore to be worshiped.
Thus the Mass is basically
nothing but a denial
of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ
and a condemnable idolatry.

[1] John 19:30; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25-26; 10:10-18
[2] 1 Cor. 6:17; 10:16-17
[3] Acts 7:55-56; Heb. 1:3; 8:1
[4] Matt. 6:20-21; John 4:21-24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1-3

*Q&A 80 was altogether absent from the first edition of the catechism but was present in a shorter form in the second edition. The translation here given is of the expanded text of the third edition.

In response to a mandate from Synod 1998, the Christian Reformed Church's

Interchurch Relations Committee conducted a study of Q & A 80 and the Roman Catholic Mass. Based on this study, Synod 2004 declared that "Q & A 80 can no longer be held in its current form as part of our confession." Synod 2006 directed that Q & A 80 remain in the CRC's text of the Heidelberg Catechism but that the last three paragraphs be placed in brackets to indicate that they do not accurately reflect the official teaching and practice of today's Roman Catholic Church and are no longer confessionally binding on members of the CRC.

The Reformed Church in America retains the original full text, choosing to recognize that the catechism was written within a historical context which may not accurately describe the Roman Catholic Church's current stance.

Q&A 81
Q. Who should come
to the Lord's table?
A. Those who are displeased with themselves
because of their sins,
but who nevertheless trust
that their sins are pardoned
and that their remaining weakness is covered
by the suffering and death of Christ,
and who also desire more and more
to strengthen their faith
and to lead a better life.

Hypocrites and those who are unrepentant, however,
eat and drink judgment on themselves.[1]

[1] 1 Cor. 10:19-22; 11:26-32

Q&A 82
Q. Should those be admitted
to the Lord's Supper
who show by what they profess and how they live
that they are unbelieving and ungodly?
A. No, that would dishonor God's covenant
and bring down God's wrath upon the entire congregation.[1]
Therefore, according to the instruction of Christ
and his apostles,
the Christian church is duty-bound to exclude such people,
by the official use of the keys of the kingdom,
until they reform their lives.

[1] 1 Cor. 11:17-32; Ps. 50:14-16; Isa. 1:11-17

Lord's Day 31

Q&A 83
Q. What are the keys of the kingdom?
A. The preaching of the holy gospel
and Christian discipline toward repentance.
Both of them
open the kingdom of heaven to believers

and close it to unbelievers.[1]

[1] Matt. 16:19; John 20:22-23

Q&A 84
Q. How does preaching the holy gospel open and close the kingdom of heaven?
A. According to the command of Christ,

The kingdom of heaven is opened
by proclaiming and publicly declaring
to all believers, each and every one, that,
as often as they accept the gospel promise in true faith,
God, because of Christ's merit,
truly forgives all their sins.

The kingdom of heaven is closed, however,
by proclaiming and publicly declaring
to unbelievers and hypocrites that,
as long as they do not repent,
the wrath of God and eternal condemnation
rest on them.

God's judgment, both in this life and in the life to come,
is based on this gospel testimony.[1]

[1] Matt. 16:19; John 3:31-36; 20:21-23

Q&A 85
Q. How is the kingdom of heaven closed and opened by Christian discipline?
A. According to the command of Christ:

Those who, though called Christians,
profess unchristian teachings or live unchristian lives,
and who after repeated personal and loving admonitions,
refuse to abandon their errors and evil ways,
and who after being reported to the church, that is,
to those ordained by the church for that purpose,
fail to respond also to the church's admonitions—
such persons the church excludes
from the Christian community
by withholding the sacraments from them,
and God also excludes them from the kingdom of Christ.[1]

Such persons,
when promising and demonstrating genuine reform,
are received again
as members of Christ
and of his church.[2]

[1] Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:3-5, 11-13; 2 Thess. 3:14-15
[2] Luke 15:20-24; 2 Cor. 2:6-11

Part III: Gratitude

Lord's Day 32

Q&A 86
Q. Since we have been delivered
from our misery
by grace through Christ
without any merit of our own,
why then should we do good works?
A. Because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood,
is also restoring us by his Spirit into his image,
so that with our whole lives
we may show that we are thankful to God
for his benefits,[1]
so that he may be praised through us,[2]
so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits,[3]
and so that by our godly living
our neighbors may be won over to Christ.[4]

[1] Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:5-10
[2] Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19-20
[3] Matt. 7:17-18; Gal. 5:22-24; 2 Pet. 1:10-11
[4] Matt. 5:14-16; Rom. 14:17-19; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:1-2

Q&A 87
Q. Can those be saved
who do not turn to God
from their ungrateful
and unrepentant ways?
A. By no means.
Scripture tells us that
no unchaste person,
no idolater, adulterer, thief,
no covetous person,
no drunkard, slanderer, robber,
or the like
will inherit the kingdom of God.[1]

[1] 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:1-20; 1 John 3:14

Lord's Day 33

Q&A 88
Q. What is involved
in genuine repentance or conversion?
A. Two things:
the dying-away of the old self,
and the rising-to-life of the new.[1]

[1] Rom. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-10

Q&A 89
Q. What is the dying-away of the old self?

A. To be genuinely sorry for sin
and more and more to hate
and run away from it.[1]

[1] Ps. 51:3-4, 17; Joel 2:12-13; Rom. 8:12-13; 2 Cor. 7:10

Q&A 90
Q. What is the rising-to-life of the new self?
A. Wholehearted joy in God through Christ[1]
and a love and delight to live
according to the will of God
by doing every kind of good work.[2]

[1] Ps. 51:8, 12; Isa. 57:15; Rom. 5:1; 14:17
[2] Rom. 6:10-11; Gal. 2:20

Q&A 91
Q. What are good works?
A. Only those which
are done out of true faith,[1]
conform to God's law,[2]
and are done for God's glory;[3]
and not those based
on our own opinion
or human tradition.[4]

[1] John 15:5; Heb. 11:6
[2] Lev. 18:4; 1 Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10
[3] 1 Cor. 10:31
[4] Deut. 12:32; Isa. 29:13; Ezek. 20:18-19; Matt. 15:7-9

The Ten Commandments

Lord's Day 34

Q&A 92
Q. What is God's law?
A. God spoke all these words:

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT
"I am the Lord your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery;
you shall have no other gods before me."

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT
"You shall not make for yourself an idol,
whether in form of anything that is in heaven above,
or that is on the earth beneath,
or that is in the water under the earth.
You shall not bow down to them or worship them;
for I the Lord your God am a jealous God,
punishing children for the iniquity of parents,
to the third and fourth generation

of those who reject me,
but showing love to the thousandth generation of those
who love me and keep my commandments."

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT
"You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God,
for the Lord will not acquit anyone
who misuses his name."

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT
"Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
Six days you shall labor and do all your work.
But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God;
you shall not do any work—
you, your son or your daughter,
your male or female slave,
your livestock,
or the alien resident in your towns.
For in six days the Lord made
the heaven and earth, the sea,
and all that is in them,
but rested the seventh day;
therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day
and consecrated it."

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT
"Honor your father and your mother,
so that your days may be long
in the land that the Lord your God is giving to you."

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT
"You shall not murder."

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT
"You shall not commit adultery."

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT
"You shall not steal."

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT
"You shall not bear false witness
against your neighbor."

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT
"You shall not covet your neighbor's house;
you shall not covet your neighbor's wife,
or male or female slave,
or ox, or donkey,
or anything that belongs to your neighbor."[1]

[1] Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21

Q&A 93
Q. How are these commandments divided?

A. Into two tables.
The first has four commandments,
teaching us how we ought to live in relation to God.
The second has six commandments,
teaching us what we owe our neighbor.[1]

[1] Matt. 22:37-39

Q&A 94
Q. What does the Lord require in the first commandment?
A. That I, not wanting to endanger my own salvation,
avoid and shun
all idolatry,[1] sorcery, superstitious rites,[2]
and prayer to saints or to other creatures.[3]

That I rightly know the only true God,[4]
trust him alone,[5]
and look to God for every good thing[6]
humbly[7] and patiently,[8]
and love,[9] fear,[10] and honor[11] God
with all my heart.

In short,
that I give up anything
rather than go against God's will in any way.[12]

[1] 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 10:5-14; 1 John 5:21
[2] Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9-12
[3] Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9
[4] John 17:3
[5] Jer. 17:5, 7
[6] Ps. 104:27-28; James 1:17
[7] 1 Pet. 5:5-6
[8] Col. 1:11; Heb. 10:36
[9] Matt. 22:37 (Deut. 6:5)
[10] Prov. 9:10; 1 Pet. 1:17
[11] Matt. 4:10 (Deut. 6:13)
[12] Matt. 5:29-30; 10:37-39

Q&A 95
Q. What is idolatry?
A. Idolatry is
having or inventing something in which one trusts
in place of or alongside of the only true God,
who has revealed himself in the Word.[1]

[1] 1 Chron. 16:26; Gal. 4:8-9; Eph. 5:5; Phil. 3:19

Lord's Day 35

Q&A 96
Q. What is God's will for us in the second commandment?

A. That we in no way make any image of God[1]
nor worship him in any other way
than has been commanded in God's Word.[2]

[1] Deut. 4:15-19; Isa. 40:18-25; Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:22-23
[2] Lev. 10:1-7; 1 Sam. 15:22-23; John 4:23-24

Q&A 97
Q. May we then not make any image at all?
A. God can not and may not be visibly portrayed in any way.

Although creatures may be portrayed,
yet God forbids making or having such images
if one's intention is to worship them
or to serve God through them.[1]

[1] Ex. 34:13-14, 17; 2 Kings 18:4-5

Q&A 98
Q. But may not images be permitted in churches in place of books for the unlearned?
A. No, we should not try to be wiser than God.
God wants the Christian community instructed
by the living preaching of his Word[1]—
not by idols that cannot even talk.[2]

[1] Rom. 10:14-15, 17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19
[2] Jer. 10:8; Hab. 2:18-20

Lord's Day 36

Q&A 99
Q. What is the aim of the third commandment?
A. That we neither blaspheme nor misuse the name of God
by cursing,[1] perjury,[2] or unnecessary oaths,[3]
nor share in such horrible sins
by being silent bystanders.[4]

In summary,
we should use the holy name of God
only with reverence and awe,[5]
so that we may properly
confess God,[6]
pray to God,[7]
and glorify God in all our words and works.[8]

[1] Lev. 24:10-17
[2] Lev. 19:12
[3] Matt. 5:37; James 5:12
[4] Lev. 5:1; Prov. 29:24
[5] Ps. 99:1-5; Jer. 4:2

[6] Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10
[7] Ps. 50:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:8
[8] Col. 3:17

Q&A 100
Q. Is blasphemy of God's name by swearing and cursing really such serious sin that God is angry also with those who do not do all they can to help prevent and forbid it?
A. Yes, indeed;[1]
No sin is greater
or provokes God's wrath more
than blaspheming his name.
That is why God commanded it to be punished with death.[2]

[1] Lev. 5:1
[2] Lev. 24:10-17

Lord's Day 37

Q&A 101
Q. But may we swear an oath in God's name if we do it reverently?
A. Yes, when the government demands it,
or when necessity requires it,
in order to maintain and promote truth and trustworthiness
for God's glory and our neighbor's good.

Such oaths are grounded in God's Word[1]
and were rightly used by the people of God
in the Old and New Testaments.[2]

[1] Deut. 6:13; 10:20; Jer. 4:1-2; Heb. 6:16
[2] Gen. 21:24; Josh. 9:15; 1 Kings 1:29-30; Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23

Q&A 102
Q. May we also swear by saints or other creatures?
A. No.
A legitimate oath means calling upon God
as the only one who knows my heart
to witness to my truthfulness
and to punish me if I swear falsely.[1]
No creature is worthy of such honor.[2]

[1] Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:23
[2] Matt. 5:34-37; 23:16-22; James 5:12

Lord's Day 38

Q&A 103
Q. What is God's will for you in the fourth commandment?

A. First,
that the gospel ministry and education for it be maintained,[1]
and that, especially on the festive day of rest,
I diligently attend the assembly of God's people[2]
to learn what God's Word teaches,[3]
to participate in the sacraments,[4]
to pray to God publicly,[5]
and to bring Christian offerings for the poor.[6]

Second,
that every day of my life
I rest from my evil ways,
let the Lord work in me through his Spirit,
and so begin in this life
the eternal Sabbath.[7]

[1] Deut. 6:4-9, 20-25; 1 Cor. 9:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:13-17; Titus 1:5
[2] Deut. 12:5-12; Ps. 40:9-10; 68:26; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25
[3] Rom. 10:14-17; 1 Cor. 14:31-32; 1 Tim. 4:13
[4] 1 Cor. 11:23-25
[5] Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1
[6] Ps. 50:14; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8-9
[7] Isa. 66:23; Heb. 4:9-11

Lord's Day 39

Q&A 104
Q. What is God's will for you in the fifth commandment?
A. That I honor, love, and be loyal
to my father and mother
and all those in authority over me;
that I submit myself with proper obedience
to all their good teaching and discipline;[1]
and also that I be patient with their failings[2]—
for through them God chooses to rule us.[3]

[1] Ex. 21:17; Prov. 1:8; 4:1; Rom. 13:1-2; Eph. 5:21-22; 6:1-9; Col. 3:18–4:1
[2] Prov. 20:20; 23:22; 1 Pet. 2:18
[3] Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-8; Eph. 6:1-9; Col. 3:18-21

Lord's Day 40

Q&A 105
Q. What is God's will for you in the sixth commandment?
A. I am not to belittle, hate, insult, or kill my neighbor—
not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture,
and certainly not by actual deeds—
and I am not to be party to this in others;[1]
rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge.[2]

I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either.[3]

Prevention of murder is also why
government is armed with the sword.[4]

[1] Gen. 9:6; Lev. 19:17-18; Matt. 5:21-22; 26:52
[2] Prov. 25:21-22; Matt. 18:35; Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:26
[3] Matt. 4:7; 26:52; Rom. 13:11-14
[4] Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:14; Rom. 13:4

Q&A 106
Q. Does this commandment refer only to murder?
A. By forbidding murder God teaches us
that he hates the root of murder:
envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness.[1]

In God's sight all such are disguised forms of murder.[2]

[1] Prov. 14:30; Rom. 1:29; 12:19; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 2:9-11
[2] 1 John 3:15

Q&A 107
Q. Is it enough then
that we do not murder our neighbor
in any such way?
A. No.
By condemning envy, hatred, and anger
God wants us
to love our neighbors as ourselves,[1]
to be patient, peace-loving, gentle,
merciful, and friendly toward them,[2]
to protect them from harm as much as we can,
and to do good even to our enemies.[3]

[1] Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10
[2] Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:36; Rom. 12:10, 18; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:8
[3] Ex. 23:4-5; Matt. 5:44-45; Rom. 12:20-21 (Prov. 25:21-22)

Lord's Day 41

Q&A 108
Q. What does the seventh commandment teach us?
A. That God condemns all unchastity,[1]
and that therefore we should thoroughly detest it[2]
and live decent and chaste lives,[3]
within or outside of the holy state of marriage.

[1] Lev. 18:30; Eph. 5:3-5
[2] Jude 22-23
[3] 1 Cor. 7:1-9; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4

Q&A 109
Q. Does God, in this commandment,
forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?
A. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul,

and God wants both to be kept clean and holy.
That is why God forbids
all unchaste actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires,[1]
and whatever may incite someone to them.[2]

[1] Matt. 5:27-29; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; Eph. 5:3-4
[2] 1 Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:18

Lord's Day 42

Q&A 110
Q. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?
A. God forbids not only outright theft and robbery,
punishable by law.[1]

But in God's sight theft also includes
all scheming and swindling
in order to get our neighbor's goods for ourselves,
whether by force or means that appear legitimate,[2]
such as
inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume;
fraudulent merchandising;
counterfeit money;
excessive interest;
or any other means forbidden by God.[3]

In addition God forbids all greed[4]
and pointless squandering of his gifts.[5]

[1] Ex. 22:1; 1 Cor. 5:9-10; 6:9-10
[2] Mic. 6:9-11; Luke 3:14; James 5:1-6
[3] Deut. 25:13-16; Ps. 15:5; Prov. 11:1; 12:22; Ezek. 45:9-12; Luke 6:35
[4] Luke 12:15; Eph. 5:5
[5] Prov. 21:20; 23:20-21; Luke 16:10-13

Q&A 111
Q. What does God require of you in this commandment?
A. That I do whatever I can
for my neighbor's good,
that I treat others
as I would like them to treat me,
and that I work faithfully
so that I may share with those in need.[1]

[1] Isa. 58:5-10; Matt. 7:12; Gal. 6:9-10; Eph. 4:28

Lord's Day 43

Q&A 112
Q. What is the aim of the ninth commandment?
A. That I
never give false testimony against anyone,

twist no one's words,
not gossip or slander,
nor join in condemning anyone
rashly or without a hearing.[1]

Rather, in court and everywhere else,
I should avoid lying and deceit of every kind;
these are the very devices the devil uses,
and they would call down on me God's intense wrath.[2]
I should love the truth,
speak it candidly,
and openly acknowledge it.[3]
And I should do what I can
to guard and advance my neighbor's good name.[4]

[1] Ps. 15; Prov. 19:5; Matt. 7:1; Luke 6:37; Rom. 1:28-32
[2] Lev. 19:11-12; Prov. 12:22; 13:5; John 8:44; Rev. 21:8
[3] 1 Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25
[4] 1 Pet. 3:8-9; 4:8

Lord's Day 44

Q&A 113
Q. What is the aim of the tenth commandment?
A. That not even the slightest desire or thought
contrary to any one of God's commandments
should ever arise in our hearts.

Rather, with all our hearts
we should always hate sin
and take pleasure in whatever is right.[1]

[1] Ps. 19:7-14; 139:23-24; Rom. 7:7-8

Q&A 114
Q. But can those converted to God
obey these commandments perfectly?
A. No.
In this life even the holiest
have only a small beginning of this obedience.[1]

Nevertheless, with all seriousness of purpose,
they do begin to live
according to all, not only some,
of God's commandments.[2]

[1] Eccles. 7:20; Rom. 7:14-15; 1 Cor. 13:9; 1 John 1:8-10
[2] Ps. 1:1-2; Rom. 7:22-25; Phil. 3:12-16

Q&A 115
Q. Since no one in this life
can obey the Ten Commandments perfectly,
why does God want them
preached so pointedly?

A. First, so that the longer we live
the more we may come to know our sinfulness
and the more eagerly look to Christ
for forgiveness of sins and righteousness.[1]

Second, so that
we may never stop striving,
and never stop praying to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit,
to be renewed more and more after God's image,
until after this life we reach our goal:
perfection.[2]

[1] Ps. 32:5; Rom. 3:19-26; 7:7, 24-25; 1 John 1:9
[2] 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:12-14; 1 John 3:1-3

The Lord's Prayer

Lord's Day 45

Q&A 116
Q. Why do Christians need to pray?
A. Because prayer is the most important part
of the thankfulness God requires of us.[1]
And also because God gives his grace and Holy Spirit
only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly,
asking God for these gifts
and thanking God for them.[2]

[1] Ps. 50:14-15; 116:12-19; 1 Thess. 5:16-18
[2] Matt. 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-13

Q&A 117
Q. What is the kind of prayer
that pleases God and that he listens to?
A. First, we must pray from the heart
to no other than the one true God,
revealed to us in his Word,
asking for everything God has commanded us to ask for.[1]

Second, we must fully recognize our need and misery,
so that we humble ourselves in God's majestic presence.[2]

Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation:
even though we do not deserve it,
God will surely listen to our prayer
because of Christ our Lord.
That is what God promised us in his Word.[3]

[1] Ps. 145:18-20; John 4:22-24; Rom. 8:26-27; James 1:5; 1 John 5:14-15
[2] 2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 2:11; 34:18; 62:8; Isa. 66:2; Rev. 4
[3] Dan. 9:17-19; Matt. 7:8; John 14:13-14; 16:23; Rom. 10:13; James 1:6

Q&A 118
Q. What did God command us to pray for?
A. Everything we need, spiritually and physically,[1]
as embraced in the prayer
Christ our Lord himself taught us.

[1] James 1:17; Matt. 6:33

Q&A 119
Q. What is this prayer?
A. Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.
For the kingdom
and the power
and the glory are yours forever.
Amen.[1]*

[1] Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

*Earlier and better manuscripts of Matthew 6 omit the words "For the kingdom and …Amen."

Lord's Day 46

Q&A 120
Q. Why did Christ command us to call God "our Father"?
A. To awaken in us
at the very beginning of our prayer
what should be basic to our prayer—
a childlike reverence and trust
that through Christ God has become our Father,
and that just as our parents do not refuse us
the things of this life,
even less will God our Father refuse to give us
what we ask in faith.[1]

[1] Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 11:11-13

Q&A 121
Q. Why the words "in heaven"?
A. These words teach us
not to think of God's heavenly majesty
as something earthly,[1]

and to expect everything
needed for body and soul
from God's almighty power.[2]

[1] Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-25
[2] Matt. 6:25-34; Rom. 8:31-32

Lord's Day 47

Q&A 122
Q. What does the first petition mean?
A. "Hallowed be your name" means:

Help us to truly know you,[1]
to honor, glorify, and praise you
for all your works
and for all that shines forth from them:
your almighty power, wisdom, kindness,
justice, mercy, and truth.[2]

And it means,

Help us to direct all our living—
what we think, say, and do—
so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us
but always honored and praised.[3]

[1] Jer. 9:23-24; 31:33-34; Matt. 16:17; John 17:3
[2] Ex. 34:5-8; Ps. 145; Jer. 32:16-20; Luke 1:46-55, 68-75; Rom. 11:33-36
[3] Ps. 115:1; Matt. 5:16

Lord's Day 48

Q&A 123
Q. What does the second petition mean?
A. "Your kingdom come" means:
Rule us by your Word and Spirit in such a way
that more and more we submit to you.[1]

Preserve your church and make it grow.[2]

Destroy the devil's work;
destroy every force which revolts against you
and every conspiracy against your holy Word.[3]

Do this until your kingdom fully comes,
when you will be
all in all.[4]

[1] Ps. 119:5, 105; 143:10; Matt. 6:33
[2] Ps. 122:6-9; Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:42-47
[3] Rom. 16:20; 1 John 3:8
[4] Rom. 8:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:28; Rev. 22:17, 20

Lord's Day 49

Q&A 124
Q. What does the third petition mean?
A. "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" means:

Help us and all people
to reject our own wills
and to obey your will without any back talk.
Your will alone is good.[1]

Help us one and all to carry out the work we are called to,[2]
as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.[3]

[1] Matt. 7:21; 16:24-26; Luke 22:42; Rom. 12:1-2; Titus 2:11-12
[2] 1 Cor. 7:17-24; Eph. 6:5-9
[3] Ps. 103:20-21

Lord's Day 50

Q&A 125
Q. What does the fourth petition mean?
A. "Give us this day our daily bread" means:

Do take care of all our physical needs[1]
so that we come to know
that you are the only source of everything good,[2]
and that neither our work and worry
nor your gifts
can do us any good without your blessing;[3]

And so help us to give up our trust in creatures
and trust in you alone.[4]

[1] Ps. 104:27-30; 145:15-16; Matt. 6:25-34
[2] Acts 14:17; 17:25; James 1:17
[3] Deut. 8:3; Ps. 37:16; 127:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58
[4] Ps. 55:22; 62; 146; Jer. 17:5-8; Heb. 13:5-6

Lord's Day 51

Q&A 126
Q. What does the fifth petition mean?
A. "Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors" means:

Because of Christ's blood,
do not hold against us, poor sinners that we are,
any of the sins we do
or the evil that constantly clings to us.[1]

Forgive us just as we are fully determined,
as evidence of your grace in us,
to forgive our neighbors.[2]

[1] Ps. 51:1-7; 143:2; Rom. 8:1; 1 John 2:1-2
[2] Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35

Lord's Day 52

Q&A 127
Q. What does the sixth petition mean?
A. "And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one" means:

By ourselves we are too weak
to hold our own even for a moment.[1]

And our sworn enemies—
the devil,[2] the world,[3] and our own flesh[4]—
never stop attacking us.

And so, Lord,
uphold us and make us strong
with the strength of your Holy Spirit,
so that we may not go down to defeat
in this spiritual struggle,[5]
but may firmly resist our enemies
until we finally win the complete victory.[6]

[1] Ps. 103:14-16; John 15:1-5
[2] 2 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Pet. 5:8
[3] John 15:18-21
[4] Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17
[5] Matt. 10:19-20; 26:41; Mark 13:33; Rom. 5:3-5
[6] 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23

Q&A 128
Q. What does your conclusion to this prayer mean?
A. "For the kingdom
and the power
and the glory are yours forever" means:

We have made all these petitions of you
because, as our all-powerful king,
you are both willing and able
to give us all that is good;[1]
and because your holy name,
and not we ourselves,
should receive all the praise, forever.[2]

[1] Rom. 10:11-13; 2 Pet. 2:9
[2] Ps. 115:1; John 14:13

Q&A 129
Q. What does that little word "Amen" express?
A. "Amen" means:

This shall truly and surely be!

It is even more sure
that God listens to my prayer
than that I really desire
what I pray for.[1]

[1] Isa. 65:24; 2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:13

Introduction to the Belgic Confession

The oldest of the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America is the Confession of Faith, popularly known as the Belgic Confession, following the seventeenth century Latin designation "Confessio Belgica." "Belgica" referred to the whole of the Netherlands, both north and south, which today is divided into the Netherlands and Belgium. The confession's chief author was Guido de Bres, a preacher of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands, who died a martyr to the faith in the year 1567. During the sixteenth century the churches in this country were exposed to terrible persecution by the Roman Catholic government. To protest against this cruel oppression, and to prove to the persecutors that the adherents of the Reformed faith were not rebels, as was laid to their charge, but law-abiding citizens who professed the true Christian doctrine according to the Holy Scriptures, de Bres prepared this confession in the year 1561. In the following year a copy was sent to King Philip II, together with an address in which the petitioners declared that they were ready to obey the government in all lawful things, but that they would "offer their backs to stripes, their tongues to knives, their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to the fire," rather than deny the truth expressed in this confession.

Although the immediate purpose of securing freedom from persecution was not attained, and de Bres himself fell as one of the many thousands who sealed their faith with their lives, his work has endured and will continue to endure. In its composition the author availed himself to some extent of a confession of the Reformed churches in France, written chiefly by John Calvin, published two years earlier. The work of de Bres, however, is not a mere revision of Calvin's work, but an independent composition. In 1566 the text of this confession was revised at a synod held at Antwerp. In the Netherlands it was at once gladly received by the churches, and it was adopted by national synods held during the last three decades of the sixteenth century. The text, not the contents, was revised again at the Synod of Dort in 1618-19 and adopted as one of the doctrinal standards to which all office-bearers in the Reformed churches were required to subscribe. The confession is recognized as one of the best official summaries of Reformed doctrine.

The text of Article 36 is presented in two forms in this edition because the Christian Reformed Church in 1938 and 1985 decided to revise it from the original text in order to set forth what it judged to be a more biblical statement on the relationship between church and state, and to eliminate language that denounced "Anabaptists, other anarchists…and so on." The Reformed Church in America has not made any amendments to the Belgic Confession. However, when the Reformed Church in America adopted the Belgic Confession in 1792 as one of the three confessional Standards of Unity, it also adopted the Explanatory Articles that reconciled the statements in the three Standards and the Church Order of Dort with the situation in which it existed in the newly independent United States of America. With regard to Article 36 dealing with the relation of church and state, it stated that "whatever relates to the immediate authority and interposition of the Magistrate in the government of the Church, and which is introduced more or less into all the national establishments in Europe, is entirely omitted in the constitution now published." With regard to the harsh words about the Anabaptists in Article 36, the RCA stated that "In pub-

lishing the Articles of Faith, the Church determined to abide by the words adopted in the Synod of Dordtrecht, as most expressive of what she believes to be truth; in consequences of which, the terms alluded to could not be avoided. But she openly and candidly declares that she by no means thereby intended to refer to any denomination of Christians at present known, and would be grieved at giving offence, or unnecessarily hurting the feelings of any person."

THE BELGIC CONFESSION

Article 1: The Only God
We all believe in our hearts
and confess with our mouths
that there is a single
and simple
spiritual being,
whom we call God—

eternal,
incomprehensible,
invisible,
unchangeable,
infinite,
almighty;

completely wise,
just,
and good,
and the overflowing source
of all good.

Article 2: The Means by Which We Know God
We know God by two means:

First, by the creation, preservation, and government
of the universe,
since that universe is before our eyes
like a beautiful book
in which all creatures,
great and small,
are as letters
to make us ponder
the invisible things of God:
God's eternal power and divinity,
as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20.

All these things are enough to convict humans
and to leave them without excuse.

Second, God makes himself known to us more clearly
by his holy and divine Word,
as much as we need in this life,
for God's glory
and for our salvation.

Article 3: The Written Word of God
We confess that this Word of God
was not sent nor delivered "by human will,"
but that "men and women moved by the Holy Spirit,
spoke from God,"
as Peter says.[1]

Afterward our God—
with special care
for us and our salvation—
commanded his servants, the prophets and apostles,
to commit this revealed Word to writing.
God, with his own finger,
wrote the two tables of the law.

Therefore we call such writings
holy and divine Scriptures.

[1] 2 Pet. 1:21

Article 4: The Canonical Books
We include in the Holy Scripture the two volumes
of the Old and New Testaments.
They are canonical books
with which there can be no quarrel at all.

In the church of God the list is as follows:
In the Old Testament,
the five books of Moses—
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy;
the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth;
the two books of Samuel, and two of Kings;
the two books of Chronicles, called Paralipomenon;
the first book of Ezra; Nehemiah, Esther, Job;
the Psalms of David;
the three books of Solomon—
Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song;
the four major prophets—
Isaiah, Jeremiah*, Ezekiel, Daniel;
and then the other twelve minor prophets—
Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah,
Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk,
Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

In the New Testament,
the four gospels—
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John;
the Acts of the Apostles;
the fourteen letters of Paul—
to the Romans;
the two letters to the Corinthians;
to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians;
the two letters to the Thessalonians;

the two letters to Timothy;
to Titus, Philemon, and to the Hebrews;
the seven letters of the other apostles—
one of James;
two of Peter;
three of John;
one of Jude;
and the Revelation of the apostle John.

* "Jeremiah" here includes the Book of Lamentations as well as the Book of Jeremiah.

Article 5: The Authority of Scripture
We receive all these books
and these only
as holy and canonical,
for the regulating, founding, and establishing
of our faith.

And we believe
without a doubt
all things contained in them—
not so much because the church
receives and approves them as such
but above all because the Holy Spirit
testifies in our hearts
that they are from God,
and also because they
prove themselves
to be from God.

For even the blind themselves are able to see
that the things predicted in them
do happen.

Article 6: The Difference between Canonical and Apocryphal Books
We distinguish between these holy books
and the apocryphal ones,
which are the third and fourth books of Esdras;
the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Jesus Sirach, Baruch;
what was added to the Story of Esther;
the Song of the Three Children in the Furnace;
the Story of Susannah;
the Story of Bell and the Dragon;
the Prayer of Manasseh;
and the two books of Maccabees.

The church may certainly read these books
and learn from them
as far as they agree with the canonical books.
But they do not have such power and virtue
that one could confirm
from their testimony
any point of faith or of the Christian religion.

Much less can they detract
from the authority
of the other holy books.

Article 7: The Sufficiency of Scripture
We believe
that this Holy Scripture contains
the will of God completely
and that everything one must believe
to be saved
is sufficiently taught in it.

For since the entire manner of service
which God requires of us
is described in it at great length,
no one—
    even an apostle
    or an angel from heaven,
    as Paul says[2]—
ought to teach other than
what the Holy Scriptures have
already taught us.

For since it is forbidden
to add to the Word of God,
or take anything away from it,[3]
it is plainly demonstrated
that the teaching is perfect
and complete in all respects.

Therefore we must not consider human writings—
    no matter how holy their authors may have been—
equal to the divine writings;
nor may we put custom,
nor the majority,
nor age,
nor the passage of times or persons,
nor councils, decrees, or official decisions
above the truth of God,
    for truth is above everything else.

For all human beings are liars by nature
and more vain than vanity itself.

Therefore we reject with all our hearts
everything that does not agree
with this infallible rule,
    as we are taught to do by the apostles
    when they say,
        "Test the spirits
        to see if they are from God,"[4]
    and also,
        "Do not receive into the house
        or welcome anyone

who comes to you
and does not bring this teaching."[5]

[2] Gal. 1:8
[3] Deut. 12:32; Rev. 22:18-19
[4] 1 John 4:1
[5] 2 John 10

Article 8: The Trinity
In keeping with this truth and Word of God
we believe in one God,
who is one single essence,
in whom there are three persons,
really, truly, and eternally distinct
according to their incommunicable properties—
namely,
Father,
Son,
and Holy Spirit.
The Father
is the cause,
origin,
and source of all things,
visible as well as invisible.

The Son
is the Word,
the Wisdom,
and the image
of the Father.

The Holy Spirit
is the eternal power
and might,
proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Nevertheless,
this distinction does not divide God into three,
since Scripture teaches us
that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
each has a distinct subsistence
distinguished by characteristics—
yet in such a way
that these three persons are
only one God.

It is evident then
that the Father is not the Son
and that the Son is not the Father,
and that likewise the Holy Spirit is
neither the Father nor the Son.

Nevertheless,
these persons,

thus distinct,
are neither divided
nor fused or mixed together.

For the Father did not take on flesh,
nor did the Spirit,
but only the Son.

The Father was never
without the Son,
nor without the Holy Spirit,
since all these are equal from eternity,
in one and the same essence.

There is neither a first nor a last,
for all three are one
in truth and power,
in goodness and mercy.

Article 9: The Scriptural Witness on the Trinity
All these things we know
from the testimonies of Holy Scripture
as well as from the effects of the persons,
especially from those we feel within ourselves.

The testimonies of the Holy Scriptures,
which teach us to believe in this Holy Trinity,
are written in many places of the Old Testament,
which need not be enumerated
but only chosen with discretion.

In the book of Genesis God says,
"Let us make humankind in our image,
according to our likeness."
So "God created humankind in his image"—
indeed, "male and female he created them."[6]
"See, the man has become like one of us."[7]

It appears from this
that there is a plurality of persons
within the Deity,
when God says,
"Let us make humankind in our image"—
and afterward God indicates the unity
in saying,
"God created."

It is true that God does not say here
how many persons there are—
but what is somewhat obscure to us
in the Old Testament
is very clear in the New.

For when our Lord was baptized in the Jordan,
the voice of the Father was heard saying,
"This is my Son, the Beloved;"[8]
the Son was seen in the water;
and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove.

So, in the baptism of all believers
this form was prescribed by Christ:
Baptize all people "in the name
of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit."[9]

In the Gospel according to Luke
the angel Gabriel says to Mary,
the mother of our Lord:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;
therefore the child to be born will be holy;
he will be called Son of God."[10]

And in another place it says:
"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with all of you."[11]

["There are three that testify in heaven,
the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit,
and these three are one."][12]

In all these passages we are fully taught
that there are three persons
in the one and only divine essence.
And although this doctrine surpasses human understanding,
we nevertheless believe it now,
through the Word,
waiting to know and enjoy it fully
in heaven.

Furthermore,
we must note the particular works and activities
of these three persons in relation to us.
The Father is called our Creator,
by reason of his power.
The Son is our Savior and Redeemer,
by his blood.
The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier,
by living in our hearts.

This doctrine of the holy Trinity
has always been maintained in the true church,
from the time of the apostles until the present,

against Jews, Muslims,
and certain false Christians and heretics,
such as Marcion, Mani,
Praxeas, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, Arius,
and others like them,
who were rightly condemned by the holy fathers.

And so,
in this matter we willingly accept
the three ecumenical creeds—
the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian—
as well as what the ancient fathers decided
in agreement with them.

[6] Gen. 1:26-27
[7] Gen. 3:22
[8] Matt. 3:17
[9] Matt. 28:19
[10] Luke 1:35
[11] 2 Cor. 13:14
[12] 1 John 5:7—following the better Greek texts, the NRSV and other modern translations place this verse in a footnote.

Article 10: The Deity of Christ
We believe that Jesus Christ,
according to his divine nature,
is the only Son of God—
eternally begotten,
not made or created,
for then he would be a creature.

He is one in essence with the Father;
coeternal;
the exact image of the person of the Father
and the "reflection of God's glory,"[13]
being like the Father in all things.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God
not only from the time he assumed our nature
but from all eternity,
as the following testimonies teach us
when they are taken together.

Moses says that God created the world;[14]
and John says that all things were created through the Word,[15]
which he calls God.
The apostle says that God created the world through the Son.[16]
He also says that God created all things through Jesus Christ.[17]

And so it must follow
that the one who is called God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus Christ
already existed before creating all things.
Therefore the prophet Micah says
that Christ's origin is "from ancient days."[18]

And the apostle says
that the Son has "neither beginning of days
nor end of life."[19]

So then,
he is the true eternal God,
the Almighty,
whom we invoke,
worship,
and serve.

[13] Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3
[14] Gen. 1:1
[15] John 1:3
[16] Heb. 1:2
[17] Col. 1:16
[18] Mic. 5:2
[19] Heb. 7:3

Article 11: The Deity of the Holy Spirit
We believe and confess also
that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally
from the Father and the Son—
neither made,
nor created,
nor begotten,
but only proceeding
from the two of them.

In regard to order,
the Spirit is the third person of the Trinity—
of one and the same essence,
and majesty,
and glory,
with the Father and the Son,
being true and eternal God,
as the Holy Scriptures teach us.

Article 12: The Creation of All Things
We believe that the Father,
when it seemed good to him,
created heaven and earth and all other creatures
from nothing,
by the Word—
that is to say,
by the Son.

God has given all creatures
their being, form, and appearance
and their various functions
for serving their Creator.

Even now
God also sustains and governs them all,

according to his eternal providence
and by his infinite power,
that they may serve humanity,
in order that humanity may serve God.

God has also created the angels good,
that they might be messengers of God
and serve the elect.

Some of them have fallen
from the excellence in which God created them
into eternal perdition;
and the others have persisted and remained
in their original state,
by the grace of God.

The devils and evil spirits are so corrupt
that they are enemies of God
and of everything good.
They lie in wait for the church
and every member of it
like thieves,
with all their power,
to destroy and spoil everything
by their deceptions.

So then,
by their own wickedness
they are condemned to everlasting damnation,
daily awaiting their torments.

For that reason
we detest the error of the Sadducees,
who deny that there are spirits and angels,
and also the error of the Manicheans,
who say that the devils originated by themselves,
being evil by nature,
without having been corrupted.

Article 13: The Doctrine of God's Providence
We believe that this good God,
after creating all things,
did not abandon them to chance or fortune
but leads and governs them
according to his holy will,
in such a way that nothing happens in this world
without God's orderly arrangement.

Yet God is not the author of,
and cannot be charged with,
the sin that occurs.
For God's power and goodness
are so great and incomprehensible
that God arranges and does his works very well and justly

even when the devils and the wicked act unjustly.

We do not wish to inquire
with undue curiosity
into what God does that surpasses human understanding
and is beyond our ability to comprehend.
But in all humility and reverence
we adore the just judgments of God,
which are hidden from us,
being content to be Christ's disciples,
so as to learn only what God shows us in the Word,
without going beyond those limits.

This doctrine gives us unspeakable comfort
since it teaches us
that nothing can happen to us by chance
but only by the arrangement of our gracious
heavenly Father,
who watches over us with fatherly care,
sustaining all creatures under his lordship,
so that not one of the hairs on our heads
(for they are all numbered)
nor even a little bird
can fall to the ground
without the will of our Father.[20]

In this thought we rest,
knowing that God holds in check
the devils and all our enemies,
who cannot hurt us
without divine permission and will.

For that reason we reject
the damnable error of the Epicureans,
who say that God does not get involved in anything
and leaves everything to chance.

[20] Matt. 10:29-30

Article 14: The Creation and Fall of Humanity
We believe
that God created human beings from the dust of the earth
and made and formed them in his image and likeness—
good, just, and holy;
able by their will to conform
in all things
to the will of God.

But when they were in honor
they did not understand it[21]
and did not recognize their excellence.
But they subjected themselves willingly to sin
and consequently to death and the curse,
lending their ear to the word of the devil.

For they transgressed the commandment of life,
which they had received,
and by their sin they separated themselves from God,
who was their true life,
having corrupted their entire nature.

So they made themselves guilty
and subject to physical and spiritual death,
having become wicked,
perverse,
and corrupt in all their ways.
They lost all their excellent gifts
which they had received from God,
and retained none of them
except for small traces
which are enough to make them
inexcusable.

Moreover, all the light in us is turned to darkness,
as the Scripture teaches us:
"The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it."[22]
Here John calls the human race "darkness."

Therefore we reject everything taught to the contrary
concerning human free will,
since humans are nothing but the slaves of sin
and cannot do a thing
unless it is given them from heaven.[23]

For who can boast of being able
to do anything good by oneself,
since Christ says,
"No one can come to me
unless drawn by the Father who sent me"?[24]

Who can glory in their own will
when they understand that "the mind of the flesh
is hostile to God"?[25]
Who can speak of their own knowledge
in view of the fact that "those who are unspiritual
do not understand the gifts of God's Spirit"?[26]

In short,
who can produce a single thought,
knowing that we are not able to think a thing
about ourselves,
by ourselves,
but that "our competence is from God"?[27]

And therefore,
what the apostle says
ought rightly to stand fixed and firm:

"God works within us
both to will and to do
according to God's good pleasure."[28]

For there is no understanding nor will
conforming to God's understanding and will
apart from Christ's involvement,
as he teaches us when he says,
"Apart from me you can do nothing."[29]

[21] Ps. 49:20
[22] John 1:5
[23] John 3:27
[24] John 6:44
[25] Rom. 8:7
[26] 1 Cor. 2:14
[27] 2 Cor. 3:5
[28] Phil. 2:13
[29] John 15:5

Article 15: The Doctrine of Original Sin
We believe
that by the disobedience of Adam
original sin has been spread
through the whole human race.[30]

It is a corruption of the whole human nature—
an inherited depravity which even infects small infants
in their mother's womb,
and the root which produces in humanity
every sort of sin.
It is therefore so vile and enormous in God's sight
that it is enough to condemn the human race,
and it is not abolished
or wholly uprooted
even by baptism,
seeing that sin constantly boils forth
as though from a contaminated spring.

Nevertheless,
it is not imputed to God's children
for their condemnation
but is forgiven
by his grace and mercy—
not to put them to sleep
but so that the awareness of this corruption
might often make believers groan
as they long to be set free
from the "body of this death."[31]

Therefore we reject the error of the Pelagians
who say that this sin is nothing else than a matter of imitation.

[30] Rom. 5:12-13

[31] Rom. 7:24

Article 16: The Doctrine of Election
We believe that—
all Adam's descendants having thus fallen
into perdition and ruin
by the sin of Adam—
God showed himself to be as he is:
merciful and just.

God is merciful
in withdrawing and saving from this perdition those who,
in the eternal and unchangeable divine counsel,
have been elected and chosen in Jesus Christ our Lord
by his pure goodness,
without any consideration of their works.

God is just
in leaving the others in their ruin and fall
into which they plunged themselves.

Article 17: The Recovery of Fallen Humanity
We believe that our good God,
by marvelous divine wisdom and goodness,
seeing that Adam and Eve had plunged themselves in this manner
into both physical and spiritual death
and made themselves completely miserable,
set out to find them,
though they,
trembling all over,
were fleeing from God.

And God comforted them,
promising to give them his Son,
born of a woman,[32]
to crush the head of the serpent,[33]
and to make them blessed.

[32] Gal. 4:4
[33] Gen. 3:15

Article 18: The Incarnation
So then we confess
that God fulfilled the promise
made to the early fathers and mothers
by the mouth of the holy prophets
when he sent the only and eternal Son of God
into the world
at the time appointed.

The Son took the "form of a slave"
and was made in "human form,"[34]
truly assuming a real human nature,
with all its weaknesses,

except for sin;
being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
without male participation.

And Christ not only assumed human nature
as far as the body is concerned
but also a real human soul,
in order to be a real human being.
For since the soul had been lost as well as the body
Christ had to assume them both
to save them both together.

Therefore we confess,
(against the heresy of the Anabaptists
who deny that Christ assumed
human flesh from his mother)
that Christ "shared the very flesh and blood of children";[35]
being the "fruit of the loins" of David "according to the flesh,"[36]
"descended from David" according to the flesh;[37]
the "fruit of the womb" of the virgin Mary;[38]
born of a woman;[39]
the seed of David;[40]
the "root of Jesse";[41]
descended from Judah,[42]
having descended from the Jews according to the flesh;
descended from Abraham—
having assumed descent from Abraham and Sarah,
and was "made like his brothers and sisters,"
yet without sin.[43]

In this way Christ is truly our Immanuel—
that is: "God with us."[44]

[34] Phil. 2:7
[35] Heb. 2:14
[36] Acts 2:30
[37] Rom. 1:3
[38] Luke 1:42
[39] Gal. 4:4
[40] 2 Tim. 2:8
[41] Rom. 15:12
[42] Heb. 7:14
[43] Heb. 2:17; 4:15
[44] Matt. 1:23

Article 19: The Two Natures of Christ
We believe that by being thus conceived
the person of the Son has been inseparably united
and joined together
with human nature,
in such a way that there are not two Sons of God,
nor two persons,
but two natures united in a single person,

with each nature retaining its own distinct properties.

Thus his divine nature has always remained uncreated,
without beginning of days or end of life,[45]
filling heaven and earth.

Christ's human nature has not lost its properties
but continues to have those of a creature—
it has a beginning of days;
it is of a finite nature
and retains all that belongs to a real body.
And even though he,
by his resurrection,
gave it immortality,
that nonetheless did not change
the reality of his human nature;
for our salvation and resurrection
depend also on the reality of his body.

But these two natures
are so united together in one person
that they are not even separated by his death.

So then,
what he committed to his Father when he died
was a real human spirit which left his body.
But meanwhile his divine nature remained
united with his human nature
even when he was lying in the grave;
and his deity never ceased to be in him,
just as it was in him when he was a little child,
though for a while it did not so reveal itself.

These are the reasons why we confess him
to be true God and truly human—
true God in order to conquer death
by his power,
and truly human that he might die for us
in the weakness of his flesh.

[45] Heb. 7:3

Article 20: The Justice and Mercy of God in Christ
We believe that God—
who is perfectly merciful
and also very just—
sent the Son to assume the nature
in which the disobedience had been committed,
in order to bear in it the punishment of sin
by his most bitter passion and death.

So God made known his justice toward his Son,
who was charged with our sin,
and he poured out his goodness and mercy on us,

who are guilty and worthy of damnation,
giving to us his Son to die,
by a most perfect love,
and raising him to life
for our justification,
in order that by him
we might have immortality
and eternal life.

Article 21: The Atonement
We believe
that Jesus Christ is a high priest forever
according to the order of Melchizedek—
made such by an oath—
and that he presented himself
in our name
before his Father,
to appease his Father's wrath
with full satisfaction
by offering himself
on the tree of the cross
and pouring out his precious blood
for the cleansing of our sins,
as the prophets had predicted.

For it is written
that "the punishment that made us whole"
was placed on the Son of God
and that "by his bruises we are healed."
He was "like a lamb that is led to the slaughter";
he was "numbered with the transgressors"[46]
and condemned as a criminal by Pontius Pilate,
though Pilate had declared
that he was innocent.

So he paid back
what he had not stolen,[47]
and he suffered—
"the righteous for the unrighteous,"[48]
in both his body and his soul—
in such a way that
when he sensed the horrible punishment
required by our sins
"his sweat became like great drops of blood
falling down on the ground."[49]
He cried, "My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?"[50]

And he endured all this
for the forgiveness of our sins.

Therefore we rightly say with Paul that
we know nothing "except Jesus Christ and him crucified";[51]
we "regard everything as loss

because of the surpassing value
of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord."[52]
We find all comforts in his wounds
and have no need to seek or invent any other means
to reconcile ourselves with God
than this one and only sacrifice,
once made,
which renders believers perfect
forever.

This is also why
the angel of God called him Jesus—
that is, "Savior"—
    because he would save his people
    from their sins.[53]

[46] Isa. 53:4-12
[47] Ps. 69:4
[48] 1 Pet. 3:18
[49] Luke 22:44
[50] Matt. 27:46
[51] 1 Cor. 2:2
[52] Phil. 3:8
[53] Matt. 1:21

Article 22: The Righteousness of Faith
We believe that
for us to acquire the true knowledge of this great mystery
the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith
that embraces Jesus Christ,
    with all his merits,
and makes him its own,
and no longer looks for anything
    apart from him.

For it must necessarily follow
that either all that is required for our salvation
is not in Christ or,
if all is in him,
then those who have Christ by faith
have his salvation entirely.

Therefore,
to say that Christ is not enough
but that something else is needed as well
is a most enormous blasphemy against God—
    for it then would follow
    that Jesus Christ is only half a Savior.
And therefore we justly say with Paul
that we are justified "by faith alone"
or "by faith apart from works."[54]

However,
we do not mean,

properly speaking,
that it is faith itself that justifies us—
for faith is only the instrument
by which we embrace Christ,
our righteousness.

But Jesus Christ is our righteousness
in making available to us all his merits
and all the holy works he has done
for us and in our place.
And faith is the instrument
that keeps us in communion with him
and with all his benefits.

When those benefits are made ours
they are more than enough to absolve us
of our sins.

[54] Rom. 3:28

Article 23: The Justification of Sinners
We believe
that our blessedness lies in the forgiveness of our sins
because of Jesus Christ,
and that in it our righteousness before God is contained,
as David and Paul teach us
when they declare those people blessed
to whom God grants righteousness
apart from works.[55]

And the same apostle says
that we are "justified by his grace as a gift,
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."[56]
And therefore we cling to this foundation,
which is firm forever,
giving all glory to God,
humbling ourselves,
and recognizing ourselves as we are;
not claiming a thing for ourselves or our merits
and leaning and resting
on the sole obedience of Christ crucified,
which is ours when we believe in him.

That is enough to cover all our sins
and to make us confident,
freeing the conscience from the fear, dread, and terror
of God's approach,
without doing what our first parents, Adam and Eve, did,
who trembled as they tried to cover themselves
with fig leaves.

In fact,
if we had to appear before God relying—
no matter how little—

on ourselves or some other creature,
then, alas, we would be swallowed up.

Therefore everyone must say with David:
"Lord, do not enter into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you."[57]

[55] Ps. 32:1; Rom. 4:6
[56] Rom. 3:24
[57] Ps. 143:2

Article 24: The Sanctification of Sinners
We believe that this true faith,
produced in us by the hearing of God's Word
and by the work of the Holy Spirit,
regenerates us and makes us new creatures, [58]
causing us to live a new life[59]
and freeing us from the slavery of sin.

Therefore,
far from making people cold
toward living in a pious and holy way,
this justifying faith,
quite to the contrary,
so works within them that
apart from it
they will never do a thing out of love for God
but only out of love for themselves
and fear of being condemned.

So then, it is impossible
for this holy faith to be unfruitful in a human being,
seeing that we do not speak of an empty faith
but of what Scripture calls
"faith working through love,"[60]
which moves people to do by themselves
the works that God has commanded
in the Word.

These works,
proceeding from the good root of faith,
are good and acceptable to God,
since they are all sanctified by God's grace.
Yet they do not count toward our justification—
for by faith in Christ we are justified,
even before we do good works.
Otherwise they could not be good,
any more than the fruit of a tree could be good
if the tree is not good in the first place.

So then, we do good works,
but not for merit—
for what would we merit?
Rather, we are indebted to God for the good works we do,

and not God to us,
since God "is at work in us, enabling us both
to will and to work for his good pleasure"[61]—
thus keeping in mind what is written:
"When you have done all that you were ordered to do,
say, 'We are worthless slaves;
we have done only what we ought to have done.'"[62]

Yet we do not wish to deny
that God rewards good works—
but it is by grace
that God crowns these gifts.

Moreover,
although we do good works
we do not base our salvation on them;
for we cannot do any work
that is not defiled by our flesh
and also worthy of punishment.
And even if we could point to one,
memory of a single sin is enough
for God to reject that work.

So we would always be in doubt,
tossed back and forth
without any certainty,
and our poor consciences would be tormented constantly
if they did not rest on the merit
of the suffering and death of our Savior.

[58] 2 Cor. 5:17
[59] Rom. 6:4
[60] Gal. 5:6
[61] Phil. 2:13
[62] Luke 17:10

Article 25: The Fulfillment of the Law
We believe
that the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ended
with the coming of Christ,
and that all foreshadowings have come to an end,
so that the use of them ought to be abolished
among Christians.
Yet the truth and substance of these things
remain for us in Jesus Christ,
in whom they have been fulfilled.

Nevertheless,
we continue to use the witnesses
drawn from the law and prophets
to confirm us in the gospel
and to regulate our lives with full integrity
for the glory of God,
according to the will of God.

Article 26: The Intercession of Christ
We believe that we have no access to God
except through the one and only Mediator and Intercessor,
"Jesus Christ the righteous," [63]
who
therefore was made human,
uniting together the divine and human natures,
so that we human beings might have access to the divine Majesty.
Otherwise we would have no access.

But this Mediator,
    whom the Father has appointed between himself and us,
ought not terrify us by his greatness,
    so that we have to look for another one,
    according to our fancy.
For neither in heaven nor among the creatures on earth
is there anyone who loves us
more than Jesus Christ does.
    Although he was "in the form of God,"
    Christ nevertheless "emptied himself,"
    taking "human form" and "the form of a slave" for us;[64]
    and he made himself "like his brothers and sisters
      in every respect."[65]

Suppose we had to find another intercessor.
    Who would love us more than he who gave his life for us,
    even though "we were his enemies"?[66]
And suppose we had to find one who has prestige and power.
    Who has as much of these as he who is seated
      at the right hand of the Father,[67]
    and who has "all authority
      in heaven and on earth"?[68]
    And who will be heard more readily
      than God's own dearly beloved Son?

So, the practice of honoring the saints as intercessors
in fact dishonors them
because of its misplaced faith.
That was something the saints never did nor asked for,
but which in keeping with their duty,
    as appears from their writings,
they consistently refused.

We should not plead here
that we are unworthy—
    for it is not a question of offering our prayers
    on the basis of our own dignity
    but only on the basis of the excellence and dignity
    of Jesus Christ,
      whose righteousness is ours by faith.

Since the apostle for good reason
wants us to get rid of this foolish fear—
    or rather, this unbelief—

he says to us that Jesus Christ
was made like "his brothers and sisters in every respect,
    that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest"
    to purify the sins of the people.[69]
For since he suffered,
being tempted,
he is also able to help those
who are tempted.[70]

And further,
to encourage us more
to approach him
he says,
"Since, then, we have a great high priest
who has passed through the heavens,
Jesus, the Son of God,
let us hold fast to our confession.
For we do not have a high priest
who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,
but we have one who in every respect has been tempted,
as we are,
yet without sin.
Let us therefore approach
the throne of grace
with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy
and find grace,
to help in time of need."[71]

The same apostle says that
we "have confidence to enter the sanctuary
by the blood of Jesus."
"Let us approach with a true heart
in full assurance of faith...."[72]

Likewise,
Christ "holds his priesthood permanently….
Consequently, he is able for all time to save
those who approach God through him,
since he always lives
to make intercession for them."[73]

What more do we need?
For Christ himself declares:
"I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father
except through me."[74]
Why should we seek
another intercessor?

Since it has pleased God
to give us the Son as our Intercessor,
let us not leave him for another—
    or rather seek, without ever finding.

For, when giving Christ to us,
God knew well that we were sinners.

Therefore,
in following the command of Christ
we call on the heavenly Father
through Christ,
our only Mediator,
as we are taught by the Lord's Prayer,
being assured that we shall obtain
all we ask of the Father
in his name.

[63] 1 John 2:1
[64] Phil. 2:6-8
[65] Heb. 2:17
[66] Rom. 5:10
[67] Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:3
[68] Matt. 28:18
[69] Heb. 2:17
[70] Heb. 2:18
[71] Heb. 4:14-16
[72] Heb. 10:19, 22
[73] Heb. 7:24-25
[74] John 14:6

Article 27: The Holy Catholic Church
We believe and confess
one single catholic or universal church—
a holy congregation and gathering
of true Christian believers,
awaiting their entire salvation in Jesus Christ
being washed by his blood,
and sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

This church has existed from the beginning of the world
and will last until the end,
as appears from the fact
that Christ is eternal King
who cannot be without subjects.

And this holy church is preserved by God
against the rage of the whole world,
even though for a time
it may appear very small
to human eyes—
as though it were snuffed out.

For example,
during the very dangerous time of Ahab
the Lord preserved for himself seven thousand
who did not bend their knees to Baal.[75]

And so this holy church
is not confined,
bound,
or limited to a certain place or certain people.
But it is spread and dispersed
throughout the entire world,
    though still joined and united
        in heart and will,
        in one and the same Spirit,
        by the power of faith.

[75] 1 Kings 19:18

Article 28: The Obligations of Church Members
We believe that
    since this holy assembly and congregation
    is the gathering of those who are saved
    and there is no salvation apart from it,
people ought not to withdraw from it,
    content to be by themselves,
    regardless of their status or condition.

But all people are obliged
to join and unite with it,
keeping the unity of the church
    by submitting to its instruction and discipline,
    by bending their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ,
    and by serving to build up one another,
according to the gifts God has given them
as members of each other
in the same body.

And to preserve this unity more effectively,
it is the duty of all believers,
    according to God's Word,
to separate themselves
from those who do not belong to the church,
    in order to join this assembly
    wherever God has established it,
        even if civil authorities and royal decrees forbid
        and death and physical punishment result.

And so,
all who withdraw from the church
or do not join it
act contrary to God's ordinance.

Article 29: The Marks of the True Church
We believe that we ought to discern
    diligently and very carefully,
    by the Word of God,
what is the true church—
    for all sects in the world today
    claim for themselves the name of "the church."

We are not speaking here of the company of hypocrites
who are mixed among the good in the church
and who nonetheless are not part of it,
even though they are physically there.
But we are speaking of distinguishing
the body and fellowship of the true church
from all sects that call themselves "the church."

The true church can be recognized
if it has the following marks:
    The church engages in the pure preaching
        of the gospel;
    it makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments
        as Christ instituted them;
    it practices church discipline
        for correcting faults.

In short, it governs itself
according to the pure Word of God,
    rejecting all things contrary to it
    and holding Jesus Christ as the only Head.
By these marks one can be assured
of recognizing the true church—
    and no one ought to be separated from it.

As for those who can belong to the church,
we can recognize them by the distinguishing marks of Christians:
    namely by faith,
    and by their fleeing from sin and pursuing righteousness,
        once they have received the one and only Savior,
        Jesus Christ.
They love the true God and their neighbors,
    without turning to the right or left,
and they crucify the flesh and its works.

Though great weakness remains in them,
they fight against it
by the Spirit
all the days of their lives,
appealing constantly
to the blood, suffering, death, and obedience of the Lord Jesus,
    in whom they have forgiveness of their sins,
    through faith in him.

As for the false church,
it assigns more authority to itself and its ordinances
    than to the Word of God;
it does not want to subject itself
    to the yoke of Christ;
it does not administer the sacraments
    as Christ commanded in his Word;
it rather adds to them or subtracts from them
    as it pleases;
it bases itself on humans,

more than on Jesus Christ;
it persecutes those
who live holy lives according to the Word of God
and who rebuke it for its faults, greed, and idolatry.

These two churches
are easy to recognize
and thus to distinguish
from each other.

Article 30: The Government of the Church
We believe that this true church
ought to be governed according to the spiritual order
that our Lord has taught us in his Word.
There should be ministers or pastors
to preach the Word of God
and administer the sacraments.
There should also be elders and deacons,
along with the pastors,
to make up the council of the church.

By this means
true religion is preserved;
true doctrine is able to take its course;
and evil people are corrected spiritually and held in check,
so that also the poor
and all the afflicted
may be helped and comforted
according to their need.

By this means
everything will be done well
and in good order
in the church,
when such persons are elected
who are faithful
and are chosen according to the rule
that Paul gave to Timothy.[76]

[76] 1 Tim. 3

Article 31: The Officers of the Church
We believe that
ministers of the Word of God, elders, and deacons
ought to be chosen to their offices
by a legitimate election of the church,
with prayer in the name of the Lord,
and in good order,
as the Word of God teaches.

So all must be careful
not to push themselves forward improperly,
but must wait for God's call,
so that they may be assured of their calling

and be certain that they are
chosen by the Lord.

As for the ministers of the Word,
they all have the same power and authority,
no matter where they may be,
since they are all servants of Jesus Christ,
the only universal bishop,
and the only head of the church.

Moreover,
to keep God's holy order
from being violated or despised,
we say that everyone ought,
as much as possible,
to hold the ministers of the Word and elders of the church
in special esteem,
because of the work they do,
and be at peace with them,
without grumbling, quarreling, or fighting.

Article 32: The Order and Discipline of the Church
We also believe that
although it is useful and good
for those who govern the churches
to establish and set up
a certain order among themselves
for maintaining the body of the church,
they ought always to guard against deviating
from what Christ,
our only Master,
has ordained
for us.

Therefore we reject all human innovations
and all laws imposed on us,
in our worship of God,
which bind and force our consciences
in any way.

So we accept only what is proper
to maintain harmony and unity
and to keep all in obedience
to God.

To that end excommunication,
with all it involves,
according to the Word of God,
is required.

Article 33: The Sacraments
We believe that our good God,
mindful of our crudeness and weakness,
has ordained sacraments for us

to seal his promises in us,
to pledge good will and grace toward us,
and also to nourish and sustain our faith.

God has added these to the Word of the gospel
to represent better to our external senses
both what God enables us to understand by the Word
and what he does inwardly in our hearts,
confirming in us
the salvation he imparts to us.

For they are visible signs and seals
of something internal and invisible,
by means of which God works in us
through the power of the Holy Spirit.
So they are not empty and hollow signs
to fool and deceive us,
for their truth is Jesus Christ,
without whom they would be nothing.

Moreover,
we are satisfied with the number of sacraments
that Christ our Master has ordained for us.
There are only two:
the sacrament of baptism
and the Holy Supper of Jesus Christ.

Article 34: The Sacrament of Baptism
We believe and confess that Jesus Christ,
in whom the law is fulfilled,
has by his shed blood
put an end to every other shedding of blood,
which anyone might do or wish to do
in order to atone or satisfy for sins.

Having abolished circumcision,
which was done with blood,
Christ established in its place
the sacrament of baptism.

By it we are received into God's church
and set apart from all other people and alien religions,
that we may wholly belong to him
whose mark and sign we bear.
Baptism also witnesses to us
that God, being our gracious Father,
will be our God forever.

Therefore Christ has commanded
that all those who belong to him
be baptized with pure water
"in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit."[77]

In this way God signifies to us
that just as water washes away the dirt of the body
when it is poured on us
and also is seen on the bodies of those who are baptized
when it is sprinkled on them,
so too the blood of Christ does the same thing internally,
in the soul,
by the Holy Spirit.
    It washes and cleanses it from its sins
    and transforms us from being the children of wrath
    into the children of God.

This does not happen by the physical water
but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God,
who is our Red Sea,
through which we must pass
    to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh,
        who is the devil,
    and to enter the spiritual land
        of Canaan.

So ministers,
as far as their work is concerned,
give us the sacrament and what is visible,
but our Lord gives what the sacrament signifies—
namely the invisible gifts and graces;
    washing, purifying, and cleansing our souls
        of all filth and unrighteousness;
    renewing our hearts and filling them
        with all comfort;
    giving us true assurance
        of his fatherly goodness;
    clothing us with the "new self"
        and stripping off the "old self
            with its practices."[78]

For this reason we believe that
anyone who aspires to reach eternal life
ought to be baptized only once
without ever repeating it—
for we cannot be born twice.
Yet this baptism is profitable
not only when the water is on us
and when we receive it
but throughout our
entire lives.

For that reason we reject the error of the Anabaptists
    who are not content with a single baptism
        once received
    and also condemn the baptism
        of the children of believers.
    We believe our children ought to be baptized
    and sealed with the sign of the covenant,

as little children were circumcised in Israel
on the basis of the same promises
made to our children.

And truly,
Christ has shed his blood no less
for washing the little children of believers
than he did for adults.

Therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament
of what Christ has done for them,
just as the Lord commanded in the law that
by offering a lamb for them
the sacrament of the suffering and death of Christ
would be granted them
shortly after their birth.
This was the sacrament of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore,
baptism does for our children
what circumcision did for the Jewish people.
That is why Paul calls baptism
the "circumcision of Christ."[79]

[77] Matt. 28:19
[78] Col.3:9
[79] Col. 2:11

Article 35: The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
We believe and confess
that our Savior Jesus Christ
has ordained and instituted the sacrament of the Holy Supper
to nourish and sustain those
who are already regenerated and ingrafted
into his family,
which is his church.

Now those who are born again have two lives in them.
The one is physical and temporal—
they have it from the moment of their first birth,
and it is common to all.
The other is spiritual and heavenly,
and is given them in their second birth—
it comes through the Word of the gospel
in the communion of the body of Christ;
and this life is common to God's elect only.

Thus, to support the physical and earthly life
God has prescribed for us
an appropriate earthly and material bread,
which is as common to all people
as life itself.
But to maintain the spiritual and heavenly life
that belongs to believers,

God has sent a living bread
that came down from heaven:
namely Jesus Christ,
    who nourishes and maintains
    the spiritual life of believers
    when eaten—
    that is, when appropriated
    and received spiritually
    by faith.

To represent to us
this spiritual and heavenly bread
Christ has instituted
an earthly and visible bread as the sacrament of his body
and wine as the sacrament of his blood.
He did this to testify to us that
just as truly as we take and hold the sacrament in our hands
and eat and drink it with our mouths,
    by which our life is then sustained,
so truly we receive into our souls,
    for our spiritual life,
the true body and true blood of Christ,
    our only Savior.
We receive these by faith,
    which is the hand and mouth of our souls.

Now it is certain
that Jesus Christ did not prescribe
his sacraments for us in vain,
since he works in us all he represents
by these holy signs,
    although the manner in which he does it
    goes beyond our understanding
    and is incomprehensible to us,
        just as the operation of God's Spirit
        is hidden and incomprehensible.

Yet we do not go wrong when we say
that what is eaten is Christ's own natural body
and what is drunk is his own blood—
but the manner in which we eat it
is not by the mouth, but by the Spirit
through faith.

In that way Jesus Christ remains always seated
at the right hand of God the Father
in heaven—
but he never refrains on that account
to communicate himself to us
through faith.

This banquet is a spiritual table
at which Christ communicates himself to us
with all his benefits.

At that table he makes us enjoy himself
as much as the merits of his suffering and death,
as he nourishes, strengthens, and comforts
our poor, desolate souls
    by the eating of his flesh,
and relieves and renews them
    by the drinking of his blood.

Moreover,
though the sacraments and what they signify are joined together,
not all receive both of them.
The wicked certainly take the sacrament,
to their condemnation,
but do not receive the truth of the sacrament,
    just as Judas and Simon the Sorcerer both indeed
    received the sacrament,
    but not Christ,
    who was signified by it.
    He is communicated only to believers.

Finally,
with humility and reverence
we receive the holy sacrament
in the gathering of God's people,
    as we engage together,
    with thanksgiving,
    in a holy remembrance
    of the death of Christ our Savior,
    and as we thus confess
    our faith and Christian religion.
Therefore none should come to this table
without examining themselves carefully,
    lest by eating this bread
    and drinking this cup
    they "eat and drink judgment against themselves."[80]

In short,
by the use of this holy sacrament
we are moved to a fervent love
of God and our neighbors.

Therefore we reject
as desecrations of the sacraments
all the muddled ideas and condemnable inventions
that people have added and mixed in with them.
And we say that we should be content with the procedure
that Christ and the apostles have taught us
and speak of these things
as they have spoken of them.

[80] 1 Cor. 11:29

Article 36: The Civil Government
We believe that
because of the depravity of the human race,
our good God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers.
God wants the world to be governed by laws and policies
so that human lawlessness may be restrained
and that everything may be conducted in good order
among human beings.

For that purpose God has placed the sword
in the hands of the government,
to punish evil people
and protect the good.

[*RCA only**
And the government's task is not limited
to caring for and watching over the public domain
but extends also to upholding the sacred ministry,
with a view to removing and destroying
all idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist;
to promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ;
and to furthering the preaching of the gospel everywhere;
to the end that God may be honored and served by everyone,
as he requires in his Word.]

[*CRC only***
And being called in this manner
to contribute to the advancement of a society
that is pleasing to God,
the civil rulers have the task,
subject to God's law,
of removing every obstacle
to the preaching of the gospel
and to every aspect of divine worship.

They should do this
while completely refraining from every tendency
toward exercising absolute authority,
and while functioning in the sphere entrusted to them,
with the means belonging to them.

They should do it in order that
the Word of God may have free course;
the kingdom of Jesus Christ may make progress;
and every anti-Christian power may be resisted.]

Moreover everyone,
regardless of status, condition, or rank,
must be subject to the government,
and pay taxes,
and hold its representatives in honor and respect,
and obey them in all things that are not in conflict
with God's Word,

praying for them
that the Lord may be willing to lead them
in all their ways
and that we may live a peaceful and quiet life
in all piety and decency.

[RCA only***
And on this matter we reject the Anabaptists, anarchists,
and in general all those who want
to reject the authorities and civil officers
and to subvert justice
by introducing common ownership of goods
and corrupting the moral order
that God has established among human beings.]

* The Reformed Church in America retains the original full text, choosing to recognize that the confession was written within a historical context which may not accurately describe the situation that pertains today.
**Synod 1958 of the Christian Reformed Church replaced the aforementioned paragraph with the following three paragraphs (in brackets).
***The RCA retains this final paragraph of the original Article 36, choosing to recognize that the confession was written within a historical context which may not accurately describe the situation that pertains today. Synod 1985 of the CRC directed that this paragraph be taken from the body of the text and placed in a footnote.

Article 37: The Last Judgment
Finally we believe,
according to God's Word,
that when the time appointed by the Lord is come
(which is unknown to all creatures)
and the number of the elect is complete,
our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven,
bodily and visibly,
as he ascended,
with great glory and majesty,
to declare himself the judge
of the living and the dead.
He will burn this old world,
in fire and flame,
in order to cleanse it.

Then all human creatures will appear in person
before the great judge—
men, women, and children,
who have lived from the beginning until the end
of the world.

They will be summoned there
"with the archangel's call
and with the sound of God's trumpet."[81]

For all those who died before that time
will be raised from the earth,

their spirits being joined and united
with their own bodies
in which they lived.
And as for those who are still alive,
they will not die like the others
but will be changed "in the twinkling of an eye"
from perishable to imperishable.[82]

Then the books (that is, the consciences) will be opened,
and the dead will be judged
according to the things they did in the world,[83]
whether good or evil.
Indeed, all people will give account
of all the idle words they have spoken,[84]
which the world regards
as only playing games.
And then the secrets and hypocrisies of all people
will be publicly uncovered
in the sight of all.

Therefore,
with good reason
the thought of this judgment
is horrible and dreadful
to wicked and evil people.
But it is very pleasant
and a great comfort
to the righteous and elect,
since their total redemption
will then be accomplished.
They will then receive the fruits of their labor
and of the trouble they have suffered;
their innocence will be openly recognized by all;
and they will see the terrible vengeance
that God will bring on the evil ones
who tyrannized, oppressed, and tormented them
in this world.

The evil ones will be convicted
by the witness of their own consciences,
and shall be made immortal—
but only to be tormented
in "the eternal fire
prepared for the devil and his angels."[85]

In contrast,
the faithful and elect will be crowned
with glory and honor.

The Son of God will profess their names[86]
before God his Father and the holy and elect angels;
all tears will be wiped from their eyes;[87]
and their cause—
at present condemned as heretical and evil

by many judges and civil officers—
will be acknowledged as the cause of the Son of God.

And as a gracious reward
the Lord will make them possess a glory
such as the human heart
could never imagine.

So we look forward to that great day with longing
in order to enjoy fully
the promises of God in Christ Jesus,
our Lord.

[81] 1 Thess. 4:16
[82] 1 Cor. 15:51-53
[83] Rev. 20:12
[84] Matt. 12:36
[85] Matt. 25:41
[86] Matt. 10:32
[87] Rev. 7:17

Introduction to the Canons of Dort

The Decision of the Synod of Dort on the Five Main Points of Doctrine in Dispute in the Netherlands is popularly known as the Canons of Dort. It consists of statements of doctrine adopted by the great Synod of Dort, which met in the city of Dordrecht in 1618-19. Although this was a national synod of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands, it had an international character, since it was composed not only of Dutch delegates but also of twenty-six delegates from eight foreign countries.

The Synod of Dort was held in order to settle a serious controversy in the Dutch churches initiated by the rise of Arminianism. Jacob Arminius, a theological professor at Leiden University, questioned the teaching of Calvin and his followers on a number of important points. After Arminius's death, his own followers presented their views on five of these points in the Remonstrance of 1610. In this document and in later more explicit writings, the Arminians taught election based on foreseen faith, the universal application of Christ's atonement available to all who freely choose to accept it, limited human depravity, the resistibility of God's grace, and the possibility of a fall from salvation. In the Canons the Synod of Dort rejected these views and set forth the Reformed teaching on these points with the purpose of offering a deeper assurance of salvation to believers in accordance with the teaching of the Scriptures.

The Canons are thus unique among the Reformed confessions because of their original purpose as a judicial decision on the doctrinal points in dispute during the Arminian controversy. The original preface called them a "judgment, in which both the true view, agreeing with God's Word, concerning the aforesaid five points of doctrine, is explained, and the false view, disagreeing with God's Word, is rejected." The Canons also have a narrower scope than the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism in that they do not cover the whole range of doctrine but focus on the five points of doctrine in dispute.

Although in form there are only four points in the Canons of Dort, we speak properly of five points, because the Canons were structured to correspond to the five articles of the 1610 Remonstrance. Main Points Three and Four were combined into one, always designated as Main Point Three/Four. Each of the main points consists of a positive and a neg-

ative part, the former being an exposition of the Reformed doctrine on the subject, the latter a repudiation of the corresponding errors. While the Reformed Church in America does not give confessional status to the Rejection of Errors, it nevertheless recognizes that the rejections help interpret the Canons by highlighting the specific errors addressed.

The biblical quotations in the Canons are translations from the original Latin and so do not always correspond to current versions. Though not in the original text, subheadings have been added to the positive articles and to the conclusion in order to facilitate study of the Canons.

THE CANONS OF DORT

Formally Titled
The Decision of the Synod of Dort on the Five Main Points of Doctrine in Dispute in the Netherlands

The First Main Point of Doctrine
Divine Election and Reprobation

The Judgment Concerning Divine Predestination Which the Synod Declares to Be in Agreement with the Word of God and Accepted Till Now in the Reformed Churches, Set Forth in Several Articles

Article 1: God's Right to Condemn All People
Since all people have sinned in Adam and have come under the sentence of the curse and eternal death, God would have done no one an injustice if it had been his will to leave the entire human race in sin and under the curse, and to condemn them on account of their sin. As the apostle says: "The whole world is liable to the condemnation of God" (Rom. 3:19), "All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), and "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

Article 2: The Manifestation of God's Love
But this is how God showed his love: he sent his only begotten Son into the world, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (1 John 4:9, John 3:16).

Article 3: The Preaching of the Gospel
In order that people may be brought to faith, God mercifully sends messengers of this very joyful message to the people and at the time he wills. By this ministry people are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. For "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without someone preaching? And how shall they preach unless they have been sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15).

Article 4: A Twofold Response to the Gospel
God's wrath remains on those who do not believe this gospel. But those who do accept it and embrace Jesus the Savior with a true and living faith are delivered through him from God's wrath and from destruction, and receive the gift of eternal life.

Article 5: The Sources of Unbelief and of Faith
The cause or blame for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is not at all in God, but in humanity. Faith in Jesus Christ, however, and salvation through him is a free gift of God. As Scripture says, "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is a gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Likewise: "It has been freely given to you to believe in Christ" (Phil. 1:29).

Article 6: God's Eternal Decree
The fact that some receive from God the gift of faith within time, and that others do not, stems from his eternal decree. For "all his works are known to God from eternity" (Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:11). In accordance with this decree God graciously softens the hearts, however hard, of the elect and inclines them to believe, but by a just judgment God leaves in their wickedness and hardness of heart those who have not been chosen. And in this especially is disclosed to us God's act—unfathomable, and as merciful as it is just—of distinguishing between people equally lost. This is the well-known decree of election and reprobation revealed in God's Word. The wicked, impure, and unstable distort this decree to their own ruin, but it provides holy and godly souls with comfort beyond words.

Article 7: Election
Election is God's unchangeable purpose by which he did the following:
Before the foundation of the world, by sheer grace, according to the free good pleasure of his will, God chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race, which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin. Those chosen were neither better nor more deserving than the others, but lay with them in the common misery. God did this in Christ, whom he also appointed from eternity to be the mediator, the head of all those chosen, and the foundation of their salvation.

And so God decreed to give to Christ those chosen for salvation, and to call and draw them effectively into Christ's fellowship through the Word and Spirit. In other words, God decreed to grant them true faith in Christ, to justify them, to sanctify them, and finally, after powerfully preserving them in the fellowship of the Son, to glorify them.

God did all this in order to demonstrate his mercy, to the praise of the riches of God's glorious grace.

As Scripture says, "God chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, so that we should be holy and blameless before him with love; he predestined us whom he adopted as his children through Jesus Christ, in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, by which he freely made us pleasing to himself in his beloved" (Eph. 1:4-6). And elsewhere, "Those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30).

Article 8: A Single Decree of Election
This election is not of many kinds, but one and the same for all who were to be saved in the Old and the New Testament. For Scripture declares that there is a single good pleasure, purpose, and plan of God's will, by which he chose us from eternity both to grace and to glory, both to salvation and to the way of salvation, which God prepared in advance for us to walk in.

Article 9: Election Not Based on Foreseen Faith
This same election took place, not on the basis of foreseen faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, or of any other good quality and disposition, as though it were based on a prerequisite cause or condition in the person to be chosen, but rather for the purpose of faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, and so on. Accordingly, election is the source of every saving good. Faith, holiness, and the other saving gifts, and at last eternal life itself, flow forth from election as its fruits and effects. As the apostle says, "He chose us" (not because we were, but) "so that we should be holy and blameless before him in love" (Eph. 1:4).

Article 10: Election Based on God's Good Pleasure
But the cause of this undeserved election is exclusively the good pleasure of God. This

does not involve God's choosing certain human qualities or actions from among all those possible as a condition of salvation, but rather involves adopting certain particular persons from among the common mass of sinners as God's own possession. As Scripture says, "When the children were not yet born, and had done nothing either good or bad…she (Rebecca) was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Rom. 9:11-13). Also, "All who were appointed for eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48).

Article 11: Election Unchangeable
Just as God is most wise, unchangeable, all-knowing, and almighty, so the election made by him can neither be suspended nor altered, revoked, or annulled; neither can God's chosen ones be cast off, nor their number reduced.

Article 12: The Assurance of Election
Assurance of their eternal and unchangeable election to salvation is given to the chosen in due time, though by various stages and in differing measure. Such assurance comes not by inquisitive searching into the hidden and deep things of God, but by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God's Word—such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on.

Article 13: The Fruit of This Assurance
In their awareness and assurance of this election, God's children daily find greater cause to humble themselves before God, to adore the fathomless depth of God's mercies, to cleanse themselves, and to give fervent love in return to the One who first so greatly loved them. This is far from saying that this teaching concerning election, and reflection upon it, make God's children lax in observing his commandments or carnally self-assured. By God's just judgment this does usually happen to those who casually take for granted the grace of election or engage in idle and brazen talk about it but are unwilling to walk in the ways of the chosen.

Article 14: Teaching Election Properly
By God's wise plan, this teaching concerning divine election was proclaimed through the prophets, Christ himself, and the apostles, in Old and New Testament times. It was subsequently committed to writing in the Holy Scriptures. So also today in God's church, for which it was specifically intended, this teaching must be set forth with a spirit of discretion, in a godly and holy manner, at the appropriate time and place, without inquisitive searching into the ways of the Most High. This must be done for the glory of God's most holy name, and for the lively comfort of God's people.

Article 15: Reprobation
Moreover, Holy Scripture most especially highlights this eternal and undeserved grace of our election and brings it out more clearly for us, in that it further bears witness that not all people have been chosen but that some have not been chosen or have been passed by in God's eternal election—those, that is, concerning whom God, on the basis of his entirely free, most just, irreproachable, and unchangeable good pleasure, made the following decree:

to leave them in the common misery into which, by their own fault, they have plunged themselves; not to grant them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but finally to condemn and eternally punish those who have been left in their own ways and under God's just judgment, not only for their unbelief but also for all their other sins, in order to display his justice.

And this is the decree of reprobation, which does not at all make God the author of sin (a blasphemous thought!) but rather its fearful, irreproachable, just judge and avenger.

Article 16: Responses to the Teaching of Reprobation
Those who do not yet actively experience within themselves a living faith in Christ or an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ, but who nevertheless use the means by which God has promised to work these things in us—such people ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor to count themselves among the reprobate; rather they ought to continue diligently in the use of the means, to desire fervently a time of more abundant grace, and to wait for it in reverence and humility. On the other hand, those who seriously desire to turn to God, to be pleasing to God alone, and to be delivered from the body of death, but are not yet able to make such progress along the way of godliness and faith as they would like—such people ought much less to stand in fear of the teaching concerning reprobation, since our merciful God has promised not to snuff out a smoldering wick or break a bruised reed.* However, those who have forgotten God and their Savior Jesus Christ and have abandoned themselves wholly to the cares of the world and the pleasures of the flesh—such people have every reason to stand in fear of this teaching, as long as they do not seriously turn to God.

*Isaiah 42:3

Article 17: The Salvation of the Infants of Believers
Since we must make judgments about God's will from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, godly parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy.

Article 18: The Proper Attitude Toward Election and Reprobation
To those who complain about this grace of an undeserved election and about the severity of a just reprobation, we reply with the words of the apostle, "Who are you, O man, to talk back to God?" (Rom. 9:20), and with the words of our Savior, "Have I no right to do what I want with my own?" (Matt. 20:15). We, however, with reverent adoration of these secret things, cry out with the apostle: "Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond tracing out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Or who has first given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen" (Rom. 11:33-36).

Rejection of Errors
Rejection of the Errors by Which the Dutch Churches Have for Some Time Been Disturbed

Having set forth the orthodox teaching concerning election and reprobation, the Synod rejects the errors of those

I
Who teach that the will of God to save those who would believe and persevere in faith and in the obedience of faith is the whole and entire decision of election to salvation, and that nothing else concerning this decision has been revealed in God's Word.

For they deceive the simple and plainly contradict Holy Scripture in its testimony that God does not only wish to save those who would believe, but that he has also from eternity chosen certain particular people to whom, rather than to others, he would within time grant faith in Christ and perseverance. As Scripture says, "I have revealed your name to those

whom you gave me" (John 17:6). Likewise, "All who were appointed for eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48), and "He chose us before the foundation of the world so that we should be holy..." (Eph. 1:4).

II
Who teach that God's election to eternal life is of many kinds: one general and indefinite, the other particular and definite; and the latter in turn either incomplete, revocable, conditional, or else complete, irrevocable, and absolute. Likewise, who teach that there is one election to faith and another to salvation, so that there can be an election to justifying faith apart from a nonconditional election to salvation.

For this is an invention of the human mind, devised apart from the Scriptures, which distorts the teaching concerning election and breaks up this golden chain of salvation: "Those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30).

III
Who teach that God's good pleasure and purpose, which Scripture mentions in its teaching of election, does not involve God's choosing certain particular people rather than others, but involves God's choosing, out of all possible conditions (including the works of the law) or out of the whole order of things, the intrinsically unworthy act of faith, as well as the imperfect obedience of faith, to be a condition of salvation; and it involves his graciously wishing to count this as perfect obedience and to look upon it as worthy of the reward of eternal life.

For by this pernicious error the good pleasure of God and the merit of Christ are robbed of their effectiveness and people are drawn away, by unprofitable inquiries, from the truth of undeserved justification and from the simplicity of the Scriptures. It also gives the lie to these words of the apostle: "God called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of works, but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time" (2 Tim. 1:9).

IV
Who teach that in election to faith a prerequisite condition is that humans should rightly use the light of nature, be upright, unassuming, humble, and disposed to eternal life, as though election depended to some extent on these factors.

For this smacks of Pelagius, and it clearly calls into question the words of the apostle: "We lived at one time in the passions of our flesh, following the will of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in transgressions, made us alive with Christ, by whose grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with him and seated us with him in heaven in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages we might show the surpassing riches of his grace, according to his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith (and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God) not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:3-9).

V
Who teach that the incomplete and conditional election of particular persons to salvation occurred on the basis of a foreseen faith, repentance, holiness, and godliness, which has just begun or continued for some time; but that complete and nonconditional election occurred on the basis of a foreseen perseverance to the end in faith, repentance, holiness, and godliness. And that this is the gracious and evangelical worthiness, on account of

which the one who is chosen is more worthy than the one who is not chosen. And therefore that faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness, and perseverance are not fruits or effects of an unchangeable election to glory, but indispensable conditions and causes, which are prerequisite in those who are to be chosen in the complete election, and which are foreseen as achieved in them.

This runs counter to the entire Scripture, which throughout impresses upon our ears and hearts these sayings among others: "Election is not by works, but by him who calls" (Rom. 9:11-12); "All who were appointed for eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48); "He chose us in himself so that we should be holy" (Eph. 1:4); "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15:16); "If by grace, not by works" (Rom. 11:6); "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son" (1 John 4:10).

VI
Who teach that not every election to salvation is unchangeable, but that some of the chosen can perish and do in fact perish eternally, with no decision of God to prevent it.

By this gross error they make God changeable, destroy the comfort of the godly concerning the steadfastness of their election, and contradict the Holy Scriptures, which teach that "the elect cannot be led astray" (Matt. 24:24), that "Christ does not lose those given to him by the Father" (John 6:39), and that "those whom God predestined, called, and justified, he also glorifies" (Rom. 8:30).

VII
Who teach that in this life there is no fruit, no awareness, and no assurance of one's unchangeable election to glory, except as conditioned upon something changeable and contingent.

For not only is it absurd to speak of an uncertain assurance, but these things also militate against the experience of the saints, who with the apostle rejoice from an awareness of their election and sing the praises of this gift of God; who, as Christ urged, "rejoice" with his disciples "that their names have been written in heaven" (Luke 10:20); and finally who hold up against the flaming arrows of the devil's temptations the awareness of their election, with the question "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?" (Rom. 8:33).

VIII
Who teach that it was not on the basis of his just will alone that God decided to leave anyone in the fall of Adam and in the common state of sin and condemnation or to pass anyone by in the imparting of grace necessary for faith and conversion.

For these words stand fast: "He has mercy on whom he wishes, and he hardens whom he wishes" (Rom. 9:18). And also: "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (Matt. 13:11). Likewise: "I give glory to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and have revealed them to little children; yes, Father, because that was your pleasure" (Matt. 11:25-26).

IX
Who teach that the cause for God's sending the gospel to one people rather than to another is not merely and solely God's good pleasure, but rather that one people is better and worthier than the other to whom the gospel is not communicated.

For Moses contradicts this when he addresses the people of Israel as follows: "Behold, to

Jehovah your God belong the heavens and the highest heavens, the earth and whatever is in it. But Jehovah was inclined in his affection to love your ancestors alone, and chose out their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day" (Deut. 10:14-15). And also Christ: "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! for if those mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. 11:21).

The Second Main Point of Doctrine
Christ's Death and Human Redemption Through It

Article 1: The Punishment Which God's Justice Requires
God is not only supremely merciful, but also supremely just. This justice requires (as God has revealed in the Word) that the sins we have committed against his infinite majesty be punished with both temporal and eternal punishments, of soul as well as body. We cannot escape these punishments unless satisfaction is given to God's justice.

Article 2: The Satisfaction Made by Christ
Since, however, we ourselves cannot give this satisfaction or deliver ourselves from God's wrath, God in boundless mercy has given us as a guarantee his only begotten Son, who was made to be sin and a curse for us, in our place, on the cross, in order that he might give satisfaction for us.

Article 3: The Infinite Value of Christ's Death
This death of God's Son is the only and entirely complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; it is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world.

Article 4: Reasons for This Infinite Value
This death is of such great value and worth for the reason that the person who suffered it is—as was necessary to be our Savior—not only a true and perfectly holy human, but also the only begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Another reason is that this death was accompanied by the experience of God's wrath and curse, which we by our sins had fully deserved.

Article 5: The Mandate to Proclaim the Gospel to All
Moreover, it is the promise of the gospel that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be announced and declared without differentiation or discrimination to all nations and people, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel.

Article 6: Unbelief, a Human Responsibility
However, that many who have been called through the gospel do not repent or believe in Christ but perish in unbelief is not because the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross is deficient or insufficient, but because they themselves are at fault.

Article 7: Faith God's Gift
But all who genuinely believe and are delivered and saved by Christ's death from their sins and from destruction receive this favor solely from God's grace—which God owes to no one—given to them in Christ from eternity.

Article 8: The Saving Effectiveness of Christ's Death
For it was the entirely free plan and very gracious will and intention of God the Father that the enlivening and saving effectiveness of his Son's costly death should work itself out in all the elect, in order that God might grant justifying faith to them only and thereby lead

them without fail to salvation. In other words, it was God's will that Christ through the blood of the cross (by which he confirmed the new covenant) should effectively redeem from every people, tribe, nation, and language all those and only those who were chosen from eternity to salvation and given to him by the Father; that Christ should grant them faith (which, like the Holy Spirit's other saving gifts, he acquired for them by his death). It was also God's will that Christ should cleanse them by his blood from all their sins, both original and actual, whether committed before or after their coming to faith; that he should faithfully preserve them to the very end; and that he should finally present them to himself, a glorious people, without spot or wrinkle.

Article 9: The Fulfillment of God's Plan
This plan, arising out of God's eternal love for the elect, from the beginning of the world to the present time has been powerfully carried out and will also be carried out in the future, the gates of hell seeking vainly to prevail against it. As a result, the elect are gathered into one, all in their own time, and there is always a church of believers founded on Christ's blood, a church which steadfastly loves, persistently worships, and here and in all eternity praises him as her Savior who laid down his life for her on the cross, as a bridegroom for his bride.

Rejection of the Errors
Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those

I
Who teach that God the Father appointed his Son to death on the cross without a fixed and definite plan to save anyone by name, so that the necessity, usefulness, and worth of what Christ's death obtained could have stood intact and altogether perfect, complete and whole, even if the redemption that was obtained had never in actual fact been applied to any individual.

For this assertion is an insult to the wisdom of God the Father and to the merit of Jesus Christ, and it is contrary to Scripture. For the Savior speaks as follows: "I lay down my life for the sheep, and I know them" (John 10:15, 27). And Isaiah the prophet says concerning the Savior: "When he shall make himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days, and the will of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand" (Isa. 53:10). Finally, this undermines the article of the creed in which we confess what we believe concerning the Church.

II
Who teach that the purpose of Christ's death was not to establish in actual fact a new covenant of grace by his blood, but only to acquire for the Father the mere right to enter once more into a covenant with men, whether of grace or of works.

For this conflicts with Scripture, which teaches that Christ "has become the guarantee and mediator" of a better—that is, a new—covenant (Heb. 7:22; 9:15), "and that a will is in force only when someone has died" (Heb. 9:17).

III
Who teach that Christ, by the satisfaction which he gave, did not certainly merit for anyone salvation itself and the faith by which this satisfaction of Christ is effectively applied to salvation, but only acquired for the Father the authority or plenary will to relate in a new way with humanity and to impose such new conditions as he chose, and that the satisfying of these conditions depends on human free choice; consequently, that it was possible that either all or none would fulfill them.

For they have too low an opinion of the death of Christ, do not at all acknowledge the foremost fruit or benefit which it brings forth, and summon back from hell the Pelagian error.

IV
Who teach that what is involved in the new covenant of grace which God the Father made with humanity through the intervening of Christ's death is not that we are justified before God and saved through faith, insofar as it accepts Christ's merit, but rather that God, having withdrawn his demand for perfect obedience to the law, counts faith itself, and the imperfect obedience of faith, as perfect obedience to the law, and graciously looks upon this as worthy of the reward of eternal life.

For they contradict Scripture: "They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ, whom God presented as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:24-25). And along with the ungodly Socinus, they introduce a new and foreign justification of humanity before God, against the consensus of the whole church.

V
Who teach that all people have been received into the state of reconciliation and into the grace of the covenant, so that no one on account of original sin is liable to condemnation, or is to be condemned, but that all are free from the guilt of this sin.

For this opinion conflicts with Scripture which asserts that we are by nature children of wrath.

VI
Who make use of the distinction between obtaining and applying in order to instill in the unwary and inexperienced the opinion that God, as far as he is concerned, wished to bestow equally upon all people the benefits which are gained by Christ's death; but that the distinction by which some rather than others come to share in the forgiveness of sins and eternal life depends on their own free choice (which applies itself to the grace offered indiscriminately) but does not depend on the unique gift of mercy which effectively works in them, so that they, rather than others, apply that grace to themselves.

For, while pretending to set forth this distinction in an acceptable sense, they attempt to give the people the deadly poison of Pelagianism.

VII
Who teach that Christ neither could die, nor had to die, nor did die for those whom God so dearly loved and chose to eternal life, since such people do not need the death of Christ.

For they contradict the apostle, who says: "Christ loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20), and likewise: "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died," that is, for them (Rom. 8:33-34). They also contradict the Savior, who asserts: "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15), and "My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for one's friends" (John 15:12-13).

The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine
Human Corruption, Conversion to God, and the Way It Occurs

Article 1: The Effect of the Fall on Human Nature
Human beings were originally created in the image of God and were furnished in mind

with a true and sound knowledge of the Creator and things spiritual, in will and heart with righteousness, and in all emotions with purity; indeed, the whole human being was holy. However, rebelling against God at the devil's instigation and by their own free will, they deprived themselves of these outstanding gifts. Rather, in their place they brought upon themselves blindness, terrible darkness, futility, and distortion of judgment in their minds; perversity, defiance, and hardness in their hearts and wills; and finally impurity in all their emotions.

Article 2: The Spread of Corruption
Human beings brought forth children of the same nature as themselves after the fall. That is to say, being corrupt they brought forth corrupt children. The corruption spread, by God's just judgment, from Adam and Eve to all their descendants—except for Christ alone—not by way of imitation (as in former times the Pelagians would have it) but by way of the propagation of their perverted nature.

Article 3: Total Inability
Therefore, all people are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin. Without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform.

Article 4: The Inadequacy of the Light of Nature
There is, to be sure, a certain light of nature remaining in all people after the fall, by virtue of which they retain some notions about God, natural things, and the difference between what is moral and immoral, and demonstrate a certain eagerness for virtue and for good outward behavior. But this light of nature is far from enabling humans to come to a saving knowledge of God and conversion to him—so far, in fact, that they do not use it rightly even in matters of nature and society. Instead, in various ways they completely distort this light, whatever its precise character, and suppress it in unrighteousness. In doing so all people render themselves without excuse before God.

Article 5: The Inadequacy of the Law
In this respect, what is true of the light of nature is true also of the Ten Commandments given by God through Moses specifically to the Jews. For humans cannot obtain saving grace through the Decalogue, because, although it does expose the magnitude of their sin and increasingly convict them of their guilt, yet it does not offer a remedy or enable them to escape from human misery, and, indeed, weakened as it is by the flesh, leaves the offender under the curse.

Article 6: The Saving Power of the Gospel
What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law can do, God accomplishes by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word or the ministry of reconciliation. This is the gospel about the Messiah, through which it has pleased God to save believers, in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Article 7: God's Freedom in Revealing the Gospel
In the Old Testament, God revealed this secret of his will to a small number; in the New Testament (now without any distinction between peoples) God discloses it to a large number. The reason for this difference must not be ascribed to the greater worth of one nation over another, or to a better use of the light of nature, but to the free good pleasure and undeserved love of God. Therefore, those who receive so much grace, beyond and in spite of all they deserve, ought to acknowledge it with humble and thankful hearts. On the other hand, with the apostle they ought to adore (but certainly not inquisitively search into) the severity and justice of God's judgments on the others, who do not receive this grace.

Article 8: The Earnest Call of the Gospel
Nevertheless, all who are called through the gospel are called earnestly. For urgently and most genuinely God makes known in the Word what is pleasing to him: that those who are called should come to God. God also earnestly promises rest for their souls and eternal life to all who do come and believe.

Article 9: Human Responsibility for Rejecting the Gospel
The fact that many who are called through the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not brought to conversion must not be blamed on the gospel, nor on Christ, who is offered through the gospel, nor on God, who calls them through the gospel and even bestows various gifts on them, but on the people themselves who are called. Some in self-assurance do not even entertain the Word of life; others do entertain it but do not take it to heart, and for that reason, after the fleeting joy of a temporary faith, they relapse; others choke the seed of the Word with the thorns of life's cares and with the pleasures of the world and bring forth no fruits. This our Savior teaches in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13).

Article 10: Conversion as the Work of God
The fact that others who are called through the ministry of the gospel do come and are brought to conversion must not be credited to human effort, as though one distinguishes oneself by free choice from others who are furnished with equal or sufficient grace for faith and conversion (as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains). No, it must be credited to God: just as from eternity God chose his own in Christ, so within time God effectively calls them, grants them faith and repentance, and, having rescued them from the dominion of darkness, brings them into the kingdom of his Son, in order that they may declare the wonderful deeds of the One who called them out of darkness into this marvelous light, and may boast not in themselves, but in the Lord, as apostolic words frequently testify in Scripture.

Article 11: The Holy Spirit's Work in Conversion
Moreover, when God carries out this good pleasure in the elect, or works true conversion in them, God not only sees to it that the gospel is proclaimed to them outwardly, and enlightens their minds powerfully by the Holy Spirit so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God, but, by the effective operation of the same regenerating Spirit, God also penetrates into the inmost being, opens the closed heart, softens the hard heart, and circumcises the heart that is uncircumcised. God infuses new qualities into the will, making the dead will alive, the evil one good, the unwilling one willing, and the stubborn one compliant. God activates and strengthens the will so that, like a good tree, it may be enabled to produce the fruits of good deeds.

Article 12: Regeneration a Supernatural Work
And this is the regeneration, the new creation, the raising from the dead, and the making alive so clearly proclaimed in the Scriptures, which God works in us without our help. But this certainly does not happen only by outward teaching, by moral persuasion, or by such a way of working that, after God's work is done, it remains in human power whether or not to be reborn or converted. Rather, it is an entirely supernatural work, one that is at the same time most powerful and most pleasing, a marvelous, hidden, and inexpressible work, which is not less than or inferior in power to that of creation or of raising the dead, as Scripture (inspired by the author of this work) teaches. As a result, all those in whose hearts God works in this marvelous way are certainly, unfailingly, and effectively reborn and do actually believe. And then the will, now renewed, is not only activated and motivated by God, but in being activated by God is also itself active. For this reason, people themselves, by that grace which they have received, are also rightly said to believe and to repent.

Article 13: The Incomprehensible Way of Regeneration
In this life believers cannot fully understand the way this work occurs; meanwhile, they rest content with knowing and experiencing that, by this grace of God, they do believe with the heart and love their Savior.

Article 14: The Way God Gives Faith
In this way, therefore, faith is a gift of God, not in the sense that it is offered by God for people to choose, but that it is in actual fact bestowed on them, breathed and infused into them. Nor is it a gift in the sense that God bestows only the potential to believe, but then awaits assent—the act of believing—by human choice; rather, it is a gift in the sense that God who works both willing and acting and, indeed, works all things in all people and produces in them both the will to believe and the belief itself.

Article 15: Responses to God's Grace
God does not owe this grace to anyone. For what could God owe to those who have nothing to give that can be paid back? Indeed, what could God owe to those who have nothing of their own to give but sin and falsehood? Therefore those who receive this grace owe and give eternal thanks to God alone; those who do not receive it either do not care at all about these spiritual things and are satisfied with themselves in their condition, or else in self-assurance foolishly boast about having something which they lack. Furthermore, following the example of the apostles, we are to think and to speak in the most favorable way about those who outwardly profess their faith and better their lives, for the inner chambers of the heart are unknown to us. But for others who have not yet been called, we are to pray to the God who calls things that do not exist as though they did. In no way, however, are we to pride ourselves as better than they, as though we had distinguished ourselves from them.

Article 16: Regeneration's Effect
However, just as by the fall humans did not cease to be human, endowed with intellect and will, and just as sin, which has spread through the whole human race, did not abolish the nature of the human race but distorted and spiritually killed it, so also this divine grace of regeneration does not act in people as if they were blocks and stones; nor does it abolish the will and its properties or coerce a reluctant will by force, but spiritually revives, heals, reforms, and—in a manner at once pleasing and powerful—bends it back.

As a result, a ready and sincere obedience of the Spirit now begins to prevail where before the rebellion and resistance of the flesh were completely dominant. In this the true and spiritual restoration and freedom of our will consists. Thus, if the marvelous Maker of every good thing were not dealing with us, we would have no hope of getting up from our fall by our own free choice, by which we plunged ourselves into ruin when still standing upright.

Article 17: God's Use of Means in Regeneration
Just as the almighty work by which God brings forth and sustains our natural life does not rule out but requires the use of means, by which God, according to his infinite wisdom and goodness, has wished to exercise that divine power, so also the aforementioned supernatural work by which God regenerates us in no way rules out or cancels the use of the gospel, which God in great wisdom has appointed to be the seed of regeneration and the food of the soul. For this reason, the apostles and the teachers who followed them taught the people in a godly manner about this grace of God, to give God the glory and to humble all pride, and yet did not neglect meanwhile to keep the people, by means of the holy admonitions of the gospel, under the administration of the Word, the sacraments, and discipline. So even today it is out of the question that the teachers or those taught in the church should presume to test God by separating what God in his good pleasure has wished to be close-

ly joined together. For grace is bestowed through admonitions, and the more readily we perform our duty, the more lustrous the benefit of God working in us usually is, and the better that work advances. To God alone, both for the means and for their saving fruit and effectiveness, all glory is owed forever. Amen.

Rejection of the Errors
Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those

I
Who teach that, properly speaking, it cannot be said that original sin in itself is enough to condemn the whole human race or to warrant temporal and eternal punishments.

For they contradict the apostle when he says: "Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death passed on to all people because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12); also: "The guilt followed one sin and brought condemnation" (Rom. 5:16); likewise: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

II
Who teach that the spiritual gifts or the good dispositions and virtues such as goodness, holiness, and righteousness could not have resided in the human will at creation and therefore could not have been separated from the will at the fall.

For this conflicts with the apostle's description of the image of God in Ephesians 4:24, where he portrays the image in terms of righteousness and holiness, which definitely reside in the will.

III
Who teach that in spiritual death the spiritual gifts have not been separated from human will, since the will in itself has never been corrupted but only hindered by the darkness of the mind and the unruliness of the emotions, and since the will is able to exercise its innate free capacity once these hindrances are removed, which is to say, it is able of itself to will or choose whatever good is set before it—or else not to will or choose it.

This is a novel idea and an error and has the effect of elevating the power of free choice, contrary to the words of Jeremiah the prophet: "The heart itself is deceitful above all things and wicked" (Jer. 17:9); and of the words of the apostle: "All of us also lived among them" (the children of disobedience) "at one time in the passions of our flesh, following the will of our flesh and thoughts" (Eph. 2:3).

IV
Who teach that unregenerate humanity is not strictly or totally dead in sin or deprived of all capacity for spiritual good but is able to hunger and thirst for righteousness or life and to offer the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit which is pleasing to God.

For these views are opposed to the plain testimonies of Scripture: "You were dead in your transgressions and sins" (Eph. 2:1, 5); "The imagination of the thoughts of the human heart is only evil all the time" (Gen. 6:5; 8:21). Besides, to hunger and thirst for deliverance from misery and for life, and to offer God the sacrifice of a broken spirit is characteristic only of the regenerate and of those called blessed (Ps. 51:17; Matt. 5:6).

V
Who teach that corrupt and natural humanity can make such good use of common grace (by which they mean the light of nature) or of the gifts remaining after the fall that they are able thereby gradually to obtain a greater grace—evangelical or saving grace—as well

as salvation itself; and that in this way God, for his part, shows himself ready to reveal Christ to all people, since God provides to all, to a sufficient extent and in an effective manner, the means necessary for the revealing of Christ, for faith, and for repentance.

For Scripture, not to mention the experience of all ages, testifies that this is false: "He makes known his words to Jacob, his statutes and his laws to Israel; he has done this for no other nation, and they do not know his laws" (Ps. 147:19-20); "In the past God let all nations go their own way" (Acts 14:16); "They" (Paul and his companions) "were kept by the Holy Spirit from speaking God's word in Asia;" and "When they had come to Mysia, they tried to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit would not allow them to" (Acts 16:6-7).

VI
Who teach that in the true conversion of men and women new qualities, dispositions, or gifts cannot be infused or poured into their will by God, and indeed that the faith [or believing] by which we first come to conversion and from which we receive the name "believers" is not a quality or gift infused by God, but only a human act, and that it cannot be called a gift except in respect to the power of attaining faith.

For these views contradict the Holy Scriptures, which testify that God does infuse or pour into our hearts the new qualities of faith, obedience, and the experiencing of his love: "I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts" (Jer. 31:33); "I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring" (Isa. 44:3); "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5). They also conflict with the continuous practice of the Church, which prays with the prophet: "Convert me, Lord, and I shall be converted" (Jer. 31:18).

VII
Who teach that the grace by which we are converted to God is nothing but a gentle persuasion, or (as others explain it) that the way of God's acting in conversion that is most noble and suited to human nature is that which happens by persuasion, and that nothing prevents this grace of moral persuasion even by itself from making the natural person spiritual; indeed, that God does not produce the assent of the will except in this manner of moral persuasion, and that the effectiveness of God's work by which it surpasses the work of Satan consists in the fact that God promises eternal benefits while Satan promises temporal ones.

For this teaching is entirely Pelagian and contrary to the whole of Scripture, which recognizes besides this persuasion also another, far more effective and divine way in which the Holy Spirit acts in human conversion. As Ezekiel 36:26 puts it: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; and I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh…"

VIII
Who teach that God in regenerating people does not bring to bear that power of his omnipotence whereby God may powerfully and unfailingly bend the human will to faith and conversion, but that even when God has accomplished all the works of grace which he uses for their conversion, they nevertheless can, and in actual fact often do, so resist God and the Spirit in their intent and will to regenerate them, that they completely thwart their own rebirth; and, indeed, that it remains in their own power whether or not to be reborn.

For this does away with all effective functioning of God's grace in our conversion and subjects the activity of Almighty God to human will; it is contrary to the apostles, who teach that "we believe by virtue of the effective working of God's mighty strength" (Eph. 1:19),

and that "God fulfills the undeserved good will of his kindness and the work of faith in us with power" (2 Thess. 1:11), and likewise that "his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3).

IX
Who teach that grace and free choice are concurrent partial causes which cooperate to initiate conversion, and that grace does not precede—in the order of causality—the effective influence of the will; that is to say, that God does not effectively help the human will to come to conversion before that will itself motivates and determines itself.

For the early church already condemned this doctrine long ago in the Pelagians, on the basis of the words of the apostle: "It does not depend on human willing or running but on God's mercy" (Rom. 9:16); also: "Who makes you different from anyone else?" and "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7); likewise: "It is God who works in you to will and act according to his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

The Fifth Main Point of Doctrine
The Perseverance of the Saints

Article 1: The Regenerate Not Entirely Free from Sin
Those people whom God according to his purpose calls into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord and regenerates by the Holy Spirit, God also sets free from the dominion and slavery of sin, though not entirely from the flesh and from the body of sin as long as they are in this life.

Article 2: The Believer's Reaction to Sins of Weakness
Hence daily sins of weakness arise, and blemishes cling to even the best works of saints, giving them continual cause to humble themselves before God, to flee for refuge to Christ crucified, to put the flesh to death more and more by the Spirit of supplication and by holy exercises of godliness, and to strain toward the goal of perfection, until they are freed from this body of death and reign with the Lamb of God in heaven.

Article 3: God's Preservation of the Converted
Because of these remnants of sin dwelling in them and also because of the temptations of the world and Satan, those who have been converted could not remain standing in this grace if left to their own resources. But God is faithful, mercifully strengthening them in the grace once conferred on them and powerfully preserving them in it to the end.

Article 4: The Danger of True Believers' Falling into Serious Sins
The power of God strengthening and preserving true believers in grace is more than a match for the flesh. Yet those converted are not always so activated and motivated by God that in certain specific actions they cannot by their own fault depart from the leading of grace, be led astray by the desires of the flesh, and give in to them. For this reason they must constantly watch and pray that they may not be led into temptations. When they fail to do this, not only can they be carried away by the flesh, the world, and Satan into sins, even serious and outrageous ones, but also by God's just permission they sometimes are so carried away—witness the sad cases, described in Scripture, of David, Peter, and other saints falling into sins.

Article 5: The Effects of Such Serious Sins
By such monstrous sins, however, they greatly offend God, deserve the sentence of death, grieve the Holy Spirit, suspend the exercise of faith, severely wound the conscience, and sometimes lose the awareness of grace for a time—until, after they have returned to the right way by genuine repentance, God's fatherly face again shines upon them.

Article 6: God's Saving Intervention
For God, who is rich in mercy, according to the unchangeable purpose of election does not take the Holy Spirit from his own completely, even when they fall grievously. Neither does God let them fall down so far that they forfeit the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or commit the sin which leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit), and plunge themselves, entirely forsaken by God, into eternal ruin.

Article 7: Renewal to Repentance
For, in the first place, God preserves in those saints when they fall the imperishable seed from which they have been born again, lest it perish or be dislodged. Secondly, by his Word and Spirit God certainly and effectively renews them to repentance so that they have a heartfelt and godly sorrow for the sins they have committed; seek and obtain, through faith and with a contrite heart, forgiveness in the blood of the Mediator; experience again the grace of a reconciled God; through faith adore God's mercies; and from then on more eagerly work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

Article 8: The Certainty of This Preservation
So it is not by their own merits or strength but by God's undeserved mercy that they neither forfeit faith and grace totally nor remain in their downfalls to the end and are lost. With respect to themselves this not only easily could happen, but also undoubtedly would happen; but with respect to God it cannot possibly happen. God's plan cannot be changed; God's promise cannot fail; the calling according to God's purpose cannot be revoked; the merit of Christ as well as his interceding and preserving cannot be nullified; and the sealing of the Holy Spirit can neither be invalidated nor wiped out.

Article 9: The Assurance of This Preservation
Concerning this preservation of those chosen to salvation and concerning the perseverance of true believers in faith, believers themselves can and do become assured in accordance with the measure of their faith. By this faith they firmly believe that they are and always will remain true and living members of the church, and that they have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Article 10: The Ground of This Assurance
Accordingly, this assurance does not derive from some private revelation beyond or outside the Word, but from faith in the promises of God which are very plentifully revealed in the Word for our comfort, from the testimony of "the Holy Spirit testifying with our spirit that we are God's children and heirs" (Rom. 8:16-17), and finally from a serious and holy pursuit of a clear conscience and of good works. If God's chosen ones in this world did not have this well-founded comfort that the victory will be theirs and this reliable guarantee of eternal glory, they would be of all people most miserable.

Article 11: Doubts Concerning This Assurance
Meanwhile, Scripture testifies that believers have to contend in this life with various doubts of the flesh, and that under severe temptation they do not always experience this full assurance of faith and certainty of perseverance. But God, the Father of all comfort, "does not let them be tempted beyond what they can bear, but with the temptation he also provides a way out" (1 Cor. 10:13), and by the Holy Spirit revives in them the assurance of their perseverance.

Article 12: This Assurance as an Incentive to Godliness
This assurance of perseverance, however, so far from making true believers proud and carnally self-assured, is rather the true root of humility, of childlike respect, of genuine godliness, of endurance in every conflict, of fervent prayers, of steadfastness in crossbearing and in confessing the truth, and of well-founded joy in God. Reflecting on this benefit pro-

vides an incentive to a serious and continual practice of thanksgiving and good works, as is evident from the testimonies of Scripture and the examples of the saints.

Article 13: Assurance No Inducement to Carelessness
Neither does the renewed confidence of perseverance produce immorality or lack of concern for godliness in those put back on their feet after a fall, but it produces a much greater concern to observe carefully the ways which the Lord prepared in advance. They observe these ways in order that by walking in them they may maintain the assurance of their perseverance, lest, by their abuse of God's fatherly goodness, the face of the gracious God (for the godly, looking upon that face is sweeter than life, but its withdrawal is more bitter than death) turn away from them again, with the result that they fall into greater anguish of spirit.

Article 14: God's Use of Means in Perseverance
And, just as it has pleased God to begin this work of grace in us by the proclamation of the gospel, so God preserves, continues, and completes this work by the hearing and reading of the gospel, by meditation on it, by its exhortations, threats, and promises, and also by the use of the sacraments.

Article 15: Contrasting Reactions to the Teaching of Perseverance
This teaching about the perseverance of true believers and saints, and about their assurance of it—a teaching which God has very richly revealed in the Word for the glory of his name and for the comfort of the godly, and which God impresses on the hearts of believers—is something which the flesh does not understand, Satan hates, the world ridicules, the ignorant and the hypocrites abuse, and the spirits of error attack. The bride of Christ, on the other hand, has always loved this teaching very tenderly and defended it steadfastly as a priceless treasure; and God, against whom no plan can avail and no strength can prevail, will ensure that the church will continue to do this. To this God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

Rejection of the Errors
Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those

I
Who teach that the perseverance of true believers is not an effect of election or a gift of God produced by Christ's death, but a condition of the new covenant which people, before what they call their "peremptory" election and justification, must fulfill by their free will.

For Holy Scripture testifies that perseverance follows from election and is granted to the chosen by virtue of Christ's death, resurrection, and intercession: "The chosen obtained it; the others were hardened" (Rom. 11:7); likewise, "He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not, along with him, grant us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised—who also sits at the right hand of God, and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:32-35).

II
Who teach that God does provide believers with sufficient strength to persevere and is ready to preserve this strength in them if they perform their duty, but that even with all those things in place which are necessary to persevere in faith and which God is pleased to use to preserve faith, it still always depends on the choice of human will whether or not to persevere.

For this view is obviously Pelagian; and though it intends to make people free it makes them sacrilegious. It is against the enduring consensus of evangelical teaching which takes from humanity all cause for boasting and ascribes the praise for this benefit only to God's grace. It is also against the testimony of the apostle: "It is God who keeps us strong to the end, so that we will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:8).

III
Who teach that those who truly believe and have been born again not only can forfeit justifying faith as well as grace and salvation totally and to the end, but also in actual fact do often forfeit them and are lost forever.

For this opinion nullifies the very grace of justification and regeneration as well as the continual preservation by Christ, contrary to the plain words of the apostle Paul: "If Christ died for us while we were still sinners, we will therefore much more be saved from God's wrath through him, since we have now been justified by his blood" (Rom. 5:8-9); and contrary to the apostle John: "No one who is born of God is intent on sin, because God's seed remains in him, nor can he sin, because he has been born of God" (1 John 3:9); also contrary to the words of Jesus Christ: "I give eternal life to my sheep, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28-29).

IV
Who teach that those who truly believe and have been born again can commit the sin that leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit).

For the same apostle John, after making mention of those who commit the sin that leads to death and forbidding prayer for them (1 John 5:16-17), immediately adds: "We know that anyone born of God does not commit sin" (that is, that kind of sin), "but the one who was born of God keeps himself safe, and the evil one does not touch him" (v. 18).

V
Who teach that apart from a special revelation no one can have the assurance of future perseverance in this life.

For by this teaching the well-founded consolation of true believers in this life is taken away and the doubting of the Romanists is reintroduced into the church. Holy Scripture, however, in many places derives the assurance not from a special and extraordinary revelation but from the marks peculiar to God's children and from God's completely reliable promises. So especially the apostle Paul: "Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39); and John: "They who obey his commands remain in him and he in them. And this is how we know that he remains in us: by the Spirit he gave us" (1 John 3:24).

VI
Who teach that the teaching of the assurance of perseverance and of salvation is by its very nature and character an opiate of the flesh and is harmful to godliness, good morals, prayer, and other holy exercises, but that, on the contrary, to have doubt about this is praiseworthy.

For these people show that they do not know the effective operation of God's grace and the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and they contradict the apostle John, who asserts the opposite in plain words: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, but what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he is made known, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies him-

self, just as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3). Moreover, they are refuted by the examples of the saints in both the Old and the New Testament, who though assured of their perseverance and salvation yet were constant in prayer and other exercises of godliness.

VII
Who teach that the faith of those who believe only temporarily does not differ from justifying and saving faith except in duration alone.

For Christ himself in Matthew 13:20ff. and Luke 8:13ff. clearly defines these further differences between temporary and true believers: he says that the former receive the seed on rocky ground, and the latter receive it in good ground, or a good heart; the former have no root, and the latter are firmly rooted; the former have no fruit, and the latter produce fruit in varying measure, with steadfastness, or perseverance.

VIII
Who teach that it is not absurd that people, after losing their former regeneration, should once again, indeed quite often, be reborn.

For by this teaching they deny the imperishable nature of God's seed by which we are born again, contrary to the testimony of the apostle Peter: "Born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable" (1 Pet. 1:23).

IX
Who teach that Christ nowhere prayed for an unfailing perseverance of believers in faith.

For they contradict Christ himself when he says: "I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:32); and John the gospel writer when he testifies in John 17 that it was not only for the apostles, but also for all those who were to believe by their message that Christ prayed: "Holy Father, preserve them in your name" (v. 11); and "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you preserve them from the evil one" (v. 15).

Conclusion
Rejection of False Accusations

And so this is the clear, simple, and straightforward explanation of the orthodox teaching on the five articles in dispute in the Netherlands, as well as the rejection of the errors by which the Dutch churches have for some time been disturbed. This explanation and rejection the Synod declares to be derived from God's Word and in agreement with the confessions of the Reformed churches. Hence it clearly appears that those of whom one could hardly expect it have shown no truth, equity, and charity at all in wishing to make the public believe:

- that the teaching of the Reformed churches on predestination and on the points associated with it by its very nature and tendency draws the minds of people away from all godliness and religion, is an opiate of the flesh and the devil, and is a stronghold where Satan lies in wait for all people, wounds most of them, and fatally pierces many of them with the arrows of both despair and self-assurance;
- that this teaching makes God the author of sin, unjust, a tyrant, and a hypocrite; and is nothing but a refurbished Stoicism, Manicheism, Libertinism, and Turkism*;
- that this teaching makes people carnally self-assured, since it persuades them that nothing endangers the salvation of the elect, no matter how they live, so that they may commit the most outrageous crimes with self-assurance; and that on the other hand nothing is of use to the reprobate for salvation even if they have truly performed all the works of the saints;

- that this teaching means that God predestined and created, by the bare and unqualified choice of his will, without the least regard or consideration of any sin, the greatest part of the world to eternal condemnation; that in the same manner in which election is the source and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and ungodliness; that many infant children of believers are snatched in their innocence from their mothers' breasts and cruelly cast into hell so that neither the blood of Christ nor their baptism nor the prayers of the church at their baptism can be of any use to them; and very many other slanderous accusations of this kind which the Reformed churches not only disavow but even denounce with their whole heart.

Therefore this Synod of Dort in the name of the Lord pleads with all who devoutly call on the name of our Savior Jesus Christ to form their judgment about the faith of the Reformed churches, not on the basis of false accusations gathered from here or there, or even on the basis of the personal statements of a number of ancient and modern authorities—statements which are also often either quoted out of context or misquoted and twisted to convey a different meaning—but on the basis of the churches' own official confessions and of the present explanation of the orthodox teaching which has been endorsed by the unanimous consent of the members of the whole Synod, one and all.

Moreover, the Synod earnestly warns the false accusers themselves to consider how heavy a judgment of God awaits those who give false testimony against so many churches and their confessions, trouble the consciences of the weak, and seek to prejudice the minds of many against the fellowship of true believers.

Finally, this Synod urges all fellow ministers in the gospel of Christ to deal with this teaching in a godly and reverent manner, in the academic institutions as well as in the churches; to do so, both in their speaking and writing, with a view to the glory of God's name, holiness of life, and the comfort of anxious souls; to think and also speak with Scripture according to the analogy of faith; and, finally, to refrain from all those ways of speaking which go beyond the bounds set for us by the genuine sense of the Holy Scriptures and which could give impertinent sophists a just occasion to scoff at the teaching of the Reformed churches or even to bring false accusations against it.

May God's Son Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God and gives gifts to humanity, sanctify us in the truth, lead to the truth those who err, silence the mouths of those who lay false accusations against sound teaching, and equip faithful ministers of God's Word with a spirit of wisdom and discretion, that all they say may be to the glory of God and the building up of their hearers. Amen.

*Islam

R-55
To approve these common translations of the doctrinal standards of the RCA and CRC for use and study in the RCA; and further,

to instruct Reformed Church Press to use these translations in its future work with Faith Alive Press. (ADOPTED)

On the Question of Classes Ordaining Elders

At its 2010 meeting, the General Synod considered the following recommendation from the Commissioned Pastor Task Force:

R-36
To direct the Commission on Church Order and the Commission on Christian Worship, in consultation with the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team and the General Synod Council's Church Multiplication Team, to develop appropriate changes to the Constitution (*Book of Church Order* and Liturgy) to allow classes to elect and ordain elders for new congregations (not yet formally organized). This may include the commissioned pastor who will lead a new ministry (*MGS 2010*, p. 147).

After some discussion, the following was proposed and then approved by the synod:

R-37
To refer R-36 to the Commission on Theology for further study and review of the appropriateness of classes ordaining elders with report to the 2011 General Synod (*MGS 2010*, p. 147).

The Commission on Theology discussed R-36 at its fall 2010 meeting. We acknowledged the validity of seeking this change to our order, particularly as it relates to new church starts where there is intention to appoint a commissioned pastor to serve. Because the commissioned pastor designation is tied to the office of elder, a classis cannot commission persons who are organizing new RCA congregations if they have no formal connection to a local church that could elect and ordain them to the office of elder, as is required. The commission can see how this may impede classis support and accountability for new church start pastors and place limits on the ministry of these pastors. Nevertheless, the commission's discussion concluded that, given our current church order, and, more importantly, the theology that informs this church order, it would be inappropriate for classes to ordain elders. At our spring 2011 meeting the commission reviewed a brief paper that provided a theological rationale for continuing to place the formation, discernment, election, and ordination of elders at the local church level.

At this same meeting, the commission met with the Rev. Tim Vink, RCA coordinator of church multiplication. He shared his experience in RCA church multiplication and presented specific cases of church plants that would benefit from the leadership of a commissioned pastor, but are prevented from this because the planters are not elders in the RCA. In the cases discussed, the church plants are geographically remote from both congregations and classes of the RCA, so it is not easily possible to have these pastors join a congregation in order to undergo the processes of becoming elders. Together we discussed the merits and challenges of linking the office of elder to the role of commissioned pastor, but we agreed that there are good reasons to continue to link them.

As a result of the conversation with Vink, the commission has decided not to make a formal response to the 2011 General Synod. We believe that it would be most helpful to the RCA for the Commission on Theology to continue this discussion with Vink, members of the Church Multiplication Team, and the Commission on Church Order so that we might be fully responsive to the concerns of new congregations and their pastors while also attending to theology and church order. It is our hope that together we can devise theologically faithful practices that will ensure that persons serving as church planters in the RCA are deeply formed in Reformed faith, and receive the necessary support and oversight of a classis.

Report of the Commission for Women

[We believe] that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways: in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope...together serve God in this world; and together fight against all which may threaten or hinder this unity.

The Belhar Confession

During 2010, the Reformed Church in America (RCA) took the final step in adopting the Belhar Confession as its fourth Standard of Unity. Whether it has, as of yet, become truly standard is arguable, but unity is unquestionably a primary part of its call. The RCA, by adopting the Belhar Confession, has said that it desires unity, and "that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church." The Belhar Confession does not paper over the diversity of convictions, spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, languages, and cultures represented in the RCA and the wider church. Rather, it calls Christians to be reconciled in Christ, and to visibly embody that reconciliation through mutual service and enrichment.

This seems a particularly apt calling for a denomination in which members hold a variety of opinions and interpretations on a number of issues, including the role of women in the leadership and ministry of the church. Within a denomination that disagrees about the ordination of women, the Commission for Women is charged by the General Synod with working for the full and complete participation of women in realizing the vision of a church and society inclusive of all gifts of all persons.

Despite this lack of consensus, women continue to respond to God's call to serve in the various offices of the church, in accordance with the ideals of the RCA and the biblical teaching that "[t]here is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Women and men find unity in working together toward Our Call: establishing new congregations and revitalizing existing ones, developing networks for pastors and other church leaders, forming followers of Christ, reaching out in mission, and striving toward a multiracial future freed from racism. The Commission for Women joins with the whole RCA in celebrating the many ways in which unity has supported and enhanced ministry to God's people and mission to the world God so loves.

However, the commission also recognizes the ways that the diversity of opinions on the issue of women's ordination has led to inequality in the RCA. Of 1,549 active ordained ministers, 261 are women (16.8 percent). Only 104 of those women serve in congregations, while 120 serve in specialized ministries and thirty-seven are currently without charge. While many of the women who serve in specialized ministries do so in accordance with their own sense of call, others report that opportunities to serve in churches have been limited because of their gender. Of 113 church planters serving in congregations, only eight are female. Approximately two-thirds of the membership of the RCA are women, and RCA seminaries currently graduate nearly equal numbers of men and women. And yet, the statistics about female ordained women suggest that women are not fully and equally participating in the life and ministry of the RCA.

In short, although the statistics show consistent improvement in the numbers of women being ordained as ministers of Word and sacrament, and serving in churches, the percentages still reflect a disparity between RCA membership and clergy, and inequality in the practice of our stated affirmation of the calls of both men and women.

Female Candidates for Ordination

The Commission for Women meets annually with seminary students to offer support and determine whether and how they are being nurtured and supported within the seminaries and by their congregations and classes. In February of 2011, the commission met with both female and male students from Western Theological Seminary to hear their stories of joy and concern. The explicit invitation to male students brought interesting additional perspectives to the table; one man commented that they had "been robbed, not hearing women preachers all these years." Students also raised the problem of declining male membership and participation within the church. While the Commission for Women is not specifically tasked with dealing with this issue, it raises broader questions of gender dynamics within the church that are of interest to the commission.

Many students reported that the seminary is a positive environment in which they are able to exercise their gifts and callings equally. However, while the seminary itself is perceived as a community where they are embraced and supported by faculty and peers, opportunities for pulpit supply and internships are more limited for female students. As they move toward graduation, many of them find that congregations are far less welcoming of women's gifts and leadership. Church profiles specifically state that only men need apply, or simply refer to their future minister in a way that makes it clear that the person they expect to call is male.

One of the challenges for female candidates for ordination is a lack of knowledge of RCA polity. Classes in polity are typically taken during the final year of seminary, when most of the candidacy process is completed. Students who are obstructed or treated unfairly by their consistory or classis do not know enough about the process or where to go for help until it's too late.

While the commission meets regularly with students from the two RCA seminaries, it has not made a practice of meeting with students from the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA). The commission received reports this year from women who found themselves in difficult situations related to their gender, who because they had come through MFCA rather than an RCA seminary, did not know where to turn for assistance. As a result, the commission is working on ways to connect with MFCA students during the required polity classes.

The Conscience Clauses

The Commission for Women continues to receive frequent reports of abuses of the conscience clauses. The commission functions in these situations as a combination of resource (clarifying polity issues and directing women to the appropriate channels of authority), support (listening to their painful stories and standing beside them as they move forward), and advocate (challenging those who unfairly obstruct the ministries of women). However, the commission cannot be the only voice speaking against these abuses. The ongoing complaints indicate widespread misunderstandings and misuses of the conscience clauses. These clauses are intended not only to allow those opposed to women's ordination to abstain from participating in it, but also to prevent obstruction to women's ordinations to the offices of the church. The commission works with other commissions, classes, congregations, and individuals to minimize abuses of the conscience clauses and encourage

adherence to the *Book of Church Order* and the RCA's established support of the ordination of women.

Progress on Past General Synod Recommendations

The Commission for Women celebrates the completion of its recommendation from General Synod 2009 "to direct the General Synod Council to develop a plan for a future Office for Women...enabling the RCA to live out its stated commitment to the full inclusion of women at all levels of the church's leadership and ministry; and further, to have a staff member in place by January 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter" (*MGS 2009*, R-74, p. 324). Claudette Reid was hired to fill this position and has already begun collaborating with the Commission for Women in shared concern for the equipping and empowering of women in the RCA.

Also in 2009, General Synod adopted the commission's recommendation to "instruct the General Synod Council to develop and hold a training event for all RCA staff that addresses issues of gender and power, assumptions about women as leaders, the use of language with regard to gender, and specific ways to fully include women in the life of the church; and further, to encourage the regional synods and classes to hold similar events, with the intention of increasing advocacy for women" (*MSG 2009*, R-73, p. 324). At the time of this report, such a training had not occurred, nor was the commission aware of any concrete plans in place for one. Staff often represent the RCA both internally and externally, and the hiring of a coordinator for women's ministries cannot be considered equivalent to or replacing of training for all staff. The Commission for Women therefore continues to urge that this recommendation be acted upon with appropriate haste.

Commission for Women Meetings

The Commission for Women met twice in the past year: in Chicago, Illinois, on October 14-16, 2009, during the joint meetings of the commissions and General Synod Council, and in Holland, Michigan, on February 3-5. The commission draws inspiration for its work from Scripture, stories of fruitful mission and ministry, theological exploration, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. The commission celebrates the many ways in which men and women work together in the ministry of Christ, exhibiting the unity of the church toward which the RCA strives, while also grieving for those whose journey to follow God's calling meets with obstacles and dismissal due to their gender. The commission challenges the RCA to continually live more fully into its commitment to the full participation of women in the life and ministry of the church. In doing so, the Commission for Women expresses gratitude to God for the blessing of living out our shared call as the body of Christ in this world that God so loves.

Report of the Commission on Nominations

The Commission on Nominations met in person on January 18, 2011, and again by conference call on February 15, March 29, April 12, and May 24, 2011. Throughout the year members of the commission actively sought out qualified candidates, solicited profiles (a brief two-page application that was formerly referred to as the "Talent Bank Form"), and checked references on those who were interested in serving on a commission or agency of the General Synod or on the board of directors or trustees of an RCA-related educational institution. In these ways the commission sought to fulfill its responsibilities as stated in the Bylaws of the General Synod—namely, "in consultation with the general secre-

tary…search the denomination for suitable nominees. In making nominations it shall consider the geographic location, occupation, and record of previous service to the denomination of persons suggested by classes, regional synods, and other sources. It shall consider this and other pertinent data in light of each commission's or agency's responsibilities, membership needs, suggested nominees, and place and schedule of meetings" (*Book of Church Order* [*BCO*] Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 8.c.2).

The commission seeks to nominate individuals for service on agencies, commissions, and boards of directors on the basis of their spiritual gifts, heart (or passion), abilities, personality, experience, and special leadership abilities, and when possible seeks to involve young adult members of the RCA (so they can be nurtured and encouraged to serve the RCA in a variety of ways in the future).

Through its efforts, the Commission on Nominations has proactively fulfilled its responsibility to "search the denomination" (*BCO*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 8.c.2) and believes those nominated have the traits that make them particularly well-suited for the work of the positions to which they are being nominated. In addition to finding people who are exceptionally well suited to serve on a General Synod commission or agency or the board of directors or trustees of an RCA educational institution, the commission is pleased to report once again that it has, to the best of its ability, fulfilled its responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the *Book of Church Order* are upheld.

When the number of qualified candidates from which to choose increases, the commission's work is made easier and the work of the RCA's agencies and commissions is carried out more effectively. Consequently, the commission encourages anyone interested in serving on a General Synod commission or agency or on the board of directors or trustees of an RCA-related educational institution to complete a profile form and submit it to the Commission on Nominations as indicated on the form. Profile forms are available from staff to the Commission on Nominations (Paul M. Karssen: (712) 737-3174 or pkarssen@rca.org; Laura Kiel Tarbous: (212) 870-3279 or ltarbous@rca.org) or through the "Profile Form and Commission Information" link on the General Synod page of the RCA website (www.rca.org/synod).

The commission also recognizes that many people are simply too modest to suggest that they may have a valuable contribution to make. For that reason, the commission has also developed a process and form by which you can recommend others. If you know someone in the RCA who would be a valuable addition to one of its commissions, boards, or agencies, please recommend that person to the General Synod by completing a recommendation form. Once its submitted, the Commission on Nominations will contact the person recommended and ask if he or she would consider serving. As with the profile form, the recommendation form is available from staff members Paul Karssen and Laura Tarbous, as well as through the same link on the General Synod page of the RCA website. The commission welcomes and values your input.

Prior to presenting nominees to the General Synod, the Commission on Nominations must address an issue regarding the terms of service for members of the board of trustees of Central College. The college's board has adjusted the terms of all of its members so that they correspond with the college's fiscal year. They have done this by extending the ending date of each member's term to the ending date of the fiscal year in which the term currently ends. As a result, the year in which the terms end has been advanced by one (i.e., instead of December of a particular year the ending date now is June 30 of the following year). The trustees elected by the General Synod whose terms are affected by this action, and the revised years in which their terms end, are as follows:

Name	Current Term	Revised Term
Susan Brandl	2012	2013
Peter Cartwright	2013	2014
Vernon Den Herder	2011	2012
Betsy Farver-Smith	2012	2013
Barbara Kniff-McCulla	2013	2014
Stanley Poortinga	2011	2012
Donna Smith	2014	2015
Judith Vogel	2012	2013

The Commission on Nominations believes that the foregoing revisions are in the best interest of Central College, and therefore makes the following recommendation:

R-56
To reassign terms for the following members of the Board of Trustees of Central College as follows:

Name	**Revised Term**	
Susan Brandl	**2013**	
Peter Cartwright	**2014**	
Vernon Den Herder	**2012**	
Betsy Farver-Smith	**2013**	
Barbara Kniff-McCulla	**2014**	
Stanley Poortinga	**2012**	
Donna Smith	**2015**	
Judith Vogel	**2013**	**(ADOPTED)**

The nominations below take into account these revisions of terms.

Nominees identified by the Commission on Nominations are as follows (* indicates a final term, and # indicates an official nomination from the assembly, institution, or agency listed):

GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL

Class of 2015

*The Rev. Kent Frens (Regional Synod of the Great Lakes)#
*Nancy Halliburton
*The Rev. Dirk Kramer (Regional Synod of Canada)#
*Christa Mooi
*The Rev. John Muniz
*Noreen Williams-Gibbs

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN ACTION

Class of 2014

*Dayber Rodrigues Goncalves
William Hertlein
*Mark Rich (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ecumenical observer)
Deborah vanHoeve
Vacancy (Reformed ecumenical observer)

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND DISCIPLESHIP

Class of 2014
*Lois Fiegl
Carleen Vande Zande

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

Class of 2012
Mitchell Kinsinger
Class of 2014
Peter De Haan
The Rev. James Seawood
The Rev. Thomas HungYong Song
Vacancy (ecumenical)

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Class of 2013
The Rev. Troy Van Beek
Class of 2014
Nancy Hoerner
*The Rev. Adriene Thorne

COMMISSION ON CHURCH ORDER

Class of 2014
The Rev. Allan Janssen
Bruce Neckers

COMMISSION ON HISTORY

Class of 2014
David Tripold
Linda Walvoord

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL BUSINESS

Class of 2013
John D'Amanda (Regional Synod of Albany)#
Class of 2014
John Terpstra (Regional Synod of the Heartland)#
Vacancy (Regional Synod of New York)#

COMMISSION ON NOMINATIONS

Class of 2012
*The Rev. Donald Poest (past president of General Synod)#
Mary Bryant (Regional Synod of New York)#
Class of 2013
The Rev. Phyllis Palsma (Regional Synod of Albany)#
Betsy Dykhouse (Regional Synod of the Far West)#

Class of 2014
The Rev. Kathy Jo Blaske (Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics)#
Annie Lee Phillips (African American/Black Council)
Laura Vroom (Regional Synod of Mid-America)#
Vacancy

COMMISSION ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

Class of 2013
The Rev. Yong Bok Kim (Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries)#
Vacancy

Class of 2014
*Kevin McMahan
*The Rev. Kenneth Petty Jr.
Alfonso Surrett Jr. (African American/Black Council)#

COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY

Class of 2014
*The Rev. James De Jong (Christian Reformed Church in North America)
*The Rev. Steven Hoogerwerf
*The Rev. Philip Hougen (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)
*The Rev. Reneè House
The Rev. John Paarlberg

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Class of 2013
The Rev. Nolan Palsma
Class of 2014
*Leonor Caballero
*The Rev. Lynn Japinga

BOARD OF BENEFITS SERVICES

Class of 2013
The Rev. Harold Brown
Class of 2014
Daniel Kim
Denise Ratcliffe
*The Rev. Carl Van Voorst

CHURCH GROWTH FUND

Class of 2013
Vacancy
Class of 2014
*Diane Faubion
*John Koerselman

MINISTERIAL FORMATION CERTIFICATION AGENCY

Class of 2014
*The Rev. Dwight Bailey
The Rev. Miriam Barnes

REFORMED CHURCH PRESS

Vacancy

NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Class of 2012
Arburta Jones
Vacancy
Vacancy
Class of 2014
Norman Aardema (Regional Synod of Mid-America)
Deborah Sterken (Regional Synod of the Great Lakes)
Class of 2015
The Rev. Michael Bos
*Karen Jackson
The Rev. Reginald Jackson
*Sara Sybesma Tolsma (Regional Synod of the Heartland)
*Cornelius Ubbels (Regional Synod of Canada)
The Rev. Paul Yang

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Class of 2014
Mary Bechler
The Rev. Erin Beckerink
Wilbert Hamstra (Regional Synod of Mid-America)
Robert Hilarides
The Rev. James Poit
*Stephen Thomas
The Rev. Michael Van Rees

CENTRAL COLLEGE

Class of 2012
The Rev. John Schmidt
Class of 2014
The Rev. Kevin Korver
Class of 2015
The Rev. Sophie Mathonnet-VanderWell
The Rev. Charles Morris

HOPE COLLEGE

Class of 2015
*Mary Bauman
*Thomas Claus
John Dood
Monica Newendorp
The Rev. D. Scott Van Oostendorp

R-57
To elect the above-named nominees to the General Synod commissions and agencies and the boards of directors or trustees of RCA-related educational institutions as indicated. (ADOPTED)

R-58
To elect Kenneth Labbé moderator of the Commission on Nominations for the 2011-2012 term. (ADOPTED)

Report of New Brunswick Theological Seminary

> *After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"* (Revelation 7:9-10)

These words from the pen and vision of St. John, written on the island of Patmos, paint for us a picture of the family of God. We are deeply grateful at New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS) to share in a community that has given us a foretaste of such a rich diversity of God's saints. Increasingly we have a number of students from outside the United States, representing more than a dozen different countries. When we pray in our mother tongues, the chapel sounds like the day of Pentecost. With denominational, ethnic, cultural, and language diversity, we are reminded regularly that our unity is only found in the presence of those who make us whole. For all who support us and pray for our sacred mission, we are deeply grateful.

Steady Enrollment and Finances

Part of the core mission of NBTS, which is to make theological education more accessible and contextual, has meant that over the last three decades we have served an increasing number of bi-vocational and thus part time students. This remarkable focus has meant that while we have more than 225 students enrolled in our many academic programs, they only represent about one hundred FTEs (full time equivalent). In other words, as we need to retain an infrastructure to serve more than two hundred students, since most of them are part time, we receive the equivalent of what one hundred students would pay for tuition and fees. While we are deeply convinced that God has called us to the sacred mission of serving those who would find it difficult to get a theological education, since they can only take classes in the evening, we are also deeply challenged to find enough resources to keep us fiscally viable.

Special Gifts

Because of this challenge, we have looked to our friends and supporters to make a significant commitment to our mission. We were delighted in October of 2010 to receive from Fountain Baptist Church of Summit, New Jersey, a three year commitment of $300,000 toward our operating budget. Over the past two decades Fountain has sent almost twenty candidates to be formed for ministry at NBTS, and so they felt called by God to make this significant pledge. Fountain was an inspiration to the state and the nation when a few years ago it pledged one million dollars to respond to the destruction of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. We note that the Fountain pledge is the most significant commitment from a non-RCA source to the operating budget of the seminary in its 227 year history.

In the spring of this year the seminary learned that it had been awarded by the Luce Foundation a $350,000 grant toward a new chair in Global Christianity. This generous gift, when added to the more than $650,000 in gifts and pledges from our friends in Korea, has moved us past the one million dollar mark toward our $1.5 million goal. New Brunswick Seminary was held in highest esteem in the nineteenth century when it produced a number of internationally known missionaries: David Abeel, many members of the Scudder family, Samuel Zwemer, James Cantine, and Horace G. Underwood, to name just a few. The focus of the twentieth century was on urban ministry as the front line of mission in the modern world. With the initiation of a new chair in Global Christianity, it is our hope that

these two significant threads will be woven together to inspire mission in a post colonial world where the gospel is taking deep root in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America.

Utilization of our Property in Service of our Mission

For those who have followed our annual reports for the past decade, you know that we have a long term commitment to leverage our seven and half acre campus in service of our mission. More than 90 percent of our students are now commuters and so the board of trustees has worked tirelessly to reduce the size of our campus in order to reduce our overhead of maintaining a dozen buildings, half of which are more than a hundred years old. The interest of Rutgers University, which surrounds us, has remained steady but has been slow to develop into an agreement. The board has acted to move beyond Rutgers to other potential buyers, fully aware of the zoning restrictions that may limit our options. While this decade long conversation has felt slow to many, it remains in our best interest in act prudently and wisely to help assure a promising future of service and mission.

Belhar Confession and Anti-Racism

For the past six years NBTS has intentionally focused its attention on becoming an anti-racist institution. Even though our community has been richly diverse for decades, it was important for us to identify ways in which power and privilege have been systemically and historically been exercised by some while others have been marginalized. This is not unique at NBTS, but is the legacy of a society that has regularly deprived people of color from access to power and privilege. The Belhar Confession, adopted by the General Synod of 2010, can become an excellent resource to help guide conversations about unity, reconciliation, and justice. We have been delighted to have cooperated in this past year with Earl James and his office in producing a video resource that can be utilized by local congregations that need to confront how racism is an invisible, but powerful, component of our institutional life. The seminary is deeply convicted that the addition of the sixth dimension to Our Call, a commitment to a multiracial future freed from racism, is a gift to the RCA and a place where our own experience with confronting racism can be of assistance to many.

Bylaws Revised

Last year's General Synod approved a revised purpose statement in the seminary's bylaws, and so this past year the board of trustees spent its time revising the bylaws to bring them into closer conformity with our stated purpose and with the mission and organization of the Reformed Church in America. We commend these amended bylaws to you in hopes that they will assure you of our deep affection for the RCA and our abiding commitment to be partners with the RCA and many others in making theological education more accessible and contextual for the whole church of Jesus Christ.

The board of trustees has approved the following revisions to the seminary bylaws.

R-59
To adopt the following revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, effective July 1, 2011 (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out).
(ADOPTED)

NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Revised January 2002
Amended April 2006
Amended June 2009

Proposed Amendments June 2011

ARTICLE I

Name

Sec. 1 The name of this corporation shall be ~~The~~ New Brunswick Theological Seminary~~ of the Reformed Church in America~~, herein after referred to as the "Corporation" or "Seminary."

ARTICLE II

Purpose

Sec. 1 Called in Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, New Brunswick Theological Seminary participates in God's own laboring to fulfill God's reign on earth.

Rooted in the Reformed tradition and centered in its trust of God's sovereignty and grace, the Seminary is an inter-cultural, ecumenical school of Christian faith, learning, and scholarship committed to its metro-urban and global contexts.

Our mission is to educate persons and strengthen communities for transformational, public ministries in church and society. We fulfill this mission through creative, contextual, and critical engagement with texts, traditions, and practices.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Sec. 1 The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America ("General Synod"), or its successor by any merger or consolidation, shall be the sole member of the Corporation for all purposes of the corporate statutes of the State of New Jersey. The General Synod~~ of the Reformed Church in America~~, acting in accordance with the governing law, shall exercise all rights granted to members by the laws of the State of New Jersey.

ARTICLE IV

Function

Sec. 1 The General Synod, as the sole member of the Corporation, reserves to itself the responsibility of developing, enacting, publishing, reviewing, and amending the standards for the preparation of candidates for the office of Ministry of Word and Sacrament within the Reformed Church in America.

Sec. 2 The General Synod entrusts to the Board of Trustees of New Brunswick Theological Seminary all authority and power necessary for the proper oversight and direction of the Corporation~~Seminary~~, as well as the control of its finances, securities, and property.

Sec. 3 The Board of Trustees shall assume responsibility for providing the Corporation~~Seminary~~ with such property and buildings; faculty, administration, and staff; library and information resources; equipment and supplies as are necessary for the effective accomplishment of the Seminary's purpose~~mission~~.

ARTICLE V

Membership of the Board of Trustees

Sec. 1 All members of the Board of Trustees shall be confessing Christians who acknowledge a commitment to the authority of the Bible over all matters of faith and practice, the sovereignty of God, and the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life. They must be willing to give of their time and talents to further the mission of New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

Sec. ~~1.~~2 The Board of Trustees shall consist of a minimum of twelve and a maximum of ~~up to~~ twenty-four members who shall be elected for a term of three ~~four~~ years beginning the first day of July following their election by the General Synod and continuing until their term expires, except in the cases of death, resignation, or declaration of incompetence by the Board of Trustees as described in Article VI, Sec. 2. Ex-officio members shall not be considered when determining the number of members of the Board of Trustees. ~~successors shall be elected and qualified.~~

Sec. ~~2~~ 3 The membership of the Board of Trustees must at all times include one member from each of the regional synods of the Reformed Church in America. These members shall be nominated and elected as are all other members, but they shall be designated as Regional Synod Trustees. The transfer of the membership of a minister or layperson to a classis or church outside the regional synod of which the individual is the designated Regional Synod Trustee shall create a vacancy. ~~At least half of these Regional Synod Trustees shall be either women or ethnic minority persons.~~

Sec. ~~3~~ 4 A majority of all trustees must be members of the Reformed Church in America. At least half of these trustees shall be either women or ethnic minority persons. The disciplinary suspension or termination of the membership of a Reformed Church in America trustee in his/her church or classis shall create a vacancy.

Sec. ~~4~~ 5 Each ~~new~~ trustee will be asked to read and sign annually a Declaration for Board Members of ~~the~~ New Brunswick Theological Seminary at a commissioning service to be held ~~annually~~ at the fall meeting of the Board. This Declaration will include a statement of commitment to faithful participation in the work ~~meetings~~ of the Board.

Sec. ~~5~~ 6 No trustee who has served two full terms (appointment or election to fill a vacancy of more than one half of a term shall constitute a full term for this purpose) shall be eligible for re-election until at least one year has elapsed. ~~Under extenuating circumstances, the Board of Trustees may decide to elect a sitting moderator, whose term as a Trustee will expire, to an additional one year as a Trustee in order to continue in the role as a moderator. This will require a 2/3 vote of the Trustees present at any meeting. (Extenuating circumstances include but not limited to, such things as a new president, an unresolved issue requiring continuity and a vice moderator unable to assume the moderator position.)~~

~~Sec. 6~~ ~~The President and the Moderator may together propose "Supernumerary Trustees" to the Board of Trustees for election to serve at the pleasure of the Board. Supernumerary Trustees must be elected by a 2/3 majority vote of those Trustees present and voting. These supernumerary trustees are elected because of their particular expertise or experience or because of their demonstrated usefulness to the Board. The Board may elect no more than three such trustees to serve at the same time. Their term of service shall be established in consultation with them and determined by the Board at the time of their election. Supernumerary trustees are not eligible to serve as officers of the Board. In all deliberations except the amendment of the Constitution and Bylaws, the nomination of trustees, or the election of a President, Supernumerary Trustees have all of the rights and privileges of other trustees, including voice and vote.~~

Sec.7 The President of the Seminary shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 8 The General Secretary~~, R.C.A.,~~ of the Reformed Church in America ~~or a representative appointed by the General Secretary,~~ shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of the Board of Trustees. The General Secretary may appoint a representative in his or her absence.

ARTICLE VI

Nomination and Election

Sec. 1 The Board Affairs Committee shall present the Board of Trustees with a slate of possible trustees. All trustees shall be recommended ~~nominated~~ by the Board of Trustees, reviewed and nominated by the

General Synod's Commission on Nominations ~~(RCA)~~, and elected by the General Synod ~~of the Reformed Church in America at its annual meeting or at any special meeting. Membership begins on the first day of July following election~~.

Sec. 2 The death, resignation, or incompetence of a trustee (determined by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Trustees at two successive meetings ~~conclusively by the remaining trustees~~) shall create a vacancy. ~~The transfer of the membership of a minister or layperson to a classis or church outside the regional synod of which the individual is the designated Regional Synod Trustee shall create a vacancy. The disciplinary suspension or termination of the membership of a trustee in his/her church or classis shall create a vacancy.~~ Vacancies shall be filled for the remaining portion of the term by the General Synod Council at any regular or special meeting after recommendation~~nomination~~ by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE VII

Meetings

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

Sec. 2 Special meetings may be called by the Moderator of the Board of Trustees or by the Officers. The Moderator is obliged to call such a meeting if so requested in writing by any five members of the Board of Trustees. If the Moderator fails to call such meeting within ten days, the Secretary shall issue the call based on the members' written request. Written notice of special meetings, stating the nature of the business to be considered, shall be given to the trustees not less than ten days prior to each such meeting. No other business shall be considered at such special meetings except by two-thirds vote of those present at the meeting.

Sec. 3 A majority of all members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum, but the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of all trustees shall be requisite for the election or removal of the President.

Sec. 4 If a ~~Board member~~trustee cannot attend a meeting, he or she must notify the Moderator of the Board of Trustees ~~President of the Seminary with the reason for the absence, normally at least two weeks prior to the meeting,~~ for report to the Board.

Sec. 5 When the Board of Trustees or the Moderator of the Board of Trustees deems it appropriate, a member of the Board Affairs Committee is to contact a ~~Board member~~trustee who has been absent from two consecutive meetings to communicate the Board of Trustees' concern.

Sec. 6 The Board of Trustees may, upon a two-thirds majority vote at two

successive meetings, seek the replacement of a ~~Board member~~trustee who has been absent from three consecutive Board meetings.

Sec. 7 The agenda shall be mailed to the trustees at least ten days prior to the meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 8 Every meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be opened and closed with prayer.

Sec. 9 The Board of Trustees may meet in Executive Session for a portion of any business meeting at which time only voting trustees shall be present unless the Board of Trustees shall expressly invite other persons to be present.

Sec. 10 Any action considered and taken in Executive Session must be ratified by a positive vote of the Trustees in open session.

ARTICLE VIII

The Organization of the Board of Trustees

Sec. 1 The Board shall have power to choose its own officers, to adopt its own rules ~~and bylaws~~ not inconsistent with this constitution or with the articles of incorporation, to alter and amend such rules ~~or bylaws,~~ and generally to organize itself and to allocate its time, resources, and business in whatever order appears most likely to serve the continued well-being of the Seminary and to further its purpose~~mission~~.

ARTICLE IX

Officers

Sec. 1 The elected officers of the Board of Trustees shall consist of a moderator, a vice moderator, a secretary, and a treasurer, all of whom shall be members of the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 2 The President of the Seminary shall serve as the Chief Executive Officer ~~chief executive officer~~ of the Corporation.

Sec. 3 The Board of Trustees may, upon a two-thirds vote of all members of the Board of Trustees, remove any officer at any time with or without cause, including the President of the Seminary.

ARTICLE X

Election of Officers

Sec. 1 In the election of the moderator, vice moderator, secretary, and treasurer, the Board Affairs Committee shall present the Board of Trustees with a slate of nominees. Additional nominees may come from the floor and be added to the slate. The Board of Trustees shall then proceed to an electing ballot. A majority of the total votes cast shall be necessary for election.

Sec. 2 With the exception of the President, each of the officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees for a term of one year and, with the exception of the treasurer, may not serve more than three yearsterms, irrespective of when served. The Moderator and Vice Moderator may not serve more than 3 consecutive terms. (See Article V, Membership of the Board of Trustees, Sec.5)

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

Sec. 4 The President of the Seminary shall be elected by a two-thirds majority of allthe members of the Board of Trustees by secret ballot for a term not to exceed five years. A person may be re-elected as the President of the Seminary.

ARTICLE XI

Duties of Officers

Sec. 1 The Moderator shall call and preside at all regular and special meetings of the Board of Trustees, shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Board of Trustees, and shall perform such other duties and exercise such other powers as usually pertain to the office. The Moderator shall be entitled to vote on all matters coming before the Board of Trustees for decision.

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

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

Sec. 4 The Treasurer or his or her agent shall be responsible for the proper custody of all corporate funds and securities. The Treasurer shall be responsible for making certain that proper books of account setting forth all corporate receipts, disbursements, and assets are kept and shall be responsible for making certain that all corporate funds are deposited in such banks and other depositories as the Board of Trustees shall designate. The Treasurer shall be bonded with the premium being paid by the Corporation Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall also perform such other duties as may be directed by the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 5 The duties of the President of the Seminary shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation, whose duties shall include those defined in the Articles of Incorporation, the position description as

adopted by the Board of Trustees, and such other responsibilities as may, from time to time, be assigned by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XII

Executive Committee

Sec. 1 The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees shall be its Officers.

Sec. 2 The President of the Seminary shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee but without vote.

Sec. 3 Other members of the Board of Trustees~~with assigned functional responsibilities~~ may be invited into meetings of the Executive Committee at the discretion of the Moderator but without vote.

Sec. 4 The Executive Committee shall meet ~~as necessary~~ at the ~~call~~request of the Moderator or the request of three officers of the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 5 The Executive Committee has the authority to conduct the business of the Board of Trustees between its stated meetings. Its actions are to be reviewed and ratified by the Board of Trustees at its next meeting.~~shall have authority to facilitate or postpone administrative action by clarifying previously approved Board policy or, in the absence of clear policy guidelines, recommend appropriate action by the full Board immediately or at its next regular meeting~~

Sec. 6 Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the Executive Committee and, within two weeks after each meeting, the minutes shall be sent to the Board of Trustees. A complete report of the acts and proceedings of the Executive Committee shall be made by the Moderator at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XIII

Committees

Sec. 1 The Board of Trustees shall establish or disband ~~such~~ committees as it deems necessary to carry on its work.

Sec. 2 At the first meeting of the Board of Trustees following General Synod and at other times as necessary, the Moderator, in consultation with the President and the chair of the Board Affairs Committee, shall appoint chairpersons and assign members of the standing committees. Chairpersons must be trustees and shall serve one year terms.

Sec. 3 Standing committees shall meet at each regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting, and at other times as necessary, to fulfill assigned responsibilities and to prepare and submit reports and recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 4 The Moderator, in consultation with the President, shall structure the

agenda of all Board of Trustees meetings to include and reflect the work of the standing committees.

Sec. 5 Each standing committee shall work within the limits of power granted to members of the Board of Trustees by the *Book of Church Order* of the Reformed Church in America, and the Constitution and By-~~L~~laws of ~~the~~ New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

Sec. 6 The name,~~charters~~ purpose, ~~and~~ responsibilities, and membership of the Standing Committees of ~~the New Brunswick Theological Seminary~~the Board of Trustees shall be published in the Trustee ~~Handbook~~ Meeting Workbook.

ARTICLE XIV

The Faculty Council

Sec. 1 The ~~f~~Faculty Council shall consist of the President, the Dean of the Seminary, the Librarian, the professors and instructors who hold regular appointment, and other administrators with faculty status. Adjunct professors may be invited to attend ~~f~~Faculty Council meetings and participate in ~~f~~Faculty Council activities at the will of the Faculty Council.

Sec. 2 The President shall preside at all meetings of the Faculty Council. In her/his absence the Dean of the Seminary shall preside.

Sec. 3 The ~~f~~Faculty Council has responsibility for:

a. Providing leadership and oversight of the worship and spiritual life of the Seminary;
b. Designing and overseeing all academic degree programs and any other educational activities of the Seminary, both curricular and extracurricular;
c. Determining admissions policies and admitting students;
d. A~~a~~rticulating and maintaining academic standards;
e. Determining policies and regulations concerning academic programs and overseeing their application to individual cases;
f. Dismissal of students;
g. Evaluating students of the Reformed Church in America for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry and making similar review of non-RCA students;
h. Determining annually the list of candidates to be recommended to the Board of Trustees for the granting of degrees;
i. Determining the annual recipients of prizes at Commencement; and
j. Reviewing library policies and programs as these pertain to the academic life of the Seminary.

Sec. 4 ~~The majority of the Faculty shall constitute a~~ A quorum of the Faculty Council must include the President and/or the Dean of the Seminary and a majority of its members. The Faculty Council shall fix the time and place of their meetings, making their own rules for the efficient

conduct of their business, and keep a record of their proceedings, which shall be open at all times to the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 5 For additional roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Council, consult the Faculty Handbook.

ARTICLE XV

The Administrative Council

Sec. 1 The Administrative Council shall consist of the President, the Dean of the Seminary, the Librarian, and ~~the~~ senior staff with responsibilities in Administration, ~~in~~ Finance, Development, and Student Services.

Sec. 2 The Administrative Council has responsibility for:

a. The establishment and approval of administrative and staff positions, with recommendation to the Board of Trustees for those requiring Board action;
b. The establishment and management of employment standards, including issues such as vacation, work disputes, the benefits packages of employees, expenses proposed beyond allocated budgets, and the like, with recommendation to the Board of Trustees of those requiring Board action;
c. Managing the financial condition of the Corporation~~Seminary~~, including approval of operational expenditures;
d. The management of the physical resources of the Corporation~~Seminary~~;
e. The management of the community relations of the Seminary;
f. The approval of the Seminary calendar (incorporating the academic calendar as received from the faculty) including the use of facilities by groups not part of the Seminary;
~~g. The recommendation to the Board of fees charged for Seminary services;~~
~~h.~~g. The monitoring of relationships with accrediting agencies;
~~i~~h. The establishment and specification of terms for the acceptance and implementation of scholarships.

Sec. 3 The President shall preside at all meetings of the Administrative Council. In the absence of the President, the ~~Director of Operations~~Dean of the Seminary shall preside.

Sec. 4 ~~A majority of the Administrative Council, among whom are the President and/or the Director of Operations, shall constitute a quorum.~~ A quorum of the Administrative Council must include the President and/or the Dean of the Seminary and a majority of its members. The Administrative Council shall fix the time and the place of its meetings, maintaining a record of its proceedings which shall be distributed to the Faculty Council and to the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 5 For additional roles and responsibilities of the Administrative Council, consult the Administrative Supplement to the Faculty Handbook.

ARTICLE XVI

Fiscal Agent

Sec. 1 All securities and valuable papers of the Corporation~~Seminary~~ shall be deposited with such bank or trust company, organized under the laws of the United States or of the State of New Jersey, as the Board of Trustees may from time to time appoint as the Fiscal Agent of the Corporation ~~Seminary~~, and shall be held by such Fiscal Agent subject to the direction of the Board of Trustees, in safekeeping and for the collection of the income and the principal thereof and the transmission of the same to the Corporation~~Seminary~~.

ARTICLE XVII

Depository

Sec. 1 All monies of the Corporation~~Seminary~~ shall be deposited in such accounts in banks or trust companies as the Board of Trustees may from time to time designate. The Board of Trustees shall determine signatories and procedures for deposits, withdrawals, and transfers of monies.

ARTICLE XVIII

Indemnification of Trustees and Officers

Sec. 1 To the full extent authorized and permitted by law, the Corporation ~~Seminary~~ shall indemnify any person made, or threatened to be made, a party to any civil or criminal action or proceeding by reason of fact that the person is or was a Trustee, officer, faculty member, administrator, or employee of the Corporation~~Seminary~~ and was acting within the scope of his/her Corporation~~Seminary~~ responsibilities and duties. The foregoing shall not obligate the Corporation ~~Seminary~~ to purchase officers' and directors' liability insurance, but should applicable law permit, the Corporation~~Seminary may~~ shall purchase such insurance ~~if~~ when authorized and approved by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XIX

Conflict of Interest

Sec. 1 A trustee shall be considered to have a conflict of interest if such trustee has existing or potential financial or other interests which impair or might reasonably appear to impair such trustee's~~member's~~ independent, unbiased judgment in the discharge of his or her responsibilities to the Corporation~~Seminary~~. All trustees shall disclose to the Board of Trustees any possible conflict of interest at the earliest practical time. No trustee shall vote on any matter under consideration at a Board or Committee meeting in which such Trustee has a conflict of interest, and the minutes of the meeting shall reflect any such declaration and abstention from voting.

ARTICLE XX

Corporate Seal

Sec. 1 The corporate seal shall be in the form of an elliptical shield with the words "Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, N.J." around the inside of the outer edge, surrounding the emblem of the Reformed Church in America within a smaller elliptical shield.

ARTICLE XXI

Distribution of Assets on Dissolution

Sec. 1 In the event of dissolution of the Corporation, its assets and properties remaining after payment of its liabilities shall be distributed and assigned to the General Synod as the sole member of the Corporation.

ARTICLE XXII

Adoption of the Constitution and Bylaws

Sec. 1 When this Constitution and Bylaws shall have been approved by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees and a majority vote of the General Synod, it shall supersede all previous documents controlling the affairs of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, excepting the Articles of Incorporation as amended.

ARTICLE XXIII

Amendment

Sec. 1 This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the General Synod at any regular meeting upon recommendation from or after consultation with the Board of Trustees of New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

~~Sec. 2~~ ~~With the exception of Articles I through IV and Article XX, the Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by the Board of Trustees at any meeting of the Board. Amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board of Trustees present at any meeting. If the substance of the proposed amendment shall have been presented to the Board of Trustees with the notice of meeting, the amendment shall become effective immediately upon approval. When the need to revise the bylaws shall arise within a meeting, the revision may be voted within that meeting, but the amendment shall not become effective until the next regularly scheduled meeting is called to order.~~

Report of Western Theological Seminary

The mission statement of Western Theological Seminary (WTS) guides its life together:

Mission Statement
It is the purpose of Western Theological Seminary to prepare Christians called by God to lead the church in mission.

Identity Statement
Western Theological Seminary is an evangelical and ecumenical community of faith and learning in the Reformed tradition that serves the church of Jesus Christ. In covenant with the Reformed Church in America, Western equips men and women for Christ-centered, biblically based, theologically integrated, culturally sensitive, mission-oriented Christian leadership.

This report points the delegates of the General Synod of 2011 to the many ways in which the seminary is trying to fully live into and out of this challenging mission. The faculty, staff, and students of Western Theological Seminary covet prayers and support in their life together.

Update on the Life and Witness of Western Theological Seminary

Financial Support
Western Theological Seminary finished the 2009-10 fiscal year in the black. While it experienced a solid performance, losses of the two previous years were not completely erased. Tuition income was soft in spite of steady enrollment. Contributions thankfully remained strong. The strength of the year was provided by the rebound of the financial markets. The seminary investments produced income of 11.3 percent during the year.

Western was once again blessed during this past year with strong financial support from its donor base, although total giving to support seminary operations was essentially even from the past fiscal year. Financial gifts are particularly important because student tuition accounts for less than one-third of Western's operating income. In an effort to keep tuition from increasing significantly, the Advancement Office continues to seek financial support from individuals, congregations, and corporations. While individual donors have been exceedingly generous, the financial support Western receives from RCA congregations continues to decline. This year, WTS received less than 9 percent of its financial support from RCA congregations, and only 27 percent of all RCA congregations voluntarily support Western. The seminary would be grateful for and encouraged by an increase in congregational support. However, Western is truly blessed by the generosity of its donors and thanks God regularly for each of them. Without them, Western would not be financially viable.

Enrollment
Overall enrollment is stable. During the 2010-11 academic year a total of 239 students were enrolled: 129 candidates in the residential Master of Divinity program and 68 candidates in the distance learning M.Div. program, down just slightly from last year. Students were also enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program, in the Th.M. program, or as non-degree students who wished to continue their learning. Western will focus attention on attracting and retaining qualified and dedicated students for degree programs by increasing its admissions staff in 2011.

Distance Learning Master of Divinity Program
The distance learning M.Div will graduate the fourth class of students in May 2011. There

are sixty-eight students enrolled in the degree program, representing many RCA regional synods. Dr. Leanne Van Dyk, dean and vice president of academic affairs, directed the program during the 2010-11 academic year. Together with the distance learning staff, she worked for ongoing program improvements and continued to value hospitality and collegiality in the degree program. The blended program design, which includes both online learning and an on-campus intensive during each semester, is a strong feature of the program for professors and students.

Graduate Certificate for Urban Pastoral Ministry (GCUPM) Program
For the 2010-11 academic year, 25 students were active in the GCUPM program, including nineteen students of color and four students who were dual-enrolled in the GCUPM and the M.Div. programs. Two GCUPM students graduated in May. This increased and steady enrollment has been supported by committed faculty who taught not only at WTS, but also at Angel Community Church in Muskegon, Michigan, and Galilee Baptist in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

As a result of the program and the increasing diversity in the WTS community, participants deepened their biblical and theological understanding for the practice of urban ministry; students of color took more risks in the community to describe their experience and exert influence; and space for multicultural/multiracial communication and understanding opened in the wider WTS community. Praise God for slow but ongoing growth!

Curriculum Revision
A committee continued its work on curriculum revision at Western Theological Seminary. The faculty will create a curriculum that is focused on pastoral formation for leadership in a changing culture.

Newbigin House of Studies
The Newbigin House of Studies (NHS) is a partnership program between Western Theological Seminary and City Church San Francisco in order to train and equip pastors and congregations for effective, faithful urban ministry. The NHS has three main components: a Center for Seminary Education, a Center for Urban Church Planting, and a Center for Work and Mission. Other NHS partnership plans include a dual-site Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts degree program. These plans are being developed.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity Initiatives
Eric Williams, an African American Ph.D. candidate, has served his two-year rotation as a Faculty Fellow, a unique program to encourage racial-ethnic scholars and increase diversity in the seminary community. WTS will search for another Faculty Fellow appointment for the 2011-12 academic year. The seminary is a partner with the Advanced Latino/a Theological Education (ALTE) initiative which sponsored a pastors' training event on campus in February. Through the ALTE partnership, the seminary will welcome several Latino/a students into the distance learning M.Div. program. The WTS Diversity Committee, led by the Rev. Denise Kingdom-Grier, held several events aimed at helping the WTS community become aware of diversity initiatives and broaden knowledge and skills in multicultural awareness.

Journey
Over this past year, Journey, Western Theological Seminary's Center for the Church's Learning, created several learning initiatives.

Thirty congregations and their pastors worked on transformational leadership through phase two of the Ridder Leadership Initiative in partnership with the RCA. (The new Journey website on leadership is www.ridderleadership.org.) The Multiracial Initiative in

the Synod of the Great Lakes, in partnership with the RCA Office for Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice, launched a series of four learning events that centered on justice and diversity. To support the vocation of proclaiming the word of God, The Henry Bast Memorial Preaching Program offered an annual preaching festival in November 2010 with Dr. Jana Childers (Dr. Craig Barnes will speak for the 2011 Preaching Festival), featured the Rev. Kate Davelaar, chaplain at Hope College, as the 2011 Bast Resident Preacher at Western Theological Seminary, and is preparing for a Preaching Fellowship week in August 2011. (Another new preaching website for Journey is www.bastpreaching.org.) Two peer learning groups of RCA pastors—a New Jersey Missional Church Journey Group and an RCA Multiracial Journey Group—experienced sustained learning on the themes of missional church and multiracial issues. In partnership with the RCA Office of Discipleship, Journey offered two learning events this past year on youth ministry and discipleship themes.

Celebrating Faculty Accomplishments
Since the 2010 General Synod, Western Theological Seminary faculty have published a number of articles, chapters, and books. A book published recently by J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) explores the challenges and joys of Scripture as it forms the community of faith. This book won the 2011 Center for Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue Book Prize.

Carol Bechtel, president of General Synod in 2008-09, has been awarded a Louisville Foundation Research Grant for the 2011-2012 academic year. The name of her research project is "Have You Considered My Servant Job? Incarnating Questions of Theodicy through Job's Story and Our Own."

Petitions for Substitution
The Board of Trustees of Western Theological Seminary approved the petition from the Classis of North Grand Rapids to substitute a fourteen-month period of supervised ministry for a portion of the twenty-four month requirement of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry for Daniel Michael.

The Board of Trustees of Western Theological Seminary approved the petition from the Classis of Illinois to substitute a fifteen-month period of supervised ministry for a portion of the twenty-four month requirement of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry for Nancy Boote.

In Remembrance of Dr. Richard Oudersluys (November 21, 1906 - November 20, 2010)
Western Theological Seminary Professor Emeritus of New Testament

The following is an excerpt from the eulogy given at Dr. Oudersluys' funeral by Dr. I. John Hesselink, Albertus C. Van Raalte Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, Western Theological Seminary.

> I had the privilege of knowing Dr. Oudersluys for sixty years—first as a student, twenty years later as his colleague, and since then as a special friend. What a joy and blessing it has been.
>
> He was one of my best teachers. When I was doing my doctoral studies at Basel University in Switzerland, I heard lectures on Romans and the Gospel of John by world renowned New Testament scholars, but I felt I learned little new, having had courses on both of these books with Dr. Oudersluys. He was that good.

He was arguably one of the finest lecturers to grace the halls of Western Theological Seminary, honing his lectures with a superb use of the English language. His course on the Gospel of John became so famous that after his retirement he taught it several times to a packed lecture room.

Yet, what made him so attractive was not simply his scholarship and teaching ability but his quiet modesty and the personal faith that undergirded his teaching and outstanding preaching. We stood in awe of him, but because he was quite reserved, some students couldn't feel close to him.

A turning point came in 1973 when his beloved wife Marian was killed in a car accident in which he was driving. This might have destroyed some people, but he valiantly carried on and taught effectively not only until retiring in 1978, but for years thereafter, including teaching Greek at Hope College. The death of his wife also marked a change in his personality. Whereas before he had been distant, he now opened up his heart to the outside world, needing to fill the void of the loss of Marian. Whereas before her death he was greatly respected, now he was also much loved by his colleagues, students, and friends.

He continued to live alone in his large old house on 11th Street, but thanks to the kindness of six women he lived a comfortable life. Every week Jean, wife of Dr. Jim Cook (Dr. Oudersluys' successor) invited him over for a meal, as did Edith, wife of Dr. Elton Eenigenburg; Margaret, wife of Dr. Eugene Osterhaven, baked him a pie; Mildred Schuppert, long-time librarian at the seminary, made him a pot of soup; and Alice DeRuiter, a Dutch immigrant, cleaned his house and brought food.

These women all helped to keep him healthy and provided tender care, but pride of place goes to his daughter Judy, who upon retiring from Petoskey Hospital in 1998, came to live with her father. Without her expertise as a nurse and her loving care, it is not likely that Richard Oudersluys would have lived 104 years. No father ever had a more loyal, loving daughter.

One of the remarkable things about our friend is that he was sharp and alert until quite recently. He gave his last lecture when he was 90 and delivered a memorable address at his 100th birthday celebration at Western Theological Seminary. Up until that time he participated in Sunrise Saints at Third Church every Wednesday at 6:30 a.m. This group of twenty-five men would gather for breakfast and then discuss a book. Dr. Oudersluys rarely spoke, but when it came to an exegetical issue, someone would often ask, "Dr. O., what do you think about this?" Dr. O. would pause, and we would wait in respectful silence for a word from Mt. Olympus.

Richard Oudersluys never promoted himself; it was simply his desire to serve the church in any way possible, whether as an active member at church, serving on commissions, or writing twenty-six years of weekly columns for the *Sunday School Guide* and the *Christian Endeavor Weekly*.

And to the end he cared about the seminary. When we would call him, his first question was, "How are things going at the seminary?"

In those later years when he and I would go somewhere together, he would take my arm and with a twinkle in his eye say, "Lead on, MacDuff" (from *Macbeth*). Somehow he got a kick out of doing that. (My Shakespearean friends tell me the words are actually "Lay on, MacDuff," but as Archie Bunker would say, "whatever.")

I know it is a bit fanciful, but I like to imagine Richard Oudersluys in heaven, taking the arm of Jesus and saying, "Lead on, King Jesus, I'm home at last!"

Richard C. Oudersluys '32
b. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 11/21/1906
d. Holland, Michigan, 11/20/2010
Calvin '29, WTS '32, University of Chicago Divinity School, Hope College, University of Basel, Cambridge University
Reformed Churches served:
1932-41, First, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Other service to the church:
1935-61, writer for *Boys' Guide*, *Girls' Guide*, and *Sunday School Guide*
1942-78, Professor of New Testament Language and Literature, WTS
1979-88, Greek instructor, Hope College

Report of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency

General Synod exercises oversight of ministerial formation and the standards for preparation for ministry through its two seminaries and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA).

The MFCA of the RCA possesses a deep commitment to developing faithful, educated, and evangelical Reformed leaders. Its purpose is the preparation of men and women for the ministries of Christ and his church, most specifically those called to minister of Word and sacrament.

The MFCA Board of Trustees has the following as its mission statement:

The MFCA is to strengthen the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the RCA by overseeing and awarding the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry to RCA candidates graduating from non-RCA seminaries or pursuing an approved alternate route.

The MFCA will accomplish this mission by:

- *Ensuring that the RCA Standards for Preparation for Ministry are upheld in the oversight of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry and periodically reviewing the standards and the process by which they are applied.*
- *Evaluating progress of candidates and confirming their continuation in the process through the RCSC and AAR committees.*
- *Providing graduate level courses designed to meet the standards for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry.*
- *Collaborating with and providing counsel to congregations and classes in the care and nurture of candidates for the ministry who are seeking the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry through the MFCA.*
- *Interpreting and advocating for the work of the MFCA to the larger church.*

The Board has also defined the values that guide the Agency.

We value being proactive in contributing to the success of our candidates, therefore we will
- help candidates discern and respond to their call to ministry with integrity

- offer equal and fair access to those who are called to ministry
- recognize that barriers exist (language, disabilities) but we do not allow them to deter the candidate from responding to the call to ministry
- demonstrate love and respect for every candidate

We value the integrity of a certification process that balances care for candidates and the church's traditions, therefore we will uphold
- a rigorous but not rigid application of the standards for preparation
- being instinctively and intentionally relational as we approach our work
- the distinctive roles of each party in the process
- honest, direct communication with the candidate

We value the distinctive role MFCA plays in strengthening the ministry of the RCA, therefore we commit to
- providing an educated clergy from all the regions of the church
- working with diverse candidates from non-traditional backgrounds
- remaining culturally relevant
- a diversity of voices around the table
- good stewardship of the resources given to us

The board has been in dialogue with the General Synod Council about adopting "policy governance," a not-for-profit governance practice developed by John and Miriam Carver, with the goal of clarifying its role with the executive director as well as creating efficient processes for its own operation. The global policy statement, executive limitations, and management delegation statements have been designed to implement the mission statement and the values of the agency.

Board Members

The new policy governance model adopted by MFCA this past year has resulted in a new configuration for the board. The board will consist of eleven members; at least three of the eleven will be drawn from the certification committees. The board will continue to be the agent awarding the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry to candidates completing the requirements of the Approved Alternate Route (AAR) and the Reformed Candidates Supervision and Care (RCSC) programs.

The board is grateful to the Rev. Ann Callender who has served her term and whose replacement will be elected at this General Synod.

General Synod Assessment Support is Well Received

The MFCA Board has been able to significantly reduce costs to candidates by reducing enrollment fees and psychological assessment fees and discounting tuition for those who do not take courses for credit. Candidates who opt to take RCA courses for non-credit will benefit from a significantly discounted tuition. This has been possible with the extra assessment money provided by the General Synod of 2010.

During the winter of 2011 the MFCA conducted a survey of its candidates in order to determine if the reduced fees were having the desired impact. Of those surveyed, over 64 percent agreed that the reduced fees provide "significant" relief to candidates and their families. The other 36 percent also rated the reduced fees as positive.

Comments received include the following:

I believe most seminary students are determined to do their absolute best when they study to prepare for ministry. However, many are balancing a full-time school load with family and ministry demands, as well as working part time to finance basic living expenses. The cost reductions provided by MFCA is gratefully received by students (often it's an answer to desperate prayer!) because it is so instrumental in allowing them to balance school, family, ministry, and even self-care, as they prepare to answer the call of God upon their lives. Thank you for helping seminary students!

Marijke Strong, Hamilton, Ontario, Ontario Classis

The reductions significantly impacted my life in a positive way. Without them I would have had to take out well over $2000 in unsubsidized federal loans. This gift has relieved much anxiety over my debt accumulation in seminary and the impact that this will have on my future in ministry.

Anonymous

The cost of MFCA services prevents new candidates from becoming a part of MFCA. Seminary students are already facing big tuition bills. I believe that MFCA should be fully funded by the denomination and endowments.

Anonymous

As a senior M.Div. student, husband, and soon-to-be father, I find it difficult to fully express how thankful I am for the reduced financial burden of the MFCA requirements. The added assistance gives more financial security and helps reduce the debt burden that so many pastors will take with them into their first pulpit.

Ben Kappers, RTS Jackson, Wisconsin Classis

General Synod Professor and MFCA

The General Synod of 2010 gave initial approval to changes which will allow the MFCA Board of Trustees to nominate individuals for the office of "General Synod Professor." The board is considering different ways and means to determine who might qualify for such a nomination. If the General Synod of 2011 approves the changes to the *Book of Church Order (BCO)*, the board may nominate someone as early as the General Synod of 2012.

Courses

Since 1992 the Theological Education Agency (TEA) and its successors have been offering RCA specific courses. The four courses offered every year are RCA Polity, RCA Standards, RCA History & Missions, and RCA Worship. These courses not only prepare candidates with knowledge about the RCA and its rich historical and theological tradition, but also bring dozens of candidates together in one location. The networking and fellowship create an intangible benefit to the individual and the denomination.

The Agency has continued to provide Distance Learning (DL) courses to its candidates, allowing them to meet the requirements of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry in a form that is flexible and accessible. During the spring of 2011 there were five courses running simultaneously. The courses were RCA History & Missions DL (Voskuil), RCA Polity DL (Kors), Seminar on Pastoral Formation (Hamman), Summary of Christian Doctrine – Credo (Fries), and a new offering for the AAR program, Hebrew Basics and Tools (Pierce). These courses have been well received by candidates, allowing them to complete program requirements from their location and doing so at less cost.

Certificates of Fitness Awarded

The Board of Trustees awarded sixteen Certificates of Fitness for Ministry, sixteen through the RCSC process and none through the AAR process.

Reformed Candidates Supervision and Care (RCSC)

Jay Phillip Carroll	Classis of Lake Erie	Ashland
Kevin Michael Clouse	Classis of Southwest Michigan	Gordon-Conwell
Bruce E. Cook	Classis of West Sioux	Fuller
Daniel Arnold Gannon	Classis of the City	Fuller
Jonathan Peter Gundlach	Classis of the City	Reformed
Michael James Johnson	Classis of South Grand Rapids	Gordon-Conwell
Matthew Harold Miller	Classis of West Sioux	Bethel
Matthew Benjamin Nault	Classis of the City	Fuller
Grace Jeeyoon Rim	Classis of Rockland-Westchester	Alliance
Jason John Van Wyk	Classis of West Sioux	Sioux Falls
Meine Veldman	Classis of Ontario	Western
Jeremy Mitchell Visser	Classis of South Grand Rapids	Reformed
Joshua Harrison Whitler	Classis of California	Fuller
Jodie Leigh Wu	Classis of New York	Fuller
Shuo-Min (Imos) Wu	Classis of New York	Fuller
Andrew Yutaka Yamamoto	Classis of Central California	San Francisco

Approved Alternate Route (AAR)

No Certificates of Fitness for Ministry granted in 2010 through the AAR.

Determining the Lines of Authority of the Classis and the Theological Education Agents of the General Synod

A recent case brought to the MFCA Board of Trustees by one of its Certification Committees has convinced the board that it must rule on at least one matter that in the past was considered basic to RCA understanding of doctrine and practice: infant baptism. In the case in question, the Approved Alternate Route (AAR) Certification Committee was presented with a candidate for entry into the AAR certificate of fitness process who was not willing to baptize infants. In the process of investigating the facts of this case, our staff became aware that the classis supporting entry to our AAR process for the candidate in question had itself established a policy that allowed the candidate to officially decline to baptize infants.

The committee, which supported the RCA's historic position, asked the MFCA board to clarify whether or not the MFCA, as the agent of the General Synod, has both the authority and responsibility to deny a candidate eligibility for ordination via one of our Certificate of Fitness processes, based on that candidate's stated unwillingness to perform infant baptisms. This case took on added urgency because one aspect of our polity seems clear to the MFCA board: if the agent of the General Synod does not take ownership of this responsibility, it would automatically (i.e., by default) become the prerogative of the classis, the body that ultimately ordains.

At its fall meeting, the MFCA board ruled that the committee could deny the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry (CFM) in cases where a candidate clearly holds a position contrary to the RCA's constitution. The board recorded the following in its minutes:

> The MFCA, with classes, is responsible to oversee the preparation of candidates for ordained ministry in the RCA. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the MFCA takes seriously the General Synod's Standards on Preparation for Ministry which we are charged to implement on behalf of the synod. Among these standards is the requirement that candidates "demonstrate a thorough understanding of and commitment to Reformed doctrine, government and worship." Given the MFCA's responsibility to ensure that persons receiving the CFM both understand and are faithful to the core practices of the RCA (e.g. infant baptism), MFCA may deny the CFM to candidates who expressly indicate that they will not teach, preach, and/or engage in practices consistent with the RCA's confessional standards. *(MFCA Board Minutes, November 12-13, 2010)*

We find both authority for this position and urgency in using it by virtue of the following facts:

1. In searching the *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*), we have found no indication that the classis has the prerogative to redefine doctrine, polity, and practice. This implies that ministers are not to act out beliefs in ways that do not conform to the standards determined by the General Synod. This appears especially poignant when it comes to the standards for the preparation of ministry and new candidates for ministry.

2. It is very clear to us who does have responsibility for those standards, and it is not any classis: the General Synod takes constitutional responsibility for doctrine, polity, and the standards for the preparation of ministers. The following *BCO* statements would support this conclusion:

   BCO Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 2:

   > *Sec. 1.* The General Synod shall exercise a general superintendence over the interests and concerns of the whole church.
   >
   > *Sec. 4.* The General Synod alone shall determine denominational policy. It may delegate the formulation of policy to committees, boards, or other agencies.
   >
   > *Sec. 7.* The General Synod shall have original authority over all matters pertaining to doctrine and denominational polity as they relate to the theological seminaries of the Reformed Church.
   >
   > *Sec. 8.* The General Synod shall exercise responsibility in the oversight of standards for the preparation of candidates for the ministry of Word and sacrament.

3. We find no ambiguity in this instance: there is no indication that a classis has the authority to redefine doctrine or polity established by the General Synod. Classis is given authority "to satisfy itself" and "examine" candidates in certain areas including "adherence to the Constitution (the Standards, the Government and Disciplinary Procedures, and the Liturgy) of the Reformed Church in America" (*BCO* 1.II.8, Sec. 7). Nowhere is it written that a classis has the authority to establish its own standards. Indeed, the language just quoted makes it clear that the classis is itself bound to respect, in its actions, the basic decisions of the General Synod and the related documents governing the RCA.

4. When a classis instead decides to endorse a "right" for individual ministers to act on beliefs in ways that contradict the RCA's Constitution and standards on preparation for ministry, it arrogates to itself authority that no one other than the General Synod possesses. It thereby also undermines the role and purpose of the agents of the

General Synod and their responsibilities for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process. Under these circumstances we would be derelict in our duty if we implicitly endorsed such a classis practice.

5. Candidates for ministry are all subject to the same standards for ministerial preparation. It follows from this that all agents that award a Certificate of Fitness must ensure that candidates adhere to these standards, which require both a "thorough knowledge of and commitment to Reformed doctrine, government, and worship" (*MGS 2006*, p. 210).

The General Synod Professors of Theology, meeting together in December 2010, reviewed and support the MFCA board's statement.

Although the MFCA Board of Trustees believes the commitment to the constitution of the RCA is clearly stated when a minister reads and signs the declaration as a minister of Word and sacrament, there remains a concern that churches and classes do not consider themselves similarly and ardently bound. Therefore, the MFCA Board of Trustees brings the following recommendation to the General Synod of 2011:

R-60
To instruct the Commission on Church Order and the Commission on Theology to evaluate the *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*) in order to determine if the "inquiries to the ministers and elder delegates" (*BCO* Part 1, Chap. II, Art. 7), and the "classis assessment of its theological students" *(BCO* Part 1, Chap. II, Art. 8, Sec. 7) adequately reflect a commitment to not only adhere to, but practice ministry in accordance with the doctrine and polity as stated in the Constitution (the Standards, the Government and Disciplinary Procedures, and the Liturgy) of the RCA; and further,

if the aforementioned sections are deemed deficient, to propose appropriate changes to the *BCO* and report those to the General Synod of 2012. (ADOPTED)

Alternate Means and Twenty Four Month Reductions

Reduction in Twenty-four Month Requirement: The Classis of the City request, on behalf of Jonathan Gundlach, to substitute a period of time to make up any deficiency of the twenty-four months of being in the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process was approved by the board (*BCO* 1.II.8.3). The board recognized the twelve months of supervised ministry performed at City Church San Francisco prior to entering the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process as meeting this requirement.

Changes to the Bylaws

At the General Synod of 2007 in Pella, Iowa, the bylaws for the newly constituted MFCA were approved on an interim basis (*MGS 2007*, R-58, pp. 218-224). The understanding was that the MFCA Board would present final changes to the bylaws to the General Synod in order to make them more permanent so they will no longer be considered "interim." The Board is prepared to recommend the changes at the 2011 General Synod.

The Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance offered a new recommendation to clarify the proposed MFCA bylaws:

R-61
To instruct the Board of Trustees of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency to clarify the meaning of both "fiduciary responsibility," found in the bylaws Article II, Section 4, and the language concerning "quorum," in Article VII, Section 4, for report to the 2012 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:
1. "Fiduciary responsibility" can be construed to imply that the MFCA Board of Trustees has control of its financial assets, but this is not the case. The General Synod Council controls the assets of the MFCA.
2. The language as it stands is confusing as to whether it references 50 percent of the total members or 50 percent of the quorum.

R-62
To adopt the following revisions to the Bylaws of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency, effective July 1, 2011 (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out). (ADOPTED)

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

BYLAWS OF THE MINISTERIAL FORMATION CERTIFICATION AGENCY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

Preamble

The Ministerial Formation Certification Agency of the Reformed Church in America shall serve the Reformed Church in America ("RCA") by:

Overseeing the education of, and awarding the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry to, candidates for the ministry who are seeking the degree of Master of Divinity or its academic equivalent from a seminary not officially related to the RCA (a "Non-RCA Seminary");

Approving means by which candidates for the ministry may meet the requirements for the receipt of a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry (as provided in the RCA *Book of Church Order* ("*BCO*"); and

Consulting with and providing counsel to congregations and classes in the care and nurture of candidates for the ministry who are seeking the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry and who are not attending an RCA Seminary as a matriculated student.

Its board of trustees (Board) will conduct its business in cooperation with the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America (GSC).

Article I

Name

The name of this agency shall be "Ministerial Formation Certification Agency of the Reformed Church in America" (hereinafter referred to as "the Agency" or "MFCA").

Article II

Relationship to RCA; Functions and Responsibilities

Sec. 1. MFCA is an agency of the RCA, and as such is subject to all provisions of the *BCO* (as same may be amended from time to time) applicable to agencies, including, without limitation, *BCO* Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 7~~6~~, Section 3 and *BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 6.

Sec. 2. The *BCO* (as the same may be amended from time to time) is incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth. Any amendment to the *BCO* shall be effective and applicable to MFCA immediately upon its effectiveness. The MFCA, as an "agency" of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America (General Synod)—solely as the term "agency" is defined in *BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 6—is and at all times shall be subject to the *BCO*. If at any time any conflict or inconsistency exists between the *BCO* and these bylaws, the *BCO* shall control.

Sec. 3. The Board may fulfill its purposes and responsibilities by delegating to its Executive Director (described in Article VIII, Section 5 of these bylaws) in writing such power and authority as the Board may from time to time deem necessary or appropriate.

Sec.4. All members of the Board (each a Trustee and collectively the Trustees) shall possess fiduciary responsibilities toward the Agency, including but not limited to the fiduciary duties of care and loyalty. By serving as such, individuals elected as Trustees agree that their personal interests must at all times be subordinated to the best interest of the Agency. Each Trustee is prohibited from using his or her position as a member to advance any personal interest or the interest of any third party or constituency.

Sec. 5~~2~~. The central purposes and responsibilities of MFCA shall include the following:

a. Providing guidance and assistance to candidates for the ministry who are seeking the degree of Master of Divinity or its academic equivalent from a Non-RCA Seminary and a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry from the General Synod~~ of the Reformed Church in America ("General Synod")~~.

b. Determining whether ministry candidates who have received the degree of Master of Divinity or its academic equivalent from a Non-RCA Seminary meet minimum competencies as determined by the standards for the preparation of ministry established by the General Synod and designed as indispensable for the proper exercise of the ministerial office of the church.

c. Providing superintendence over the supervised ministry of licensed candidates from other denominations who seek to be ordained in the RCA as a minister of Word and sacrament (when requested to do so as a result of a classis' petition to the General Synod, all as provided in *BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Section 5).

d. Awarding on behalf of the General Synod the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry to ministry candidates assigned to it as described in the *BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 9, Sections 2 ("Candidates at Other Seminaries") and 4 ("Other Candidates").

e. Providing resources to classes in their care of ministry candidates as they proceed through the processes of supervised ministry, classis care, seminary stud-

ies, and examinations prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry.

Sec. 6~~3~~. Specific responsibilities of the Agency shall include:

a. Guiding and assisting candidates for the ministry who pursue the degree of Master of Divinity or its academic equivalent from a Non-RCA Seminary in academic preparation, spiritual formation, ministerial development, personal wholeness, and the development of denominational identity with the RCA.

b. Overseeing and implementing the process that leads to the awarding of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry in accordance with the *BCO.* ~~Coordinating the work of the RCSC Certification Committee (hereinafter defined) and the AAR Certification Committee (hereinafter defined).~~

~~c. Overseeing the implementation of processes established by the AAR Certification Committee and RCSC Certification Committee.~~

c~~d~~. Awarding the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry to qualified ministry candidates who have fulfilled the requirements for the issuance thereof and who have not received the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry from a seminary of the RCA.

d~~e~~. Offering and coordinating programs and courses ~~regarding the history, Liturgy, theology and church order of the RCA for ministry candidates, all~~ in accordance with standards established by the General Synod and designated by the Agency as indispensable for the proper exercise of the ministerial office of the church.

Sec. 7~~4~~. The Agency shall make an annual report to the General Synod.

Sec. 8~~5~~. The Agency shall make itself available to congregations and classes as they participate in the formation of candidates for the ordained ministry of Word and sacrament.

Article III

Structure; Membership of~~on~~ Board of Trustees ~~and Certification Committees~~

~~*Sec. 1.* The Agency shall have a Board of Trustees, a Reformed Candidates Supervision and Care Certification Committee ("RCSC Certification Committee"), and an Approved Alternate Route Certification Committee ("AAR Certification Committee"). The RCSC Certification Committee and AAR Certification Committee may be referred to collectively herein from time to time as the "Certification Committees".~~

Sec. 1. The Agency shall be governed by the Board. The Board shall consist of eleven voting members, all of whom shall be confessing members in good standing of the RCA. Voting membership of the Board shall include at least three people who are not ordained to the office of minister of Word and sacrament, at least two people who are ordained to the office of minister of Word and sacrament and serving an RCA congregation, at least one minister of Word and sacrament who is engaged in specialized ministry such as Clinical Pastoral Education supervision or chaplaincy, one General Synod professor from an RCA seminary, the general secretary of the RCA or his or her designee, and one GSC member recommended by the GSC. The presidents of the RCA seminaries are not eligible to be on the MFCA Board. The General Synod professor from an RCA seminary will be restricted to one term.

Sec. 2. All ~~members of the Board of~~ Trustees shall be nominated by the ~~RCA~~ General Synod's Commission on Nominations (in consultation with the Agency) and elected by the General Synod. The length, number, commencement date, and calculation of the terms of the ~~members of the Board of~~ Trustees, and the eligibility of all such ~~members~~Trustees, shall be as set forth in the *BCO*.

~~*Sec. 3.* All members of the Certification Committees shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees. The length, number, commencement date, and calculation of the terms of members of the Certification Committees, and the eligibility of all such members, shall be the same as is provided in the BCO for other members of agencies and commissions, *except* that members of the Certification Committees shall be appointed and vacancies shall be filled by the Board of Trustees rather than by the General Synod Council.~~

~~*Sec. 4.* The Agency shall be governed by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine voting members, all of whom shall be confessing members in good standing of the RCA. Voting membership of the Board of Trustees shall include at least three people who are not ordained to the office of Minister of Word and sacrament, at least two parish pastors, at least one Minister of Word and sacrament who is engaged in specialized ministry, and one General Synod professor of theology.~~

~~*Sec. 5.* The RCSC Certification Committee shall have ten members, three of whom also shall be members of the Board of Trustees, and all of whom shall be confessing members in good standing of the RCA. Two members shall be a professor or associate professor who is a member of the faculty of New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS). Two members shall be a professor or associate professor who is a member of the faculty of Western Theological Seminary (WTS). At least one of the members from the faculty of NBTS and at least one of the members from the faculty of WTS shall occupy the office of the General Synod professor of theology. Four members shall be ordained ministers of Word and sacrament. Of the four members who are ordained ministers of the Word and sacrament, the Board of Trustees shall seek at least one person who is engaged in specialized ministry and at least one person who serves on the faculty of a seminary not officially related to the RCA. Two members shall be confessing members of a local church who have been inducted into the office of elder by ordination.~~

~~*Sec. 6.* The AAR Certification Committee shall have seven members, two of whom also shall be members of the Board of Trustees, and all of whom shall be confessing members in good standing of the RCA. One member shall be a member of the faculty of NBTS and one member shall be a member of the faculty of WTS, and each of these two members shall also occupy the office of the General Synod professor of theology. Three members shall be ordained ministers of Word and sacrament. Two members shall be confessing members of a local church who have been inducted into the office of elder by ordination.~~

Sec. ~~3~~4. The ~~members of the Board of~~ Trustees ~~and the members of the Certification Committees~~ shall reflect the diversity of the RCA with respect to geography, gender, age, cultural and social differences, RCA seminary board and faculty representation, academic and other appropriate expertise, and race and ethnicity, and shall possess an understanding and knowledge of theological education and ministry formation.

Sec. ~~4~~5. The Executive Director ~~GSC staff person primarily responsible for providing staff support to the Agency, the GSC staff person primarily responsible for coordinating the work of the RCA in the areas of congregational revitalization and ministerial development, nurture and renewal, and the General Secretary of the RCA~~ shall be a member~~members~~ of the Board ~~of Trustees~~, *ex officio*, without vote.

Sec. 5~~9~~. The Board ~~of Trustees~~ may engage as consultants up to three persons with special qualifications if their work would assist the Board~~board~~ with the fulfillment of its duties and responsibilities. Such consultants may attend meetings, shall be engaged for a period not to exceed one year, and may serve for not more than three consecutive years. They shall serve without remuneration but may be reimbursed for expenses.

Article IV

Officers

The Board ~~of Trustees and each Certification Committee~~ shall have three elected officers – namely, a moderator, a vice moderator, and a secretary. The elected officers shall be elected annually for one-year terms and shall be eligible for no more than two consecutive terms. Such elections shall occur during the annual meeting of the Board~~ of Trustees or Certification Committee (as the case may be)~~. The General Secretary and any Trustees who are employed by RCA seminaries are not eligible to serve as officers. The terms of office of the elected officers shall commence and conclude in the same manner as is set forth in the *BCO* for members of agencies and commissions. For purposes of determining a person's eligibility to serve as an officer of the Board~~ of Trustees or Certification Committee (as the case may be),~~ any officer who serves more than half a term in such office shall be deemed to have served a full term.

Article V

Nomination and Election of Officers

Sec. 1. The nomination and election of the~~each~~ moderator, vice moderator, and secretary shall be by written ballot, and shall be by only those Trustees~~trustees or committee members (as the case may be)~~ actually attending the meeting. The moderator shall be nominated and elected first, then the vice-moderator, and then the secretary. If more than half of the nominating ballots are cast in favor of one person, that person shall be deemed elected to the applicable office. Otherwise, all persons receiving nominations shall be eligible for election.

Sec. 2. A majority of the total votes cast on the electing ballot shall be necessary for election. If there is no majority on the first electing ballot, another electing ballot shall be cast and the persons eligible for election by that ballot shall be limited to the persons receiving the two largest numbers of votes on the immediately preceding electing ballot. This process shall continue until such time as a single person receives a majority of the votes cast on the electing ballot.

Sec. 3. In no event shall the term of office of an officer extend beyond his or her term as a member of the Board ~~of Trustees or Certification Committee (as the case may be)~~ unless no successor is elected and willing to serve.

Sec. 4. A vacancy in any office shall be filled at the next regular or special meeting of the Board~~applicable board or committee~~ through the same nomination and election process as exists for the regular elections of officers.

Article VI

Duties of Officers

Sec. 1. The duties of the officers shall be those ordinarily performed by such officers.

Sec. 2. The moderator shall call and preside at all regular and special meetings of the Boardapplicable board or committee. The moderator may vote on matters coming before the Boardboard or committee for decision only when his or her vote will affect the outcome of the vote. The moderator of the Board of Trustees shall be a member *ex officio*, without vote, of the Certification Committees and any other committees of the Board of Trustees, and shall perform such other duties and exercise such other powers as usually pertain to the office.

Sec. 3. The vice-moderator shall act as moderator when the moderator is not able or available to serve.

Sec. 4. The secretary shall keep a true and accurate record of all proceedings of the Board applicable board or committee and perform such other duties as usually pertain to the office or as the Boardapplicable board or committee may direct.

Article VII

Meetings of the Board of Trustees and Certification Committees

Sec. 1. The Board of Trustees and each Certification Committee shall hold at least onetwo stated meetingmeetings each year, and may hold special meetings when necessary. If there is more than one stated meeting in any year then theThe annual meeting shall be the stated meeting immediately preceding the annual meeting of the General Synod.

Sec. 2. The moderator of the Board of Trustees or Certification Committee (as the case may be) may call special meetings whenever special business requires it, and shall call a special meeting upon the written request of any three Trusteesmembers of the applicable board or committee.

Sec. 3. Written notice of each regular and special meeting stating the nature of the business to be considered, together with an agenda, background information, and any proposed action, shall be given to each Trusteemember of the applicable board or committee not less than ten days prior to each regular meeting and five days before each special meeting. The location of each regular or special meeting shall be specified in the notice of the meeting. Any Trusteeboard or committee member may waive in writing his or her right to receive written notice of any meeting, and no Trusteeboard or committee member who attends a meeting may object thereto on the grounds of not having received notice thereof.

Sec. 4. A majority of the membership of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum thereof. At least five members of a Certification Committee shall constitute a quorum thereof. An affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members of the Board of Trustees, and an affirmative vote of at least five members of a Certification Committee, shall be necessary to take any action, but a lesser number present may adjourn a meeting to a later date. Any written or electronically transmitted (including e-mail or facsimile transmission) consent by any board or committee member to any action taken at a meeting of such board or committee shall for all purposes (including determining the effectiveness of the action and determining the presence of a quorum for such meeting) be treated in the same manner as if the board or committee member providing the written or electronically transmitted consent had in fact attended the meeting and cast a vote in favor of the action consented to.

Sec. 5. Any one or more members of the Board of Trustees or of either Certification Committee may participate in a meeting of the Boardsuch board or committee by means of a conference telephone call or similar communications equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.

Sec. 6. Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Board ~~of Trustees or either Certification Committee~~ may be taken without a meeting if all Trustees~~trustees or committee members~~ consent in writing or by electronic transmission (including e-mail and electronic transmission) to the adoption of a resolution authorizing the action. The resolution and the written or electronically transmitted consents thereto by the Trustees~~trustees or committee members~~ shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board~~such board or committee~~.

Sec. 7. Each meeting of the Board ~~of Trustees and each Certification Committee~~ shall be opened and closed with prayer.

Article VIII

Board ~~and Committee~~ Operations

Sec. 1. The Board ~~of Trustees~~ shall establish and operate~~maintain and oversee the work of the Certification Committees, each of which shall be organized and operated in the manner prescribed herein. The Board of Trustees also may establish such other~~ committees and task forces as it deems necessary to carry out its work. The Agency will undertake reasonable efforts to cause the composition of such committees and task forces to reflect the diversity of the RCA and to be appropriate for the duties and responsibilities assigned to them. The establishment of such ~~other~~ committees and task forces shall be in writing, ~~and~~ shall include their structure, membership, operation, duties, responsibilities, and duration, and shall be included in the Agency's annual report to General Synod.

~~*Sec. 2.* The RCSC Certification Committee shall exercise general supervision and oversight over the process by which ministry candidates who do not attend NBTS or WTS seek to receive the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry. This function performed by the RCSC Certification Committee shall be comparable to the function performed by the faculties of NBTS and WTS in matters pertaining to the process by which ministry candidates who receive the degree of Master of Divinity or its academic equivalent from NBTS or WTS receive a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry.~~

~~*Sec. 3.* When interviewing candidates for the ministry, the RCSC Certification Committee may operate through sub-committees *provided* that each sub-committee consists of at least five members of the RCSC Certification Committee, one of whom shall be a professor or associate professor who is a member of the faculty of NBTS, one of whom shall be a professor or associate professor who is a member of the faculty of WTS, two of whom shall be ordained ministers of Word and sacrament, and one whom shall be an ordained elder.~~

~~*Sec. 4.* The AAR Certification Committee shall exercise general supervision and oversight over the process by which a candidate for ministry who has not received the degree of Master of Divinity or a degree that is its equivalent from a seminary that is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools or by a theological accrediting agency of comparable standards (as determined by the Agency) may qualify for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, including, without limitation, (a) approving or disapproving applications by classes for permission to pursue a special course of ministerial formation and proposals by classes for appropriate programs of ministerial formation, and (b) examining ministry candidates who have completed the course of study established by such classes, and (c) if the ministry candidate passes such examination, recommending to the Board of Trustees that the Agency award to such ministry candidate the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry.~~

~~*Sec. 5.* The GSC staff person primarily responsible for providing staff support to the Agency shall attend all meetings of each Certification Committee unless otherwise directed by the moderator of the Board of Trustees or the moderator of such Certification Committee.~~

Sec. 2~~6~~. Any Trustee~~member of the Board of Trustees or a Certification Committee~~ may be removed at any time with or without cause by a resolution adopted by a vote of at least two-thirds of the full membership of the Board~~ of Trustees~~. Any Trustee~~member of the Board of Trustees or a Certification Committee~~ may resign from the Board~~such board or committee~~ at any time by giving written notice to the moderator or secretary of the Board~~such board or committee~~. Unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Sec. 3~~7~~. A vacancy on the Board~~ of Trustees~~ shall be filled in the manner prescribed in the *BCO*. ~~A vacancy on a Certification Committee shall be filled by the Board of Trustees.~~

Sec. 4. The Agency shall have an Executive Director.

4.1 The Executive Director shall be employed by the Board.

4.2 The identification of an Executive Director for employment by the Board shall be accomplished through a search committee. The search committee for the Executive Director shall be appointed by the Board. The current Executive Director shall not be a member of the search committee

4.3 The Board shall be responsible for the supervision of the Executive Director. The Board shall review the performance of the Executive Director annually in a manner that is consistent with the Board's policies. For all such reviews of the performance of the Executive Director the Board may appoint a committee of its own membership to conduct interviews (including with the Executive Director), gather data, and prepare a report. The report shall be submitted to the Board at its annual meeting.

4.4 The Board may terminate the employment of the Executive Director.

Article IX

Amendment of the Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the voting members of the Board ~~of Trustees~~ at any regular meeting after ten days notice to all Trustees~~board members~~; *provided, however,* that such amendments shall become effective only upon the approval thereof by the General Synod.

Report of Central College

Central College is proud of its ninety-five year strong covenantal relationship with the Reformed Church in America. Located in Pella, Iowa, a community of 10,000, and rooted in Christian and Dutch heritage, Central enjoys a unique partnership with the local citizens, businesses, and faith community.

The Inaugural Year
In the last year the private liberal arts college honored retiring president Dr. David Roe, and the academic community celebrated the appointment of its twenty-first president, Dr. Mark Putnam. Putnam officially began presidential duties July 1 but his transition started well before he took office with multiple campus visits and intense planning and preparation. He previously served as senior vice president for executive affairs, chief of staff, and chief planning officer at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts.

The celebratory inaugural year, highlighted by the inauguration ceremony October 22, was themed Horizons of Opportunity – Create, Innovate, and Sustain, which provided a platform for the entire Central community to explore various topics in greater detail. The inaugural year encouraged participation in activities, lectures, special art exhibitions, musical performances, and more to generate new perspectives through a collaborative learning experience. Throughout the year, all campus and community stakeholders immersed deeply in reflection and creatively thought about where Central might be positioned in the future.

Inaugural year event highlights included visits by the following individuals and groups:
- Emmy winner Jeff Corwin, host of Animal Planet's "The Jeff Corwin Experience."
- Kathleen J. Sikkema, a 1984 graduate of Central College, and professor of psychology and neuroscience, psychiatry and behavioral sciences, and global health at Duke University.
- Kevin Doyle, president of Green Economy, an independent consulting, research, facilitation, and training firm serving public and private institutions growing a more sustainable global economy.
- Artist Ellen Wiener, poet-in-residence Ellen Bryant Voigt, conservationist and author Terry Tempest Williams, Squonk Opera, and Recycled Percussion.

A major inaugural year event, in partnership with Pella Corporation and Vermeer Corporation, featured Dr. Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, who was interviewed by CBS News correspondent and Central alumnus Harry Smith '73. Haass kicked off a March week focusing on the global community, called Pella's Global Reach Week, where students and the greater Pella community sampled international meals, music, film, and presentations, and explored international business, careers, and academic study programs.

The Future
The second year of Putnam's presidency will focus on an innovative planning session setting a strategic vision for the college. The strategic vision began with thorough discussions at a faculty workshop in May, which will be followed by an intensive summer retreat for members of the board of trustees. In the fall, the full campus will participate and assist in development of the plan.

Tough economic times continue to challenge higher education, but Central is taking bold, proactive steps to advance and strengthen programs important to reshaping the future of private liberal arts education in the nation. Four areas of focus for the Central academic community include the future of health sciences, the arts, global experiential learning, and interdisciplinary study.

Health Sciences
Central hosted a health symposium in March examining the future of health sciences with an elite panel of alumni and community partners involved in various healthcare fields. The panel discussed four main areas including the future of medical practices, providers, and the shift to coordinated care; health policy and the economics, management, finance, and insurance dimensions; science, technology, drug discovery, and delivery; and social/behavioral dimensions and public health questions.

The Arts
Central's vision revolves around reinvigorating the arts at a time when budget crises often contribute to significant cuts to fundamentally important programs for spiritual and emotional growth. Central plans to place special emphases on art, culture, music, and theater experiences.

Global Experiential Learning
The college remains committed to its study abroad program after more than forty-five years but the landscape of the globe continues to change and so will the academic experiences. Central recently added a summer program in Ghana to accompany its eight other primary sites around the world. The learning experiences will continue to focus on the academic experience rather than global tourism and will have intense components for service and civic engagement.

In the last year, Central students traveled to Pignon, Haiti, in the spring with Second Reformed Church of Pella, and again in the summer to work with United Christians International. Students poured concrete floors in homes, held vacation Bible schools, worked at nutrition centers, participated in a goat tithing program, and learned about the people of the plateau region of Haiti.

Also, Dr. Terry Kleven, professor of religion at Central, led a group of six students to Turkey. He repeats the trip this summer in an effort to broaden students' knowledge of Turkey and the Middle East and better understand Judeo-Christian heritage and the people and politics of the area.

Interdisciplinary Study
Today's students need to be prepared for lifelong learning and experiences. Even those who are committed to work in specialized fields need proficiency in a variety of liberal arts skill sets—like communication—in order to be successfully prepared. Faculty will explore ways to expand upon individualized guided study for students and an already established and successful program at Central called Intersections, where teaching and learning occurs across discipline lines around common themes. The college also sponsors an annual common reading program. The most recent community read was *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer. It was the fourth year for the program, which unites Central faculty, staff, and first-year students.

Of Special Interest
As an academic community leader, Putnam authors a much publicized blog in an environment where civil discourse is encouraged and academic stimulation ignited. Topics focus on the issues of the day that society's next generations of leaders will need to tackle and solve. The blog, Mark: my words, can be found at http://blogs.central.edu/president. The first blog entry examined sustainability and generated 158 comments. It caught national attention, which prompted a podcast recorded by *The Chronicle of Higher Education.*

Last year, Central dedicated its newest academic building, the Roe Center, which houses education, psychology, and communication studies departments, as well as Central's nationally honored community-based service-learning program and the college's new

Center for Global Sustainability. Central is committed to building green, and was awarded a platinum rating, the highest rating from the U.S. Green Building Council for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, for this building.

RCA Initiatives
As a result of annual meetings held on the college campuses and the RCA offices in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and New York City in support of R-19 (*MGS 2004*, p. 119), Central is committed to strengthening its relationship with the RCA.

- Central, along with Hope, Northwestern, and the RCA, worked to see R-80 from General Synod 2010 passed to endorse the updated Covenant of Mutual Responsibilities between the RCA colleges and the RCA.
- The annual RCA Heritage Award of $1,500 is given to students of the RCA, children of alumni, or students with a sibling currently attending Central.
- Kristin Tremper ’03 continues as coordinator of RCA relations. She works closely with congregations and pastors to increase RCA enrollment, encourage prayer support from individual churches, and develop programs of more intentional interaction.
- The Youth Group Outreach Ministry Team is a bank of Central students who travel to RCA congregations to share their faith journeys with high school students utilizing Fuller Youth Institute’s “Sticky Faith” program. Contact Tremper at (641) 628-7600 or tremperk@central.edu to arrange a visit.
- Central hosted the Central Iowa Classis winter meeting for the fourth consecutive year.
- Pastors and youth pastors were invited to a special meal with Leroy Barber of Mission Year and given a copy of his book before his presentation as a token of the college’s appreciation of the work and connectedness of Central Iowa Classis.

Central College teaches future leaders to leave its campus empowered to make an impact in this world. The prayers, gifts, and support of the individual churches of the RCA are vital to the heart and mission of Central College. The college is proud of its covenant with the RCA and is truly blessed to be a part of the RCA family.

Report of Hope College

Hope College continues to cherish its covenantal relationship with the Reformed Church in America. It is a relationship of historical significance that is increasingly important for today. In the whole realm of higher education, there are very few institutions that value a meaningful relationship with their founding denomination. Hope College remains unequivocally committed to its covenantal relationship with the Reformed Church in America and desires an even stronger relationship in the future that will prove mutually beneficial to the college and the church. Given the record of history which clearly demonstrates that these college-church relationships are not sustainable over time, the college recognizes the major challenges which mark our efforts to maintain this partnership. Even as the college pledges itself anew to this covenant, there is trust that the denomination and individual congregations will do the same.

The mission of Hope College is to educate students for lives of leadership and service in a global society through academic and co-curricular programs of recognized excellence in the liberal arts and in the context of the historic Christian faith. This is a noble mission and one which necessitates the unwavering attention of the campus community on a daily basis. The overriding passion at Hope is to be exceptional educationally and vibrantly Christian at the same time. Few institutions have this resolve, and fewer still are able to

implement it at the highest levels. Hope College is such an institution and strives diligently to hire people who are committed to the mission of the college, provide programs that support the college's mission, and seek the resources that enable the college to fulfill its mission with distinction. This presents a significant challenge for the college.

There are many post-secondary educational options for students today. It behooves every institution, therefore, to highlight the distinctives that distinguish it from the competition. One of these at Hope is certainly its national academic reputation and, specifically, the amount of collaborative undergraduate research that takes place at the undergraduate level. This is highly unusual, especially to the extent that it takes place at Hope. The college consistently receives more external funding from the National Science Foundation for undergraduate collaborative faculty-student research than any other liberal arts college in the country. This past year Hope received more in competitive National Science Foundation grants than any institution in Michigan except the Division I research institutions (Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and Wayne State University) and Michigan Technological University. Clearly, Hope has one of the best undergraduate science programs in the country and is so recognized by external evaluations. Hope also displays great strength in the arts where it continues to be the only liberal arts college in the country with nationally accredited programs in music, theatre, dance, and art. Hope is willing to submit its programs to the scrutiny of external evaluations and in addition to the four arts areas mentioned above currently holds national accreditations in chemistry, engineering, nursing, social work, athletic training, and education. The college prizes professors who have a mature understanding of and commitment to the Christian faith, are able to teach well, and have the ability to engage in cutting-edge research, most often in collaboration with their students.

In addition to outstanding academics, Hope excels in co-curricular activities that oftentimes teach life skills like teamwork, fair play, interpersonal skills, and leadership more tangibly than can be done in the classroom. The college hires professional personnel to advise, coach, and direct these programs. This past fall, for example, Hope's theatre, music, and dance departments produced Hope's first-ever opera that involved over 200 students, faculty, and staff. It was an exceptional performance. In intercollegiate sport, Hope has won the last ten consecutive Commissioner's Cups, symbolic of athletic supremacy in all sports in the United States' oldest collegiate athletic conference, the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association. In basketball, Hope continues to be nationally competitive. Both its men's and women's teams have earned their way into the national tournament the past six consecutive years, a record unmatched by any of the other 445 Division III NCAA colleges and universities.

Of primary importance for this report to the General Synod is the spiritual life distinctive at Hope. Arguably, this could be the most intentionally Christian period in the life of the college. Dimnent Chapel is filled to overflowing four times each week with voluntary student attendance. Mission trips and service projects of all kinds mark the relational dimension of the college both domestically and abroad. Bible study groups abound, and a ministry team of six full-time people minister to the campus community of approximately 4,000 people. Many, perhaps even most, of Hope's students come to the college because of strong academics and vibrant faith opportunities. They grow and mature in their Christian faith commitments during their time at Hope. There are, however, hundreds of students who come to Hope with little or no faith commitment. It is in this sense that Hope is a very fertile mission station at a time when young women and men are often searching for their own identity and their relationship with a sovereign God whose Son changed the world as Savior and Lord.

A fourth distinctive of Hope is the caring family-type community. Nearly 85 percent of

Hope's traditional college-age population lives on campus in residential housing. It is our goal to provide a wholesome environment that fosters intellectual, spiritual, social, and physical growth. The college is intent on helping each student reach his or her full potential and in the process become all that God intends for them to be.

Hope's part of the covenantal relationship with the Reformed Church in America is to provide a quality Christian education. This responsibility occupies our thoughts, prayers, and commitments on a daily basis.

The church's part of the commitment is to pray regularly for the college, encourage young women and men to consider Hope for their undergraduate education, and to provide resources as they are able to help make the Hope College experience affordable for young people of the church. The college is indebted especially to those pastors and churches who regularly uplift the college in their prayers. As a people who believe in the power of prayer, the college seeks God's providence and blessing in all its activities.

There is a growing concern at the college about the diminishing numbers of RCA students who attend Hope. At a time when virtually every other Christian denomination is increasing in the number of students sent to Hope, the RCA numbers are dropping rather precipitously. This is puzzling for the college community because the distinctives that the church should want to be present at Hope are present in ever-increasing measure. Hope does give preferential admission and financial aid consideration to members of the Reformed Church in America and will continue to pursue initiatives that make the college attractive to those who desire exceptionality in academic programs, superiority in co-curricular activities, and excellence in character and faith development. It is often the encouragement of a pastor or a congregation member that makes a difference in where young women and men go for their collegiate experience. Thank you for tangibly assisting the college in this endeavor.

College educations today are very costly. It is a challenge for most families to pay the entire sticker price without the assistance of others. In fact, no student attending Hope pays the full amount as tuition covers only about 80 percent of the actual cost. Institutional financial aid, federal and state assistance, and gifts from those who wish to do for current students what a previous generation did for them, together make an education affordable. The college realizes full well that the economic challenges faced at Hope are also very real for individual congregations. Since Hope receives no direct financial support from the Reformed Church in America but rather relies on benevolent congregations and individuals within those congregations for support, the college cherishes both the amounts and the symbolic partnership which churches provide as they are able. The record of history with virtually every private college, including the most reputable, is that denominational prayer support, student attendance, and financial support wane even as colleges go soft on their convictions. What results are simply good secular institutions. This is not our desire for Hope and the Reformed Church in America. To keep this from happening will require the unwavering commitment of the people of Hope and the denomination.

It is certainly in the best interests of the college and the denomination to forge a lasting partnership that will serve both the college and the church. There is great strength in unity. There is much to celebrate in past partnerships and successes, and there is considerable challenge for a vibrant relationship in the future. May God grant to both Hope and the denomination a steady resolve to sustain an enduring and purposeful partnership in Christian higher education.

Report of Northwestern College

News from Northwestern College
The 2010-11 school year at Northwestern College was another exciting one as the faculty and staff sought to engage students in courageous and faithful learning and living that empowers them to follow Christ and pursue God's redeeming work in the world. Among the year's highlights:

***Washington Monthly* ranks Northwestern 2nd baccalaureate college in the nation**
Northwestern College was ranked second in *Washington Monthly's* 2010 rankings of the top baccalaureate colleges in the nation. The rankings were based on how well schools are fulfilling their obligations in the area of social mobility, service, and research. In simple terms, the study reviews what colleges are doing for their country.

Factors that influence the rankings include: number of bachelor's degree recipients who go on to earn doctoral degrees or serve in the Peace Corps; the number of students who participate in community service and the staff support those efforts receive; the percentage of federal work-study funds that goes to community service; the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants; and the predicted and actual graduation rates based on percentage of Pell recipients and incoming SATs.

Other baccalaureate institutions in the top ten include: Taylor University, third; Messiah College, fifth; Augustana College (SD), sixth; and Trinity Christian College, ninth.

Women's basketball NAIA Division II national champions
For the third time in four years, Northwestern's women's basketball team won the NAIA Div. II national championship. The Lady Raiders captured their second consecutive title in March, defeating top-ranked and undefeated Davenport (Michigan) to finish the year at 35-1. Northwestern is the only NAIA Div. II team with four championships, having also won the title in 2001 and 2008.

Seniors Allison Hulst, Becca Hurley, and Kristin Neth all won three championships as a Red Raider. Hurley, in addition to be named tournament MVP, was named the NAIA player of the year. She was also selected to the Capital One Academic All-American team. Kendra De Jong was named to the second team all-tournament and chosen as the GPAC conference's co-defensive player of the year. Head coach Earl Woudstra earned the national coach of the year honor for the fourth time in his career.

Dr. Jennifer Feenstra named a Fulbright Scholar
Psychology professor Dr. Jennifer Feenstra was named a Fulbright Scholar for the 2011-12 academic year. Feenstra will be working abroad in Romania with colleagues at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj. She will also study and evaluate the youth development work of the New Horizons Foundation. Feenstra has been to Romania twice before and collaborated with Dana Bates, director of New Horizons and Northwestern's Romanian study-abroad program. She plans to further develop her research interests in volunteerism, altruism, and social capital.

Feenstra is one of 1,100 scholars chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential. Fulbright programs are designed to "increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries." As a Fulbright Scholar, Feenstra joins a select group of individuals with achievements in higher education, business, and government.

Suite style dorm housing completed and other capital projects begun
This spring construction on North Suites Hall was completed. The new hall will house 68 male students in a total of 17 suites. The three-floor, 23,487-square foot facility features rooms arranged in suites, with a bathroom in each suite. The hall includes many commons areas.

Meanwhile, construction has begun on renovations to the Rowenhorst Student Center's (RSC) 4-court area. A new floor, external lighting, and new netting system are some of the planned upgrades. Renovations are scheduled to be completed in time for Homecoming at the end of September.

Oman semester study abroad
In January Northwestern launched its first Oman semester study abroad with six students studying under the direction of the Rev. Doug Leonard, director of the Al Amana Centre. Students took courses on Muslim-Christian relations and Arabic. They also took a course with Omani students at Sultan Qaboos University. In addition, they had the opportunity to pursue a research project under the oversight of a senior-level government official.

Dr. Doug Carlson, Northwestern's associate dean for global education, shared, "This new program provides an opportunity for Northwestern students to be immersed in Middle Eastern culture and interact extensively with Omanis, encountering Islam not as a theoretical religion, but as something new friends of theirs practice."

While this is the first Northwestern group to study for a semester in Oman, sociology professor Scott Monsma has led a group of students on Christmas-break study in the country three times since 2004.

The launch of the Franken Servant Leadership Institute
Northwestern's Franken Servant Leadership Institute, launched last fall, seeks to enhance leadership development among students to better prepare them for the roles they will play after college. It includes an experiential component, seeking to develop students' leadership skills, and also focuses on helping students anticipate the challenges of living out their faith in the workplace.

Drs. Jennifer Feenstra, associate professor of psychology, and Jeff VanDerWerff, associate professor of political science, serve as co-directors of the institute. It was established through the generosity of donors in memory of Jim Franken, a 1975 Northwestern College alumnus and board member who was president and CEO of Interstates Companies and Harbor Group when he died at the age of 48 in 2001.

Senior selected as arts management intern at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Senior Greta Hays was selected for a highly competitive arts management internship at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. A public relations major with a theatre and speech minor, Hays spent the spring semester in the nation's capital managing publicity, promotion, and coordination of responsibilities for the National Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Hays was one of twenty interns who, in addition to their responsibilities, had the opportunity to attend seminars by Kennedy Center employees and executives of other major arts institutions in Washington.

EDITORIAL REPORT OF THE CORRESPONDING DELEGATE FROM THE COMMISSION ON CHURCH ORDER

The following changes are editorial in nature and will be made to the *Minutes of General Synod* and the *Book of Church Order*.

1. From the Report of the Commission on Church Order, regarding the Constitutional Inquiry Questions, page 276:

> c. Has your consistory considered the nature and extent of the ministry of the congregation in accordance with Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 1 ~~2~~ of the *Book of Church Order*?

Reason:
When the General Synod adopted R-3 (p. 42), which includes changes to Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Sections 1 and 2, the order of sections 1 and 2 were reversed (see *MGS 2010*, R-23, p. 113).

2. From the Report of the General Synod Council Serving as the Executive Committee of General Synod, regarding changes to Chapter 3 of the *Book of Church Order*, page 42:

BCO Chap 3, Part I, Article 8, Section 14, p. 114:

> *Sec. 14. Specific Commission Additional Appointments*
>
> The Commission for Women shall appoint one delegate who is a woman and not a member of the commission; the Commission on Race and Ethnicity shall appoint one delegate who is a racial/ethnic minority member and not a member of the commission; the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education ~~and Discipleship~~ shall appoint one delegate who is a young adult and not a member of the commission.

Reason:
The General Synod by adopting R-4, page 42, gave final declaration to an amendment to the Bylaws of the General Synod to change the commission name as indicated.

3. 1. From the Report of the Commission on Church Order, regarding the *BCO* Use of the Wording of "Church" as a Member of Classis, page 279:

BCO Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 13 changes voted by the 2011 General Synod:

> *Sec. 13*. The consistory shall have the care and supervision of the church's property and financial interests. They are the trustees of the church's property, unless the act of incorporation of the church, or the statutes of the state in which the church is incorporated, make other provision. The consistory shall not sell, transfer, lease, mortgage or otherwise alienate or encumber any real property of the church on which there stands a building designed for worship or religious instruction, or as a residence for the minister, unless the approval of the classis with jurisdiction over ***the*** ~~***this***~~ ~~of which the~~ church ~~is a member~~ has been secured. Further, the consistory shall not incur a total indebtedness which exceeds two-thirds of the prior year's expenditures for congregational purposes, as reported to the General Synod, without the approval of classis.

Reason:
To correct the grammar in the approved change.

The Rev. Lisa Vander Wal, pastor of Lisha's Kill Reformed Church, Schenectady, New York, was elected president. The. Rev. Thomas A. Smith, pastor of Faith Reformed Church, Rock Valley, Iowa, was elected vice president.

CLOSE OF GENERAL SYNOD

RESOLUTIONS OF GRATITUDE

Resolutions of thanks and appreciation for those volunteers, local churches, specific participants in the synod process, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and the Calvin College community who were instrumental in making the synod function smoothly were scrolled on the overhead screens. A motion was made and seconded from the floor to adopt the resolutions of thanks and appreciation.

VOTED: To adopt the resolutions.

ADJOURNMENT

President Donald Poest presented the traditional General Synod president's bell to president-elect Lisa Vander Wal.

The meeting of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America was declared to be adjourned after closing worship, which included the installation of officers and communion. Thus, the two hundred and fifth session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America adjourned at 11:43 a.m. on Tuesday, June 21, 2011.

STATISTICAL REPORTS OF THE CLASSES

The statistics given in the Statistical Tables are for the calendar year ending December 31, 2010, unless otherwise indicated. Churches and pastors are listed as of the latest reports from the stated clerks received before printing deadlines.

ABBREVIATIONS

Adh—Adherents
AP—Associate Pastor
Assmnts—Assessments (General Synod, Regional Synods, Classes)
Bapt—Baptisms
Bapt Mbrs—Baptized Members
Conf—Received on Confession
Conf Mbrs—Confessing Members
Cert—Received on Certificate
Congr Purpose—Congregational Purposes
Contrib—Contributions
Decd—Deceased
Houshld—Church Households
Inact Mbrs—Inactive Members
Mbrs—Members
M/C—Minister under Contract or Assistant Pastor
M/Cntrct—Minister under Contract or Assistant Pastor
New Mbrs Clas—New Membership Classes
Other—Other Removals from Roll
Other Contrib—Non-RCA Contributions
PE—Preaching Elder
RET—Retired Minister
ST—Student under Contract
Total Mbrs—Total Membership
Trans—Transferred

KEY TO FOOTNOTES

Headings "A," "B," "C," and "D" relate to Column 18 and reflect amounts included from the following categories:

"A"— Income from other than living donors; e.g., bequests, investment income, or interest income of any type.

"B"— Special offerings for building expansion, property investment, land purchases, new building construction, major renovation, or capital fund drives.

"C"— Funds received from RCA assemblies or institutions; e.g., salary supplement, program aid, or grants.

"D"— Income from property, programs, or associations that support the church budget; e.g., rentals, cemetery, nursery school, fellowship clubs, etc.

STATISTICAL REPORTS OF THE CLASSES

Alphabetically by classis:

Classis	Abbreviation	Page
Albany	ALB	464
British Columbia	BC	476
Brooklyn	BKLN	540
California	CAL	482
Canadian Prairies	CANP	478
Cascades	CAS	484
Central California	CC	486
Central Iowa	CI	510
Central Plains	CP	512
Chicago	CHI	524
City	CITY	488
Columbia-Greene	C-G	466
Dakota	DAK	514
Delaware-Raritan	D-R	532
East Sioux	ES	516
Greater Palisades	GPAL	534
Holland	HOL	494
Illiana	ILIA	526
Illinois	ILL	528
Lake Erie	LE	496
Mid-Hudson	M-H	542
Minnesota	MINN	518
Montgomery	MONT	468
Muskegon	MUSK	498
Nassau-Suffolk	N-S	544
New Brunswick	NB	536
New York	NY	546
North Grand Rapids	NGR	500
Northern Michigan	NMI	502
Ontario	ONT	480
Orange	ORNG	548
Passaic Valley	PASV	538
Pleasant Prairie	PP	520
Queens	QUE	550
Rochester	ROCH	470
Rockland-Westchester	R-W	552
Rocky Mountains	RM	490
Schenectady	SCNY	472
Schoharie	SCHO	474
South Grand Rapids	SGR	504
Southwest	SW	492
Southwest Michigan	SWM	506
West Sioux	WS	522
Wisconsin	WIS	530
Zeeland	ZEE	508

Alphabetically by regional synods/classis:

Regional Synod/Classis	Abbreviation	Page
ALBANY		
Albany	ALB	464
Columbia-Greene	C-G	466
Montgomery	MONT	468
Rochester	ROCH	470
Schenectady	SCNY	472
Schoharie	SCHO	474
CANADA		
British Columbia	BC	476
Canadian Prairies	CANP	478
Ontario	ONT	480
THE FAR WEST		
California	CAL	482
Cascades	CAS	484
Central California	CC	486
City	CITY	488
Rocky Mountains	RM	490
Southwest	SW	492
THE GREAT LAKES		
Holland	HOL	494
Lake Erie	LE	496
Muskegon	MUSK	498
No. Grand Rapids	NGR	500
Northern Michigan	NMI	502
So. Grand Rapids	SGR	504
Southwest Michigan	SWM	506
Zeeland	ZEE	508
THE HEARTLAND		
Central Iowa	CI	510
Central Plains	CP	512
Dakota	DAK	514
East Sioux	ES	516
Minnesota	MINN	518
Pleasant Prairie	PP	520
West Sioux	WS	522
MID-AMERICA		
Chicago	CHI	524
Illiana	ILIA	526
Illinois	ILL	528
Wisconsin	WIS	530
THE MID-ATLANTICS		
Delaware-Raritan	D-R	532
Greater Palisades	GPAL	534
New Brunswick	NB	536
Passaic Valley	PASV	538
NEW YORK		
Brooklyn	BKLN	540
Mid-Hudson	M-H	542
Nassau-Suffolk	N-S	544
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Grand totals 555

2010
STATISTICAL
TABLES

Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF ALBANY

Stated Clerk Nancy Landrigan, 29 Elwood Rd, Delmar, NY 12054-2403; 518-439-5400
Treasurer Robert Goodman, 28 Mountainview Ave, Albany, NY 12208-1015; 518-482-0649

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship						
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Houshld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
New York																											
(1)Albany, Bethany	Peggy Funderburke		09/08	55	81	0	10	91	22	74	1	1	0	5	5	0	0	-	-	-	140,196	7,093	10,128	4,068	21,289	118,907	(1)
(2)Albany, First	John D. Paarlberg		11/03	147	226	194	78	498	18	121	8	1	6	5	8	2	1	-	-	-	726,300	19,640	28,200	43,770	91,610	634,690	(2)
(3)Albany, Third	Rick L. Behan		10/08	37	48	12	10	70	4	36	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	141,926	4,118	960	8,310	13,388	128,538	(3)
(4)Castleton, Emmanuel	Roger A. Krutz		11/01	89	144	151	17	312	29	82	7	0	5	4	0	0	2	-	-	-	225,347	11,925	12,930	7,867	32,722	192,625	(4)
(5)Clarksville, Community	William J. Morris		05/00	68	78	31	34	143	35	65	3	0	0	3	11	0	0	-	-	-	114,831	6,313	1,013	85	7,411	107,420	(5)
(6)Colonie, Community	Bruce K. Cornwell		01/89	77	100	45	31	176	29	104	4	0	2	1	4	4	0	-	-	-	274,876	8,400	0	13,086	21,486	253,390	(6)
(7)Coxsackie, Second	Carolyn W. Lewis		06/04	38	65	74	10	149	32	42	3	0	0	2	3	0	1	-	-	-	103,753	5,456	735	5,408	11,599	92,154	(7)
(8)Delmar	David G. Corlett		01/00	225	305	245	175	725	175	200	6	4	4	3	0	3	0	-	-	-	603,789	24,785	26,000	34,000	84,785	519,004	(8)
	Dirk D. Gieser	AP	11/07																								
(9)Delmar, Unionville	Thomas A. Kendall	RET M/C	06/91	46	62	18	18	98	22	46	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	81,742	4,910	4,418	2,310	11,638	70,104	(9)
(10)East Berne, Second	Timothy J. Van Heest	M/C	06/07	16	20	27	10	57	8	12	0	0	1	3	2	1	0	-	-	-	38,124	2,241	728	3,325	6,294	31,830	(10)
(11)East Greenbush, Greenbush	David J. Jones		09/05	108	169	25	38	232	55	97	4	2	0	6	8	4	0	-	-	-	293,795	13,328	11,100	6,000	30,428	263,367	(11)
(12)Feura Bush, Jerusalem	Aaron J. Schulte		10/07	76	53	52	17	122	3	35	2	0	0	2	0	4	0	-	-	-	235,160	4,287	1,850	900	7,037	228,123	(12)
(13)Feura Bush, Onesquethaw	Vacant		07/08	37	61	20	17	98	14	47	0	0	0	0	28	2	0	-	-	-	93,981	4,442	2,220	12,039	18,701	75,280	(13)
(14)Glenmont	Abigail Norton-Levering		01/10	40	56	24	16	96	14	35	6	3	0	1	11	4	0	-	-	-	61,960	3,118	2	353	3,473	58,487	(14)
(15)Knox	Timothy J. Van Heest	M/C	06/07	39	60	30	32	122	13	50	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	-	-	-	94,070	6,001	3,673	317	9,991	84,079	(15)
(16)New Baltimore	Susan E. Kerr		09/06	28	48	4	13	65	4	36	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	-	-	-	95,839	4,131	3,888	7,140	15,159	80,680	(16)
(17)Rensselaer, Blooming Grove	James H. Brumm		07/00	76	117	170	87	374	53	58	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	105,690	7,599	655	70	8,324	97,366	(17)
(18)Selkirk, First of Bethlehem	Harlan E. Ratmeyer		09/02	80	114	67	0	181	8	60	12	1	0	3	38	3	2	-	-	-	208,933	8,807	6,510	9,030	24,347	184,586	(18)
(19)Westerlo	Vacant		04/09	18	32	0	1	33	0	22	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	34,325	2,416	1,100	2,000	5,516	28,809	(19)
(20)Wynantskill, First	Kerri L. Weldon		04/05	102	106	56	55	217	9	88	5	0	0	3	0	2	0	-	-	-	213,633	10,788	16,032	4,371	31,191	182,442	(20)
		Total		1,402	1,945	1,245	669	3,859	547	66	62	17	20	46	121	33	6	-	-	-	3,888,270	159,798	132,142	164,449	456,389	3,431,881	

Retired
Charlene Baird
Eric Blahut
David L. Cooper
Leonard De Beer
Albert T. Elswick
Joseph Favale
Frank Guinta
John Heeg
Carl W. Hiemstra
Thomas A. Kendall
Richard E. Lake
Benjamin E. Le Fevre
Joseph A. Loux
John L. Magee
Victor Nuovo
Richard Pruiksma
Ronald C. Stockhoff
LeRoy Suess
Norman J. Tellier
Glenn N. Van Oort
Sylvester D. Van Oort

Specialized Ministry
David L. Brower
Barbara Morgan
W. Ross Westhuis
William E. Wilbur

Without Charge
Peter E. Krug
David J. Schalekamp

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	258	(2)	115,000	(20)	3,800	(1)	32,280
(2)	232,100	(3)	360			(2)	175,000
(3)	72,398	(4)	1,580			(3)	10,873
(4)	32,910	(6)	36,624			(4)	29,084
(5)	85	(7)	3,913			(5)	1,204
(6)	44	(9)	1,359			(6)	26,410
(7)	42,170	(10)	12,053			(7)	3,835
(8)	483	(11)	10,310			(8)	23,602
(9)	6,833	(12)	9,053			(9)	6,576
(10)	3,163	(13)	575			(10)	275
(11)	2,055	(15)	5,592			(11)	73,372
(12)	184,728	(17)	950			(12)	14,850
(13)	650	(18)	6,287			(13)	1,756
(14)	2,000	(20)	22,815			(14)	16,940
(15)	1,968					(15)	3,000
(16)	59,669					(16)	6,922
(17)	2,212					(17)	8,799
(18)	74,691					(18)	6,182
(19)	1,200					(19)	9,325
(20)	15,683					(20)	9,513

Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF COLUMBIA-GREENE

Stated Clerk Gary L. De Witt, PO Box 473, Wallkill, NY 12589-0473; 845-895-2194
Treasurer Bonnie Pflegl, PO Box 207, Stottville, NY 12172-0207; 518-828-6425

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worshp Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Stewardship: Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
New York																											
(1)Athens, First	Norman C. Hamm	M/C	10/10	28	44	61	14	119	7	40	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	53,528	3,450	1,000	0	4,450	49,078	(1)
(2)Catskill, First	Vicky Eastland		09/03	33	46	80	53	179	26	30	0	0	5	4	0	1	0	-	-	-	153,855	6,375	8,791	1,755	16,921	136,934	(2)
(3)Catskill, Kiskatom	David P. Pettit		09/08	36	52	54	32	138	23	48	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	132,662	4,125	3,014	1,778	8,917	123,745	(3)
(4)Chatham, First	Gary L. De Witt		10/05	32	39	46	10	95	13	57	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	104,767	4,975	1,825	0	6,800	97,967	(4)
(5)Claverack, Reformed Dutch	Kathryn L. Davelaar		01/09	83	125	75	30	230	80	112	7	2	0	1	0	4	0	-	-	-	193,038	9,150	12,556	4,907	26,613	166,425	(5)
(6)Coxsackie, First	William T. Appleyard-Pekich		03/11	37	47	16	23	86	20	50	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	108,156	3,450	1,650	5,670	10,770	97,386	(6)
(7)Germantown	David C. Tipple		04/06	36	48	0	22	70	12	35	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	73,546	3,225	1,350	0	4,575	68,971	(7)
(8)Germantown, Livingstone Memorial	Vacant		01/08	25	29	13	10	52	3	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	50,408	2,025	2,400	668	5,093	45,315	(8)
(9)Ghent	Nancy A. McClure-Long		04/08	45	64	146	0	210	30	60	3	1	0	3	0	3	0	-	-	-	103,621	6,825	333	1,000	8,158	95,463	(9)
(10)Hudson, First	Vacant		04/06	16	23	2	23	48	3	25	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	59,368	1,950	0	500	2,450	56,918	(10)
(11)Hudson, Mt. Pleasant	David C. Tipple		03/98	40	46	2	13	61	18	34	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	68,387	3,525	3,250	625	7,400	60,987	(11)
(12)Kinderhook	Rudolph Visser		03/09	81	79	6	29	114	28	68	6	2	2	4	2	2	0	-	-	-	146,678	2,834	4,353	3,691	10,878	135,800	(12)
(13)Leeds	Vacant		03/11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	(13)
(14)Livingston, Linlithgo	Vacant		12/07	24	31	60	13	104	4	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	27,497	3,450	4,940	295	8,685	18,812	(14)
(15)Muitzeskill, Reformed Dutch	Barbara L. Dickens		09/96	46	68	40	22	130	12	33	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	88,920	4,875	4,310	4,386	13,571	75,349	(15)
(16)Nassau	Edward L. Van Kampen	RET M/C	12/00	25	34	1	1	36	4	23	3	3	1	1	2	1	0	-	-	-	58,059	2,448	1,587	1,640	5,675	52,384	(16)
(17)Philmont, Second Claverack	Daniel K. Herrick		09/02	29	46	0	0	46	2	38	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	-	-	-	39,667	3,600	95	116	3,811	35,856	(17)
(18)Pine Plains, Gallatin	Andrew Smith	*M/C	09/00	6	15	0	0	15	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	18,324	1,500	0	2,200	3,700	14,624	(18)
(19)Schodack Landing	Barbara Morgan	M/C	03/01	8	11	6	3	20	12	15	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	9,424	975	0	150	1,125	8,299	(19)
(20)Stuyvesant	Edward L. Van Kampen	RET M/C	12/00	13	18	0	0	18	6	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	41,967	1,725	388	951	3,064	38,903	(20)
(21)West Copake	Robert A. Charnin		07/05	46	48	29	15	92	24	70	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	78,246	3,000	2,400	0	5,400	72,846	(21)
		Total		689	913	637	313	1,863	328	39	29	11	12	27	5	19	0	-	-	-	1,610,118	73,482	54,242	30,332	158,056	1,452,062	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Retired

James Woodall Anderson
John L. Bowen
Warren Fullerton
Edward Leonard Van Kampen

Without Charge

A. Martha Brady
Kathleen Hart Brumm
Joanna Christian-Tipple
Dennis C. Mill

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	5,000	(2)	439	(8)	112	(2)	29,755
(2)	49,155	(3)	37,862	(19)	152	(3)	1,050
(3)	45	(5)	15,250			(4)	34,576
(4)	211	(9)	5,094			(5)	13,617
(5)	10,222	(12)	3,962			(6)	1,500
(6)	11,902	(14)	500			(7)	7,160
(7)	20,484					(8)	9,600
(8)	4,473					(9)	31,573
(9)	4,560					(10)	26,350
(10)	9,018					(11)	24,221
(11)	9,533					(12)	30,472
(12)	761					(14)	1,761
(14)	500					(15)	19,640
(15)	26,380					(16)	15,691
(16)	2,029					(17)	10,800
(17)	291					(19)	1,441
(18)	7,212					(20)	583
(19)	1,554						
(20)	10,404						
(21)	246						

Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF MONTGOMERY

Stated Clerk — Mark D. Andersen, Herkimer Reformed Church, 102 Church St, Herkimer, NY 13350; 315-866-1523
Treasurer — Kenneth W. Palmer, 19 Walnut St, Mohawk, NY 13407-1311; 315-866-6253

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship					
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Housihld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Worship Attend (7)	Conf (8)	Cert (9)	Trans (10)	Dead (11)	Other (12)	Infant (13)	Adult (14)	Sun Sch (15)	New Mbrs Clas (16)	Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
New York																										
(1)Alexandria Bay, Thousand Isles	Scott A. Nyp		08/08	61	85	161	49	295	55	83	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	-	-	-	200,258	8,328	1,770	14,546	24,644	175,614	(1)
(2)Canajoharie	Miriam A. Barnes		08/09	65	97	42	27	166	44	75	3	4	3	1	12	2	0	-	-	-	212,959	8,254	10,138	2,229	20,621	192,338	(2)
# (3)Currytown	Donald Hoaglander	M/C	03/11	16	19	15	8	42	4	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	23,089	1,578	500	1,160	3,238	19,851	(3)
(4)Fort Plain	Nancy E. Ryan		10/98	46	63	24	32	119	15	60	4	1	0	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	132,048	4,618	5,545	600	10,763	121,285	(4)
(5)Fort Plain, Ephratah	Vacant		05/90	12	19	15	3	37	35	60	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	-	-	-	20,171	1,440	0	457	1,897	18,274	(5)
(6)Herkimer	Mark D. Andersen		07/05	49	90	27	20	137	29	84	9	5	0	1	28	0	3	-	-	-	197,366	7,100	4,167	14,687	25,954	171,412	(6)
(7)Mohawk	Brian G. Engel		10/05	103	135	181	41	357	103	134	1	3	0	4	1	6	1	-	-	-	157,495	10,676	1,900	5,991	18,567	138,928	(7)
(8)North Syracuse, Pitcher Hill	Vacant		08/09	71	113	46	24	183	6	67	0	0	3	3	37	1	9	-	-	-	162,039	12,342	11,068	5,857	29,267	132,772	(8)
(9)Owasco	Vacant		11/10	50	78	21	40	139	15	70	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	137,740	6,966	10,587	1,495	19,048	118,692	(9)
(10)Saint Johnsville, St. Johns	Vacant		09/07	30	36	0	0	36	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	35,648	3,634	3,000	0	6,634	29,014	(10)
(11)Sprakers	Vacant		12/08	11	16	18	6	40	6	12	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	23,170	1,136	235	3,758	5,129	18,041	(11)
(12)Syracuse	Lucille Perkins		09/98	47	76	28	20	124	71	60	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	152,065	6,050	2,150	4,333	12,533	139,532	(12)
(13)West Leyden	Vacant		10/86	16	50	20	20	90	1	25	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	8,750	1,200	0	0	1,200	7,550	(13)
		Total		577	877	598	290	1,765	384	59	21	15	8	15	81	17	15	-	-	-	1,462,798	73,322	51,060	55,113	179,495	1,283,303	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

	FOOTNOTES							
	A		B		C		D	
Specialized Ministry								
David Johnson	(1)	1,286	(1)	46,824	(1)	2,000	(1)	3,575
Phyllis Palsma	(2)	128,876	(2)	9,880	(2)	1,400	(2)	1,557
Robert G. Vrooman	(3)	3,883	(7)	5,817	(7)	1,000	(3)	4,360
	(4)	47,919	(9)	31,182	(8)	600	(4)	13,831
Without Charge	(6)	48,689	(10)	39	(11)	675	(5)	2,292
Marcia Rose Gibbons	(7)	1,087					(6)	22,491
Daniel W. Hoogheem	(9)	1,038					(7)	10,687
Jennifer M. Reece	(10)	4,150					(8)	7,313
	(12)	15,000					(10)	2,097
							(11)	386
							(12)	31,874

Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF ROCHESTER

Stated Clerk Anita Manuele, Trinity Reformed Church, 909 N Landing Rd, Rochester, NY 14625; 585-381-5330
Treasurer Eugene Ligtenberg, 52 Marble Dr, Rochester, NY 14615-1340; 585-621-3813

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship						
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Housh'ld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
New York																											
(1)Clymer, Abbe	Vacant		11/10	92	172	69	56	297	20	135	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	209,153	14,650	32,778	56,703	104,131	105,022	(1)
(2)Clymer, Clymer Hill	Erin K. Beckerink		06/02	63	106	30	36	172	45	81	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	108,402	7,175	14,722	2,382	24,279	84,123	(2)
	Michael R. Beckerink		06/02																								
(3)Interlaken	Vacant		12/10	57	82	69	3	154	6	56	0	0	5	4	0	0	0	-	-	-	110,408	8,147	7,096	2,012	17,255	93,153	(3)
(4)Marion, Second	Donald A. White		08/90	89	141	118	74	333	40	124	2	1	3	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	234,483	11,659	5,500	29,713	46,872	187,611	(4)
(5)Newark, Woodlane Community	Brian C. Maag		09/09	53	72	0	0	72	35	63	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	115,603	5,232	3,693	6,039	14,964	100,639	(5)
(6)Palmyra	Vacant		09/07	34	43	9	13	65	19	48	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	86,918	3,241	10,156	4,223	17,620	69,298	(6)
(7)Pultneyville	Timothy J. TenClay		05/10	88	148	21	106	275	20	97	0	1	0	2	2	3	0	-	-	-	196,169	11,062	10,720	6,445	28,227	167,942	(7)
(8)Rochester, Brighton	David Ryder		06/10	69	100	9	10	119	3	71	1	4	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	163,704	7,922	10,909	3,445	22,276	141,428	(8)
(9)Rochester, Lakeview Community	Vacant		06/11	84	113	35	39	187	71	105	2	0	2	0	2	1	0	-	-	-	162,394	9,268	1,001	12,008	22,277	140,117	(9)
(10)Rochester, Trinity	Daniel Griswold		09/03	93	136	24	21	181	35	97	0	0	0	3	0	3	2	-	-	-	180,156	14,165	10,662	3,871	28,698	151,458	(10)
(11)Sodus, First	John D. Eichenberger		01/89	43	42	18	3	63	4	30	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	-	-	-	47,208	3,588	6,598	1,606	11,792	35,416	(11)
(12)Waterloo, Tyre	Vacant		04/11	18	24	4	8	36	11	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	42,937	1,719	1,787	3,510	7,016	35,921	(12)
(13)Williamson	Richard Morano	*PE	05/04	15	20	0	0	20	9	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	23,931	1,345	1,577	432	3,354	20,577	(13)
		Total		798	1,199	406	369	1,974	318	73	7	10	13	23	4	11	3	-	-	-	1,681,466	99,173	117,199	132,389	348,761	1,332,705	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Missionary
F. Peter Ford
Richard H. Otterness

Retired
Timothy B. Bush
Gordon H. Curtis
Gordon G. Damsteegt
William H. Hoffman
Kermit G. Hogenboom
John J. Kotun
Paul R. Meyerink
Eugene Edward Roberts
Nicolaos Tsianiklides
Nicholas J. Vander Weide

Specialized Ministry
Harold M. Delhagen
Suzanne L. Hodges
Michael David Merry

Without Charge
Juan Antonio Carmona
Derek Neal Vande Slunt

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C	D	
(2)	3,322	(1)	4,418		(1)	25,199
(3)	15,548	(2)	4,482		(2)	2,222
(5)	3,150	(3)	860		(3)	1,533
(6)	10,300	(6)	4,250		(5)	3,025
(7)	2,718	(7)	815		(6)	3,240
(8)	37,529	(10)	23,655		(7)	2,135
(9)	18,623	(11)	3,064		(8)	13,509
(10)	24,097	(12)	1,000		(10)	4,840
(11)	60	(13)	1,340		(11)	3,680
(12)	13,122					
(13)	638					

Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF SCHENECTADY

Stated Clerk — Carol Troost, 7 Van Voast Ln, Scotia, NY 12302-9621; 518-372-7502
Treasurer — F. James Burnetter, 4 Arbor Ln, Clifton Park, NY 12065-5911; 518-371-2822

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship						
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt								Contributions			
				Household (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Worship Attend (7)	Conf (8)	Cert (9)	Trans (10)	Decd (11)	Other (12)	Infant (13)	Adult (14)	Sun Sch (15)	New Mbrs Clas (16)	Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
New York																											
(1)Altamont	Robert J. Luidens		09/84	98	162	60	60	282	94	97	8	2	0	2	5	1	0	-	-	-	228,292	12,414	34,688	9,565	56,667	171,625	(1)
(2)Amsterdam, First Glenville	Vacant		02/11	50	90	58	28	176	18	56	2	0	0	0	2	1	1	-	-	-	209,411	6,743	3,500	7,842	18,085	191,326	(2)
(3)Clifton Park, Christ Community	Johan G. Bosman		03/04	169	256	78	56	390	19	185	12	4	1	3	0	3	1	-	-	-	389,355	22,829	8,650	11,256	42,735	346,620	(3)
	James A. Neevel	RET M/C	01/06																								
(4)Fort Edward, Fort Miller	Charles Bailey	*M/C	09/72	50	61	63	19	143	12	60	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	88,701	4,981	1,929	6,967	13,877	74,824	(4)
(5)Guilderland Center, Helderberg	Allen Jager		09/87	96	129	74	61	264	47	107	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	-	-	-	173,702	12,261	8,475	0	20,736	152,966	(5)
(6)Rexford, Amity	David G. DeVries		01/90	44	60	37	2	99	19	50	3	0	0	3	22	0	0	-	-	-	100,046	4,904	3,096	2,126	10,126	89,920	(6)
(7)Rotterdam Junction, First	Kent McHeard		09/09	44	70	5	0	75	8	70	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	132,329	6,514	13,132	7,046	26,692	105,637	(7)
(8)Schenectady, Bellevue	Richard L. Scheenstra		09/02	70	116	111	20	247	41	110	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	-	-	-	242,256	8,046	12,821	3,967	24,834	217,422	(8)
(9)Schenectady, First	William H. Levering		02/07	285	485	133	112	730	104	190	31	0	0	16	8	5	0	-	-	-	1,378,357	36,015	57,000	169,200	262,215	1,116,142	(9)
	Stacey S. Midge	AP	03/09																								
	Daniel J. Carlson	AP	06/05																								
(10)Schenectady, Lisha's Kill	Lisa Vander Wal		02/08	86	126	14	20	160	26	95	2	1	0	2	6	0	0	-	-	-	215,138	10,114	32,950	20,458	63,522	151,616	(10)
(11)Schenectady, Lynnwood	William L. Schutter		12/10	115	178	172	30	380	31	106	15	0	7	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	227,960	12,260	3,000	10,573	25,833	202,127	(11)
(12)Schenectady, Niskayuna	Scott A. DeBlock		11/95	279	383	267	231	881	294	216	17	3	4	9	3	10	0	-	-	-	688,415	29,502	8,843	8,954	47,299	641,116	(12)
(13)Schenectady, Second Rotterdam	Vacant		12/08	34	45	22	0	67	16	45	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	304,628	4,061	3,900	4,140	12,101	292,527	(13)
(14)Schenectady, Trinity	Superseded		01/09	28	35	27	9	71	25	38	14	0	2	1	9	0	1	-	-	-	57,486	4,014	700	1,840	6,554	50,932	(14)
	Arthur P. Hudak	M/C	05/11																								
(15)Schenectady, Woodlawn	Derek J. DeJager		05/08	58	57	27	3	87	8	47	0	0	11	1	1	3	0	-	-	-	79,027	5,364	275	1,467	7,106	71,921	(15)
(16)Schuylerville, Bacon Hill	Janet M. Vincent		04/00	68	104	57	40	201	45	80	2	2	0	2	1	2	0	-	-	-	94,624	8,046	2,552	4,656	15,254	79,370	(16)
(17)Schuylerville, Old Saratoga	Joyce B. de Velder		03/82	39	56	45	29	130	31	62	1	0	1	4	0	2	1	-	-	-	92,502	4,598	1,065	6,922	12,585	79,917	(17)
(18)Scotia, First	Craig J. Hoffman		03/94	283	265	77	60	402	40	222	7	0	3	12	15	6	1	-	-	-	520,470	21,686	19,608	37,842	79,136	441,334	(18)
	Jan L. Hoffman		03/94																								
		Total		1,896	2,678	1,327	780	4,785	878	102	116	13	33	68	72	38	6	-	-	-	5,222,699	214,352	216,184	314,821	745,357	4,477,342	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Chaplain
Jennifer Minier-Elliott

Retired
Donald R. Baird
Johannes Bekkering
Warren D. Bull
Paul B. Caley
William H. de Forest
Vincent A. Fasano
William E. Faulkner
Adrian C. Gray
Lewis E. Kain
Arnold Kress
James A. Neevel
John David Page
Donald S. Pangburn
Donald R. Peet
Frederick P. Van Kempen
Douglas Walrath
Robert A. White

Specialized Ministry
Kent John Busman
Susan Lynn Cox
Benjamin Doolittle
Norman C. Hamm
Jacob G. Marvel
Thomas R. Ondra
P. Wayne Townsend

Without Charge
Thomas D. McCrossan

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	68,439	(1)	21,698	(14)	22,468	(1)	440
(2)	16,958	(3)	36,383	(15)	1,467	(2)	30,811
(3)	413	(4)	9,865			(4)	13,149
(4)	3,700	(6)	1,499			(5)	5,000
(5)	39,500	(12)	25,578			(6)	15,397
(6)	5,566					(8)	75,000
(7)	41					(9)	26,625
(8)	24,131					(10)	1,960
(9)	901,923					(11)	7,935
(10)	3,171					(12)	111,831
(11)	651					(14)	6,022
(12)	208,403					(15)	881
(13)	261,095					(16)	18,639
(15)	1,274					(17)	12,206
(18)	103,465					(18)	51,911

Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF SCHOHARIE

Stated Clerk Sherri Meyer-Veen, Schoharie Reformed Church, PO Box 635, Schoharie, NY 12157; 518-295-8177
Treasurer Carol Hendrix, Schoharie Reformed Church, PO Box 635, Schoharie, NY 12157; 518-868-1971

				Membership														Education			Stewardship						
												Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt						Contributions			
CHURCHES	PASTORS			Househld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Worshp Attend (7)	Conf (8)	Cert (9)	Trans (10)	Decd (11)	Other (12)	Infant (13)	Adult (14)	Sun Sch (15)	New Mbrs Clas (16)	Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
New York																											
(1)Amsterdam, Cranesville	Mary-Lynn Morrison	*	09/08	32	59	2	1	62	30	28	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	69,621	2,965	750	86	3,801	65,820	(1)
(2)Amsterdam, Florida	Timothy J. Alicki		08/08	23	23	10	9	42	10	35	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	48,120	1,808	600	0	2,408	45,712	(2)
(3)Berne, First	Robert G. Hoffman		09/76	37	58	69	25	152	15	40	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	91,339	4,050	1,000	3,493	8,543	82,796	(3)
(4)Fonda	Joshua E. Baron		11/10	82	189	57	61	307	49	116	4	1	0	1	7	2	0	-	-	-	214,587	11,934	30,201	10,147	52,282	162,305	(4)
(5)Fultonville	Vacant		12/03	15	15	4	4	23	4	20	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	-	-	-	21,454	1,302	100	400	1,802	19,652	(5)
(6)Fultonville, Glen	Timothy J. Alicki		08/08	29	44	3	0	47	19	28	2	1	1	5	0	1	0	-	-	-	79,341	3,761	1,520	2,954	8,235	71,106	(6)
(7)Hagaman, Calvary	Stanley F. Craig	M/C	03/08	29	42	31	2	75	14	50	1	0	0	5	2	2	0	-	-	-	35,300	3,616	1,850	1,000	6,466	28,834	(7)
(8)Howes Cave, Second	Vacant		05/01	9	11	0	0	11	6	17	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	11,481	868	0	386	1,254	10,227	(8)
(9)Johnstown	Brian D. Dykema		08/07	40	87	18	20	125	27	80	3	1	1	4	4	0	1	-	-	-	105,545	6,576	4,750	200	11,526	94,019	(9)
(10)Lawyersville	Patricia (Pacia) F. Vamvas		07/09	43	44	10	18	72	20	50	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	-	-	-	353,000	4,484	4,000	4,000	12,484	340,516	(10)
(11)Middleburgh	Jeffrey A. Kelley		08/09	35	50	101	39	190	33	56	3	2	0	3	0	1	1	-	-	-	92,249	3,999	6,675	2,828	13,502	78,747	(11)
(12)Prattsville, Reformed Dutch	Gregory D. Town		02/08	16	23	2	3	28	8	19	4	0	0	0	8	0	0	-	-	-	36,308	1,664	0	970	2,634	33,674	(12)
	Rebecca L. Town		02/08																								
(13)Roxbury, Jay Gould Memorial	Richard A. Dykstra		09/81	140	58	101	44	203	30	60	0	2	0	4	2	4	1	-	-	-	88,879	4,918	1,044	1,410	7,372	81,507	(13)
(14)Schoharie	Sherri Meyer-Veen		02/04	69	83	50	2	135	10	70	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	-	-	-	155,858	7,811	2,000	15,749	25,560	130,298	(14)
	Michael Meyer-Veen		02/04																								
(15)Sharon Springs, Sharon	Patricia (Pacia) F. Vamvas		07/09	13	21	19	8	48	9	22	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	31,308	1,447	400	791	2,638	28,670	(15)
		Total		612	807	477	236	1,520	284	46	20	7	4	32	24	16	5	-	-	-	1,434,390	61,203	54,890	44,414	160,507	1,273,883	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Retired
Paul C. Ferenczy
Charles B. Hesselink
Wilbur E. Ivins
Peter Shortway
Jared Van Wagenen

Specialized Ministry
Orville J. Hine

Without Charge
Karen Jacobsma Patterson
Gretel A. Van Wieren

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C	D	
(1)	4,205	(2)	14,889		(1)	25,798
(3)	5,000	(9)	4,565		(3)	7,826
(4)	5,861	(15)	276		(4)	1,755
(5)	7,807				(5)	3,934
(8)	128				(6)	2,750
(10)	297,500				(7)	4,800
(12)	10,682				(8)	4,800
(13)	8,246				(9)	20,137
(14)	2,500				(10)	510
(15)	1,909				(11)	7,015
					(12)	2,211
					(13)	3,500
					(14)	23,959
					(15)	2,499

Regional Synod of Canada CLASSIS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Stated Clerk Abraham J. (Brent) Mulder, 1365 Graveley St, Vancouver, BC V5L 3A1; 604-324-1901
Treasurer Doug Waymark, 8977 207th St, Langley, BC V1M 2N4; 604-541-4426

CHURCHES	PASTORS		Membership: Housh (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
British Columbia																										
(1)Abbotsford, Bethel	David C. Vandervelde		12/02	38	53	11	20	84	45	70	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	169,981	4,908	4,312	11,030	20,250	149,731	(1)
(2)Burnaby, New Life Community	Jonathan D. Manlove		10/05	82	136	0	0	136	65	201	5	0	0	0	0	1	2	-	-	-	386,386	10,468	1,826	46,953	59,247	327,139	(2)
(3)Langley, Emmaus Christian	Vacant		05/11	30	52	3	6	61	24	45	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	-	-	-	84,296	3,004	0	1,000	4,004	80,292	(3)
(4)Langley, Fraser Valley	James P. Moerman		02/10	36	51	0	36	87	41	105	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	-	-	-	137,000	0	0	4,612	4,612	132,388	(4)
(5)Lantzville, Woodgrove	Stephen F. Wilkinson		09/09	22	31	5	0	36	27	42	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	-	-	-	105,700	3,277	1,200	700	5,177	100,523	(5)
(6)Parksville, Arbutus Grove	Vacant		09/10	37	45	56	2	103	25	53	3	1	0	2	0	0	2	-	-	-	80,020	2,694	940	1,638	5,272	74,748	(6)
(7)Port Alberni, Cedar Grove	Vacant		03/08	20	29	5	5	39	25	40	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	102,381	3,004	1,000	2,107	6,111	96,270	(7)
(8)Powell River	Lauretta J. Heron	*PE	02/91	27	27	8	9	44	29	39	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	-	-	-	79,922	2,731	6,614	2,176	11,521	68,401	(8)
(9)Richmond, Fujian Evangelical	David Tsai		10/05	101	167	155	2	324	159	296	3	6	2	0	2	2	2	-	-	-	584,536	15,020	11,500	70,488	97,008	487,528	(9)
	J. Jeremiah Coe	AP	03/08																								
(10)Surrey, Grace Community	Vacant		05/01	14	30	18	10	58	8	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	137,637	4,108	500	7,421	12,029	125,608	(10)
(11)Vancouver, Hope	Reindert (Randy) J. Opmeer		06/99	31	45	9	6	60	26	37	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	144,371	5,398	10,070	17,172	32,640	111,731	(11)
	John J. Opmeer	RET M/C	07/99																								
		Total		438	666	270	96	1,032	474	88	18	7	3	12	6	6	8	-	-	-	2,012,230	54,612	37,962	165,297	257,871	1,754,359	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

	FOOTNOTES							
	A		B		C		D	
Retired								
Livingstone Chen	(1)	1,038	(1)	12,034	(5)	13,500	(1)	50,668
Leslie Unwin Clark	(7)	48,642	(2)	35,571	(10)	1,207	(2)	15,855
William Hudson	(9)	872					(4)	36,000
Rudolf Katerberg	(10)	29					(5)	18,000
John J. Opmeer							(6)	11,333
Jacob Van Holst							(8)	8,717
							(9)	20,049
Specialized Ministry							(10)	78,073
David King							(11)	37,793
Murray Moerman								
Dan Williams								
Without Charge								
John Kaptein								
Janelle Elisabeth Koolhaas								
Abraham J. (Brent) Mulder								
Robert Trotter								
Jason William Van Ankum								

Regional Synod of Canada CLASSIS OF CANADIAN PRAIRIES

Stated Clerk — Willem Spaans, 26229 SH633, Sturgeon County, AB T8T 1J5; 780-459-5637
Treasurer — Cornelis (Case) Van Herk, 9302 98th Ave, Morinville, AB T8R 1J4; 780-939-2926

			Membership														Education			Stewardship						
											Average		Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
CHURCHES	PASTORS		Househld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
			(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Alberta																										
(1)Athabasca	Ronald Opmeer	04/93	54	80	41	31	152	94	152	6	2	0	1	2	1	2	-	-	-	386,669	10,194	800	8,302	19,296	367,373	(1)
(2)Calgary, Community	Vacant	07/10	43	67	2	20	89	9	45	3	2	1	2	2	2	0	-	-	-	139,038	7,942	7,200	2,846	17,988	121,050	(2)
(3)Edmonton, Emmanuel Community	Walter E. Opmeer	05/95	47	68	14	10	92	33	74	3	2	2	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	262,681	9,127	4,200	20,982	34,309	228,372	(3)
(4)Monarch	Robert Derrick	01/03	27	45	0	12	57	4	30	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	-	-	-	106,577	5,289	1,723	11,787	18,799	87,778	(4)
(5)St Albert, Christ Community	David G. Wulkan	10/09	44	63	0	22	85	18	59	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	-	-	-	141,594	8,127	1,558	3,691	13,376	128,218	(5)
Manitoba																										
(6)Winnipeg, Place of Grace	Vacant	10/09	33	48	13	17	78	21	50	5	0	1	0	1	2	0	-	-	-	104,434	8,196	2,867	4,520	15,583	88,851	(6)
		Total	248	371	70	112	553	179	68	18	7	5	4	5	9	4	-	-	-	1,140,993	48,875	18,348	52,128	119,351	1,021,642	

Planting Minister
Marc Konynenberg

Retired
Thomas Schultz

Without Charge
Barton D. Keefer

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	1,947	(1)	177,949	(1)	16,733	(1)	8,172
(2)	10,000	(2)	504	(6)	10,000	(2)	18,600
(3)	12,039	(4)	2,646			(3)	33,248
(4)	4,631					(4)	11,265
(5)	651					(5)	1,190
(6)	123					(6)	3,989

Regional Synod of Canada CLASSIS OF ONTARIO

Stated Clerk — Abram M. Blaak, Bethel Reformed Church, 506 West St, Brantford, ON N3R 3W7; 519-752-1114
Treasurer — Grace Slot, PO Box 220, Moorefield, ON N0G 2K0; 519-638-3281

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship						
												Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt						Contributions			
				Househld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worshp Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Ontario																											
(1)Brantford, Bethel	Abram M. Blaak		09/02	82	126	4	37	167	18	125	0	6	2	2	1	2	0	-	-	-	183,456	15,314	19,740	11,209	46,263	137,193	(1)
(2)Cambridge, Countryside	Vacant		12/06	26	43	8	12	63	9	45	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	-	-	-	71,430	4,986	3,248	3,324	11,558	59,872	(2)
(3)Chatham, Ont, First	Vacant		02/11	65	107	12	46	165	2	90	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	-	-	-	170,251	13,770	11,797	20,635	46,202	124,049	(3)
(4)Drayton	Dirk J. Kramer		03/88	196	329	26	136	491	45	350	7	9	5	5	0	9	0	-	-	-	498,840	38,699	69,818	85,489	194,006	304,834	(4)
	Duane Vanderlaan	*	10/10																								
(5)Exeter, Bethel	James Vellenga		04/02	24	40	5	11	56	7	40	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	-	-	-	100,904	5,342	1,342	9,681	16,365	84,539	(5)
(6)Grimsby, Forestview Community	John DeGiovanni		04/02	65	112	1	51	164	60	140	5	5	6	1	0	5	5	-	-	-	319,850	10,684	9,475	25,564	45,723	274,127	(6)
(7)Guelph, Riverside Community	Henry DeKorte		09/97	38	60	0	26	86	5	60	0	0	5	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	133,699	7,479	10,500	14,181	32,160	101,539	(7)
(8)Hamilton, Westdale	Stanley E. Seagren		09/08	127	220	12	102	334	44	200	3	2	0	3	0	3	0	-	-	-	334,587	27,855	44,960	44,354	117,169	217,418	(8)
(9)Kingsville, Faith	Kenneth P. Labbé		11/08	66	81	29	24	134	14	68	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	-	-	-	126,452	9,972	11,783	11,577	33,332	93,120	(9)
(10)London, Immanuel	Vacant			24	42	8	11	61	5	40	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	110,789	6,766	981	9,345	17,092	93,697	(10)
(11)Mississauga, Ebenezer	Vacant		01/06	45	50	0	0	50	18	45	8	2	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	96,173	5,816	3,527	5,626	14,969	81,204	(11)
(12)Mississauga, New Alliance Christian	Humberto Lopes		11/09	20	60	0	5	65	0	30	0	0	0	0	4	3	5	-	-	-	77,600	0	0	0	0	77,600	(12)
(13)Saint Catharines, First	Arthur R. VanSlageren		06/92	146	237	22	83	342	29	200	3	2	0	4	1	1	0	-	-	-	361,428	20,511	19,472	16,326	56,309	305,119	(13)
(14)Stevensville, Faith	Kenneth A. Ramsay		12/91	60	87	0	7	94	65	101	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	-	-	-	262,312	10,687	10,000	12,000	32,687	229,625	(14)
# (15)Stoney Creek, Ebenezer	Vacant		01/10	65	100	0	5	105	20	65	0	3	4	4	0	0	0	-	-	-	126,474	9,828	14,942	6,188	30,958	95,516	(15)
(16)Thorold, Grace Community	R. Leslie Boyd		12/97	49	65	17	10	92	15	90	3	4	12	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	196,182	16,619	3,560	14,640	34,819	161,363	(16)
(17)Toronto, La Senda	Alberto Salazar		10/08	48	81	9	3	93	22	98	10	2	5	1	3	2	1	-	-	-	80,944	7,123	3,799	1,820	12,742	68,202	(17)
(18)Toronto, New Life	Ceny Tavares		02/02	63	111	0	1	112	20	150	0	20	26	0	0	1	6	-	-	-	417,153	16,038	0	99,130	115,168	301,985	(18)
(19)Wainfleet, Maranatha	Emile Schmid	*CP	11/07	83	136	77	41	254	20	65	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	161,785	17,450	14,428	23,885	55,763	106,022	(19)
(20)Welland, Christ Community	Carson W. Culp		06/06	23	39	8	36	83	27	35	0	2	1	2	3	0	0	-	-	-	140,066	4,511	0	5,561	10,072	129,994	(20)
(21)Whitby, Emmanuel	Donald Waterhouse		11/01	75	99	32	17	148	17	120	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	185,680	13,770	20,184	12,167	46,121	139,559	(21)
(22)Woodstock, Emmanuel	Peter Burrill		02/11	133	226	53	72	351	12	171	0	4	2	4	0	6	0	-	-	-	266,287	29,826	14,892	56,280	100,998	165,289	(22)
		Total		1,523	2,451	323	736	3,510	474	106	44	65	71	44	12	42	19	-	-	-	4,422,342	293,046	288,448	488,982	1,070,476	3,351,866	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*
# STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Chaplain
Hendrik Bylstra
Greg Girard

Retired
Peter M. De Jong
John Drost
Karel Hanhart
Willem Kroon
Kenneth Lowe
Thomas Meyer
Christiaan Platteel
Samuel M. Priestley
C. Gordon Ross
John Strik
Clifford Turkstra
Ronald E. Van Auken
Jon Van Oostveen
J. Willem VandenBerg
Thomas Vander Schaaf
John Verhoog
Siebrand Wilts
Arthur Zeilstra

Specialized Ministry
E. J. de Waard
Janine A. Dekker
John Kapteyn
Douglas Nieuwstraten
H. Martyn Van Essen
Arthur J. VanderMeulen
Charles Webster

Without Charge
William Bernard Wensink

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	13	(1)	26,501	(5)	700	(2)	13,100
(3)	37	(3)	9,386	(6)	990	(3)	2,990
(5)	546	(9)	8,000	(20)	27,500	(5)	14,956
(6)	29,007	(11)	9,055			(7)	24,150
(9)	1,179	(13)	68,671			(8)	11,992
(11)	830	(14)	19,031			(9)	8,111
(13)	307	(20)	7,400			(11)	36,150
(14)	13,100	(21)	19,530			(12)	1,600
(16)	100					(13)	1,904
(19)	301					(14)	4,000
(21)	13					(16)	14,109
(22)	1,674					(20)	470
						(21)	5,074
						(22)	650

Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF CALIFORNIA

Stated Clerk Richard Bambrick, III, 2949 W Bridgeport Ave, Anaheim, CA 92804-2049; 714-742-9229
Treasurer Richard Bambrick, III, 2949 W Bridgeport Ave, Anaheim, CA 92804-2049; 714-742-9229

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Deed (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
California																											
(1)Artesia, New Life Community	Vacant		03/10	0	335	181	101	617	228	364	5	2	0	8	150	5	1	-	-	-	1,321,500	31,956	3,406	27,665	63,027	1,258,473	(1)
	Ralph J. Veenstra	AP	08/00																								
(2)Bellflower, Bethel	Dwayne L. Decker		02/06	114	180	0	3	183	33	199	0	1	1	3	3	2	0	-	-	-	415,282	9,881	7,701	8,179	25,761	389,521	(2)
(3)Buena Park, Christ Community	Douglas A. Scholten		01/89	155	170	21	69	260	43	235	4	0	0	4	48	5	0	-	-	-	413,000	13,100	16,500	13,000	42,600	370,400	(3)
(4)Canyon Lake, Community	Peter Van Dyke		01/77	312	374	101	380	855	372	703	20	7	12	18	0	0	3	-	-	-	1,462,759	46,023	20,928	142,204	209,155	1,253,604	(4)
# (5)Cerritos, Korean Eden	Vacant		03/10	18	24	2	23	49	0	30	0	0	5	2	2	0	1	-	-	-	13,000	0	0	0	0	13,000	(5)
(6)Chino, The Bridge	Loren Van Woudenberg	*CP	07/05	137	218	9	17	244	86	316	16	0	7	5	7	9	8	-	-	-	698,827	20,593	10,996	38,895	70,484	628,343	(6)
(7)Chula Vista, Community	Superseded		01/04	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	(7)
(8)Corona, la Senda	Andres Serrano		06/01	65	66	12	61	139	76	378	40	0	0	0	12	8	12	-	-	-	151,200	6,116	500	2,300	8,916	142,284	(8)
(9)El Monte, Trinity	Wayne A. Hoglin		01/79	10	14	13	6	33	5	24	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	70,930	917	1,278	2,938	5,133	65,797	(9)
# (10)Escondido, Community (Infusion)	John M. Alwood	*CP	06/08	65	100	10	100	210	150	150	0	3	2	5	0	1	0	-	-	-	166,535	5,371	2,920	4,008	12,299	154,236	(10)
# (11)Garden Grove, Crystal Cathedral	Vacant		02/09	3,090	1,000	4,000	800	5,800	3,000	3,605	18	3	0	44	0	22	18	-	-	-	6,332,711	76,450	0	16,845	93,295	6,239,416	(11)
	Juan C. Ortiz	AP	01/96																								
	Robert H. Schuller	M/C	01/06																								
# (12)Glendora, New Hope Comm (Living Faith)	Casey Cox	*CP	03/07	22	28	1	4	33	6	25	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	49,003	2,395	4,682	916	7,993	41,010	(12)
(13)Hemet, Calvary Community (Promise)	Eldon Stephenson	*CP	06/08	20	37	4	14	55	52	120	0	3	3	0	3	1	14	-	-	-	122,200	2,856	0	4,000	6,856	115,344	(13)
(14)Hesperia, Oasis	Vinnie Hanke	*CP	10/10	62	115	35	0	150	200	350	0	0	2	1	3	6	31	-	-	-	288,839	6,881	0	6,731	13,612	275,227	(14)
# (15)Laguna Hills, Lake Hills	Superseded		10/09	233	164	205	0	369	80	262	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	-	-	-	845,358	39,094	3,600	116,270	158,964	686,394	(15)
(16)Lakewood, Mayfair Community	Timothy Vander Baan		09/98	43	66	12	26	104	68	94	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	-	-	-	113,561	4,893	5,941	4,959	15,793	97,768	(16)
(17)Lakewood, Revolution	Vacant		10/10	100	90	10	40	140	30	115	5	0	0	0	10	0	10	-	-	-	237,711	12,000	0	0	12,000	225,711	(17)
(18)Long Beach, El Dorado Park	Jeff Ludington	*CP	10/10	101	138	18	0	156	50	160	4	5	0	7	18	0	1	-	-	-	483,148	12,385	44,935	0	57,320	425,828	(18)
# (19)Los Angeles, Abundant Mission	Hyo Woo Park		06/05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	(19)
(20)Los Angeles, Hope (Faith and Hope)	Superseded		10/08	7	10	7	3	20	100	135	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	-	-	-	93,719	1,596	3,695	1,400	6,691	87,028	(20)
(21)Los Angeles, Park Hills	Richard Horton	*M/C	05/09	66	80	3	8	91	17	85	6	0	0	2	5	0	3	-	-	-	226,766	6,574	3,161	600	10,335	216,431	(21)
(22)Moreno Valley, Palm Canyon	Bill W. Martin		04/00	50	73	9	163	245	163	350	5	0	0	0	9	0	28	-	-	-	335,058	2,115	0	9,146	11,261	323,797	(22)
(23)Murrieta, Oak Springs	Michael W. Patton	*M/C	07/03	25	56	16	1	73	6	35	1	2	19	1	0	0	1	-	-	-	87,784	5,504	600	1,500	7,604	80,180	(23)
# (24)Norco, Church on the Hill	Superseded		03/10	60	0	0	0	0	50	100	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	-	-	-	163,214	0	770	0	770	162,444	(24)
(25)Norwalk, Faith	Ronald G. Spence		04/03	19	24	0	0	24	50	45	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	-	-	-	133,261	1,738	0	60	1,798	131,463	(25)
# (26)Palmdale, Desert Winds	Ned L. Beadel		06/91	65	124	28	6	158	120	225	6	0	0	0	0	2	4	-	-	-	489,917	9,251	0	1,200	10,451	479,466	(26)
	Joel D. Plantinga	AP	03/04																								
(27)Pomona, Lincoln Avenue Community	Richard W. DeBruyne		07/91	41	61	13	12	86	57	85	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	-	-	-	215,218	4,511	3,439	4,656	12,606	202,612	(27)
(28)Redlands, Bethany	Leon R. Fikse		11/95	94	134	8	49	191	60	112	0	0	4	4	8	0	0	-	-	-	252,700	12,000	8,400	6,000	26,400	226,300	(28)
(29)Riverside, East Hills Community	Craig R. Gilbert		10/02	138	149	54	214	417	135	472	41	0	8	3	42	0	45	-	-	-	780,818	12,401	78,100	60,271	150,772	630,046	(29)

(30)Riverside, Faith Community	Superseded		10/10	76	109	30	31	170	70	154	0	0	7	4	0	3	2	-	-	-	545,267	500	600	4,614	5,714	539,553	(30)
# (31)San Jacinto, El Calvario	Santos Gonzalez	*CP	10/08	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	(31)
(32)Temecula, Rancho Community	Scott D. Treadway	*CP	06/07	589	1,000	0	0	1,000	2,611	2,641	120	0	0	11	109	0	96	-	-	-	7,417,157	76,450	19,360	327,118	422,928	6,994,229	(32)
		Total		5,777	4,939	4,802	2,131	11,872	7,918	362	299	26	71	138	429	69	284	-	-	-	23,926,443	423,551	241,512	805,475	1,470,538	22,455,905	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Chaplain
William Godwin-Stremler
Linda K. Hodson
Kenneth Kolenbrander
Jason Medina

Graduate Study
William Dean Roozeboom

Inactive
Jesus M. Garcia
David John Van Lant

Missionary
David Alexander

Planting Minister
Peter Bai
Ezra Eun Mok Kim
Abner Pinedo
Samuel Setyawan

Retired
Jack Stanley Carpenter
Donald L. Collier
John Edward De Jong
Glenn A. De Master
Donald E. Den Dulk
Richard L. Detrich
Leon Dale Draayer
Chester Droog
Henry M. Haga
Joel Hansma
Gerald D. Heemstra
Walter A. Henrichsen
Harvey Thomas Hoekstra
Vernon L. Hoffs
Richard Huls
Harold John Korver
William J. Miedema
Rodwell Morgan
Juan Carlos Ortiz
Elzie Richardson
Ronald T. Smith
C. William (Bill) Stevens
Stephen P. Struikmans
Duane Tellinghuisen
Albert Terry
Robert A. Van Earden
Douglas R. van Gessel
Kenneth Vermeer
Lawrence Wilkes

Specialized Ministry
Jhonny Alicea-Baez
Kerry L. Allison
William P. Bennett
Bruce L. Bugbee
Richard J. Chavarria
Andrea Godwin-Stremler
Lucas Leys
Philip Noordmans
John Marvin Scholte
Robert A. Schuller
Gregory Simpson
J. Matthew Soeter
Keiji Soga
Charles Van Engen

Without Charge
Edward N. Baker
John G. Bales
Roger G. Beukelman
Michael Blankers
Charles D. Bordner
Simon Soon Choi
David Hartono
Bruce Jarvis
William G. Koster
Sung Kyong (Daniel) Kwak
Samuel Oh-Dal Kwon
Luiz S. Lemos
Dunston Sampson
David Son
Daniel J. Van Gorp
Eugene H. Van Zee

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C	D	
(6)	844	(13)	1,000		(1)	444,832
(10)	46	(21)	19,275		(2)	44,384
(12)	3,107	(26)	101,112		(3)	36,000
(15)	10,463	(27)	15,897		(4)	183,921
(18)	5,680	(29)	4,130		(6)	18,188
(21)	220	(32)	167,458		(9)	31,815
(22)	23				(10)	67,807
(24)	14,947				(11)	2,788,436
(27)	28,859				(13)	1,200
(28)	6,100				(16)	4,373
(30)	22,940				(18)	43,200
					(20)	22,519
					(21)	17,958
					(22)	8,266
					(24)	64,896
					(25)	52,503
					(26)	694
					(27)	58,244
					(28)	28,600
					(29)	153,364
					(30)	366,427
					(32)	3,906,871

Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF CASCADES

Stated Clerk Larry G. Martinsen, 1589 Polnell Rd, Oak Harbor, WA 98277-8603; 360-675-3802
Treasurer Larry G. Martinsen, 1589 Polnell Rd, Oak Harbor, WA 98277-8603; 360-675-3802

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship					
										Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Houshld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worshp Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Idaho																										
(1)Meridian, Valley Life Community	Thomas L. Katsma		03/98	57	98	0	55	153	66	181	10	0	0	0	0	2	4	-	-	-	269,956	0	0	27,563	27,563	242,393	(1)
(2)Twin Falls	Brian L. Vriesman		11/89	428	758	0	193	951	682	753	33	6	2	5	68	17	12	-	-	-	1,135,773	58,128	26,095	179,089	263,312	872,461	(2)
	Charles Swoboda	AP	08/03																							
(3)Wendell, New Life Community	Garret M. Westra	*CP	12/09	62	121	14	34	169	48	135	1	2	5	0	11	1	0	-	-	-	175,665	9,239	6,105	0	15,344	160,321	(3)
Montana																										
(4)Great Falls, Christ's Church	Reynold (Ray) O. Larson		07/07	24	36	9	0	45	7	32	6	0	0	1	1	0	4	-	-	-	83,483	2,289	3,909	1,032	7,230	76,253	(4)
Washington																										
(5)Edmonds, Faith Community	Philip Assink		09/94	54	76	16	18	110	45	90	4	2	5	1	1	1	0	-	-	-	159,273	5,875	9,670	5,746	21,291	137,982	(5)
(6)Kent, Lighthouse Korean	John Park		11/08	31	63	25	4	92	4	80	4	0	12	10	12	2	4	-	-	-	127,452	5,024	5,400	3,200	13,624	113,828	(6)
(7)Kent, Trinity Community	Perry L. Raak		01/89	50	85	9	15	109	60	90	5	0	3	1	5	0	1	-	-	-	193,363	7,498	822	7,405	15,725	177,638	(7)
(8)Lynden, Faith	Paul E. Van Maaren		09/05	121	197	5	63	265	68	167	2	3	3	5	13	1	1	-	-	-	430,261	17,344	27,325	10,438	55,107	375,154	(8)
(9)Lynden, First	Ryan Bajema	*CP	02/09	236	434	6	253	693	31	368	17	8	9	5	0	12	5	-	-	-	620,423	37,397	14,090	49,362	100,849	519,574	(9)
(10)Lynnwood, Good Shepherd	Timothy J. Schaaf		10/04	60	85	0	3	88	47	116	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	-	-	-	238,663	5,269	1,188	19,326	25,783	212,880	(10)
(11)Nooksack, Nooksack Valley	Charles J. Kleinhesselink		04/91	136	256	9	123	388	22	265	1	0	8	0	0	6	0	-	-	-	253,106	20,878	3,455	36,779	61,112	191,994	(11)
(12)Oak Harbor, First	Jonathon P. Brown		09/03	197	346	0	44	390	87	313	18	0	0	6	0	12	2	-	-	-	767,243	28,292	12,359	35,329	75,980	691,263	(12)
(13)Yakima, East Valley	William Van Herk		01/99	63	102	27	68	197	39	109	4	0	4	2	11	2	0	-	-	-	195,219	9,161	8,873	5,850	23,884	171,335	(13)
		Total		1,519	2,657	120	873	3,650	1,206	208	108	21	52	36	122	56	37	-	-	-	4,649,880	206,394	119,291	381,119	706,804	3,943,076	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Chaplain
Ronald T. Bechtel
Mark A. Bonnema

Inactive
Bernard Brower
John D. De Haan

Planting Minister
Jay Braband

Retired
Donald J. Brandt
Julius Brandt
Harold E. Brown
Roger A. Bruggink
Frank Vernon Love
Catherine (Robin) B. Reed
Eric John Schulze
Stephen Tamminga
Norman D. Van Manen
Kenneth W. Van Wyk
Robert L. Vander Aarde
Richard M. Vander Voet
Elmer C. VanderPloeg
Arvin Wester

Specialized Ministry
Paul J. Bach
Wesley Granberg-Michaelson
Terika E. Raak
Gerald Lawson Sittser
Keith W. Tanis

Without Charge
Brandon C. Beebe
John Thomas Haas
Rebecca Stegeman Riekse

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(2)	4,032	(1)	2,360	(7)	1,200	(2)	720
(3)	86	(2)	51,869	(8)	149,703	(4)	9,750
(7)	15,110	(4)	3,520			(5)	540
(8)	1,394	(5)	978			(7)	79,000
(9)	98,175	(7)	3,031			(8)	13,088
(10)	2,297	(12)	216,031			(9)	11,300
(11)	276	(13)	2,150			(10)	41,319
(13)	1,842					(12)	53,509
						(13)	2,520

Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Stated Clerk Donald Werkhoven, 4555 Barrett Rd, Carmichael, CA 95608-1107; 916-203-0965
Treasurer Donald Werkhoven, 4555 Barrett Rd, Carmichael, CA 95608-1107; 916-203-0965

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
California																											
(1)Brentwood, Impact Christian	Steven With	M/C	05/09	46	56	0	12	68	110	140	8	0	2	0	12	0	18	-	-	-	177,103	5,280	0	0	5,280	171,823	(1)
(2)Carmichael, Christ Community	Gregory Alderman		12/06	702	820	170	260	1,250	477	1,104	96	0	9	12	23	1	33	-	-	-	2,277,860	81,200	25,325	90,335	196,860	2,081,000	(2)
(3)Chowchilla, Cornerstone Community	Michael J. Scott		08/99	137	254	27	95	376	141	402	4	20	0	2	16	2	0	-	-	-	945,296	23,040	47,811	65,451	136,302	808,994	(3)
(4)Clovis, Oak Hills	Roy M. Pope		05/09	38	87	8	45	140	35	130	8	4	10	1	5	2	8	-	-	-	290,897	6,720	8,500	13,260	28,480	262,417	(4)
	Kim Short	M/C	09/09																								
(5)Fremont, New Hope Community	Steven Norman	*	09/09	55	81	22	11	114	47	76	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	243,577	7,488	19,625	5,229	32,342	211,235	(5)
(6)Lathrop, Lighthouse Community	Timothy Voogd	*CP	12/05	20	30	27	26	83	31	90	5	0	2	0	25	6	12	-	-	-	131,576	0	0	0	0	131,576	(6)
(7)Modesto, Church of the Cross	Donald Cowart	*M/C	05/11	86	112	16	17	145	27	103	2	0	0	2	3	1	0	-	-	-	290,568	10,404	8,520	2,500	21,424	269,144	(7)
(8)Modesto, Living Faith Community	Vacant		11/08	29	46	0	9	55	5	55	1	0	0	0	5	1	1	-	-	-	114,323	2,880	0	0	2,880	111,443	(8)
(9)Oakland, Community	Jeffrey M. Parker		09/06	76	82	19	0	101	48	62	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	-	-	-	127,882	110	400	1,781	2,291	125,591	(9)
(10)Ripon, Calvary	David D. Schutt		01/10	357	557	103	426	1,086	18	467	13	0	5	12	160	4	1	-	-	-	1,135,554	61,430	52,535	33,539	147,504	988,050	(10)
	Donald Rowe	AP	04/06																								
(11)Sacramento, Chinese Community	Louis Lee	*M/C	01/10	49	62	21	29	112	50	75	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	276,244	6,240	4,500	22,360	33,100	243,144	(11)
(12)Sacramento, Cristianna Emmanuel	Ana Bautista	*CP	11/09	50	72	58	8	138	30	138	12	0	0	0	77	0	30	-	-	-	74,598	0	0	0	0	74,598	(12)
	José Bautista	*CP	05/09																								
(13)San Jose, Church of the Chimes	Dwight M. Bailey		08/05	165	266	57	12	335	478	398	2	5	2	10	0	2	10	-	-	-	1,151,429	34,560	13,775	79,579	127,914	1,023,515	(13)
	Douglas Morton	M/C	09/06																								
(14)San Jose, The Journey	Jeff Wenke		09/07	155	50	0	0	50	130	180	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	-	-	-	306,712	7,680	9,970	27,847	45,497	261,215	(14)
(15)Sonoma, Sonoma Valley Community	Timothy J. Arensmeier	*CP	11/09	31	34	7	0	41	56	40	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	-	-	-	95,753	4,095	2,705	5,420	12,220	83,533	(15)
(16)Tulare, Community	Mark J. Schwarz		11/05	274	506	57	236	799	101	577	16	0	2	2	0	7	2	-	-	-	2,004,453	50,592	298,207	306,120	654,919	1,349,534	(16)
	Roger Peterson	AP	09/06																								
	Timothy Ramage	M/C	09/07																								
	Edward Fikse	RET M/C	10/01																								
(17)Tulare, New Life Community	Larry Dodson	*CP	07/05	42	30	10	48	88	30	90	5	0	10	0	16	3	2	-	-	-	77,886	2,018	0	4,389	6,407	71,479	(17)
(18)Tulare, Sunrise Community	Russell D. Siders		01/00	54	106	13	29	148	17	160	4	0	1	0	14	1	3	-	-	-	341,790	8,976	5,292	9,352	23,620	318,170	(18)
		Total		2,366	3,251	615	1,263	5,129	1,831	238	187	30	43	46	362	30	123	-	-	-	10,063,501	312,713	497,165	667,162	1,477,040	8,586,461	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Planting Minister
David A. Moorhead
David Theonugraha

Retired
Warren G. Bovenkerk
Raymond DeDoes
Richard A. Evers
Edward Fikse
G. Lloyd Menning
Peter Mondeel
John W. Oldenburger
Karl L. Overbeek
James R. Schoon
Carl B. Vogelaar
Erwin R. Voogd
Kenneth C. Working
Moody Yap

Specialized Ministry
Beryl Rodney Banks
Charles Blom
Gerald Davelaar
Wik Dippenaar
John C. Foster
Donald W. Hammond
Kevin Garth Harney
Keith Henry Poppen
David W. Schreuder

Without Charge
Timothy John Boeve
Jeffrey N. Kreiser

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(2)	45,790	(1)	4,880	(6)	21,955	(4)	800
(7)	23,852	(2)	426,327	(12)	17,500	(5)	78,077
(10)	677	(3)	92,570			(6)	11,220
(11)	986	(4)	27,000			(7)	9,473
(13)	9,388	(5)	9,500			(8)	13,868
(14)	415	(7)	16,111			(9)	13,730
(16)	100,000	(8)	4,327			(11)	71,554
(18)	28	(9)	2,135			(13)	62,446
		(10)	68,598			(14)	9,600
		(11)	99,516			(16)	598,062
		(13)	50			(17)	5,468
						(18)	200

Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF CITY

Stated Clerk Jonathan Gundlach, City Church of San Francisco, PO Box 641049, San Francisco, CA 94164-1049; 415-346-6994 ext 124
Treasurer Michael Hayes, City Church of San Francisco, PO Box 641049, San Francisco, CA 94164-1049; 415-346-6994 ext 117

				Membership														Education			Stewardship					
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
CHURCHES	PASTORS			Housihld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Deced	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
California																										
(1)Paramount, Emmanuel	Kenley E. Korver		01/01	803	1,076	39	513	1,628	2,497	1,765	73	0	6	8	18	15	20	-	-	-	3,999,375	91,460	14,060	309,088	414,608	3,584,767	(1)
	William C. White	AP	10/00																							
	Eddy M. Aleman	M/C	07/09																							
	Todd A. Van Ek	M/C	08/09																							
(2)San Francisco, City Church	Fred Harrell		09/06	354	498	16	120	634	1,290	802	79	10	4	3	37	16	11	-	-	-	4,556,626	38,688	27,310	763,815	829,813	3,726,813	(2)
	Charles DeGroat	M/C	03/09																							
	Daniel Gannon	M/C	11/10																							
	Jonathan Gundlach	M/C	02/11																							
	Michael Hayes	M/C	09/06																							
	Anni Mingin	M/C	06/09																							
	Matthew Nault	M/C	11/10																							
	M. Scot Sherman	M/C	10/05																							
	Paul J. Trudeau	M/C	05/09																							
Colorado																										
(3)Denver, City Church	Vacant		11/10	78	158	10	20	188	0	150	5	15	15	0	0	10	0	-	-	-	348,327	14,451	0	20,173	34,624	313,703	(3)
		Total		1,235	1,732	65	653	2,450	3,787	906	157	25	25	11	55	41	31	-	-	-	8,904,328	144,599	41,370	1,093,076	1,279,045	7,625,283	

Planting Minister
Kenneth Brown
Patrick Dean Dirkse
Jose Ignacio Figueroa
William F. Forsythe

Specialized Ministry
Robin William Aladeen
Alan T. Baker
Cornelis G. Kors
Frances Bragdon Nelson
Nicholas Ryan Zylstra

Without Charge
Samuel Downing

	FOOTNOTES							
	A		B		C	D		
(1)	36,103	(1)	145,326			(1)	204,878
(2)	2,809					(2)	545,576

Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Stated Clerk — Bruce L. Van Dusseldorp, Christ Community Church, 8085 E Hampden Ave, Denver, CO 80231; 303-755-0745
Treasurer — Sandy Mueller, Springs Community Church, 7290 Lexington Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80918-6367; 719-590-1705

				Membership													Education			Stewardship						
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
CHURCHES	PASTORS			Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Worship Attend (7)	Conf (8)	Cert (9)	Trans (10)	Decd (11)	Other (12)	Infant (13)	Adult (14)	Sun Sch (15)	New Mbrs Clas (16)	Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Colorado																										
(1)Aurora, New Hope Community	Philip Schuiling		01/91	113	160	34	10	204	48	123	23	0	1	1	0	3	2	-	-	-	267,515	16,004	1,900	14,200	32,104	235,411	(1)
	Ann M. Blakeslee	AP	01/10																							
(2)Colorado Springs, Springs Community	Eric B. Carpenter		05/08	175	301	29	256	586	146	361	28	0	2	1	27	5	0	-	-	-	808,702	31,632	11,700	40,995	84,327	724,375	(2)
	Benjamin J. Brooks	M/C	02/10																							
(3)Denver, Christ Community	Bruce L. Van Dusseldorp		06/90	91	134	13	40	187	34	80	9	2	1	2	0	2	1	-	-	-	226,282	13,969	3,367	6,799	24,135	202,147	(3)
(4)Denver, First	David A. Phillips		10/01	25	34	0	13	47	3	29	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	63,214	3,888	0	16,800	20,688	42,526	(4)
(5)Denver, Mountain View Community	Vacant		05/07	32	37	4	0	41	5	30	2	1	0	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	105,028	3,984	740	4,289	9,013	96,015	(5)
(6)Lakewood, Our Saviour's	A. Eugene Pearson		08/07	79	111	22	8	141	18	86	9	0	4	1	0	2	2	-	-	-	181,513	0	0	11,495	11,495	170,018	(6)
(7)Littleton, Faith Community	Jeffrey S. Allen		06/05	89	167	13	28	208	126	173	5	6	1	0	13	4	0	-	-	-	397,923	20,703	18,839	15,987	55,529	342,394	(7)
(8)Monument, Forest Ridge	Timothy R. Miller		02/03	42	73	32	0	105	100	146	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	323,000	9,826	0	0	9,826	313,174	(8)
(9)Wheat Ridge, Harvest Christian Comm	David Cheadle	*PE	11/04	31	49	0	1	50	30	72	3	0	0	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	86,254	1,957	0	1,820	3,777	82,477	(9)
	Kathleen M. King	AP	11/04																							
New Mexico																										
(10)Dulce, Jicarilla Apache	William J. De Boer		09/94	52	68	25	37	130	15	65	1	0	0	2	0	3	0	-	-	-	73,013	8,197	3,670	600	12,467	60,546	(10)
		Total		729	1,134	172	393	1,699	525	117	80	9	9	13	40	21	5	-	-	-	2,532,444	110,160	40,216	112,985	263,361	2,269,083	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Chaplain
David W. Grooters
Robert C. Laning
Steven Peterson
Tyler Teague
Wayne A. Van Kampen

Planting Minister
Peter Kim
Russell Ooms
Benjamin E. Park
J. Andrew Robinson

Retired
John E. Bandt
Ronald D. Gray
Ronald Thomas Gross
Thomas J. Harris
James L. Moore
Barbara Morphew
Dennis L. Pelley
Ivan Rymes
Edward D. Seely
Willis J. Vander Kooi

Specialized Ministry
Arthur DeBruyn
Gail Merrick Ebersole
Donald R. Orange
Stanley E. Perea
Eugene Van Dusseldorp
Nancy Van Wyk Phillips

Without Charge
Larry Burtoft
Daniel George Weis Lannin
Karl W. Neerhof
Young C. Yoo

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	625	(1)	9,200	(4)	500	(1)	7,200
(2)	16,176	(3)	20,989	(5)	500	(2)	96,378
(3)	897	(5)	34,544	(10)	22,000	(4)	17,185
(4)	4	(7)	70,590			(5)	23,618
(5)	1,310					(6)	570
(7)	4,252					(7)	20,032
(10)	2,000					(10)	8,290

Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF SOUTHWEST

Stated Clerk Lynn Fischer, 18505 Superstition Dr, Queen Creek, AZ 85242; 480-988-1755
Treasurer Lynn Fischer, 18505 Superstition Dr, Queen Creek, AZ 85242; 480-988-1755

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worshp Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Arizona																											
(1)Gilbert, New Hope Community	James Poit		09/09	126	210	47	73	330	194	228	12	8	17	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	342,999	15,120	9,909	8,030	33,059	309,940	(1)
	Gary L. Jarvis	AP	04/07																								
(2)Glendale, Christ's Community	Randal J. Wieland		08/05	138	205	14	0	219	11	350	0	0	2	9	1	4	1	-	-	-	722,471	15,834	18,505	28,038	62,377	660,094	(2)
(3)Mesa, Desert Haven Community	Scott D. Kooiman		07/06	107	68	79	28	175	84	120	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	211,082	0	0	0	0	211,082	(3)
(4)Phoenix, Longview Community	Richard Caballero	*CP	12/06	47	50	9	25	84	36	164	0	0	0	0	40	0	20	-	-	-	114,346	4,072	6,775	5,700	16,547	97,799	(4)
(5)Prescott, Community	David S. Ellis		09/08	125	131	31	8	170	48	125	0	4	2	10	0	0	0	-	-	-	213,147	10,128	14,500	10,638	35,266	177,881	(5)
(6)Scottsdale, Glass and Garden Comm	Gene James	*CP	09/10	45	80	12	10	102	20	90	2	4	3	3	0	1	15	-	-	-	355,260	14,400	0	500	14,900	340,360	(6)
(7)Surprise, The Journey	Vacant		08/10	28	50	3	32	85	20	130	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	190,843	5,000	4,936	0	9,936	180,907	(7)
(8)Tucson, Cortaro Vista Community	Ted VandeBerg		11/92	51	98	12	23	133	28	103	17	0	5	6	6	7	5	-	-	-	128,790	7,343	4,541	8,637	20,521	108,269	(8)
(9)Tucson, Rosemont Community	Vacant		08/10	41	53	2	30	85	53	48	10	0	3	6	2	2	0	-	-	-	93,958	2,981	769	345	4,095	89,863	(9)
New Mexico																											
(10)Los Alamos, United**	Vacant		06/10	38	50	0	0	50	5	40	3	1	5	6	20	0	0	-	-	-	112,843	4,500	0	34,762	39,262	73,581	(10)
(11)Mescalero	Robert L. Schut		08/84	54	62	54	102	218	30	87	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	-	-	-	73,675	3,908	6,728	316	10,952	62,723	(11)
		Total		800	1,057	263	331	1,651	529	135	46	24	37	44	69	19	41	-	-	-	2,559,414	83,286	66,663	96,966	246,915	2,312,499	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

**LINE 10—A FEDERATED CONGREGATION WITH THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA, CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST), MORAVIAN CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, AND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.). IT MAINTAINS SEPARATE MEMBERSHIP ROLLS FROM WHICH STATISTICS ARE OBTAINED.

Chaplain
Edward Lungu
Cathleen Jaworowski Wolff

Retired
John E. Busman
Fred R. Doidge
Russell Wayne Dykehouse
Floyd Goulooze
Anne L. Guild-Donovan
William Heynen
Richard Hine
Donald E. Jansma
Richard H. Koerselman
Bruce G. Laverman
Judith Marvel
Bob J. Myers
Robert A. Otto
Edwin F. Parsil
Robert E. Spencer
Warren C. Thompson
John C. Van Mantgem
Byron White

Specialized Ministry
Youm Yoon Oh
Juno Smalley
John C. Stapert

Without Charge
Corinne Spencer Ellis
Loren VanGalder

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	23	(1)	10,765	(1)	5,000	(1)	20,452
(2)	340	(5)	2,090	(11)	20,500	(2)	29,954
(5)	517	(7)	6,896			(3)	44,143
(6)	239,100	(8)	261			(4)	20,329
(7)	39	(10)	10,580			(5)	5,540
(9)	3,251					(8)	6,000
(10)	5,800					(9)	5,795
(11)	2,889					(10)	3,500
						(11)	2,100

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF HOLLAND

Stated Clerk — Larry Schuyler, 513 E 8th St Ste 32, Holland, MI 49423; 616-394-0550
Treasurer — Marylynn Redder, 2586 Floral Dr, Zeeland, MI 49464-9106; 616-772-9226

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Michigan																											
(1)Holland, Beechwood	James K. Lankheet		02/02	450	932	62	228	1,222	15	659	41	15	13	12	29	10	6	-	-	-	1,907,940	76,754	34,700	511,216	622,670	1,285,270	(1)
	Dawn E. Vagle	AP	06/10																								
(2)Holland, Calvary	Vacant		05/11	257	432	41	155	628	49	254	4	11	1	10	23	7	0	-	-	-	695,254	40,687	44,323	41,975	126,985	568,269	(2)
(3)Holland, Central Park	David J. Landegent		01/03	167	272	75	84	431	52	197	4	6	4	10	0	5	2	-	-	-	485,295	23,667	18,813	11,615	54,095	431,200	(3)
(4)Holland, Christ Memorial	Vacant		12/10	1,264	2,541	86	590	3,217	100	1,850	48	30	20	21	97	11	3	-	-	-	5,248,536	211,597	65,339	680,214	957,150	4,291,386	(4)
	Mary Ann Wierks	AP	06/00																								
	Steven J. Vander Molen	AP	11/05																								
	William Boersma	AP	08/90																								
	Dewey L. Thompson	M/C	05/06																								
(5)Holland, Crossroad Chapel	Andres S. Fierro		11/97	36	37	15	35	87	16	70	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	71,227	3,446	0	2,886	6,332	64,895	(5)
(6)Holland, Fellowship	Brian R. Keepers		07/05	499	985	91	337	1,413	59	605	23	5	10	7	38	17	2	-	-	-	1,204,678	80,044	77,898	86,892	244,834	959,844	(6)
	Megan Hodgin	AP	07/10																								
	James H. Baar	RET M/C	07/81																								
(7)Holland, First	Daniel N. Gillett		02/92	402	544	27	199	770	3	450	9	15	5	7	4	8	1	-	-	-	883,150	43,013	26,745	32,838	102,596	780,554	(7)
	Mary A. Wisner	AP	10/07																								
	Darrell W. Koopmans	M/C	06/05																								
	Paul A. Reynen	RET M/C	09/06																								
(8)Holland, Grace Community	Aaron K. Anderson		09/07	119	179	17	50	246	15	130	18	0	5	7	1	6	4	-	-	-	307,299	16,129	4,000	4,000	24,129	283,170	(8)
	Jean E. Lemmenes	M/C	11/09																								
(9)Holland, Hope	Jill Russell		09/08	312	464	115	186	765	75	278	7	12	2	5	0	11	0	-	-	-	706,686	36,716	37,000	303,055	376,771	329,915	(9)
	Gordon S. Wiersma		08/99																								
(10)Holland, Maple Avenue Ministries**	Denise V. Grier		02/09	25	70	8	12	90	7	90	5	6	2	1	6	3	2	-	-	-	178,450	3,000	3,000	1,500	7,500	170,950	(10)
#(11)Holland, Maplewood	Vacant		10/08	104	191	86	37	314	7	139	8	2	4	8	0	0	0	-	-	-	363,747	20,911	34,000	26,302	81,213	282,534	(11)
	Jason T. Semans	AP	07/08																								
	Aaron S. VanDerVeen	M/C	01/10																								
	Carl M. Balk	RET M/C	03/07																								
(12)Holland, New Community/Fourth	Jonathan C. Brownson	M/C	09/07	63	96	31	24	151	34	92	7	7	2	6	0	2	0	-	-	-	192,976	8,997	5,230	2,750	16,977	175,999	(12)
(13)Holland, Rose Park	David J. Van Opstall		09/06	126	221	22	65	308	10	210	6	6	5	5	0	2	2	-	-	-	314,650	21,000	12,300	18,700	52,000	262,650	(13)
	Tracy E. Van Opstall	M/C	09/09																								
(14)Holland, Third	Kent A. Fry		04/08	347	636	178	219	1,033	35	425	17	8	8	7	3	13	1	-	-	-	1,363,841	48,954	65,970	51,875	166,799	1,197,042	(14)
	Kama K. Jongerius	AP	01/99																								
	William Unzicker	RET M/C	03/10																								
(15)Holland, Trinity	Christopher J. DeGraaf		10/09	214	281	76	36	393	6	172	7	12	17	12	0	1	0	-	-	-	476,809	27,719	68,480	67,811	164,010	312,799	(15)
(16)West Olive, Haven Shores Community	Miguel A. Cruz		01/09	24	40	54	16	110	16	40	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	-	-	-	71,233	3,485	625	2,179	6,289	64,944	(16)
		Total		4,409	7,921	984	2,273	11,178	499	354	208	136	98	118	201	98	26	-	-	-	14,471,771	666,119	498,423	1,845,808	3,010,350	11,461,421	

STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
**LINE 10—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.

Chaplain
David P. Blauw
Rachel Brownson
Kathryn Ann Davelaar
Margaret Mary Hoekstra
Erwin Johnson
Trygve David Johnson
Nicholas Eli Knebl
Sharon Kay Knibbe
Katrina J. Meyer
Dianne Mugg
J. Benjamin Patterson
Larry J. Terlouw
Leigh Boelkins Van Kempen
Cynthia J. Veldheer DeYoung

Graduate Study
Gretchen Schoon-Tanis

Inactive
Joel Zuidema

Missionary
Wayne Alan Jansen
John Paul Sundararajan
Rowland D. Van Es
Mark Wilson

Planting Minister
James Michael Daniels

Professor/Teacher
John T. Billings
Stephanie Croom
Keith A. Derrick
Matthew D. Floding
Jacobus Hamman
Steven Hoogerwerf
Lynn M. Japinga
Christopher B. Kaiser
Paul Smith
Robert E. Van Voorst

Retired
Carole Jean Aardsma
Paul J. Alderink
James H. Baar
Carl M. Balk
Alan J. Beagley
Louis H. Benes
Marvin C. Beukelman
Arie William Blok
William Brownson
Elton J. Bruins
Richard V. Coffill
H. Paul Colenbrander
Wilbur D. Daniels
Harold De Roo
Roger D. De Young
Dick A. Doeden
Darrell V. Franken
Eugene P. Heideman
James L. Heneveld
Marvin D. Hoff
Alan Jay Hofland
J. Samuel Hofman
Larry A. Izenbart
Wendell Karsen
Earl William Kennedy
Wesley E. Kiel
John R. Kleinheksel
Roger E. Kleinheksel
Earl A. Laman
Clarence Liang
Jack H. Millard
Edwin G. Mulder
Russell L. Norden
Robert J. Palma
Lynn Post
Chester Postma
Paul A. Reynen
Marchiene Rienstra
Calvin J. Rynbrandt
Carl J. Schroeder
Lewis R. Scudder
Steven Scott Stam
Vernon J. Sterk
Russell Sybesma
Ellsworth M. Ten Clay
John Tien
William Unzicker
Merwin D. Van Doornik
Cornelius A. Van Heest
Gerard J. Van Heest
Eugene H. Vander Well
Marlin A. Vander Wilt
Daryl A. Vetter
Stanley Lee Vugteveen
Mark L. Walvoord
C. Bruce Wierks
Gayle Wilson

Specialized Ministry
Sharon Arendshorst
Jeanette A. Beagley-Koolhaas
Anna Hunsberger Bogertman
Burton Dane Bolt
Celaine Bouma-Prediger
H. Curtis Bush
Jaeseung Cha
Dennis J. DeWitt
Terry A. DeYoung
Lorene Marie Duin
Kenneth W. Eriks
Kenita Ruth Harris
Norma Hook
Jeffrey S. Japinga
David Kool
Jay Roger Lindell
Robert E. Mc Andrews
Fumihito (Andy) Nakajima
Blaine C. Newhouse
Mark G. Poppen
Philip Charles Rose
Larry Schuyler
Patricia Simmons
Randall Scott Smit
Kathryn W. Sundararajan
Judy Lynn Van Dyke
Cornelis H. J. Van Kempen
Allen Verhey
Joshua M. Vis
Jacquelyn K. Wagenmaker
Stephen R. Wing

Without Charge
Thomas Mark Daubenspeck
Elizabeth A. De Jonge
Amanda Kay Dykhouse
Happy Foster Kinnear
Ruth Hawley-Lowry
Carolyn Ridder Hoffman
Dennis L. Mulder
Jeffrey L. Munroe
Susan Stoneman
Sara Ann Vogel
Marcia K. Wallinga

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	2,800	(2)	109,556	(1)	83,118	(1)	573,251
(2)	510	(3)	102,975	(2)	2,600	(2)	60,813
(3)	75,153	(4)	1,324,845	(4)	1,700	(3)	26,744
(4)	4,360	(5)	5,346	(5)	13,250	(4)	4,210
(6)	1,369	(6)	74,885	(7)	2,000	(5)	4,991
(7)	23,392	(7)	88,774	(10)	13,000	(7)	26,542
(8)	23	(8)	23,671	(12)	48,750	(8)	12,285
(9)	30,342	(9)	14,567	(16)	500	(9)	41,119
(10)	20,000	(13)	2,000			(10)	5,000
(11)	37	(14)	87,564			(11)	8,470
(12)	16,200					(12)	5,900
(14)	14,000					(13)	2,000
(15)	68,469					(15)	41,326

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF LAKE ERIE

Stated Clerk — Donald R. Veltman, 27142 Newberry Blvd, Brownstown Twp, MI 48134-6020; 734-789-9908
Treasurer — Sharon Schooley, 20312 Indiana Ave, Brownstown Twp, MI 48183-5019; 734-675-4864

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship					
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Houshld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worshp Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Kentucky																										
(1)Annville, Community	Vacant		03/05	18	29	4	3	36	14	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	23,640	2,200	0	400	2,600	21,040	(1)
(2)Gray Hawk	Jason Elam	*CP	09/09	29	39	19	6	64	41	80	4	0	6	0	3	3	1	-	-	-	54,938	4,400	0	7,100	11,500	43,438	(2)
(3)McKee	Calvin C. Hays	RET M/C	03/99	22	42	7	0	49	11	45	3	0	0	1	4	0	2	-	-	-	53,046	3,440	8,888	1,177	13,505	39,541	(3)
Michigan																										
(4)Allen Park, Grace	Bruce Hunt	*ST	05/09	56	80	13	21	114	56	111	4	0	0	1	3	1	11	-	-	-	121,085	7,302	5,820	0	13,122	107,963	(4)
(5)Ann Arbor, Grace	Sung Kim		12/05	37	56	11	54	121	120	165	12	4	1	0	2	2	4	-	-	-	220,000	2,800	2,000	8,200	13,000	207,000	(5)
(6)Canton, Crosswinds	Jonathan L. Beyer		04/98	63	118	7	46	171	125	178	9	4	0	0	18	1	1	-	-	-	251,118	13,660	8,070	2,675	24,405	226,713	(6)
(7)Detroit, Nardin Park	Robert Morris	*CP	03/96	44	59	0	1	60	15	60	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	-	-	-	80,000	4,800	1,200	4,700	10,700	69,300	(7)
(8)Southgate, Calvary	Donald R. Veltman	RET M/C	10/09	29	44	5	6	55	8	43	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	48,812	4,400	0	1,063	5,463	43,349	(8)
(9)Warren, Church of the Master	Paul Bakker	M/C	11/09	37	50	2	7	59	16	32	1	1	0	1	7	1	0	-	-	-	99,121	4,160	3,920	6,078	14,158	84,963	(9)
(10)Westland, Good Shepherd	Vacant		04/95	10	18	7	0	25	4	12	0	0	1	0	6	0	0	-	-	-	72,416	1,701	0	1,500	3,201	69,215	(10)
Ohio																										
(11)Brooklyn	Carl Czirr		05/95	87	148	9	25	182	27	0	6	0	0	4	0	0	0	-	-	-	203,914	11,281	11,345	8,920	31,546	172,368	(11)
(12)Brunswick	Donald J. Poest		06/78	196	339	123	196	658	139	376	21	2	1	3	0	6	7	-	-	-	582,214	28,240	13,000	38,458	79,698	502,516	(12)
(13)Cleveland, Calvary	Dean S. Van Farowe		06/00	31	46	3	26	75	47	79	4	1	0	1	2	1	4	-	-	-	98,655	3,440	98	1,758	5,296	93,359	(13)
(14)Fairview Park, New Hope	Daniel C. Sewell		03/90	83	102	25	37	164	32	131	10	0	0	5	6	0	0	-	-	-	195,140	8,343	4,010	5,922	18,275	176,865	(14)
(15)Gahanna, Good Samaritan	Clayton K. Smith	M/C	10/08	54	54	11	6	71	28	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	186,499	4,800	6,179	10,871	21,850	164,649	(15)
(16)Lewis Center, CenterPoint	David J. Jansen		04/08	48	80	0	47	127	44	121	0	14	12	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	241,291	6,000	0	0	6,000	235,291	(16)
(17)Parma Heights, Parma Park	Vacant		12/10	34	53	1	8	62	8	38	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	55,165	960	220	225	1,405	53,760	(17)
(18)Powell, New Hope	Stephen M. Norden		04/87	259	509	95	132	736	303	440	35	8	0	4	3	21	2	-	-	-	913,339	36,480	17,662	24,892	79,034	834,305	(18)
		Total		1,137	1,866	342	621	2,829	1,038	112	112	34	21	24	55	41	33	-	-	-	3,500,393	148,407	82,412	123,939	354,758	3,145,635	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Chaplain
Lindsay Kae Bona
Jonathan Clark Boogaart
Cooper
Stephen A. Hielkema
Vernon Wayne McNear
Sarah Naber Samson

Inactive
Jeffery L. Thibodeau

Missionary
Richard Matthew Peterson

Planting Minister
Paul Lloyd Bradford

Retired
William J. Burke
Carroll de Forest
Abraham deVries
Calvin C. Hays
Samuel H. Laswell
Ronald D. Lokhorst
George Magee
Joyce Magee
Gerrit Molenaar
Alan W. Rice
Robert G. Scholten
Eurie Hayes Smith
Calvin L. Tysen
Arthur O. Van Eck
Donald R. Veltman
Nevin B. Webster

Specialized Ministry
Amy Elizabeth Avery
Jay Carroll
Susan L. Curtis
Daniel Dean Edgerly
Ciela J. Ledbetter-Guckian
Arthur Oberg
Jonathan Hoff Tice
Stephen W. Van Dop

Without Charge
Mary Virginia Brooks
James N. Foster
Jeffrey Todd Gowman

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	4,000	(2)	6,565	(1)	1,000	(1)	1,100
(3)	120	(4)	10,329	(3)	1,600	(3)	1,200
(6)	280	(5)	64,310	(5)	17,690	(4)	2,340
(9)	11,164	(6)	2,934	(7)	13,910	(7)	8,020
(11)	300	(10)	2	(9)	25,000	(9)	455
(12)	21	(11)	16,858	(13)	28,056	(10)	56,590
(13)	107	(14)	4,223	(14)	15,472	(11)	1,110
(15)	948	(15)	17,366	(15)	13,700	(12)	11,499
(16)	29	(18)	219,188			(13)	145
(17)	555					(14)	2,812
(18)	2,469					(15)	10,845
						(16)	29,617
						(17)	2,740
						(18)	22,268

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF MUSKEGON

Stated Clerk John C. Koedyker, 17292 Burkshire Dr, Grand Haven, MI 49417; 616-884-8758
Treasurer Calvin Jacobs, 17546 Beechwood Ln, Spring Lake, MI 49456-3302; 616-842-2787

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship						
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Housh'ld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Worshp Attend (7)	Conf (8)	Cert (9)	Trans (10)	Decd (11)	Other (12)	Infant (13)	Adult (14)	Sun Sch (15)	New Mbrs Clas (16)	Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Michigan																											
(1)Conklin	Anthony M. De La Rosa		06/07	62	107	1	29	137	25	90	19	4	2	1	10	5	4	-	-	-	113,588	5,813	7,150	8,042	21,005	92,583	(1)
(2)Coopersville	Gregory J. Stamm		09/10	244	458	32	176	666	150	457	12	13	13	7	94	9	2	-	-	-	545,330	35,347	30,000	25,550	90,897	454,433	(2)
(3)Coopersville, Church of the Saviour	David V. Kingma		04/06	75	138	9	60	207	28	100	1	2	0	0	2	6	1	-	-	-	168,000	9,100	0	2,000	11,100	156,900	(3)
(4)Fruitport, Word of Hope	John C. Koedyker	M/C	09/08	29	43	13	18	74	12	45	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	46,264	2,956	998	3,669	7,623	38,641	(4)
(5)Grand Haven, First	John E. Kenny		01/07	107	187	32	33	252	65	175	4	5	2	8	25	0	0	-	-	-	346,156	15,926	13,000	32,625	61,551	284,605	(5)
(6)Grand Haven, Hope	Timothy N. Taylor		07/07	126	214	39	55	308	60	250	31	14	2	6	2	14	12	-	-	-	364,769	13,608	5,648	52,784	72,040	292,729	(6)
(7)Grand Haven, Second	Mike Van Kampen		06/08	156	246	26	77	349	30	270	4	6	0	4	0	6	1	-	-	-	294,064	15,725	7,013	22,208	44,946	249,118	(7)
(8)Grand Haven, Trinity	Randolph H. Bremmer		08/08	59	103	28	18	149	17	93	7	8	5	5	14	2	2	-	-	-	234,361	0	1,957	22,058	24,015	210,346	(8)
(9)Montague, Ferry Memorial	Dick B. Klaver		07/99	151	256	47	112	415	40	315	7	0	2	1	0	2	1	-	-	-	395,008	17,472	16,814	20,129	54,415	340,593	(9)
	Nicholas E. Bowling	AP	01/04																								
	Amy S. deGroot-Bowling	AP	01/04																								
(10)Muskegon Heights, Covenant Comm	Mark D. Bush		07/84	74	114	20	32	166	13	125	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	183,475	7,612	1,702	17,910	27,224	156,251	(10)
(11)Muskegon, Fellowship	Gregory A. Vander Meer		11/99	288	468	195	273	936	181	478	4	7	0	9	22	4	3	-	-	-	684,082	34,944	453	23,397	58,794	625,288	(11)
	Jerry Worrel		11/90																								
(12)Muskegon, Fifth	Paul I. Burmeister		01/10	162	310	44	93	447	184	271	20	10	10	4	5	6	2	-	-	-	473,184	21,302	18,185	21,979	61,466	411,718	(12)
(13)Muskegon, Hope	Steven S. Hyma		02/92	89	110	12	28	150	18	80	1	1	0	8	0	3	1	-	-	-	159,272	8,265	2,582	3,351	14,198	145,074	(13)
(14)Muskegon, Laketon Bethel	Sherwin L. Brantsen		09/92	317	544	187	199	930	76	518	30	4	3	11	19	6	4	-	-	-	493,144	37,027	4,112	9,596	50,735	442,409	(14)
(15)Muskegon, New Life Community	Todd D. Bush		11/09	18	27	0	15	42	111	140	23	0	0	0	0	2	1	-	-	-	157,542	0	0	0	0	157,542	(15)
(16)Muskegon, Olivet	Vacant		08/09	38	70	39	19	128	15	65	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	-	-	-	81,079	8,751	0	2,467	11,218	69,861	(16)
(17)Muskegon, Unity	Kyle J. DeYoung		10/03	180	275	40	102	417	0	200	5	3	10	11	0	1	0	-	-	-	313,931	19,891	13,000	8,937	41,828	272,103	(17)
(18)Muskegon, Westwood	Scott R. VanArendonk		08/09	71	129	10	61	200	15	120	4	2	2	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	209,103	8,719	12,785	8,410	29,914	179,189	(18)
(19)Ravenna, First	Vacant		08/09	101	157	20	66	243	85	100	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	198,133	11,290	1,000	2,122	14,412	183,721	(19)
		Total		2,347	3,956	794	1,466	6,216	1,125	205	173	83	54	80	193	73	34	-	-	-	5,460,485	273,748	136,399	287,234	697,381	4,763,104	

Chaplain
Kathryn L. Roberts

Retired
R. James Bos
Charles E. Doornbos
Walter F. Jones
Gordon D. Laman
Cleo Ludwick
Gerald R. Mahler
Richard B. Rienstra
John Staal
James H. Stevens
Peter J. Theune
Gordon Timmerman
Arnold D. Van Beek
Gordon R. Van Hoeven
John Veldman
Marvin G. Wassink
Gordon James Webster
Sherwin D. Weener

Specialized Ministry
Miriam D. Bush
Richard Roger Christy
John H. DeKam
Raymond Dekker
Jonathan DePoy
Robert B. Hitchcock
Lary Douglas Jackson
Mark E. Nieuwsma
Randall Scott Vander Weit
James D. VanderMeiden
Richard D. Veenstra

Without Charge
Kevin Jean

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	96	(1)	21,321	(5)	2,500	(1)	15,554
(2)	3,191	(2)	765	(6)	7,000	(2)	7,010
(4)	6,840	(6)	76,291	(19)	5,000	(3)	21,000
(5)	363	(8)	25,261			(4)	945
(6)	31	(10)	17,910			(5)	2,000
(7)	141	(11)	93,516			(6)	475
(8)	21	(12)	50,205			(7)	931
(9)	3,000	(15)	2,130			(8)	825
(11)	10,365	(16)	50			(11)	7,266
(13)	20,575	(19)	33,590			(13)	550
(16)	14					(16)	939
(17)	569						
(18)	2,325						

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF NORTH GRAND RAPIDS

Stated Clerk William H. Fennema, 950 Leonard St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504; 616-459-4451
Treasurer Janice Myers, 2428 Rockhill Dr NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525-1239; 616-363-0962

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Stewardship: Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Michigan																											
(1)Ada, Community	Julie A. VanDerVeen VanTil		08/03	73	140	1	48	189	26	130	7	4	4	3	0	4	0	-	-	-	274,819	30,656	24,588	6,029	61,273	213,546	(1)
	Bruce A. Menning	RET M/C	03/10																								
(2)Casnovia	William D. Vander Werp		06/05	35	55	0	25	80	19	58	2	1	0	2	0	1	3	-	-	-	88,502	3,853	0	1,733	5,586	82,916	(2)
(3)Flint, Resurrection	Douglas J. Kiel		06/07	109	177	30	33	240	14	110	3	0	0	2	2	2	0	-	-	-	285,082	12,712	8,198	7,952	28,862	256,220	(3)
	Kristi A. Kiel		06/07																								
(4)Grand Rapids, Aberdeen	Sophie L. Landt		06/09	57	89	14	28	131	34	75	1	0	2	3	1	2	1	-	-	-	141,963	6,069	4,967	2,683	13,719	128,244	(4)
	Ryan M. Landt		06/09																								
(5)Grand Rapids, Central	Louis E. Lotz		04/03	262	403	223	116	742	26	300	7	26	13	9	0	6	0	-	-	-	912,794	22,217	20,316	31,426	73,959	838,835	(5)
(6)Grand Rapids, Clancy Street Fellowship	David Wygmans	M/C	01/10	20	24	2	15	41	15	27	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	-	-	-	21,699	3,460	0	0	3,460	18,239	(6)
	Carol Faas	RET M/C	01/10																								
(7)Grand Rapids, Common Ground	Vacant		09/10	34	42	10	0	52	7	50	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	-	-	-	211,218	2,657	0	300	2,957	208,261	(7)
(8)Grand Rapids, Fourth	Timothy Meendering		03/96	131	175	3	84	262	25	150	4	4	3	1	1	4	2	-	-	-	276,645	11,232	138	18,770	30,140	246,505	(8)
(9)Grand Rapids, Knapp Street	Vacant		05/09	89	156	34	44	234	45	122	5	0	3	7	0	2	0	-	-	-	255,703	11,616	8,209	16,490	36,315	219,388	(9)
(10)Grand Rapids, Oakview Community	Gerald A. Vander Velde	RET M/C	01/09	37	60	5	5	70	8	50	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	103,289	4,062	14,867	5,569	24,498	78,791	(10)
(11)Grand Rapids, Orchard Hill	Robert S. Karel		01/07	301	473	21	107	601	47	353	15	6	6	6	13	11	7	-	-	-	1,124,127	33,003	40,100	10,750	83,853	1,040,274	(11)
	Kathy I. Bartels	M/C	09/08																								
(12)Grand Rapids, Remembrance	Steve Bristol		03/08	356	647	55	342	1,044	120	670	45	15	16	8	28	16	3	-	-	-	1,203,195	46,922	13,500	144,674	205,096	998,099	(12)
	Eric J. Cook	M/C	10/09																								
	Todd Schmidt	M/C	01/11																								
(13)Grand Rapids, Richmond	Christopher Westerbeek	*CP	03/08	135	241	20	51	312	8	162	14	6	9	2	26	7	5	-	-	-	299,865	18,534	31,432	8,020	57,986	241,879	(13)
	Roger E. Eernisse	RET M/C	07/09																								
(14)Grand Rapids, Servants Community	Jeffrey P. Petersen		09/06	53	76	12	31	119	47	95	5	0	4	1	4	4	2	-	-	-	148,321	4,829	0	10,150	14,979	133,342	(14)
	Jennifer S. Petersen		11/07																								
(15)Grand Rapids, Standale	Vacant		06/08	150	274	28	84	386	38	165	3	2	6	1	24	8	1	-	-	-	490,473	20,010	20,252	16,218	56,480	433,993	(15)
	Jessica M. Shults	AP	01/05																								
	Ralph E. Robrahn	RET M/C	06/09																								
(16)Grand Rapids, Third	Dennis L. TeBeest		12/09	193	360	38	104	502	34	311	17	3	13	7	10	8	3	-	-	-	460,009	20,877	31,745	7,661	60,283	399,726	(16)
(17)Grand Rapids, Trinity	Karsten T. Voskuil		04/04	141	237	23	94	354	38	170	5	2	4	5	0	10	1	-	-	-	283,011	15,873	5,250	1,566	22,689	260,322	(17)
	Deborah D. Swanson	M/C	01/07																								
(18)Rockford	Richard C. Tigchon		08/97	168	331	52	128	511	161	313	13	4	6	2	22	2	0	-	-	-	670,809	23,070	36,800	30,000	89,870	580,939	(18)
	Bryan C. Boersma	AP	09/10																								
		Total		2,344	3,960	571	1,339	5,870	712	184	146	75	89	63	135	89	28	-	-	-	7,251,524	291,652	260,362	319,991	872,005	6,379,519	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Chaplain
Leroy A. Ausema
Karin Granberg-Michaelson
Kathryn Kooyman
Lisa Hansen Tice
David Andrew Veldt

Missionary
Bradley Richard Olson

Planting Minister
Eric John Branch
Andre A. Daley

Professor/Teacher
Ronald Rienstra
Travis Michael West

Retired
David P. Baak
Richard J. Bates
Robert W. Bedingfield
Thomas L. Bos
James Garth DeWitt
Lawrence Doorn
Roger Eugene Eernisse
Neva J. Evenhouse
Carol Faas
Louis R. Harvey
Bruce A. Menning
Truman Raak
Ralph E. Robrahn
Janet K. Rogacki
James P. Rozeboom
Thurman P. Rynbrandt
Richard J. Ter Maat
Gerald A. Vander Velde
Kenneth E. VanderBroek

Specialized Ministry
Andrew Atwood
Jody Betten
Andrew L. DeBraber
John M. Delger
Evelyn DeJong Diephouse
Marcia Lou Elders
Charlotte Ann Ellison
William H. Fennema
Roger Grandia
Lisa Greene Henderson
Robert P. Huizenga
Diane Lynn Konynenbelt
Henry M. Kroondyk
Judith Kuiper
Diane J. Maodush-Pitzer
Victoria M. Menning
Cheryl K. Molhoek
Thomas S. Moucka
Adam R. Navis
Daniel Plasman
Ronald L. Redder
Robyn Saylor
Susan Vander Wall
Thomas J. Woudstra

Without Charge
Mary Ellen Bos

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	15,727	(1)	1,000	(2)	6,000	(1)	17,654
(3)	34	(3)	26,870	(4)	3,300	(2)	2,550
(4)	1,321	(5)	172,331	(6)	1,500	(3)	250
(5)	73,904	(7)	130,000	(8)	1,100	(4)	1,826
(6)	164	(8)	14,525	(14)	20,927	(5)	34,110
(7)	4,703	(10)	600	(15)	1,100	(6)	300
(8)	22,615	(11)	169,569	(17)	27,700	(7)	6,603
(9)	7,360	(14)	3,364			(8)	20,050
(10)	4,707	(15)	102,769			(9)	17,387
(11)	2,537	(17)	500			(10)	1,074
(14)	41	(18)	86,968			(11)	285,334
(15)	1,737					(14)	13,044
(16)	3,470					(15)	8,375
(17)	131					(16)	7,133
(18)	41					(17)	530

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Stated Clerk Lee Pranger, PO Box 7, New Era, MI 49446-0007; 231-861-4303
Treasurer Lee Pranger, PO Box 7, New Era, MI 49446-0007; 231-861-4303

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship						
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Housihld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Actv	Worshp Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Michigan																											
(1)Charlevoix, Community	John (Chip) B. Sauer		02/05	217	352	26	63	441	214	275	0	0	0	5	3	2	1	-	-	-	639,196	24,809	1,000	67,300	93,109	546,087	(1)
(2)Ellsworth, Belltower	Vacant		09/10	79	135	12	27	174	48	93	4	0	8	1	8	2	2	-	-	-	156,242	10,025	6,170	2,546	18,741	137,501	(2)
(3)Falmouth	Robert J. Hekhuis	RET M/C	12/05	18	29	0	4	33	16	40	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	39,260	1,451	2,532	1,695	5,678	33,582	(3)
(4)Falmouth, Moddersville	Jerry B. Wheeler	*PE	09/02	32	55	5	9	69	25	57	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	71,789	4,768	0	6,100	10,868	60,921	(4)
(5)Fremont, First	Kevin T. Schutt		08/09	158	263	40	62	365	24	208	1	6	0	6	1	2	0	-	-	-	350,420	19,072	6,963	80,919	106,954	243,466	(5)
(6)Fremont, Living Christ	Vacant		03/11	92	180	20	66	266	72	132	8	6	12	1	46	0	5	-	-	-	296,964	13,556	6,911	47,448	67,915	229,049	(6)
	Paul E. Copeland	M/C	07/10																								
(7)Glen Arbor, Glen Lake	Andrew T. Bossardet		06/09	74	120	54	16	190	30	115	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	247,122	8,844	20,120	25,089	54,053	193,069	(7)
(8)Grant, First	Michael Sutton	*CP	10/09	84	138	6	35	179	30	135	3	1	2	7	6	1	0	-	-	-	267,693	9,674	6,500	40,946	57,120	210,573	(8)
(9)McBain, Rehoboth	David J. Sterk		11/01	193	371	17	234	622	80	340	4	9	0	5	12	6	0	-	-	-	503,582	25,990	40,932	15,173	82,095	421,487	(9)
(10)Midland	Michael T. De Ruyter		10/03	93	189	30	50	269	80	185	0	6	3	0	5	2	1	-	-	-	496,453	11,470	20,825	50,606	82,901	413,552	(10)
(11)New Era	Frederick Eschenburg		01/11	126	237	145	63	445	19	195	6	0	5	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	445,781	23,287	12,370	21,015	56,672	389,109	(11)
(12)Scottville, Mason County	Rick J. Van Haitsma		12/87	192	374	10	145	529	121	358	8	10	2	1	4	5	2	-	-	-	447,322	25,014	14,000	42,506	81,520	365,802	(12)
(13)Shelby, New Hope Community	Nathan DeWard	M/C	03/11	37	62	0	13	75	7	65	15	5	1	0	0	3	4	-	-	-	57,131	0	500	750	1,250	55,881	(13)
	Andrea L. DeWard	M/C	03/11																								
(14)Traverse City, Faith	Peter C. Semeyn		09/02	391	710	147	244	1,101	599	764	19	3	11	4	192	10	1	-	-	-	2,038,897	69,880	68,650	175,684	314,214	1,724,683	(14)
	Leslie (Les) Wiseman	AP	01/01																								
	David P. Anderson	M/C	04/07																								
		Total		1,786	3,215	512	1,031	4,758	1,365	212	70	48	44	33	277	35	16	-	-	-	6,057,852	247,840	207,473	577,777	1,033,090	5,024,762	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Chaplain
David Andrew Bassett

Retired
Sherwin John Broersma
Gerrit Brus
Mary B. Fitzgerald
Phillip L. Frens
Ronald L. Geschwendt
Larry D. Grooters
Stanley Warren Hagemeyer
Robert J. Hekhuis
Wayne O. Lemmen
John C. Moser
Adrian J. Newhouse

Specialized Ministry
Barbara Ann Boss
Rodney Kamrath
Nathan D. Kooistra
Mark Steven LaChonce
Amy Lynn Van Gunst
Kevin Ver Hoeven
Thomas James Welscott

Without Charge
Thomas Jasperse
Jean LeMahieu
Jonathan David Mays
Norman P. Swier

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C	D	
(2)	38	(2)	6,688		(2)	26,650
(4)	3,167	(5)	1,729		(5)	4,083
(5)	46	(7)	6,480		(7)	890
(6)	1,767	(8)	2,585		(8)	1,290
(8)	110	(9)	148,395		(9)	1,390
(9)	9,210	(11)	77,237		(11)	9,310
(10)	620	(12)	900		(14)	33,471
(11)	2	(14)	303,750			
(12)	811					
(14)	3,677					

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF SOUTH GRAND RAPIDS

Stated Clerk — Randy L. Weener, 4500 60th St SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512; 616-541-0903
Treasurer — Randall Vander Lugt, 4183 Blackhawk Ct SW, Grandville, MI 49418-2427; 616-949-9030 ext 13

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Househld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Stewardship: Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Michigan																											
(1)Byron Center, Corinth	Donald Porter	*	07/05	609	956	30	566	1,552	574	1,400	41	47	2	5	26	27	6	-	-	-	1,535,189	81,386	11,739	92,961	186,086	1,349,103	(1)
	Joshua E. Blunt	AP	02/11																								
(2)Byron Center, First	Peter Van Elderen	*M/C	03/10	155	266	4	54	324	10	205	11	3	14	5	0	1	0	-	-	-	469,939	22,460	28,750	33,934	85,144	384,795	(2)
(3)Byron Center, RiverTree	Christian Shearer		09/07	55	52	0	34	86	55	120	0	2	2	0	0	9	8	-	-	-	190,000	2,396	0	11,000	13,396	176,604	(3)
(4)Byron Center, Woodhaven	Steven L. Petroelje		08/08	153	270	2	121	393	30	213	8	12	1	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	363,954	19,152	9,550	15,586	44,288	319,666	(4)
# (5)Caledonia, Wayfarer Community	Vacant		12/10	26	54	0	49	103	74	150	9	2	0	0	0	1	2	-	-	-	141,720	0	0	0	0	141,720	(5)
(6)East Lansing, University	Kevin DeYoung		09/04	183	337	9	79	425	103	424	35	10	3	1	39	14	1	-	-	-	850,659	17,966	32,853	97,124	147,943	702,716	(6)
	Benjamin J. Falconer	AP	06/09																								
(7)Grand Rapids, Branch	Christopher P. DeBlaay		08/10	45	32	0	54	86	54	100	32	0	0	0	0	5	0	-	-	-	134,409	0	150	2,500	2,650	131,759	(7)
(8)Grand Rapids, Fifth	Jonathan R. Sherrill		12/07	290	565	35	149	749	10	339	11	11	6	8	71	10	2	-	-	-	969,889	59,494	123,664	0	183,158	786,731	(8)
	Bruce D. Mulder	AP	05/01																								
(9)Grand Rapids, Hope	W. Peter Te Winkle		09/06	99	152	6	1	159	14	97	1	3	5	5	0	2	0	-	-	-	252,634	14,173	750	500	15,423	237,211	(9)
(10)Grand Rapids, Immanuel	Brian N. Smilde		05/04	90	157	16	45	218	20	145	3	6	0	1	0	1	2	-	-	-	394,425	10,309	43,292	2,623	56,224	338,201	(10)
(11)Grand Rapids, New Life	Jack Klunder	M/C	03/06	27	43	14	0	57	5	35	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	-	-	-	95,613	0	0	8,380	8,380	87,233	(11)
(12)Grand Rapids, Providence	Vacant		11/10	17	39	2	55	96	5	115	3	2	5	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	111,444	1,644	0	9,119	10,763	100,681	(12)
(13)Grand Rapids, Thornapple	Paul D. Wesselink		09/87	87	172	7	57	236	45	130	4	3	1	0	0	4	0	-	-	-	330,263	14,166	31,171	10,013	55,350	274,913	(13)
	Tim Dieffenbach	M/C	03/05																								
(14)Grandville, First	Vacant		06/10	411	753	6	224	983	16	412	17	17	8	3	0	13	0	-	-	-	840,005	62,281	80,100	103,107	245,488	594,517	(14)
(15)Grandville, Olivet	Vacant		10/10	102	184	8	31	223	3	97	0	0	4	5	32	1	0	-	-	-	242,107	16,174	39,630	14,608	70,412	171,695	(15)
(16)Grandville, Zion	Gregory W. Brower		11/04	175	306	84	99	489	38	250	7	14	6	4	4	9	0	-	-	-	641,839	23,003	29,740	64,117	116,860	524,979	(16)
(17)Hudsonville, Fair Haven	Thomas R. De Vries		09/04	954	1,880	40	686	2,606	75	1,860	85	0	21	11	107	27	4	-	-	-	2,933,549	147,772	98,000	89,000	334,772	2,598,777	(17)
	Thomas J. Elenbaas	AP	09/05																								
	Mical R. Pugh	AP	09/05																								
	Douglas C. McClintic	AP	09/06																								
(18)Jenison, Hager Park	James D. Lester		05/07	141	295	5	193	493	19	220	15	1	7	1	30	10	0	-	-	-	445,827	25,004	6,346	37,054	68,404	377,423	(18)
(19)Jenison, Rosewood	James T. Goldschmeding		04/08	239	497	394	136	1,027	18	325	20	1	10	3	0	6	0	-	-	-	653,811	34,491	37,906	92,274	164,671	489,140	(19)
	Howard H. Moths	AP	03/85																								
(20)Kentwood, Home Acres	Darrell B. Dalman	M/C	02/08	43	68	8	18	94	38	85	2	0	7	0	10	2	0	-	-	-	141,221	6,607	0	3,460	10,067	131,154	(20)
(21)Kentwood, Unity	Mark J. Bergsma		06/79	160	263	13	127	403	30	200	7	1	21	4	0	0	2	-	-	-	319,226	18,382	18,440	21,513	58,335	260,891	(21)
(22)Lansing, Immanuel Community	Richard K. Heusinkveld		09/88	88	169	20	42	231	23	163	6	2	0	2	0	0	2	-	-	-	352,902	11,000	13,000	26,000	50,000	302,902	(22)
	Jeri Baker	M/C	04/11																								
(23)Middleville, Peace	Adam T. Barr		10/10	225	343	22	144	509	92	284	6	2	2	2	45	8	0	-	-	-	466,038	25,238	10,983	20,337	56,558	409,480	(23)
(24)Wayland, Gun Lake Community	Daniel J. Beyer		09/10	286	477	27	268	772	223	634	3	0	5	4	0	4	1	-	-	-	1,281,972	40,251	18,000	231,077	289,328	992,644	(24)
	S. Mark Veldt	AP	06/09																								
	Brian K. Steenhoek	AP	11/04																								
(25)Wyoming, Beverly	Vacant		11/10	181	315	6	87	408	15	193	3	3	5	5	7	2	0	-	-	-	383,986	25,228	33,929	17,558	76,715	307,271	(25)
(26)Wyoming, Eighth	Robert J. Langenberg	RET M/C	09/08	48	64	15	15	94	9	60	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	101,800	5,016	12,200	1,716	18,932	82,868	(26)
(27)Wyoming, Faith	Bruce Osbeck		12/97	126	187	223	30	440	8	115	6	0	0	9	0	1	2	-	-	-	232,572	13,257	14,271	10,182	37,710	194,862	(27)

(28)Wyoming, Grace	Rick A. Oppenhuizen George G. Grevenstuk	M/C	01/98 09/10	119	205	7	78	290	2	123	5	6	2	6	10	2	1	-	-	-	356,347	17,424	27,912	11,564	56,900	299,447	(28)
(29)Wyoming, Newhall	Daniel G. Kroeze	M/C	10/08	126	156	0	44	200	26	114	1	7	0	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	173,222	10,089	3,200	11,682	24,971	148,251	(29)
		Total		5,260	9,257	1,003	3,486	13,746	1,634	297	341	156	138	93	384	163	35	-	-	-	15,406,562	724,363	725,576	1,038,989	2,488,928	12,917,634	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME * SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory* # STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Chaplain
Susan Huizenga Cleveland
Jayne A. Yonkman

Inactive
Paul D. Fox
Rober Garcia

Planting Minister
Mark Thomas Milkamp

Retired
Richard Baukema
Stuart J. Blauw
Dirk Jan Budding
Warren D. Burgess
Jack D. Cooper
Howard Davis
David G. Dethmers
Jack L. Doorlag
Leon Dykstra
Evert H. Fikse
Bernard Daniel Hakken
Wayne M. Hall
Roger Hendricks
Harvey E. Heneveld
Vernon Dale Hoffman
Paul E. Hostetter
LeRoy G. Koopman
George Kroeze
Robert J. Langenberg
Ralph Edson Ludwick
Cecil Martens
J. David Muyskens
John F. Padgett
Michael Pierce
Richard D. Rockwood
Franklin Spoolstra
Tom Stark
Gary D. Van Koevering
Richard Vander Klok
Richard A. Welscott
Eildert D. Zwart

Specialized Ministry
Lynn Allhusen
Robert John Baird
David Bast
Leland S. Cogan
Barbara Lynn Edema
Ben L. Ingebretson
Lynne Kammeraad
James Karsten
Thomas Alan Kragt
Bradley Jon Langstraat
Jean Chit Mulder
Tom F. Schwanda
Brian Todd Telzerow
Donald Topp
Douglas Van Bronkhorst
Cornelis Van den Berg
Randy L. Weener
J. Barrett Wernlund
James A. Zinger
Rebekah J. C. Zorgdrager

Without Charge
Scott Lyndsay Crane
Harvey P. Hertz
Vernon A. Hettinga
G. David Korsen
Bruce R. Kuiper
Michael D. Painter
Gordon Ivor Waddilove
Kamren P. C. Zorgdrager

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	283	(1)	45,125	(3)	15,000	(1)	50
(2)	11,215	(5)	6,206	(20)	6,000	(2)	3,635
(4)	518	(6)	38,695	(28)	10,000	(4)	4,175
(6)	17	(7)	8,000			(9)	10,248
(8)	111,383	(9)	10,389			(12)	3,357
(9)	4,396	(10)	11,195			(13)	1,679
(10)	43,246	(11)	4,180			(15)	625
(13)	286	(12)	17,403			(16)	5,411
(15)	7,159	(16)	72,389			(17)	45,452
(16)	60,940	(17)	201,954			(18)	610
(19)	36	(18)	3,905			(19)	4,105
(20)	400	(19)	30,285			(20)	16,099
(22)	2,400	(21)	36,241			(21)	1,443
(23)	635	(24)	269,455			(22)	2,160
(24)	209	(25)	58,771			(23)	1,448
(25)	1,490	(27)	7,800			(24)	172,791
(26)	9,300	(28)	12,388			(25)	3,822
(27)	5,414	(29)	13,097			(27)	3,000
(29)	591					(29)	104

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

Stated Clerk — Allison VanderMeer, 910 Jenks Blvd, Kalamazoo, MI 49006; 269-349-6260
Treasurer — Paul Block, 910 Jenks Blvd, Kalamazoo, MI 49006; 269-330-6260

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worshp Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Michigan																											
(1)Allegan, Living Word Family	Austin Kreutz	M/C	10/09	15	30	0	30	60	6	31	2	0	0	0	5	1	1	-	-	-	69,479	1,392	0	7,696	9,088	60,391	(1)
(2)Battle Creek, Christ Community	Kevin Clouse		09/10	38	71	2	11	84	18	70	6	2	0	1	0	1	1	-	-	-	176,000	5,140	23,885	4,076	33,101	142,899	(2)
(3)Decatur, First	Mark A. Hofstra		04/01	53	79	4	7	90	23	74	1	1	2	3	8	0	0	-	-	-	113,603	7,977	21,372	1,522	30,871	82,732	(3)
(4)Hopkins, Community	Mark T. Kamper		10/04	99	178	18	88	284	0	180	11	10	4	1	2	13	2	-	-	-	272,062	14,119	9,979	460	24,558	247,504	(4)
(5)Kalamazoo, Bethany	Robert H. Terwilliger		11/98	122	173	29	35	237	57	150	16	3	2	6	11	1	1	-	-	-	258,676	13,461	16,300	22,551	52,312	206,364	(5)
(6)Kalamazoo, Bethel	David R. Armstrong	M/C	05/90	20	25	7	1	33	14	27	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	-	-	-	42,406	2,494	1,140	5,764	9,398	33,008	(6)
(7)Kalamazoo, Centerpoint	Jeffrey C. Porte		07/87	698	1,170	286	518	1,974	250	986	49	30	12	6	164	36	11	-	-	-	2,815,788	135,336	26,904	76,317	238,557	2,577,231	(7)
	Darwin L. Vander Wal	AP	08/94																								
(8)Kalamazoo, Fourth	Russell K. Camp		04/10	56	79	39	17	135	29	80	2	0	10	4	0	2	0	-	-	-	183,220	7,972	15,000	5,650	28,622	154,598	(8)
(9)Kalamazoo, Greenwood	Jonathan L. Loper		05/03	48	84	12	15	111	23	75	0	0	0	0	13	0	1	-	-	-	134,409	9,250	386	1,978	11,614	122,795	(9)
(10)Kalamazoo, Haven	Brian Stone		07/07	338	559	74	92	725	185	478	16	8	7	6	17	7	5	-	-	-	1,158,408	48,240	15,164	74,322	137,726	1,020,682	(10)
	David M. Mayer	AP	10/09																								
	Keith L. Lohman	M/C	04/09																								
	John D. Sparks	*M/C	01/02																								
(11)Kalamazoo, Hope	Kent A. Frens		08/03	162	262	41	126	429	40	225	17	2	2	5	0	4	7	-	-	-	331,980	20,684	22,573	14,006	57,263	274,717	(11)
(12)Kalamazoo, North Park	Paul Fazio		09/00	139	227	27	81	335	28	233	6	5	2	7	4	3	1	-	-	-	314,278	16,893	10,200	54,315	81,408	232,870	(12)
(13)Kalamazoo, River	Robert M. Link		11/07	70	130	0	50	180	550	620	0	0	0	0	0	21	62	-	-	-	432,000	1,200	0	75,000	76,200	355,800	(13)
(14)Kalamazoo, Second	Kevin V. Hart		11/08	224	366	25	62	453	83	218	8	8	1	16	0	2	0	-	-	-	587,446	28,464	22,425	6,051	56,940	530,506	(14)
(15)Kalamazoo, Southridge	Mark A. Vanderson		09/95	378	711	0	402	1,113	167	700	46	40	6	4	19	17	9	-	-	-	1,318,597	56,319	33,000	162,174	251,493	1,067,104	(15)
(16)Kalamazoo, Trinity	Jacques Nel		04/02	65	109	7	13	129	27	103	10	1	0	4	0	4	1	-	-	-	216,886	9,726	3,030	3,130	15,886	201,000	(16)
(17)Kalamazoo, Twin Lakes	Vacant		08/08	52	83	43	13	139	11	68	4	1	5	4	17	5	2	-	-	-	109,522	6,917	2,733	2,065	11,715	97,807	(17)
(18)Kalamazoo, Vanguard	Nathaniel R. Bull	*CP	06/10	0	40	0	39	79	150	92	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	-	-	-	104,186	0	189	3,020	3,209	100,977	(18)
	Keith A. Platte	*CP	06/10																								
(19)Martin	James J. Vander Roest		11/08	151	289	8	125	422	44	290	7	3	6	1	9	8	0	-	-	-	453,610	21,806	24,504	60,093	106,403	347,207	(19)
(20)Mattawan, Calvary	Gregory N. Van Heukelom		05/99	75	98	12	23	133	150	230	2	0	0	3	0	1	4	-	-	-	237,446	8,471	3,700	12,880	25,051	212,395	(20)
(21)Plainwell, Doster Community	Steven J. Slater		10/99	56	86	6	2	94	30	85	3	0	2	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	153,465	7,800	3,250	7,750	18,800	134,665	(21)
(22)Plainwell, North Point	Jason A. Zimmer		06/08	81	153	0	4	157	253	410	154	0	0	0	0	5	0	-	-	-	593,864	0	3,727	26,089	29,816	564,048	(22)
(23)Portage, First	Vacant		06/10	103	169	22	45	236	32	127	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	-	-	-	287,744	12,945	21,218	34,891	69,054	218,690	(23)
(24)South Haven, Hope	Curry M. Pikkaart		11/05	168	279	13	91	383	175	258	4	11	3	2	3	3	2	-	-	-	638,897	21,468	24,000	24,770	70,238	568,659	(24)
(25)Three Oaks, First	Ronald W. Ahrens		07/07	19	25	4	4	33	9	25	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	43,653	2,823	10,875	2,258	15,956	27,697	(25)

(26)Vicksburg, Lakeland	Edward W. Schmidt	07/04	143	231	49	78	358	102	201	1	6	7	4	9	2	0	-	-	-	625,962	31,011	17,964	10,993	59,968	565,994	(26)
	Total		3,373	5,706	728	1,972	8,406	2,456	232	365	131	71	92	281	136	149	-	-	-	11,673,587	491,908	333,518	699,821	1,525,247	10,148,340	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Chaplain
Lon Bouma
Victor Downing
Theda McBryde

Graduate Study
Michael J. Brinks

Missionary
James Scott Harrison
Agshin Ali Jafarov
David William Zomer

Planting Minister
Ram Nepal
Adam Potgiesser
Daniel Allen Teerman
Debbra L. Yurk

Retired
Roy A. Ackerman
David A. Bruininks
Harold S. Cupery
Donald H. DeYoung
Bernard D. Ekema
Donald J. Jansen
Frederick R. Kruithof
Donald A. Lam
Edwin A. Martin
Leon A. Roggen
Wallace R. Stoepker
Donald T. Van Hoeven

Specialized Ministry
Brenda Marie Clark
William G. Crawford
Sandra J. Elfring
Suzanne Lynn Hart
Jonathan W. Lam
James W. Sipsma
Patricia Jean Weatherwax
Arthur Lee Wiers

Without Charge
John Blumenstein
Darrin De Vries
Michael Charles Drew
Laura Osborne
Richard R. Patterson
Denise L. Thompson
Robert Allen VandeVord

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(3)	4,058	(1)	4,000	(1)	10,200	(1)	1,000
(4)	385	(7)	227,450	(5)	1,000	(4)	4,993
(7)	60,356	(9)	10,770	(18)	9,011	(7)	351,828
(8)	983	(11)	17,905			(8)	8,664
(9)	288	(16)	10,229			(10)	355,770
(10)	177	(20)	8,000			(11)	4,813
(11)	288	(21)	14,940			(13)	12,000
(12)	8,393	(23)	41,328			(14)	28,250
(15)	3,076	(24)	179,160			(15)	7,822
(16)	1,310	(26)	29,368			(16)	17,316
(18)	8					(19)	86,605
(19)	10					(21)	2,741
(21)	1,015					(23)	6,533
(22)	296,932					(24)	21,487
(23)	5,458					(26)	190,422
(25)	3,728						
(26)	16,513						

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF ZEELAND

Stated Clerk Steven A. Smallegan, 100 S Pine St Ste 383, Zeeland, MI 49464; 616-748-6081
Treasurer Christine Blood, 3108 53rd St, Hamilton, MI 49419-9626; 269-751-4042

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Househld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Stewardship: Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Georgia																											
(1)Roswell, Bridge to Grace	David L. Bonselaar		02/07	35	94	7	98	199	18	87	3	5	13	0	11	0	3	-	-	-	212,822	6,096	0	23,332	29,428	183,394	(1)
(2)Sugar Hill, Jusarang	Byung Il (Billy) Go		10/09	35	30	35	0	65	0	60	8	0	45	0	0	4	2	-	-	-	180,000	0	0	5,000	5,000	175,000	(2)
Michigan																											
(3)Allegan, Dunningville	Vacant		04/10	54	90	10	35	135	26	82	8	0	2	0	0	3	0	-	-	-	159,708	5,734	27,649	6,031	39,414	120,294	(3)
(4)Allendale, Lighthouse Community	Vacant		02/09	174	347	54	135	536	45	450	31	11	5	4	31	8	6	-	-	-	456,186	0	4,359	17,214	21,573	434,613	(4)
	Steven F. Demers	AP	02/04																								
(5)Allendale, Spring Valley Community	Robert D. Wondergem		10/09	92	184	41	83	308	102	198	29	10	19	0	12	7	2	-	-	-	359,273	11,353	0	16,885	28,238	331,035	(5)
(6)Fennville, Immanuel	Ralph Houston	M/C	05/01	16	24	0	0	24	5	42	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	40,465	526	0	713	1,239	39,226	(6)
(7)Hamilton	Thomas Dekker		11/06	224	352	25	133	510	25	270	8	5	1	10	14	2	0	-	-	-	449,966	25,461	34,884	75,284	135,629	314,337	(7)
(8)Hamilton, Bentheim	Larry D. LePoire	M/C	11/09	124	232	17	126	375	22	315	10	6	2	1	14	9	2	-	-	-	423,276	31,709	14,058	41,013	86,780	336,496	(8)
(9)Hamilton, Haven	D. Marc de Waard		09/05	282	554	42	330	926	72	386	13	7	14	6	16	7	0	-	-	-	633,320	39,164	64,121	50,286	153,571	479,749	(9)
	Ronald J. VerWys	AP	03/10																								
(10)Holland, Ebenezer	Todd D. Krygsheld		10/00	129	228	30	58	316	18	225	3	5	10	3	0	1	0	-	-	-	345,333	14,349	21,600	32,193	68,142	277,191	(10)
(11)Holland, Harlem	John W. Nyitray		09/92	213	301	39	123	463	60	220	3	0	0	8	0	6	0	-	-	-	402,197	22,951	11,295	31,344	65,590	336,607	(11)
(12)Holland, North Holland	Joshua J. Van Leeuwen		06/06	154	300	4	89	393	28	261	9	17	6	3	3	18	2	-	-	-	374,887	18,500	58,595	29,655	106,750	268,137	(12)
	Dustyn E. Keepers	M/C	03/10																								
(13)Holland, Overisel	Scott Lokers		07/01	265	457	13	174	644	9	385	17	5	9	5	2	10	0	-	-	-	683,801	30,690	56,278	112,226	199,194	484,607	(13)
(14)Hudsonville	Donald L. Van Slyke		11/96	518	933	0	417	1,350	100	900	9	53	13	10	9	37	4	-	-	-	1,414,010	59,125	53,875	143,051	256,051	1,157,959	(14)
	Jeremy Visser	M/C	12/10																								
(15)Hudsonville, Covenant Community	Aaron M. Vis		06/04	93	200	0	87	287	22	193	12	6	7	0	0	2	1	-	-	-	268,122	12,110	17,000	9,400	38,510	229,612	(15)
(16)Hudsonville, Fellowship	Michael H. Van Buren		03/98	787	1,457	25	612	2,094	155	1,450	41	43	17	13	23	39	4	-	-	-	2,385,232	112,392	85,940	148,252	346,584	2,038,648	(16)
	Shawn M. Hulst	AP	06/01																								
	John E. Zwyghuizen	RET M/C	06/04																								
(17)Hudsonville, Forest Grove	Judson Marvel		01/09	177	328	12	202	542	7	350	3	2	12	4	0	4	6	-	-	-	517,570	21,954	33,670	41,724	97,348	420,222	(17)
	Stephen C. Simon	M/C	11/10																								
(18)Hudsonville, North Blendon	James (Nate) N. Meldrim		01/08	64	115	21	32	168	6	85	1	4	0	2	0	2	0	-	-	-	148,378	7,238	7,204	5,220	19,662	128,716	(18)
(19)Hudsonville, South Blendon	Mark E. Kleinheksel		08/04	102	203	19	61	283	19	180	11	6	2	6	5	4	0	-	-	-	271,093	13,563	16,805	14,682	45,050	226,043	(19)
(20)Jamestown	Adrian J. Batt		09/09	139	263	1	169	433	34	235	6	4	5	3	0	8	0	-	-	-	288,829	17,960	32,465	12,223	62,648	226,181	(20)
(21)West Olive, Ottawa	Marvin E. Jacobs		06/06	208	388	9	216	613	65	362	4	5	9	4	4	6	2	-	-	-	605,596	27,052	109,848	55,897	192,797	412,799	(21)
	Kevin P. Kleinheksel	AP	03/01																								
(22)Zeeland, Beaverdam	Vacant		06/09	55	106	8	30	144	5	100	3	11	13	1	11	1	0	-	-	-	184,104	4,145	1,627	2,315	8,087	176,017	(22)
(23)Zeeland, Community	Dann A. Stouten		09/97	550	1,134	7	563	1,704	50	810	36	50	3	10	22	35	1	-	-	-	1,386,434	85,628	46,886	52,381	184,895	1,201,539	(23)
	Kurtis J. Henry	AP	06/07																								
	Timothy D. Custer	AP	08/05																								
	James E. Beltman	M/C	09/02																								
	Stephen C. Simon	M/C	11/10																								

(24)Zeeland, Faith	Jonathan C. Elgersma		07/01	330	714	0	304	1,018	95	575	3	21	4	10	0	10	0	-	-	-	1,287,116	62,282	93,574	96,880	252,736	1,034,380	(24)
	David C. Smits	RET M/C	09/01																							
(25)Zeeland, First	Scott Van Oostendorp		06/91	349	729	53	245	1,027	93	531	10	16	9	9	7	10	0	-	-	-	1,550,263	47,237	47,850	201,863	296,950	1,253,313	(25)
	Christopher L. Zeller	AP	06/09																							
	Thomas W. Grabill	AP	06/95																							
(26)Zeeland, Peace	Vacant		11/10	59	103	4	33	140	13	95	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	202,922	8,190	4,000	7,985	20,175	182,747	(26)
(27)Zeeland, Second	John E. Schmidt		10/95	231	270	108	141	519	71	250	9	0	8	4	23	4	0	-	-	-	420,639	19,464	15,017	17,596	52,077	368,562	(27)
(28)Zeeland, Vriesland	Timothy R. Rotman		03/08	295	602	22	319	943	17	549	13	15	2	1	36	23	1	-	-	-	772,379	32,505	46,366	130,432	209,303	563,076	(28)
	Timothy K. Wilson	AP	06/08																							
		Total		5,754	10,738	606	4,815	16,159	1,182	345	305	309	232	117	243	260	37	-	-	-	16,423,921	737,378	904,966	1,381,077	3,023,421	13,400,500	

Chaplain
Paul Hinga Boersma
Pamela Joy Bush
Mary Lokers Merrill
Christopher Stahl Pieters
Darren Allen Tigelaar

Inactive
Bradley M. Norg

Planting Minister
Sung Howy Kim
Ed Schneider

Professor/Teacher
Dawn C. Boelkins

Retired
Lee R. Bayer
Don Jay Bekkering
Rodger H. Dalman
James W. Ikerd
Irven Lee Jungling
Cornelis B. Koolhaas
Louis Paul Kraay
Mark G. Lemmenes
John F. Nordstrom
Terry L. Nyhuis
John Nyitray
Robert A. Nykamp
Norman J. Ratering
David C. Smits
Henry Stegenga
Rowland D. Van Es
Jack Van Heest
Roger D. Vander Kolk
John W. Vander Roest
Vernon R. Vanderwerff
Harris John Verkaik
John E. Zwyghuizen

Specialized Ministry
David P. Breen
Jill Erin Carattini
Kirsty DePree
James F. Dykstra
David J. Grissen
Trevlynn Kimball
Steven A. Smallegan
Lewis T. Tait
Lisa M. Tait
Kris Allen Van Engen
Kirk Vander Molen
Brian Dean Vander Wege
Timothy James Vink
Marlin Peter Vis
Barbara Yandell

Without Charge
Mitchell Curtis Brink
Steven DeLoof
Carolyn Daily Raar
Andrew Jay Rozendaal
John Marshall Sanders
Heather Jean Van Leeuwen

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(3)	38,662	(4)	38,691	(12)	550	(1)	20,137
(4)	37	(5)	48,620	(19)	11,304	(2)	2,000
(5)	153	(6)	6,650	(22)	5,000	(4)	8,326
(7)	15	(8)	79,539	(27)	3,650	(5)	8,740
(9)	476	(10)	34,532			(7)	36,330
(11)	98	(11)	11,264			(8)	3,413
(12)	789	(13)	147,475			(9)	69,310
(13)	860	(14)	277,658			(12)	8,220
(15)	3,790	(15)	31,229			(13)	47,569
(16)	1,406	(16)	873,612			(15)	12,811
(17)	43,582	(17)	50,339			(17)	18,964
(18)	48	(18)	14,860			(20)	5,515
(20)	4,604	(19)	2,400			(21)	19,300
(21)	43,190	(20)	3,700			(22)	13,994
(22)	21	(23)	195,488			(23)	4,556
(23)	980	(24)	226,280			(24)	162,303
(25)	5,025	(25)	250,131			(25)	39,193
(27)	26,197	(27)	21,559			(27)	22,633
(28)	3,742	(28)	35,164			(28)	45,165

Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF CENTRAL IOWA

Stated Clerk — Suzanne Vogel, 623 N Oaks Dr, Pella, IA 50219-7646; 641-204-1249
Treasurer — Mark L. Sandbulte, 2035 SE Leeann Dr, Waukee, IA 50263-8625; 515-226-6599

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Iowa																											
(1)Altoona, Adventure Life	Thomas VandeBerg		07/07	143	241	27	78	346	55	238	8	3	2	1	2	2	5	-	-	-	329,391	20,895	13,146	6,650	40,691	288,700	(1)
(2)Ankeny, Prairie Ridge	Michael J. Van Rees		03/02	151	264	0	190	454	460	907	28	6	0	0	17	21	24	-	-	-	1,325,866	27,604	0	23,237	50,841	1,275,025	(2)
	Bruce Cook	M/C	01/11																								
(3)Des Moines, Bethany	Todd H. Rempe		07/09	75	135	1	32	168	75	135	5	6	2	1	1	2	0	-	-	-	215,365	9,460	10,300	13,196	32,956	182,409	(3)
(4)Des Moines, Meredith Drive	Anthony D. Vis		03/84	740	1,504	69	482	2,055	38	1,058	74	21	11	12	66	48	5	-	-	-	2,306,090	131,838	135,250	217,123	484,211	1,821,879	(4)
	Jill K. Ver Steeg	AP	08/03																								
	Jonathan J. Nelson	AP	01/10																								
	Jane Brown	AP	11/01																								
# (5)Eddyville, Faith Community**	Vacant		05/99	18	25	15	0	40	22	30	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	23,967	0	0	3,045	3,045	20,922	(5)
(6)Knoxville, Celebrate Community	Andrew Schmidt	*ST	04/11	120	186	41	79	306	150	296	5	16	1	0	6	3	4	-	-	-	407,808	15,948	0	19,483	35,431	372,377	(6)
(7)Leighton, Ebenezer	Mark J. Jicinsky		04/06	79	120	2	3	125	9	110	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	-	-	-	300,763	12,030	68,609	19,285	99,924	200,839	(7)
(8)Norwalk, Crossroads	Glen A. Blumer		04/09	85	93	12	73	178	107	240	44	30	2	4	4	4	1	-	-	-	302,447	0	17,156	25,247	42,403	260,044	(8)
(9)Oskaloosa, Central	Donald R. De Glopper		06/97	289	427	38	143	608	62	350	3	4	10	4	1	11	0	-	-	-	384,422	40,648	39,000	10,129	89,777	294,645	(9)
(10)Otley	Vacant		08/10	116	210	20	49	279	47	163	1	1	7	1	3	0	0	-	-	-	266,048	20,440	45,993	15,917	82,350	183,698	(10)
(11)Pella, First	Raymond G. Tilstra		03/03	242	342	45	58	445	22	225	1	2	7	17	7	1	0	-	-	-	565,478	33,652	53,800	2,000	89,452	476,026	(11)
	Kevin Yurk	AP	01/01																								
(12)Pella, Heartland	Ross A. Davidson		09/02	75	127	17	74	218	15	130	5	3	0	2	0	3	0	-	-	-	149,271	9,556	9,750	5,581	24,887	124,384	(12)
(13)Pella, Second	Sophie Mathonnet-Vanderwell		02/99	245	357	151	135	643	50	335	0	16	0	12	4	6	0	-	-	-	809,966	32,520	82,000	20,470	134,990	674,976	(13)
	Stephen J. Mathonnet-Vanderwell		02/99																								
(14)Pella, Third	Kevin E. Korver		02/93	753	1,378	568	670	2,616	1,165	1,900	49	25	4	6	0	42	6	-	-	-	4,022,868	123,915	39,700	625,872	789,487	3,233,381	(14)
	Keith E. Korver	M/C	03/06																								
(15)Pella, Trinity	Christopher J. Piersma		08/02	287	525	24	242	791	36	421	11	13	1	10	1	18	0	-	-	-	1,034,573	30,912	87,612	55,523	174,047	860,526	(15)
(16)Prairie City, First	Vacant		03/10	68	125	16	60	201	22	140	0	2	1	3	16	2	0	-	-	-	140,702	12,484	21,686	23,493	57,663	83,039	(16)
(17)Sully, First	Wayne E. Sneller		09/09	230	410	20	159	589	51	460	13	8	9	4	3	8	1	-	-	-	476,671	36,584	69,926	36,181	142,691	333,980	(17)
(18)Waukee, Westview	Vacant		07/10	156	182	0	63	245	46	193	18	0	2	0	15	10	1	-	-	-	374,699	15,981	14,800	22,577	53,358	321,341	(18)
	Susan B. Watson	AP	06/08																								
Texas																											
(19)Plano	Elizabeth B. Hardeman		03/11	116	197	269	38	504	8	160	1	3	1	5	0	4	0	-	-	-	653,747	27,004	15,000	31,828	73,832	579,915	(19)
	Michael J. Hardeman		03/11																								
		Total		3,988	6,848	1,335	2,628	10,811	2,440	394	267	159	63	84	146	188	47	-	-	-	14,090,142	601,471	723,728	1,176,837	2,502,036	11,588,106	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*
\# STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
**LINE 5—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.

Chaplain
Eric Vincent Bogerd
DeWayne Francis Breen
D. Joel Brummel
James De Hoog
Douglas Freeman
Eric D. Johnson
Kenneth L. Sampson
Craig A. Wagner

Missionary
John E. Buteyn
Alan J. Schreuder

Planting Minister
J. Erik Buteyn
David W. Lantz
Steven D. McNary
John Clifford White

Professor/Teacher
Chad Pierce

Retired
Fran De Jong
Robert J. DeYoung
Virgil E. Dykstra
James P. Ebbers
John P. Ekema
Douglas J. Groen
Norman L. Kolenbrander
David A. Laman
Duane W. Laman
Barbara Nauta
William Paul
Donald L. Ringnalda
Marinus P. Spierenburg
Carl H. Van Farowe
James H. Van Roekel
Stephen S. Veldhuis
Gilbert L. Visser
Robert R. Wallinga

Specialized Ministry
Martin Batts
Gerrit Richard Hanson
Sarah Ellen Henseler
James S. Hibma
James I. Koopman
Neale Leroy Roller
Shane Evan Ver Steeg

Without Charge
Douglas Dobbie
Eric Ishimaru
Jeong Yeop Lee
Angie Lee Mabry-Nauta
Gary Lee Roozeboom

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	5,666	(1)	1,452	(8)	2,873	(1)	35
(2)	5,278	(2)	3,037	(14)	122,897	(3)	1,150
(3)	76	(3)	16,307	(17)	1,000	(6)	20,939
(4)	12,391	(6)	113,675	(18)	10,000	(8)	5,357
(8)	2,916	(7)	57,829			(10)	11,479
(9)	1,775	(8)	7,605			(12)	1,000
(10)	101	(10)	8,229			(13)	1,175
(11)	42,460	(11)	21,000			(15)	6,506
(12)	1,572	(13)	134,986			(16)	7,987
(13)	161,238	(14)	855,114			(17)	8,796
(14)	20,236	(15)	407,706			(18)	995
(15)	194	(16)	17,121			(19)	39,907
(17)	45,010	(17)	2,301				
(18)	243	(18)	26,323				
(19)	232	(19)	56,956				

Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF CENTRAL PLAINS

Stated Clerk — Charlotte Foreman, 11400 N Portland Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73120-4699; 405-755-6522 ext 231
Treasurer — Charlotte Foreman, 11400 N Portland Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73120-4699; 405-755-6522 ext 231

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Housihld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worshp Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Kansas																											
(1)Overland Park, Crossroads	Donley G. Huitink		07/80	38	55	14	18	87	90	70	5	0	0	2	8	4	0	-	-	-	201,411	5,355	2,454	5,550	13,359	188,052	(1)
(2)Prairie View	Jeffrey Van Der Weele		10/98	36	55	2	31	88	21	65	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	72,340	4,545	3,484	7,021	15,050	57,290	(2)
(3)Wichita, Harvest Community	David H. Henion		01/96	71	77	133	12	222	61	132	10	2	0	2	0	2	5	-	-	-	222,226	8,218	0	2,609	10,827	211,399	(3)
	Richard C. Husselman	M/C	06/09																								
Nebraska																											
(4)Adams, Pella	Marcus C. Roskamp		07/09	69	113	25	31	169	13	96	0	1	0	5	0	1	0	-	-	-	232,082	10,380	41,575	18,693	70,648	161,434	(4)
(5)Firth	Jonathan T. Garbison		09/06	91	189	100	60	349	25	171	3	0	1	4	0	3	0	-	-	-	317,425	18,857	13,381	13,900	46,138	271,287	(5)
(6)Hickman, Holland	Victor J. Folkert		03/08	72	141	18	20	179	75	125	10	2	1	1	3	1	1	-	-	-	258,299	10,250	21,617	13,760	45,627	212,672	(6)
(7)Lincoln, Hope Community	Terry Maassen		07/00	155	273	8	105	386	63	300	6	4	1	1	8	8	1	-	-	-	668,406	25,996	14,000	3,631	43,627	624,779	(7)
(8)Omaha, Westwood	Scott Christiansen		08/95	219	392	32	149	573	102	383	14	4	2	0	0	16	7	-	-	-	1,099,806	29,529	14,555	13,530	57,614	1,042,192	(8)
Oklahoma																											
(9)Apache	Jeffrey W. Taylor		10/05	78	35	59	77	171	11	19	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	-	-	-	42,760	2,500	0	0	2,500	40,260	(9)
#(10)Lawton, Comanche	Vacant		01/11	21	31	41	57	129	12	60	0	0	0	0	3	6	3	-	-	-	60,788	2,500	1,375	2,500	6,375	54,413	(10)
(11)Oklahoma City, Our Lord's Community	Roc Bottomly		09/08	187	326	19	48	393	98	292	17	15	5	1	20	0	3	-	-	-	930,984	21,343	25,500	123,691	170,534	760,450	(11)
		Total		1,037	1,687	451	608	2,746	571	156	68	28	10	19	42	43	21	-	-	-	4,106,527	139,473	137,941	204,885	482,299	3,624,228	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Chaplain
Harry R. Tysen

Retired
Ross L. Arnold
George (Brick) C. Bradford
John Vincent Dabney
Joyce L. Jennings
Daniel L. Ramaker
Charles D. Spencer
Herman E. Van Galen

Specialized Ministry
Dale A. Assink
Randy A. Blumer
Mark Crain Bradford
Ronnie G. Helmink
Thomas Michael Stewart
Amy Jo Van Es-Hawley

Without Charge
Matthew Ryan Bosch

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	346	(4)	21,642	(3)	22,444	(1)	2,686
(3)	30	(5)	47,796	(9)	30,360	(3)	5,592
(4)	926	(6)	86,951			(4)	15,981
(5)	5,314	(7)	1,679			(6)	3,797
(6)	50					(7)	296,246
(7)	4,195					(8)	528,543
(8)	61					(10)	9,812
(9)	400					(11)	23,719
(11)	22,241						

Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF DAKOTA

Stated Clerk — Lawrence Namminga, Jr., PO Box 317, Springfield, SD 57062-0317; 605-660-3255
Treasurer — Brenda Van Beek, 2600 S Bernhaven Ave, Sioux Falls, SD 57110-5956; 605-595-7369

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership															Education			Stewardship					
												Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Househld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
North Dakota																											
(1)Bismarck Community	Maurice D. Millican		10/97	141	217	175	126	518	110	160	6	3	6	3	0	6	0	-	-	-	354,912	18,576	538	28,624	47,738	307,174	(1)
(2)Hague, Hope Westfield	Lane Keister	*M/C	04/05	38	72	21	6	99	6	55	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	68,531	4,610	3,914	10,828	19,352	49,179	(2)
(3)Litchville, First	Paul M. Peterson	*ST	06/99	14	23	5	3	31	5	24	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	36,472	1,380	800	750	2,930	33,542	(3)
(4)Marion, North Marion	Paul M. Peterson	*ST	06/99	22	31	9	20	60	5	34	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	58,962	2,710	1,720	1,934	6,364	52,598	(4)
(5)Strasburg	Vacant		03/96	16	27	0	5	32	8	28	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	22,037	1,888	2,129	950	4,967	17,070	(5)
(6)West Fargo, Red River	Ronald Van Peursem		10/09	35	63	0	0	63	16	85	5	5	2	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	135,688	4,695	0	1,620	6,315	129,373	(6)
South Dakota																											
(7)Amherst, Zion	Vacant		12/07	24	37	18	5	60	7	36	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	39,751	2,397	2,918	2,770	8,085	31,666	(7)
(8)Armour, Grandview	Vacant		05/05	53	95	0	20	115	35	65	5	2	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	91,600	8,609	0	1,570	10,179	81,421	(8)
(9)Brookings, Faith	Carl R. Boersma	M/C	10/10	40	81	3	17	101	52	59	3	3	3	1	3	2	0	-	-	-	172,898	4,606	5,029	10,617	20,252	152,646	(9)
(10)Canton, Bethany	Allen D. Richardson		07/07	90	180	20	101	301	13	151	6	12	1	1	0	6	0	-	-	-	315,341	13,642	1,654	14,871	30,167	285,174	(10)
(11)Castlewood, Hamlin	Vacant		12/10	74	120	56	63	239	24	135	2	2	0	4	0	7	0	-	-	-	109,699	5,459	10,265	11,424	27,148	82,551	(11)
(12)Chancellor	LeRoy G. Boender		06/05	115	213	104	102	419	80	180	5	4	3	1	0	4	0	-	-	-	258,692	17,850	2,350	7,212	27,412	231,280	(12)
(13)Colton, First	David Tims	*M/C	08/09	23	30	20	20	70	2	30	0	0	3	1	40	1	0	-	-	-	34,849	5,366	500	0	5,866	28,983	(13)
(14)Corsica, Grace	Joshua Benton	*	09/10	57	93	0	25	118	10	190	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	100,860	7,340	2,500	2,108	11,948	88,912	(14)
(15)Davis, Bethel	Vacant		01/04	19	31	12	3	46	6	20	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	-	-	-	24,444	2,195	30	1,110	3,335	21,109	(15)
(16)Dell Rapids	Frank L. Boerema		06/94	94	151	148	130	429	25	190	6	5	3	3	0	7	0	-	-	-	229,798	17,085	9,239	10,238	36,562	193,236	(16)
(17)Harrison, First	Stephen M. Hayes		08/09	42	69	18	9	96	0	45	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	45,745	5,366	15,130	1,700	22,196	23,549	(17)
(18)Lennox, Delaware	Jamie L. Dykstra		07/08	74	129	0	46	175	13	135	2	0	0	1	0	5	0	-	-	-	168,450	10,637	11,500	4,951	27,088	141,362	(18)
(19)Lennox, Second	Harlan G. Hayunga		09/97	115	198	24	60	282	37	150	9	4	1	1	0	8	1	-	-	-	155,926	18,615	6,267	4,694	29,576	126,350	(19)
(20)Marietta, Antelope Valley	John Graves	*M/C	09/01	7	10	4	2	16	6	13	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	29,968	1,525	1,815	2,145	5,485	24,483	(20)
(21)Mitchell, First	Dean Ulmer		09/04	152	267	2	105	374	62	225	3	7	1	2	10	6	0	-	-	-	297,901	22,355	7,500	10,581	40,436	257,465	(21)
	Kevin Karhoff	AP	09/10																								
(22)Monroe, Calvary	John DeGroff	*M/C	11/98	92	143	60	50	253	64	125	2	1	2	3	0	2	2	-	-	-	167,050	8,437	16,102	8,442	32,981	134,069	(22)
(23)Platte, First	Harry Koops		06/03	148	249	4	99	352	68	265	19	8	3	4	9	7	4	-	-	-	233,937	23,381	22,566	43,913	89,860	144,077	(23)
	Michael A. De Jager	*ST	01/11																								
(24)Sioux Falls, Community	Clyde Teel		07/03	274	470	12	251	733	300	740	14	25	4	4	0	29	0	-	-	-	754,574	37,400	20,602	54,482	112,484	642,090	(24)
(25)Sioux Falls, Crossing	Seth E. Sundstrom		07/09	70	118	0	6	124	160	225	2	0	0	0	0	5	1	-	-	-	183,223	0	3,600	2,074	5,674	177,549	(25)
(26)Sioux Falls, First	Steve Anthes		05/04	250	455	39	163	657	56	358	10	16	8	7	13	6	0	-	-	-	498,680	39,100	27,681	19,177	85,958	412,722	(26)
(27)Sioux Falls, Good News	Kevin Schneider		08/03	217	470	34	257	761	285	473	35	15	2	5	2	20	6	-	-	-	523,374	35,800	24,095	35,722	95,617	427,757	(27)
(28)Springfield, Emmanuel	David D. Reck		05/91	139	237	17	70	324	37	200	2	0	3	3	0	4	0	-	-	-	161,791	20,485	18,324	1,775	40,584	121,207	(28)
# (29)Stickney, Aurora	Daniel W. Ebbens		10/09	86	143	15	73	231	17	135	0	1	4	3	0	5	0	-	-	-	92,673	8,436	6,381	6,439	21,256	71,417	(29)
(30)Valley Springs	Norman J. Bouwens	M/C	10/08	36	53	4	22	79	9	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	65,823	3,801	4,772	2,200	10,773	55,050	(30)

(31)Volga, First	Vacant	12/10	95	173	18	62	253	6	147	0	8	4	3	0	2	0	-	-	-	207,919	14,171	5,342	14,297	33,810	174,109 (31)
(32)Yankton, Riverview	Rodney D. Veldhuizen	04/97	87	155	20	59	234	20	115	7	2	4	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	180,432	7,703	2,619	5,649	15,971	164,461 (32)
	Total		2,739	4,803	862	1,980	7,645	1,544	151	150	124	61	57	77	143	16	-	-	-	5,822,000	375,620	237,882	324,867	938,369	4,883,631

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*
# STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Chaplain
Wendell L. Brenneman
James Edward Claggett
Dean R. Meeter
Timothy S. Moermond
Darin Robert Namminga
Harry W. Ter Maat

Inactive
Todd Wise

Retired
C. Lee Andrews
Gerard De Loof
Paul Leslie Lupkes
Emmo John Oltmanns
Arvin W. Roos
Henry G. Schoon
Gilbert Van Beek
Arlin W. Vande Zande
Robert John Vander Schaaf
Thomas W. Zylstra

Specialized Ministry
Frank H. Dobos
Ron Klein
Jamie Dawn Schmeling
Carl Van Voorst
Fred Wilgenburg

Without Charge
Steven J. Boint
Stewart Mowry
Harold J. Willemstyn

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(2)	1,736	(8)	25,821	(23)	1,780	(2)	6,159
(5)	168	(9)	13,998			(6)	3,462
(6)	1,810	(10)	150,000			(7)	10,550
(7)	2,507	(12)	35,990			(8)	6,011
(8)	2,328	(14)	17,170			(9)	8,485
(9)	518	(18)	14,253			(12)	22,527
(12)	84	(19)	9,711			(14)	13,251
(15)	587	(22)	4,014			(18)	64,872
(16)	324	(23)	4,653			(19)	4,252
(18)	1,270	(24)	190,950			(20)	3,034
(19)	525	(26)	84,404			(21)	2,860
(20)	1,277	(27)	26,948			(23)	154
(23)	1,324					(27)	23,481
(24)	923					(28)	9,274
(26)	792					(29)	3,210
(27)	276					(30)	3,291
(28)	1,300					(31)	4,642
(30)	154						
(31)	10,531						

Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF EAST SIOUX

Stated Clerk Lizbeth Moss, PO Box 63, Alton, IA 51003-0063; 712-756-4225
Treasurer Leon H. Koele, 1120 S 8th Ave, Sheldon, IA 51201-2017; 712-324-3766

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worshp Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Iowa																											
(1)Alton	Vacant		01/11	144	247	14	68	329	24	225	6	5	3	4	4	4	0	-	-	-	375,292	21,130	20,912	17,360	59,402	315,890	(1)
(2)Archer	Jeremy Wiersema		06/05	65	121	20	49	190	7	92	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	145,876	8,895	6,934	2,525	18,354	127,522	(2)
(3)Hospers, First	Milton D. Sikkema		09/97	81	134	13	46	193	25	85	0	1	4	8	22	3	0	-	-	-	249,783	13,225	28,873	12,613	54,711	195,072	(3)
(4)Melvin, First	Benson Den Hartog	M/C	05/10	36	54	0	0	54	5	35	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	3,512	2,459	0	0	2,459	1,053	(4)
(5)Newkirk	David H. Powers		11/07	100	166	4	42	212	8	175	1	0	5	5	10	1	0	-	-	-	349,594	14,849	62,788	61,632	139,269	210,325	(5)
(6)Okoboji, Good News Community	John B. Messer		10/05	235	393	0	147	540	231	516	32	12	6	0	0	4	10	-	-	-	598,713	29,954	15,000	32,000	76,954	521,759	(6)
(7)Orange City, American	Keith L. Krebs		06/04	181	320	13	108	441	20	200	4	9	12	6	2	2	0	-	-	-	448,794	27,238	33,578	1,039	61,855	386,939	(7)
(8)Orange City, First	Timothy S. Breen		09/10	508	717	98	215	1,030	20	755	7	26	11	23	8	9	0	-	-	-	1,200,094	63,048	223,351	254,647	541,046	659,048	(8)
(9)Orange City, Trinity	Jonathan Opgenorth		02/99	286	545	77	216	838	94	600	8	17	12	5	10	13	1	-	-	-	1,306,135	45,908	183,763	64,092	293,763	1,012,372	(9)
	Robert D. De Boer	AP	09/10																								
(10)Primghar, American	Dennis D. Hietbrink		10/06	75	142	21	98	261	5	81	3	2	2	4	0	3	1	-	-	-	197,214	11,470	6,000	21,088	38,558	158,656	(10)
(11)Sanborn, First	Gary D. Hegstad		08/00	187	346	18	82	446	66	231	11	5	3	8	0	3	0	-	-	-	306,068	28,596	42,100	4,818	75,514	230,554	(11)
(12)Sheldon, Bethel	Troy D. Van Beek		07/06	210	380	14	98	492	29	170	19	7	8	7	0	7	0	-	-	-	429,390	32,416	21,725	24,081	78,222	351,168	(12)
(13)Sheldon, First	David R. Brower		08/00	338	544	32	288	864	12	600	10	7	5	11	16	16	0	-	-	-	801,006	48,623	71,060	131,643	251,326	549,680	(13)
	Jody L. Habinck	AP	07/07																								
(14)Sibley, First	Gary A. Van Heukelom		10/90	271	404	38	164	606	76	350	6	7	4	5	0	7	3	-	-	-	384,421	34,536	55,450	50,252	140,238	244,183	(14)
(15)Spencer, Hope	Russell J. Muilenburg		07/07	237	457	21	170	648	87	408	10	21	2	4	0	8	1	-	-	-	557,888	33,433	41,700	20,421	95,554	462,334	(15)
		Total		2,954	4,970	383	1,791	7,144	709	302	118	120	78	90	72	82	16	-	-	-	7,353,780	415,780	813,234	698,211	1,927,225	5,426,555	

Chaplain
Harlan J. Van Oort

Planting Minister
Donald W. De Kok
Jason Martin Olson

Professor/Teacher
John Michael Hubers
Jacqueline L. Smallbones

Retired
Don Gordon Bloemendaal
Arthur T. De Hoogh
Gordon De Pree
Gerald G. Dykstra
Alvin L. Honken
Donald D. Jiskoot
Cornie D. Keunen
Donald R. Lenderink
Sylvio J. Scorza
David C. Ter Beest
Stanley J. Vandersall
Raymond E. Weiss

Specialized Ministry
Deborah Mechler
Lizbeth Moss
Jason Van Wyk
Mark H. Volkers

Without Charge
David Loveall

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	692	(1)	15,964	(1)	5,000	(1)	9,627
(2)	4,407	(2)	39,027			(2)	11,840
(3)	79,994	(4)	3,512			(5)	1,545
(5)	18,576	(5)	46,935			(6)	15,489
(6)	428	(6)	46,615			(8)	9,635
(8)	6,604	(8)	16,489			(11)	210
(9)	25,150	(9)	498,587			(12)	50,032
(10)	56,751	(10)	19,534			(13)	20,426
(11)	226	(11)	22,601				
(12)	2,565	(12)	2,833				
(14)	6,695	(15)	43,116				
(15)	627						

Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF MINNESOTA

Stated Clerk — Lori L. Walber, Our Savior's Church, 8209 Zane Ave N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443; 763-561-7129
Treasurer — Jerry Pederstuen, 1977 County Road J, Baldwin, WI 54002-5110; 715-684-2446

CHURCHES	PASTORS		Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains Conf (8)	Gains Cert (9)	Losses Trans (10)	Losses Decd (11)	Losses Other (12)	Bapt Infant (13)	Bapt Adult (14)	Sun Sch (15)	New Mbrs Clas (16)	Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Minnesota																										
(1)Blomkest, Roseland	James R. Lemmenes		10/00	86	164	12	32	208	40	125	4	2	0	2	0	4	0	-	-	-	260,000	13,000	36,000	12,000	61,000	199,000	(1)
(2)Bloomington, Riverside	Chad A. DeGraff		07/05	57	101	8	33	142	52	145	3	0	2	2	0	3	0	-	-	-	250,945	8,240	15,000	4,450	27,690	223,255	(2)
(3)Brooklyn Park, Our Savior's	Lori L. Walber		10/96	35	57	6	15	78	24	66	2	0	0	2	4	0	0	-	-	-	138,330	5,199	10,500	8,398	24,097	114,233	(3)
(4)Chandler	Nathan P. Huisman		08/10	89	173	6	42	221	25	155	1	2	1	5	0	1	1	-	-	-	151,488	10,850	30,935	19,000	60,785	90,703	(4)
(5)Clara City, Bethany	Donald W. Plantinga		01/01	268	457	109	119	685	13	308	9	14	2	4	8	3	0	-	-	-	477,651	39,197	43,283	35,723	118,203	359,448	(5)
(6)Eagan, Peace	Allen L. Pruis		08/01	284	543	37	198	778	119	366	26	2	3	3	14	6	9	-	-	-	784,150	47,385	30,693	46,209	124,287	659,863	(6)
(7)Edgerton, First	Rick D. Timmer		04/06	217	402	55	187	644	30	380	4	10	5	5	0	5	0	-	-	-	479,587	24,242	58,879	2,415	85,536	394,051	(7)
(8)Herman, Eden	Vacant		01/90	25	33	0	15	48	5	25	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	51,355	2,351	70	2,750	5,171	46,184	(8)
(9)Hollandale	Neal Ooms		03/09	88	128	30	30	188	12	120	1	2	0	2	1	2	0	-	-	-	171,515	12,853	14,300	9,800	36,953	134,562	(9)
(10)Leota, Bethel	Barrett D. Lang		09/09	65	112	17	36	165	12	105	2	0	4	8	0	3	0	-	-	-	193,167	17,725	30,338	2,079	50,142	143,025	(10)
(11)Luverne, American	David C. Sikkema		01/98	279	501	97	208	806	56	371	4	9	3	6	1	8	0	-	-	-	1,040,838	46,673	46,652	32,324	125,649	915,189	(11)
(12)Montevideo, Hope	Michael Altena		07/04	80	145	27	55	227	44	127	14	4	5	0	2	5	9	-	-	-	235,834	9,858	10,264	27,374	47,496	188,338	(12)
(13)Preston, Greenleaflon	Roger D. Lokker		08/04	180	251	30	92	373	25	192	15	0	5	5	7	8	0	-	-	-	267,436	20,596	40,753	18,306	79,655	187,781	(13)
(14)Rochester, Church of the Savior	Robert J. Johnson	M/C	02/11	60	86	27	35	148	12	69	0	0	1	2	5	1	0	-	-	-	195,872	8,715	20,700	13,106	42,521	153,351	(14)
(15)Silver Creek, Community	Vacant		07/10	45	74	1	13	88	9	65	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	133,980	5,199	817	4,987	11,003	122,977	(15)
(16)Slayton, First	Mark E. Ellens		05/00	54	96	2	24	122	14	101	2	1	0	4	0	0	0	-	-	-	181,872	7,869	3,540	565	11,974	169,898	(16)
(17)Steen	Daniel J. Kuik		01/09	183	296	0	137	433	34	350	3	3	5	10	0	7	0	-	-	-	485,900	25,491	34,376	23,544	83,411	402,489	(17)
(18)Willmar, First	Mark E. Starr		09/07	104	186	2	76	264	25	159	3	2	0	2	0	4	0	-	-	-	227,984	15,167	4,500	12,268	31,935	196,049	(18)
(19)Woodstock, American	Carl E. Gearhart		07/00	78	130	6	60	196	26	145	2	0	6	2	6	2	0	-	-	-	164,227	11,518	10,350	10,575	32,443	131,784	(19)
(20)Worthington, American	Irwin D. Van Leeuwen		07/95	170	274	15	71	360	26	252	1	9	7	4	1	2	0	-	-	-	374,756	26,056	42,486	29,304	97,846	276,910	(20)
Wisconsin																										
(21)Baldwin, First	Timothy A. Sluiter		08/08	148	189	58	70	317	31	130	1	0	0	9	10	1	0	-	-	-	223,689	15,550	30,677	13,295	59,522	164,167	(21)
		Total		2,595	4,398	545	1,548	6,491	634	179	97	61	51	78	59	66	19	-	-	-	6,490,576	373,734	515,113	328,472	1,217,319	5,273,257	

Chaplain
Verlyn D. Hemmen
Roger D. Punt

Planting Minister
Jon (JR) Henderson

Retired
Robert H. Drier
Victor W. Ebert
Forrest Harms
David M. Hensley
George D. Muyskens
Ronald Lee Sikkema
Wilmer J. VerMeer

Specialized Ministry
Gary Dekker
Wendy Jean Haack
Stephanie Ruth Huisman
Randal Kurt Lubbers
Timothy W. Olsen
David P. Poppen

Without Charge
Shirley Heeg
Nyla Ann Lewis
Marlin J. Meendering
Walter E. Pickup
Mark James Reynoso

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	30,000	(4)	8,121	(14)	2,500	(2)	24,443
(2)	9,897	(7)	89,033			(3)	14,601
(3)	540	(8)	3,330			(4)	4,300
(4)	1,200	(10)	26,337			(6)	655,051
(5)	28,456	(11)	580,842			(8)	5,240
(7)	730	(14)	185			(9)	1,261
(9)	5,775	(15)	5,163			(10)	166
(10)	31,799	(16)	63,054			(12)	19,160
(13)	5,310	(17)	132,066			(13)	43,866
(14)	1,683	(18)	19,857			(14)	15,540
(15)	955					(16)	175
(16)	1,755					(17)	37,478
(17)	758					(20)	9,917
(18)	893					(21)	950
(19)	342						
(20)	238						
(21)	1,106						

Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF PLEASANT PRAIRIE

Stated Clerk Melvin J. Voss, 712 3rd Ave NE, Belmond, IA 50421; 641-444-7150
Treasurer Melvin J. Voss, 712 3rd Ave NE, Belmond, IA 50421; 641-444-7150

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education		Stewardship						
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt						Contributions			
				Housihld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Iowa																										
(1)Ackley, Washington	Jack D. Ritsema		03/99	80	98	19	22	139	27	80	0	0	2	1	0	3	1	-	-	-	137,719	8,670	7,619	25,423	41,712	96,007	(1)
(2)Alexander, First	Philip Arnold		04/01	83	57	50	38	145	12	44	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	-	-	-	144,071	4,930	20,419	700	26,049	118,022	(2)
(3)Allison, Trinity	Gary A. Mulder		09/09	98	169	13	29	211	34	145	4	3	1	3	13	1	0	-	-	-	155,382	15,130	21,501	4,592	41,223	114,159	(3)
(4)Aplington, Bethel	Scott A. Summers		02/97	117	228	19	126	373	13	203	4	7	2	3	0	4	1	-	-	-	289,554	18,445	10,880	12,500	41,825	247,729	(4)
(5)Aplington, First	Vacant		07/10	118	190	16	46	252	20	160	7	3	3	5	0	2	0	-	-	-	191,125	16,575	37,281	8,500	62,356	128,769	(5)
(6)Belmond, Bethany	Philip Arnold	M/C	04/06	21	29	26	9	64	5	22	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	22,729	4,205	771	740	5,716	17,013	(6)
(7)Belmond, Immanuel	David L. DeKuiper		07/07	48	72	5	24	101	21	85	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	104,813	5,886	15,930	3,655	25,471	79,342	(7)
(8)Bristow, First	Tamara EnTin	*M/C	12/07	8	12	0	1	13	10	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	13,310	1,105	1,800	450	3,355	9,955	(8)
(9)Buffalo Center, First	William A. Peake		11/82	75	129	160	41	330	7	75	7	5	0	8	0	4	1	-	-	-	124,021	10,860	2,095	6,391	19,346	104,675	(9)
(10)Cedar Falls, Orchard Hill	B. Edward Baker		07/81	717	1,151	594	641	2,386	551	1,554	42	41	5	2	1	44	14	-	-	-	2,735,500	101,915	11,607	697,860	811,382	1,924,118	(10)
	Douglas K. Tensen	AP	09/97																								
	Michael A. Brost	M/C	04/07																								
(11)Cedar Rapids, Cedar Hills Community	Kent Landhuis		07/95	253	485	31	152	668	152	421	22	33	0	4	29	18	2	-	-	-	873,750	38,675	18,000	98,378	155,053	718,697	(11)
	Todd J. Joslin	AP	06/06																								
(12)Coralville, New Life Community	Vacant		03/09	79	106	5	47	158	83	120	2	5	4	0	0	4	0	-	-	-	216,148	8,670	11,580	8,318	28,568	187,580	(12)
(13)Dumont	April M. Fiet		08/07	75	118	17	40	175	5	75	3	2	0	3	16	5	0	-	-	-	97,645	12,240	5,900	1,850	19,990	77,655	(13)
	Jeffrey A. Fiet		08/07																								
(14)Evansdale, First	David Craig	*M/C	01/09	34	39	1	12	52	10	49	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	79,302	3,315	9,022	5,025	17,362	61,940	(14)
(15)Holland, Pleasant Valley	Rick L. Vollema		04/09	57	124	8	15	147	10	75	2	0	2	3	3	2	0	-	-	-	118,171	10,835	4,564	4,077	19,476	98,695	(15)
(16)Meservey, First	Rodney M. Meester		08/77	97	151	0	33	184	50	120	0	4	0	6	0	1	0	-	-	-	123,553	13,175	10,030	1,417	24,622	98,931	(16)
(17)Parkersburg, Hope	Leighton M. Seys		08/10	78	134	9	13	156	6	70	0	3	5	4	0	1	0	-	-	-	100,660	10,850	4,825	7,999	23,674	76,986	(17)
(18)Sheffield, Zion	Arthur J. Zewert		01/00	94	163	77	128	368	18	132	2	0	1	5	0	3	0	-	-	-	193,188	14,960	10,500	11,722	37,182	156,006	(18)
(19)Stout	David M. VanderLeest		08/08	62	98	2	32	132	7	70	1	0	0	5	0	3	0	-	-	-	143,356	9,095	29,350	11,162	49,607	93,749	(19)
(20)Titonka, Ramsey	Perry L. De Groot		10/10	64	108	49	17	174	18	75	0	1	2	5	2	2	0	-	-	-	137,602	7,840	14,388	15,198	37,426	100,176	(20)
(21)Waterloo, Grace	David R. Van Netten		04/98	131	163	25	61	249	18	144	16	6	0	6	9	12	6	-	-	-	146,934	14,863	3,000	11,000	28,863	118,071	(21)
(22)Wellsburg	Michael Weaver		05/10	90	135	17	21	173	4	115	2	3	1	5	0	1	0	-	-	-	170,146	9,520	22,685	2,950	35,155	134,991	(22)
		Total		2,479	3,959	1,143	1,548	6,650	1,081	175	120	116	28	71	73	111	26	-	-	-	6,318,679	341,759	273,747	939,907	1,555,413	4,763,266	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Planting Minister
Kevin Van Wyk

Retired
John J. Helmus
William Kroon
Harold Oppermann
Dennis E. Redeker
Philip J. Somsen
Stanley W. Vander Weide
Melvin J. Voss

Specialized Ministry
D. Ryan Boes
Brice Hoyt
R. James Van Zetten
Lyle D. Vander Broek

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	7,140	(3)	1,021	(4)	450	(1)	20,044
(2)	10,866	(4)	23,534	(10)	54,190	(2)	54,578
(3)	1,082	(9)	2,040	(11)	1,200	(4)	18,935
(4)	83,071	(10)	365,468	(13)	225	(7)	1,200
(5)	350	(12)	1,904	(14)	700	(8)	412
(6)	15	(15)	5,000	(17)	792	(9)	3,375
(7)	1,105	(16)	6,283	(20)	1,000	(10)	588,924
(8)	2,146	(18)	19,323			(11)	7,365
(9)	24	(20)	42,631			(12)	18,947
(11)	5,154	(22)	10,712			(13)	800
(12)	5,734					(14)	8,215
(13)	1,170					(15)	800
(14)	125					(16)	5,818
(15)	878					(17)	3,320
(16)	388					(18)	2,241
(17)	78					(20)	7,733
(19)	4,269					(22)	14,882
(20)	2,084						
(21)	11						
(22)	3,011						

Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF WEST SIOUX

Stated Clerk Brian Hellenga, PO Box 276, Little Rock, IA 51243; 712-479-2494
Treasurer John Hulshof, 1205 S Carroll St, Rock Rapids, IA 51246-2069; 712-472-2887

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education		Stewardship						
										Average	Gains			Losses			Baptized							Contributions		
				Houshld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worshp Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Iowa																										
(1)Boyden, First	Matthew Draffen		12/96	170	230	30	107	367	11	150	1	1	5	6	0	1	0	-	-	-	309,685	11,479	2,035	6,642	20,156	289,529	(1)
(2)Carmel	Mark K. Heijerman		04/00	215	394	20	252	666	20	360	6	8	4	3	0	13	0	-	-	-	580,359	30,950	57,068	60,120	148,138	432,221	(2)
(3)Doon, First	Donald E. Baker		01/01	72	122	20	53	195	1	125	2	3	2	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	108,358	9,203	3,700	15,463	28,366	79,992	(3)
(4)George, Hope	Vacant		11/10	78	136	21	55	212	11	90	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	142,808	10,365	19,762	2,000	32,127	110,681	(4)
(5)Hawarden, Community	Douglas J. Baker		09/02	75	114	3	36	153	5	74	4	2	1	3	2	4	0	-	-	-	150,141	7,171	8,248	3,960	19,379	130,762	(5)
(6)Hull, American	Steve R. Bierly		09/98	138	293	1	170	464	6	260	5	13	5	1	0	4	0	-	-	-	294,465	22,808	7,700	18,310	48,818	245,647	(6)
(7)Hull, First	Verlyn Boone		06/96	282	444	41	261	746	15	501	7	10	8	11	0	8	0	-	-	-	474,698	40,143	50,987	64,420	155,550	319,148	(7)
(8)Inwood, First	Vacant		03/09	68	113	8	66	187	26	112	4	0	4	2	1	3	0	-	-	-	149,646	6,756	8,498	7,812	23,066	126,580	(8)
(9)Ireton, First	Douglas Van Aartsen		08/92	68	99	18	62	179	20	76	0	2	2	3	0	2	0	-	-	-	118,240	6,507	11,666	2,416	20,589	97,651	(9)
(10)LeMars, Rejoice! Community	Jon Moravec	*PE	02/11	61	103	22	7	132	21	144	21	3	0	0	2	14	2	-	-	-	162,681	7,254	285	7,100	14,639	148,042	(10)
(11)Lester, Bethel	Donald E. Baker		01/01	51	95	9	72	176	10	125	4	7	2	1	0	1	2	-	-	-	135,798	5,014	6,000	1,142	12,156	123,642	(11)
(12)Little Rock, Salem	Brian Hellenga		04/82	154	244	14	190	448	35	190	9	1	0	4	0	4	1	-	-	-	156,157	19,851	8,800	2,674	31,325	124,832	(12)
(13)Maurice, First	Vacant		12/10	324	541	59	287	887	90	450	3	15	22	5	0	16	0	-	-	-	821,547	45,866	90,170	87,783	223,819	597,728	(13)
(14)Middleburg, Free Grace	Stephen Breen		07/95	72	154	7	97	258	4	187	2	3	1	0	0	8	0	-	-	-	229,711	12,056	27,537	11,678	51,271	178,440	(14)
(15)Rock Rapids, First	Daniel T. Haggar		11/99	250	445	25	229	699	33	375	7	11	5	5	3	8	1	-	-	-	654,488	36,328	70,576	40,868	147,772	506,716	(15)
	Katie Van Veldhuizen	AP	07/03																								
(16)Rock Valley, Faith	Michael L. Molenaar		04/97	221	476	43	235	754	47	442	15	4	16	0	0	9	5	-	-	-	799,632	22,291	117,273	63,078	202,642	596,990	(16)
	Thomas A. Smith		02/03																								
(17)Rock Valley, First	Michael D. Van Hamersveld		06/99	150	268	9	105	382	1	125	4	1	4	9	9	1	0	-	-	-	276,400	27,204	46,914	13,125	87,243	189,157	(17)
(18)Sioux Center, Central	R. Van Rathbun		09/01	235	380	2	135	517	25	315	4	9	2	4	0	6	0	-	-	-	536,155	31,517	75,000	17,999	124,516	411,639	(18)
(19)Sioux Center, First	Roger L. Voskuil		01/01	549	976	9	308	1,293	6	900	25	19	4	10	0	9	0	-	-	-	1,626,303	79,788	232,426	522,494	834,708	791,595	(19)
	Robert J. Holtrop	AP	10/08																								
	Tanner Smith	AP	08/08																								
(20)Sioux Center, New Life	Vacant		10/10	275	502	10	362	874	88	540	7	8	9	2	10	11	1	-	-	-	806,575	47,359	35,820	48,863	132,042	674,533	(20)
	Daniel Kruse	AP	08/04																								
	Rick Van Ravensway	AP	08/08																								
(21)Sioux City, Sunnybrook Community	Jeffrey C. Moes		10/02	606	1,019	0	9	1,028	360	1,116	86	0	2	2	0	54	11	-	-	-	1,939,490	67,929	0	243,385	311,314	1,628,176	(21)
Minnesota																										
(22)Ellsworth, Bethel	Matthew Miller		10/10	101	180	9	118	307	12	128	3	6	2	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	160,718	13,725	12,948	9,589	36,262	124,456	(22)
Nebraska																										
(23)Winnebago	Lowell Ten Clay	*PE	03/11	48	58	20	110	188	5	40	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	-	-	-	47,946	2,371	0	1,200	3,571	44,375	(23)
		Total		4,263	7,386	400	3,326	11,112	852	297	219	126	100	75	27	185	23	-	-	-	10,682,001	563,935	893,413	1,252,121	2,709,469	7,972,532	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Chaplain
R. John Boyer
Brian (B. J.) Van Kalsbeek

Planting Minister
Robert John Rook

Retired
Joel L. Bensema
John R. Boender
James D. Brinkhuis
Stephen G. Cobb
Harlan R. De Jong
Mark David DeWitt
Richard Kooistra
Norman Menning
Arnold Frank Punt
Marilyn June Rensink
Brook B. Stephens
Jacob J. Van Mantgem

Specialized Ministry
Mark Beernink
Paul Hansen
Thomas Drew Vande Berg

Without Charge
Steven A. Brouwer
David J. Vander Laan
Calvin L. Ver Mulm

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	40,000	(1)	3,952	(23)	17,800	(1)	16,023
(2)	7,815	(3)	7,578			(2)	64,910
(4)	301	(4)	23,094			(5)	6,928
(5)	1,300	(5)	25,130			(6)	36,452
(6)	785	(6)	63,703			(7)	29,418
(7)	945	(7)	35,453			(8)	9,214
(8)	217	(10)	5,790			(9)	5,873
(10)	21	(11)	62,816			(10)	1,266
(11)	1,644	(12)	13,350			(11)	75
(12)	8,278	(13)	85,845			(13)	69,180
(13)	52,563	(14)	22,857			(14)	19,631
(14)	5,032	(15)	157,873			(15)	39,315
(15)	196	(16)	228,438			(16)	46,889
(16)	8,739	(17)	20,162			(19)	4,605
(17)	5,125	(18)	89,078			(20)	4,670
(18)	387	(19)	124,779			(23)	475
(19)	8,328	(20)	53,750				
(20)	2,495	(21)	397,386				
(21)	995						
(22)	5,530						

(23) 1,488

Regional Synod of Mid-America CLASSIS OF CHICAGO

Stated Clerk Diane Spacek, Christ Community Church, 13400 Bell Rd, Lemont, IL 60439; 815-474-0508

Treasurer Diane Spacek, Christ Community Church, 13400 Bell Rd, Lemont, IL 60439; 815-474-0508

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Househld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Stewardship: Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Illinois																											
(1)Berwyn, First	Vacant		07/00	17	22	0	2	24	4	23	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	-	-	-	67,115	1,477	3,200	1,378	6,055	61,060	(1)
(2)Chicago, Bethel	Superseded		09/08	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2)
(3)Chicago, La Capilla del Barrio	Pedro J. Windsor-Garcia		04/85	20	18	0	16	34	15	50	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	33,000	1,600	150	300	2,050	30,950	(3)
(4)Chicago, Mt. Greenwood	William K. Crowder		01/07	53	80	0	16	96	9	81	0	0	2	4	0	1	0	-	-	-	156,200	5,125	6,600	10,000	21,725	134,475	(4)
(5)Downer's Grove, Community	Vacant		07/10	48	105	9	18	132	5	90	1	5	6	1	0	3	1	-	-	-	212,714	8,024	8,600	6,400	23,024	189,690	(5)
(6)Lemont, Christ Community	Paul D. Pratt		10/03	215	432	103	83	618	147	310	14	1	4	3	0	3	0	-	-	-	766,423	25,712	19,500	5,500	50,712	715,711	(6)
	David N. Parrish	AP	12/06																								
(7)Lombard, Taiwanese Community	Cheng-I Mo	*M/C	07/09	30	48	2	7	57	12	52	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	124,536	3,193	36,912	0	40,105	84,431	(7)
(8)Orland Park, Calvary	Howard R. Hoekstra		04/84	470	908	130	370	1,408	27	846	31	14	33	17	217	20	2	-	-	-	1,726,058	70,079	82,086	194,035	346,200	1,379,858	(8)
(9)Riverdale, Ivanhoe	Vacant		09/07	17	21	0	0	21	9	20	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	56,215	2,214	142	6,158	8,514	47,701	(9)
(10)Stickney, Faith Community	Christopher M. Poest		02/04	47	74	12	25	111	18	54	2	0	0	2	7	1	0	-	-	-	116,600	4,919	6,850	1,630	13,399	103,201	(10)
(11)West Chicago, Faith Community	Travis Else		05/09	74	144	40	34	218	36	157	8	12	2	3	0	9	2	-	-	-	422,482	7,396	5,075	20,289	32,760	389,722	(11)
	Shane M. Sterk	AP	08/05																								
		Total		991	1,852	296	571	2,719	282	153	58	36	50	36	224	37	7	-	-	-	3,681,343	129,739	169,115	245,690	544,544	3,136,799	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

Chaplain
Patricia Allen
Stephen Scott-Sidney Luchies
Maryteresa Orshonsky
David Michael Schwabauer

Inactive
Zachary Allen Pryor

Planting Minister
Jeffrey J. Klein
Robert Reid

Retired
Carl J. De Jong
Donald W. Den Hartog
Jacob Dykstra
Philip A. Grawburg
DuWayne M. Hanke
Robert M. Honig
Benjamin Ming-Chau Hsu
Sonny Lai
Arlan D. Menninga
Harold G. Rust
Donald A. Vandenberg
Harold S. Vogelaar
Joshua Yapp

Specialized Ministry
George Duane Beukema
Liala R. Beukema
Debra A. Braaksma
Thomas Corwin
David Crump
Grover Davis
Richard W. Davis
Aaron James Kuecker
Scott Manetsch
David Melvin
Joseph P. Paglia
Ronald David Sanford
Kenneth Dale Schmitt
Keith E. Starkenburg
Felix Theonugraha
David F. Van Kley
Steve Alan Young

Without Charge
Christopher Lee Cano

	FOOTNOTES							
	A		B		C		D	
	(5)	1,813	(8)	260,517	(3)	9,000	(1)	14,000
	(6)	5	(11)	104,564	(4)	1,200	(4)	10,000
	(7)	3,649			(5)	15,000	(5)	15,634
	(10)	708			(9)	500	(6)	10,065
	(11)	894			(11)	600	(7)	4,292
							(9)	6,036
							(10)	3,284
							(11)	20,585

Regional Synod of Mid-America CLASSIS OF ILLIANA

Stated Clerk Randy Farmer, 3057 E Lakeview Dr, Crete, IL 60417; 708-672-3150
Treasurer Dale Huizenga, ~~1367 W Exore Ln, Kankakee, IL 60901-7353; 815-939-7671~~

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education		Stewardship						
										Average	Gains			Losses			Baptized					Contributions				
				Household	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Deed	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Florida																										
(1)Bradenton, Bayshore Gardens	Vacant		10/09	47	59	6	12	77	42	98	0	0	5	3	10	0	0	-	-	-	186,586	11,933	5,310	200	17,443	169,143	(1)
(2)Deerfield Beach, New Horizons	Rob Davidson	*M/C	07/02	31	39	17	6	62	48	90	7	0	0	3	16	2	3	-	-	-	232,614	3,750	0	6,990	10,740	221,874	(2)
(3)Miami, Chinese	Daniel Tsai	*M/C	05/07	14	30	0	0	30	10	30	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	-	-	-	48,251	1,110	0	0	1,110	47,141	(3)
(4)Miami, North Dade Community	Newton Fairweather		12/06	60	50	3	8	61	50	85	9	2	0	1	3	0	9	-	-	-	140,500	4,500	4,000	6,500	15,000	125,500	(4)
(5)Orlando, Korean Choong Hyun	Seok Won Kim	M/C	01/07	21	23	6	6	35	23	39	5	0	0	2	2	0	0	-	-	-	65,310	2,027	0	700	2,727	62,583	(5)
# (6)Palm Springs, Comunidad de Fe	Vacant		12/09	21	17	5	18	40	23	35	8	2	0	0	5	0	0	-	-	-	79	1	0	0	1	78	(6)
(7)Pompano Beach, Christ Community	Edward D. Hernandez		08/04	48	63	57	17	137	48	146	6	0	18	4	22	2	17	-	-	-	195,639	2,450	22,564	11,388	36,402	159,237	(7)
(8)Sarasota, West Coast Cross	Kevin O'Hara	*CP	10/10	8	30	0	0	30	135	83	22	0	0	0	0	3	8	-	-	-	148,504	0	0	2,000	2,000	146,504	(8)
(9)Southwest Ranches, W Broward Comm	E. Jay Sowers		02/06	26	34	11	5	50	14	40	1	0	7	2	14	2	0	-	-	-	164,142	0	0	111	111	164,031	(9)
(10)Tampa, First	William A. Bengtson		05/95	98	148	13	26	187	75	135	9	0	2	2	0	1	3	-	-	-	246,482	12,351	5,400	20,109	37,860	208,622	(10)
(11)Venice, Community	Neal S. Busker	M/C	02/05	39	42	5	2	49	20	72	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	110,564	7,125	3,425	1,300	11,850	98,714	(11)
	Arnold Rumph	*M/C	06/02																								
(12)Zellwood, Rolling Hills	Vacant		08/10	96	132	2	0	134	50	138	7	0	7	16	41	0	3	-	-	-	472,699	12,676	6,964	5,126	24,766	447,933	(12)
Illinois																										
(13)Bourbonnais, Cornerstone	Robert A. Grysen		08/95	119	182	41	166	389	113	393	37	0	0	0	23	11	2	-	-	-	644,195	16,721	0	0	16,721	627,474	(13)
(14)Crete	David A. Smith		12/10	128	217	25	105	347	57	240	16	2	5	9	0	7	1	-	-	-	580,843	15,821	70,313	0	86,134	494,709	(14)
(15)Danforth	Donald J. Mac Donald		06/94	53	84	9	26	119	15	74	2	0	0	2	0	3	1	-	-	-	85,008	6,246	60	1,906	8,212	76,796	(15)
(16)Frankfort, Peace Community	Vacant		10/09	134	280	89	11	380	186	307	31	0	0	1	16	10	1	-	-	-	601,967	23,146	15,200	70,950	109,296	492,671	(16)
(17)Glenwood, Living Springs Comm	David A. Izenbart		06/05	269	454	30	209	693	426	437	38	2	4	5	14	13	10	-	-	-	934,289	32,792	1,200	54,187	88,179	846,110	(17)
	Jason L. Perry	M/C	03/09																								
(18)Kankakee, Faith	Paul G. Akers		12/04	66	91	17	32	140	15	100	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	205,367	7,641	19,541	13,266	40,448	164,919	(18)
(19)Lansing, First	Kenneth W. Kuiper		02/98	234	419	0	123	542	34	350	5	4	10	6	1	5	0	-	-	-	850,361	32,405	15,041	165,322	212,768	637,593	(19)
(20)Lansing, Grace	Andrew J. Neampass		09/95	209	270	11	54	335	52	180	17	0	4	6	5	2	5	-	-	-	369,876	21,456	52,976	76,568	151,000	218,876	(20)
#	Dennis S. Colton	AP	03/10																								
(21)Lynwood, Living Grace	Superseded		03/09	31	40	9	0	49	5	65	0	0	16	4	0	0	0	-	-	-	170,465	0	16,000	2,315	18,315	152,150	(21)
(22)Saint Anne, First Wichert	Vacant		01/11	174	229	4	95	328	110	128	10	1	4	2	0	4	5	-	-	-	246,310	16,553	37	39,583	56,173	190,137	(22)
(23)Saint Anne, Pembroke Fellowship	Rodney Lake	*M/C	03/09	64	99	1	0	100	9	75	7	0	1	3	0	0	5	-	-	-	143,332	3,672	1,400	5,700	10,772	132,560	(23)
(24)South Holland, Calvary Community	Alfonzo K. Surrett	*CP	01/08	104	97	17	41	155	1	115	5	0	1	5	7	0	0	-	-	-	238,499	10,507	7,200	38,314	56,021	182,478	(24)
(25)South Holland, First	Matthew J. Waterstone		06/08	230	362	16	48	426	14	180	14	6	0	8	12	2	0	-	-	-	721,950	28,804	32,432	68,497	129,733	592,217	(25)
(26)South Holland, Thorn Creek	Thomas Archer		09/10	121	203	28	43	274	24	181	0	0	4	14	9	1	0	-	-	-	417,336	16,386	7,000	55,677	79,063	338,273	(26)
	Sidney M. Mauldin	M/C	06/08																								
(27)Tinley Park	Vacant		02/01	17	21	4	0	25	13	21	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	85,602	1,910	13,500	2,575	17,985	67,617	(27)
Indiana																										
(28)DeMotte, American	Daniel R. Jelsma		07/01	302	544	25	237	806	21	367	6	10	4	4	2	3	0	-	-	-	516,643	39,851	64,450	69,325	173,626	343,017	(28)
	Troy A. Nanninga	AP	06/10																								
(29)DeMotte, First	John D. Huff		08/04	247	463	29	141	633	42	333	15	2	11	4	16	6	1	-	-	-	779,908	35,638	53,943	71,137	160,718	619,190	(29)
	Roger D. Huitink	AP	11/03																								
(30)Dyer, Faith	Robert W. Bouwer		08/90	1,733	3,021	12	1,615	4,648	1,912	3,056	207	94	11	10	44	91	29	-	-	-	5,289,511	204,821	67,153	456,718	728,692	4,560,819	(30)

	Michael G. Pitsenberger	01/11																						
(31)Fishers, Christ's Community	Nathan A. Pyle	07/08	50	102	14	25	141	35	136	3	0	3	1	28	2	2	-	-	-	267,788	7,873	3,572	21,526	32,971	234,817	(31)
(32)Fort Wayne, Christ's Community	Dale D. Matthews	06/97	88	112	38	36	186	16	90	2	7	2	0	14	1	0	-	-	-	254,586	10,508	1,523	4,200	16,231	238,355	(32)
(33)Gary, Ross	Shawn M. Gerbers	03/09	81	116	36	27	179	11	115	5	0	5	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	144,494	11,757	2,800	4,155	18,712	125,782	(33)
(34)Hammond, Riverside Community	Vacant	03/00	16	21	9	32	62	17	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	41,679	2,099	0	2,900	4,999	36,680	(34)
(35)Indianapolis, Christian Park	Cornelius J. Moss	06/08	53	69	21	12	102	17	47	0	0	8	3	1	0	0	-	-	-	250,347	6,540	18,145	11,268	35,953	214,394	(35)
(36)Lafayette, Community	Chad R. Schuitema	03/04	91	160	12	44	216	50	159	7	1	6	4	0	2	0	-	-	-	303,894	12,271	8,500	30,668	51,439	252,455	(36)
(37)Lafayette, Heartland Community	Andrea L. Poppleton	11/05	55	97	5	20	122	38	97	2	5	1	1	0	0	1	-	-	-	233,984	8,090	11,638	4,022	23,750	210,234	(37)
	Drew B. Poppleton	11/05																						
(38)Munster, Trinity	Richard L. Bawinkel	10/01	74	119	21	60	200	33	95	4	3	0	2	6	2	1	-	-	-	222,894	8,965	15,231	19,910	44,106	178,788	(38)
Ohio																										
(39)Van Wert, St. Paul	Chad M. Strabbing	03/09	72	117	46	15	178	7	72	1	0	0	5	34	0	0	-	-	-	117,373	9,699	1,453	4,742	15,894	101,479	(39)
	Total		5,324	8,656	694	3,317	12,667	3,811	216	510	143	140	136	345	176	111	-	-	-	16,729,871	650,095	547,971	1,349,855	2,547,921	14,181,950	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME * SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the General Synod Directory # STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Chaplain
John H. Armstrong
Michael Lee Herring
Mike Hoppe
Robert W. Jackson
Mark Gregory Prestriedge
Mark J. Tjepkema

Planting Minister
Hope-anne Germoso
Steven Germoso
Gerald P. Hekhuis

Retired
William J. Bouwer
Louis M. Branning
Neal S. Busker
Dale Haven Cox
Melvin DeVries
Herbert Du Mont
Robert Eggebeen
Wilfred G. Fiet
Charlotte Heinen
Ronald K. Kelley
Wayne Eugene Kiel
Kelvin Lee Kronemeyer
Donald P. Lindskoog
James C. McDonald
James Phillip Medendorp
Joseph Muyskens
William E. Nelson
Peter D. Nordstrom
Walter H. Pickup
Albert Vander Meer
Isaac R. West
Kenneth L. Westrate

Specialized Ministry
Heino A. Blaauw
Robert Harrison
Timothy J. King
Richard Edwin Plass
W. Thomas Slager
David D. Tellinghuisen
H. Arlan TenClay
Wesley Tillett
Wayne A. Van Regenmorter
Michael S. VandenBerg
Barry L. Wynveen

Without Charge
Lance Davids
Scott C. Eding
Fernando J. Jensen
David Jay Kasper
Larry W. Klaaren
Walter A. McCray
Jonathan Jacob Meester
German Moreno
Fernando Ricardo Ossandon
Reggie R. Padin
Michael R. Talaga
Charles H. Van Dommelen
Jared Henry Van Noord

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(7)	1,720	(1)	10,865	(4)	12,000	(1)	7,950
(10)	51	(4)	3,500	(8)	5,000	(2)	77,890
(11)	28,924	(7)	15,667	(10)	11,252	(4)	65,000
(12)	100	(12)	192,270	(12)	5,000	(5)	2,700
(14)	110	(13)	104,059	(17)	1,450	(6)	54
(15)	842	(14)	9,837	(21)	3,333	(7)	2,400
(16)	1,875	(18)	8,000	(30)	25,000	(8)	7,205
(17)	883	(19)	139,883	(31)	500	(9)	56,263
(18)	665	(20)	17,075			(10)	13,456
(20)	16,532	(21)	23,767			(11)	28,785
(21)	1,660	(24)	15,417			(12)	13,111
(22)	425	(28)	17,908			(13)	64,534
(24)	1,543	(30)	145,813			(14)	97,571
(25)	181,706	(31)	2,850			(17)	51,038
(26)	13,898	(32)	49,600			(18)	4,951
(27)	96	(37)	70,976			(21)	10,185
(28)	1,023	(38)	5,290			(24)	24,910
(30)	10,917	(39)	22,600			(25)	44,240
(31)	39					(26)	6,445
(32)	1,242					(27)	48,000
(34)	41,679					(29)	9,300
(35)	110,512					(30)	13,864
(36)	12,965					(31)	42,015
(37)	621					(32)	3,016
(38)	2,846					(37)	3,220
(39)	4,375					(39)	15,190

Regional Synod of Mid-America CLASSIS OF ILLINOIS

Stated Clerk — Gerald A. Dykstra, Elim Reformed Church, 140 S Church Rd, Kings, IL 61068-4525; 815-562-6811
Treasurer — Roger Fiet, 805 Keith Dr, Morrison, IL 61270-3046; 815-772-2546

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship					
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt						Contributions			
				Housihld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Illinois																										
(1)Baileyville	Vacant		01/11	51	75	7	39	121	3	60	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	-	-	-	146,500	6,300	16,600	24,300	47,200	99,300	(1)
(2)Erie, Newton Zion	Vacant		01/02	30	57	10	21	88	17	45	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	88,378	3,802	0	5,933	9,735	78,643	(2)
(3)Fairview	Michael A. Holleman		08/10	29	59	104	5	168	10	45	11	2	1	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	94,552	12,906	11,975	5,250	30,131	64,421	(3)
(4)Forreston	Vacant		09/09	90	122	0	26	148	9	103	6	0	0	10	0	1	1	-	-	-	127,150	8,335	18,200	6,905	33,440	93,710	(4)
(5)Freeport, Community	Herbert Bollman		04/98	19	23	1	1	25	7	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	32,794	1,779	80	1,077	2,936	29,858	(5)
(6)Fulton, First	Edith Lenz		11/08	119	172	0	50	222	0	100	2	2	2	11	0	0	0	-	-	-	204,165	12,020	19,323	4,851	36,194	167,971	(6)
(7)Fulton, Second	Scott A. Stephan		07/05	229	372	50	218	640	16	300	7	2	4	7	4	4	1	-	-	-	320,905	22,447	13,104	14,973	50,524	270,381	(7)
(8)Fulton, Spring Valley	Scott A. Bonestroo		02/00	79	130	33	58	221	9	142	1	0	1	1	5	10	1	-	-	-	155,138	7,752	3,700	12,484	23,936	131,202	(8)
(9)Fulton, Trinity	Thomas E. Merchant		07/06	57	85	13	25	123	0	57	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	127,966	6,133	14,518	7,530	28,181	99,785	(9)
(10)German Valley, Silver Creek	Randall P. Knoll		07/95	127	198	23	60	281	12	140	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	-	-	-	226,954	19,707	17,934	3,634	41,275	185,679	(10)
(11)Kings, Elim	Gerald A. Dykstra	M/C	05/09	37	57	65	9	131	7	47	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	150,538	3,496	47,489	3,552	54,537	96,001	(11)
(12)Lanark, Faith	Herbert Bollman		04/98	12	18	15	0	33	4	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	26,563	1,227	1,500	349	3,076	23,487	(12)
(13)Morrison, Ebenezer	Gerald H. Norman		01/11	347	387	120	104	611	11	200	6	2	0	11	10	3	1	-	-	-	511,333	31,425	36,150	535	68,110	443,223	(13)
(14)Morrison, Emmanuel	Jeffrey McIlrath		07/04	243	517	20	96	633	25	325	12	10	5	5	0	9	4	-	-	-	663,292	32,986	39,731	18,268	90,985	572,307	(14)
(15)Oregon, Ebenezer	Brion J. Brooks		08/09	85	149	17	77	243	10	120	1	0	2	2	0	1	1	-	-	-	229,649	10,582	18,500	4,729	33,811	195,838	
(16)Pekin, Normandale	Vacant		10/05	28	40	0	0	40	20	50	2	1	0	2	0	0	1	-	-	-	62,432	2,392	1,514	4,300	8,206	54,226	(16)
(17)Pekin, Second	Bradley J. VanderWaal		12/06	88	118	55	24	197	23	102	0	0	2	4	0	2	0	-	-	-	190,600	7,800	4,700	9,250	21,750	168,850	(17)
(18)Raritan	Terry R. Muller	M/C	01/11	15	18	6	3	27	4	16	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	23,704	859	3,202	353	4,414	19,290	(18)
(19)Sterling, Bethel	Kenneth L. Zuithoff		01/79	117	185	18	70	273	18	139	0	0	1	2	15	1	0	-	-	-	215,530	12,082	18,390	6,134	36,606	178,924	(19)
Iowa																										
(20)Clinton, Community	Robert D. Hoffman		11/07	57	100	26	26	152	25	70	8	2	0	4	0	2	0	-	-	-	114,312	5,520	5,197	2,400	13,117	101,195	(20)
(21)Davenport, Christ's Family	Brian L. Akker		04/02	136	228	10	88	326	60	197	6	9	6	1	0	5	0	-	-	-	530,255	16,260	15,200	32,800	64,260	465,995	(21)
	Timothy J. Truesdell	AP	07/07																							
(22)Eldridge, North Ridge Community	Douglas Evenhouse		02/08	59	97	6	74	177	35	150	12	18	0	0	0	9	0	-	-	-	267,444	4,501	22,492	18,782	45,775	221,669	(22)
Missouri																										
(23)Saint Peters, Christ's	Philip E. Doeschot		06/95	97	171	40	70	281	55	173	4	3	0	0	2	4	2	-	-	-	297,126	9,445	7,469	9,864	26,778	270,348	(23)
	Stephanie D. Doeschot		06/95																							
		Total		2,151	3,378	639	1,144	5,161	380	114	78	53	27	69	38	56	12	-	-	-	4,807,280	239,756	336,968	198,253	774,977	4,032,303	

Chaplain
Henry C. Elgersma
Julie Ann Jones

Retired
Levi W. Akker
Donald D. Barnes
Franklin De Graaf
Herman H. Dragt
Harmen Heeg
Phillip P. Sneller
James A. Stralow

Specialized Ministry
Pamela J. Hoogheem
Dean Haughton Kladder
Kurt Timothy Kruger
Roy D. Paterik
David John Smallegan
Vinton Ervin Smith
Joel VanderWal

Without Charge
Stephen S. Schwander

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	6,100	(4)	1,000	(16)	5,000	(1)	23,800
(2)	22	(5)	631	(17)	5,000	(3)	5,452
(3)	12,481	(7)	10,178	(23)	15,000	(4)	6,288
(4)	6,414	(8)	16,623			(5)	4,650
(5)	2,758	(9)	28,383			(8)	3,947
(6)	47,210	(13)	3,677			(9)	1,770
(7)	4,006	(14)	140,800			(10)	6,743
(8)	4,700	(15)	35,179			(13)	5,718
(9)	10,992	(16)	5,000			(15)	18,597
(10)	15,593	(19)	35,779			(16)	655
(11)	69,355	(22)	38,438			(17)	44,000
(13)	67,311	(23)	31,559			(18)	85
(14)	2,327					(20)	30
(15)	1,114					(22)	3,478
(17)	35,000					(23)	2,550
(18)	991						
(20)	542						
(22)	1,237						
(23)	87						

Regional Synod of Mid-America CLASSIS OF WISCONSIN

Stated Clerk — William P. Te Winkle, 607 N 8th St Fl 7, Sheboygan, WI 53081-4519; 920-458-5501 ext 114
Treasurer — Edith Daane, N2081 Wittwood Rd, Oostburg, WI 53070-1636; 920-564-3267

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership															Education		Stewardship					
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Housihld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Wisconsin																										
(1)Brandon, Bethel	John C. Tilstra		01/11	179	309	72	169	550	32	200	3	0	1	4	14	7	0	-	-	-	315,607	22,259	16,344	27,046	65,649	249,958	(1)
(2)Brown Deer, Trinity Community	William J. Flavin		07/09	82	185	34	35	254	25	134	12	0	0	3	12	0	0	-	-	-	271,613	11,625	8,841	58,560	79,026	192,587	(2)
(3)Cedar Grove, Faith	Earl V. Slotman		10/02	137	221	34	94	349	11	182	2	0	1	1	0	7	0	-	-	-	307,371	17,396	20,567	13,031	50,994	256,377	(3)
(4)Cedar Grove, First	Kent E. Vant Hul		08/98	273	382	0	134	516	106	350	10	7	0	9	0	7	0	-	-	-	516,240	37,425	21,639	49,479	108,543	407,697	(4)
(5)Clinton, Emmanuel	Clyde H. Rensink		02/99	77	95	43	18	156	7	80	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	198,571	5,789	17,923	10,230	33,942	164,629	(5)
(6)Delavan, Creek Road Community	Michael R. Ploeger		06/02	27	48	5	11	64	27	67	5	0	1	0	2	0	0	-	-	-	117,970	1,500	3,065	3,560	8,125	109,845	(6)
(7)Fond du Lac, Grace	Barry Vegter		03/00	243	311	0	319	630	123	320	10	0	0	1	0	3	2	-	-	-	571,702	18,757	67,836	36,810	123,403	448,299	(7)
(8)Friesland, First	Robert A. Ford		11/06	163	314	21	147	482	21	200	4	4	2	5	0	4	0	-	-	-	330,321	24,133	28,888	43,356	96,377	233,944	(8)
(9)Hingham	Steven J. Bakker		09/91	221	411	0	139	550	45	370	7	2	1	5	8	6	0	-	-	-	493,585	30,190	57,137	33,257	120,584	373,001	(9)
(10)Milwaukee, Iglesia Trinidad	Vacant		03/10	23	25	7	24	56	95	59	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	-	-	-	96,416	1,056	1,463	985	3,504	92,912	(10)
(11)Milwaukee, New Life Community	Vacant		07/10	45	76	8	9	93	8	59	0	2	5	1	19	1	0	-	-	-	126,426	3,543	6,460	7,114	17,117	109,309	(11)
(12)New Berlin, Calvary Community	Joe Veltman		10/05	23	37	8	2	47	10	33	4	0	0	1	2	1	0	-	-	-	65,090	2,360	3,887	6,018	12,265	52,825	(12)
(13)Oostburg, First	Wayne J. DeVrou		09/04	448	806	18	267	1,091	18	495	37	5	7	8	45	7	0	-	-	-	803,877	52,539	65,238	53,944	171,721	632,156	(13)
	Brian K. Taylor	AP	07/96																							
(14)Racine, First	Cary J. Winn		06/88	47	84	5	13	102	20	63	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	-	-	-	126,717	5,141	8,270	5,521	18,932	107,785	(14)
(15)Randolph, First	Timothy A. Ehrhardt		09/10	168	279	11	123	413	38	210	2	2	9	4	3	4	0	-	-	-	308,376	23,194	28,800	22,651	74,645	233,731	(15)
	Benjamin Bruins	AP	11/07																							
	Sarah V. Bruins	AP	08/07																							
(16)Sheboygan Falls, First	Bradley W. Veenendaal		12/05	177	304	10	134	448	25	275	12	1	0	5	0	4	0	-	-	-	326,706	19,665	7,978	31,016	58,659	268,047	(16)
	Jason J. Fyffe	AP	11/07																							
(17)Sheboygan Falls, Gibbsville	John F. Ornee		11/10	347	639	8	155	802	12	420	10	2	0	4	29	10	0	-	-	-	713,235	41,643	46,970	150,612	239,225	474,010	(17)
	Luke A. Schouten	AP	07/07																							
(18)Sheboygan, Bethany	Vacant		01/11	394	662	109	313	1,084	3	620	21	12	7	5	5	12	0	-	-	-	823,984	58,074	31,291	21,437	110,802	713,182	(18)
	Robert A. Abel	AP	07/09																							
	Theodore A. Lindman	AP	10/06																							
(19)Sheboygan, Hope	William P. Te Winkle		08/09	109	124	37	47	208	8	107	7	3	0	5	1	3	0	-	-	-	198,884	10,458	6,554	7,512	24,524	174,360	(19)
	Philip A. Rauwerdink	RET M/C	01/11																							
(20)Waupun, Alto	Vacant		01/11	284	542	53	301	896	62	430	10	12	5	5	4	7	0	-	-	-	580,208	34,254	42,108	63,857	140,219	439,989	(20)
(21)Waupun, Emmanuel	Calvin J. Vande Zande		04/08	112	171	4	51	226	11	123	3	5	2	1	0	4	0	-	-	-	174,385	9,550	17,160	7,988	34,698	139,687	(21)
(22)Waupun, First	Robert G. James		10/10	198	345	46	125	516	31	256	10	4	1	12	0	3	0	-	-	-	389,004	24,593	47,319	49,987	121,899	267,105	(22)
(23)Waupun, Trinity	Vacant		12/08	114	200	19	68	287	7	137	2	2	2	5	8	2	0	-	-	-	216,242	20,256	14,500	7,794	42,550	173,692	(23)

(24)Wausau, New Hope Community	Daniel L. Eisnor		07/07	186	295	31	82	408	14	187	8	1	2	1	1	6	1	-	-	-	427,214	28,869	63,311	43,192	135,372	291,842	(24)
(25)West Bend, Hope Community	Eric Boon	M/C	01/10	27	39	18	12	69	12	45	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	86,143	3,196	3,377	1,530	8,103	78,040	(25)
(26)Wisconsin Rapids, Faith	Vance R. Elzinga		08/10	63	105	7	37	149	36	98	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	215,065	8,301	7,000	7,388	22,689	192,376	(26)
		Total		4,167	7,009	608	2,829	10,446	807	212	189	65	47	88	154	102	4	-	-	-	8,800,952	515,766	643,926	763,875	1,923,567	6,877,385	

Chaplain
Jessica Christi Scholten
Joseph P. Wojnarowski

Planting Minister
Jon W. Nienhuis

Retired
Donald Boss
Louis John Buytendorp
Dennis P. Foemmel
Madeline Fuentez
Harold J. Goldzung
Wayne W. Joosse
Philip A. Rauwerdink
Gerald E. Shibley
Vernon A. Smith
Larry J. Ten Haken
Wayne Nellis Tripp
Ronald J. Van Der Werff
Albert Van Dyke
Elton L. Van Pernis
Howard G. Vande Guchte
Richard Westra
Paul W. Zoschke

Specialized Ministry
Ronald Dennis Cassie
Kevin Allen Edlefson
Robert G. Grahmann
Allen R. Schut
Earl L. Smith
Paul Wayne Wernlund
Bruce A. Wilterdink
Lyle Zumdahl

Without Charge
Amy L. Nyland
Gregg Pusateri
Dale Eugene Vos

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	89	(1)	26,771	(10)	77,691	(1)	34,135
(4)	12,301	(3)	62,044	(18)	35,000	(4)	10,495
(5)	38	(8)	11,755	(19)	6,000	(5)	9,289
(7)	1,209	(9)	46,203			(6)	4,307
(8)	214	(11)	1,940			(9)	1,325
(9)	4,090	(13)	12,742			(11)	750
(11)	1,400	(15)	16,896			(12)	1,620
(12)	2,170	(17)	136,644			(14)	300
(13)	803	(18)	62,883			(15)	310
(15)	182	(19)	17,340			(17)	78,763
(16)	730	(20)	32,862			(18)	350
(17)	15,280	(21)	9,846			(19)	3,425
(18)	6,438	(23)	1,280			(20)	42,043
(19)	11,060	(24)	34,183			(21)	600
(20)	28,227	(26)	3,083			(24)	10,336
(21)	233					(25)	248
(22)	28,073					(26)	18,711
(24)	2,658						
(25)	273						
(26)	1,207						

Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics CLASSIS OF DELAWARE-RARITAN

Stated Clerk David H. Ruisard, Rockaway Reformed Church, PO Box 98, White House Station, NJ 08889; 908-534-4351
Treasurer Joyce Murphy, 19 Sand Hill Rd, Annandale, NJ 08801-3111; 908-236-6236

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Househld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Deced (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
New Jersey																											
(1)Annandale	Kenneth Lobb	M/C	01/10	45	41	133	19	193	9	54	0	0	3	2	0	2	0	-	-	-	126,124	4,632	284	1,793	6,709	119,415	(1)
(2)Belle Meade, Harlingen	William G. De Young		09/98	122	180	51	44	275	27	135	8	3	0	2	27	1	1	-	-	-	308,350	14,708	3,453	28,211	46,372	261,978	(2)
(3)Blawenburg	Richard R. Van Doren		11/01	60	91	0	26	117	8	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	281,716	5,333	4,019	2,806	12,158	269,558	(3)
(4)Bridgewater, Bradley Gardens	J. Susan Gunther		11/02	83	52	84	2	138	34	55	6	0	0	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	67,095	5,607	1,162	2,497	9,266	57,829	(4)
(5)Bridgewater, Finderne	Warren R. Seibert	M/C	11/10	32	42	10	0	52	4	25	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	84,276	5,038	600	725	6,363	77,913	(5)
(6)Bridgewater, North Branch	Todd F. Buurstra		09/99	274	512	270	149	931	88	235	25	9	4	9	0	6	0	-	-	-	613,669	42,580	40,578	45,254	128,412	485,257	(6)
	Mark E. Swart		01/08																								
(7)Gladstone, Peapack	Kathryn Henry	*	01/04	63	99	35	38	172	30	73	5	2	1	2	3	4	2	-	-	-	361,005	7,638	6,642	61,814	76,094	284,911	(7)
(8)High Bridge	Stephen A. Yon		03/00	47	82	9	17	108	15	64	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	90,096	6,338	1,261	0	7,599	82,497	(8)
(9)Hillsborough	Fred D. Mueller		10/03	130	172	70	72	314	40	129	3	12	6	2	13	5	0	-	-	-	323,568	15,144	14,152	27,706	57,002	266,566	(9)
(10)Hillsborough, Clover Hill	John W. Cherry		03/99	76	133	278	130	541	165	95	17	2	2	4	0	7	0	-	-	-	233,600	10,532	5,213	8,668	24,413	209,187	(10)
(11)Hillsborough, Neshanic	David J. Hill		09/01	142	163	219	114	496	68	116	20	5	4	1	17	8	0	-	-	-	276,468	13,895	3,500	9,400	26,795	249,673	(11)
(12)Hillsborough, South Branch	Stephen J. Eckert		05/03	73	97	42	46	185	19	92	8	1	0	2	15	2	0	-	-	-	173,802	8,621	4,880	0	13,501	160,301	(12)
(13)Lebanon	Kenneth B. Petty		09/07	40	50	9	25	84	17	45	1	0	2	3	15	0	0	-	-	-	147,619	5,688	3,100	6,850	15,638	131,981	(13)
(14)Pottersville	Steven C. Miller	M/C	04/03	33	47	34	6	87	7	35	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	144,452	4,063	1,000	2,000	7,063	137,389	(14)
(15)Princeton, Griggstown	David A. Leung Kahler		04/03	46	73	42	32	147	34	48	7	0	0	7	0	2	0	-	-	-	46,509	6,807	11,834	4,032	22,673	23,836	(15)
(16)Readington	Catherin Gumpert		11/02	56	79	116	51	246	34	90	2	0	2	3	0	2	0	-	-	-	206,026	7,151	2,673	2,955	12,779	193,247	(16)
(17)Rocky Hill, First	Linda A. Pepe	*M/C	10/08	40	67	40	23	130	41	58	6	0	0	2	1	6	0	-	-	-	140,542	1,539	180	0	1,719	138,823	(17)
#(18)Somerville, United	Paul J. Walther	M/C	10/07	80	152	155	12	319	10	71	3	3	2	3	2	0	0	-	-	-	267,651	11,274	10,654	6,700	28,628	239,023	(18)
(19)South Bound Brook	Martin Winters		01/97	25	42	60	30	132	16	23	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	73,752	3,088	0	3,402	6,490	67,262	(19)
(20)Stanton	Rebekah A. Pratt		03/09	79	154	56	34	244	54	125	7	4	1	3	2	7	0	-	-	-	240,700	8,600	16,000	17,000	41,600	199,100	(20)
	Phillip A. Pratt		03/09																								
(21)Three Bridges	Ryan T. Nace		04/10	145	270	183	72	525	15	130	13	3	0	2	4	0	0	-	-	-	330,368	20,558	15,094	12,558	48,210	282,158	(21)
	Richard L. Brihn	RET M/C	03/09																								
(22)Whitehouse Station, Rockaway	David H. Ruisard		06/84	42	55	53	59	167	22	42	0	0	2	4	8	0	0	-	-	-	156,683	5,851	6,068	10,442	22,361	134,322	(22)
Pennsylvania																											
(23)Churchville, North & Southampton	Bethany L. Devos		11/07	243	381	0	86	467	63	188	15	2	4	10	0	7	0	-	-	-	405,501	30,960	30,954	20,704	82,618	322,883	(23)
	Corstian W. Devos		04/08																								
(24)Doylestown, Pleasant Ridge	Dawn Alpaugh	*ST	05/08	29	41	4	6	51	14	31	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	-	-	-	82,836	2,844	2,778	2,102	7,724	75,112	(24)
(25)Feasterville, Community	Al Alicea		09/96	120	43	30	15	88	7	50	4	0	0	1	5	2	1	-	-	-	0	6,013	2,700	0	8,713	-8,713	(25)
(26)Levittown, Faith	Donald H. Kazen	M/C	11/09	41	52	0	0	52	1	41	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	92,151	4,307	4,000	4,756	13,063	79,088	(26)
(27)Newtown	Leon Via	*M/C	11/09	19	27	3	2	32	13	45	0	0	0	1	7	0	2	-	-	-	117,196	2,113	0	11,407	13,520	103,676	(27)

(28)Richboro, Addisville	Douglas J. Dwyer		11/97	266	393	200	27	620	96	305	23	4	4	6	20	3	0	-	-	-	600,669	31,744	51,009	24,095	106,848	493,821	(28)
	Aaron M. Klein	AP	10/02																							
(29)Warminster, Johnsville	David Henry	*M/C	10/00	18	13	5	5	23	8	16	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	-	-	-	55,178	0	0	2,500	2,500	52,678	(29)
(30)Willow Grove	Christopher D. Heitkamp		09/09	47	72	50	18	140	28	81	7	1	2	3	0	2	1	-	-	-	168,617	6,338	672	5,228	12,238	156,379	(30)
(31)Willow Grove, Korean	Sung Chul Lee	*M/C		46	65	10	0	75	0	60	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	290,990	6,988	15,974	25,941	48,903	242,087	(31)
		Total		2,562	3,740	2,251	1,160	7,151	987	84	188	53	44	87	140	69	7	-	-	-	6,507,209	305,992	260,434	351,546	917,972	5,589,237	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Chaplain
Kirsten Allhusen
James L. DeVries
Bonnie Laverne Fee
Lynne Koehler McGarrigan
Brent Jeremy Mulder

Planting Minister
Heidi Elizabeth Butterworth
Robert J. Jones

Retired
Charles R. Ausherman
Richard L. Brihn
Allen G. Buurma
Joseph Cookson
Dennis Ferguson
James W. Ferrone
Barbara D. Fillette
Ruth Fries Robbins
Robert J. Hoeksema
Donald J. Hull
John I. Itzen
Leonard V. Kalkwarf
Carl Mark Kleis
Peter G. Maurer
Richard A. Miller
Peter M. Paulsen
Armand Renskers
Michael Romano
Arlen R. Salthouse
Ernest Schwehm
David Montgomery Taylor
Frank J. Villerius

Specialized Ministry
John J. Arnone
Marisol Ferrer
Janet L. Fries
David Haddorff
John Jong-Pyo Lee
Jamie Lynn Moyer
Luis R. Perez
Samuel H. Pomper
Keith R. Schmitt

Without Charge
James Young Kang

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	57,793	(2)	40,176	(8)	5,000	(1)	8,706
(2)	41,187	(3)	40,479	(10)	1,750	(2)	12,383
(3)	111,496	(9)	64,264			(3)	27,715
(4)	1,648	(10)	30,344			(4)	2,792
(5)	13,775	(11)	2,400			(5)	15,450
(6)	17,212	(15)	3,000			(6)	89,951
(7)	217,399	(16)	17,118			(7)	26,925
(8)	5,000	(17)	30,115			(9)	152
(11)	9,221	(18)	2,389			(10)	5,644
(12)	20,011	(19)	1,122			(11)	38,935
(13)	437	(20)	26,000			(12)	29,083
(15)	15,500	(22)	16,177			(13)	44,497
(16)	3,638	(28)	8,944			(14)	37,200
(18)	79,117					(15)	14,581
(20)	1,500					(16)	16,734
(21)	25,921					(17)	17,059
(22)	7,351					(18)	50,673
(23)	98,823					(19)	26,444
(24)	2,859					(20)	48,200
(26)	1,707					(21)	18,460
(28)	4,002					(22)	33,696
(30)	10,000					(23)	39,636
						(24)	27,751
						(26)	46,596
						(27)	28,449
						(28)	4,310
						(29)	13,536
						(30)	33,765

Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics CLASSIS OF GREATER PALISADES

Stated Clerk Aleta C. Shepler, 176 Big Ridge Ests, East Stroudsburg, PA 18302; 570-223-1984
Treasurer William Simmons, 37 Kohring Cir S, Harrington Park, NJ 07640-1917; 201-768-5444

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship					
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt						Contributions			
				Housihld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Worship Attend (7)	Conf (8)	Cert (9)	Trans (10)	Decd (11)	Other (12)	Infant (13)	Adult (14)	Sun Sch (15)	New Mbrs Clas (16)	Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
New Jersey																										
# (1)Bayonne, Bergen Point Comm**	Vacant		07/99	1	10	0	0	10	2	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	15,144	1,061	400	800	2,261	12,883	(1)
# (2)Bayonne, First Federated**	Barbara Katora	*M/C	05/97	6	6	0	0	6	12	23	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	59,899	320	0	170	490	59,409	(2)
(3)Bergenfield, Clinton Avenue	Mark W. Ennis		08/06	168	167	97	23	287	33	85	4	0	2	3	17	3	0	-	-	-	211,692	8,020	5,300	238	13,558	198,134	(3)
(4)Bergenfield, Podonamoo	Hyok Tschoe		07/09	26	44	10	56	110	0	130	10	0	0	0	0	1	4	-	-	-	257,007	0	0	34,191	34,191	222,816	(4)
(5)Bogota, Bogart Memorial	Jodie Wu	M/C	03/11	52	45	32	14	91	21	42	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	162,434	1,289	1,220	0	2,509	159,925	(5)
	Shuo-Min (Imos) Wu	M/C	03/11																								
(6)Closter	John E. Hiemstra	RET M/C	03/94	44	51	22	16	89	14	48	3	0	0	2	19	0	1	-	-	-	117,500	5,486	3,300	2,500	11,286	106,214	(6)
# (7)Cresskill, Han Sung	Peter Je Chul Ko		01/03	26	28	0	25	53	10	65	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	345,000	2,041	0	0	2,041	342,959	(7)
(8)Dumont, Old North	Richard J. Vander Borgh		02/83	67	90	48	42	180	38	61	5	0	0	1	14	0	0	-	-	-	133,414	10,044	10,000	2,050	22,094	111,320	(8)
(9)Englewood, Grace and Peace	Hak Ryong Kim		05/10	12	25	10	0	35	0	25	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	75,000	1,207	0	500	1,707	73,293	(9)
(10)Fair Lawn, Community	George Lai		10/10	45	78	29	6	113	10	66	4	2	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	236,158	5,792	4,480	16,865	27,137	209,021	(10)
	Faith M. Hice	M/C	01/10																								
(11)Fair Lawn, Peace Korean	Jae Jun Kim		09/06	69	134	0	71	205	5	165	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	-	-	-	861,338	5,000	0	7,593	12,593	848,745	(11)
(12)Fort Lee, First Palisades	Dominick Apollo		06/94	33	48	31	32	111	64	73	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	181,712	1,870	5,000	4,480	11,350	170,362	(12)
(13)Glen Rock, Community	Allan J. Janssen		11/00	140	204	162	51	417	25	120	2	2	3	4	0	4	0	-	-	-	288,680	18,052	5,800	5,425	29,277	259,403	(13)
(14)Guttenberg, Hispanic	José Lopez	*M/C	05/09	15	0	1	0	1	5	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	37,173	0	0	0	0	37,173	(14)
# (15)Hackensack, First	Vacant		10/05	13	19	0	0	19	75	15	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	62,580	1,579	10,388	2,070	14,037	48,543	(15)
(16)Hackensack, Glory Christian	Chang Soo Jung		04/03	25	20	5	13	38	2	57	3	9	9	0	0	0	3	-	-	-	81,499	1,829	0	0	1,829	79,670	(16)
(17)Hackensack, Second	Dennis B. Wilcox		04/95	125	207	93	31	331	18	100	5	2	0	4	0	1	0	-	-	-	385,390	16,961	19,400	7,810	44,171	341,219	(17)
# (18)Hackensack, Third	Vacant		04/09	18	22	18	2	42	5	25	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	48,984	3,675	2,050	100	5,825	43,159	(18)
(19)Harrington Park, Community	George V. Kaden		10/83	111	172	129	49	350	54	126	4	5	0	6	6	1	0	-	-	-	359,767	15,310	22,878	20,245	58,433	301,334	(19)
(20)Hasbrouck Heights, First	Dianna L. Smith		10/05	72	123	49	16	188	22	64	8	4	2	8	15	2	0	-	-	-	118,843	10,391	6,500	2,000	18,891	99,952	(20)
# (21)Hoboken, Community**	Marvin Krieger	*	02/06	12	17	3	2	22	4	39	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	-	-	-	44,740	1,300	100	1,750	3,150	41,590	(21)
(22)Ho-Ho-Kus, Community	Richard S. Bierwas		09/04	62	110	141	33	284	9	58	5	4	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	215,637	11,472	1,500	14,267	27,239	188,398	(22)
# (23)Jersey City, Old Bergen**	Jon Brown	*M/C	11/10	60	73	28	20	121	7	46	3	0	3	2	0	3	1	-	-	-	105,651	18,094	0	5,868	23,962	81,689	(23)
(24)Jersey City, Second Hudson City	John R. Muñiz		06/95	20	16	20	9	45	55	55	3	0	0	3	3	2	8	-	-	-	91,000	5,000	500	3,000	8,500	82,500	(24)
# (25)Jersey City, United	Vacant		07/06	6	7	0	0	7	5	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	40,667	0	0	0	0	40,667	(25)
(26)Lodi, Faith	Timothy Ippolito		09/05	22	28	6	21	55	47	70	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	-	-	-	101,934	1,247	2,700	375	4,322	97,612	(26)
(27)Mahwah, Ramapo	William F. Grob		10/02	61	98	26	41	165	31	55	18	2	3	1	0	3	1	-	-	-	140,818	5,537	2,568	2,259	10,364	130,454	(27)
(28)North Bergen, Grove	Vacant		03/08	46	55	38	5	98	24	43	3	0	2	6	0	3	0	-	-	-	387,044	5,404	12,350	4,433	22,187	364,857	(28)
(29)North Bergen, Woodcliff Community	Gregory Dunlap		02/06	17	29	36	17	82	143	35	7	0	12	1	26	2	2	-	-	-	63,592	0	0	0	0	63,592	(29)
(30)Old Tappan, Trinity	Kirsten Shepler-Ross	*ST	08/07	31	65	0	23	88	2	55	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	106,982	7,298	2,115	1,231	10,644	96,338	(30)
(31)Oradell	Vacant		06/09	45	76	37	0	113	16	60	2	1	3	3	1	0	0	-	-	-	192,523	6,900	429	4,011	11,340	181,183	(31)
(32)Oradell, New Covenant Korean	Jong Kug Kim		02/07	40	35	11	30	76	5	93	2	1	3	1	4	2	2	-	-	-	196,400	2,161	4,600	21,679	28,440	167,960	(32)
# (33)Paramus, HanMaUm	Vacant		03/11	170	75	60	95	230	30	280	25	3	5	3	0	9	16	-	-	-	1,960,000	8,320	6,000	70,000	84,320	1,875,680	(33)
(34)Park Ridge, Pascack	Paul G. Janssen		10/91	123	151	87	40	278	15	75	2	0	1	3	3	2	0	-	-	-	350,500	12,765	5,800	2,175	20,740	329,760	(34)

# (35)Ridgefield, English Neighborhood	Vacant		04/11	24	27	6	2	35	5	35	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	299,500	3,596	6,300	6,800	16,696	282,804	(35)
(36)Ridgewood, First	Judith Broeker		05/94	4	7	1	0	8	140	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	108,300	560	0	400	960	107,340	(36)
(37)Ridgewood, Old Paramus	Thomas C. Marsden		05/98	94	161	43	35	239	25	126	1	5	2	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	0	14,381	15,000	24,000	53,381	-53,381	(37)
# (38)Ridgewood, Upper Ridgewood Comm	Nolan D. Palsma		10/09	75	133	26	31	190	26	85	10	0	3	1	2	8	0	-	-	-	289,520	9,224	810	6,880	16,914	272,606	(38)
(39)River Edge, Cherry Hill	Ralph P. Acerno		04/93	14	20	0	0	20	20	40	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	-	-	-	145,000	2,500	0	0	2,500	142,500	(39)
# (40)Secaucus, First	William H. Henkel	RET M/C	01/09	31	38	3	1	42	13	25	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	60,787	4,717	1,025	2,742	8,484	52,303	(40)
# (41)Upper Saddle River, Saddle River	Robert W. Fretz		09/00	56	82	65	22	169	25	48	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	-	-	-	253,272	10,204	7,500	8,265	25,969	227,303	(41)
(42)West New York, Trinity	John H. Sharpe		10/95	45	62	35	13	110	64	77	0	0	0	2	25	0	0	-	-	-	145,113	6,318	3,756	2,129	12,203	132,910	(42)
# (43)Westwood, Parkside Community	Rodney W. Haveman		11/01	30	42	7	25	74	15	55	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	216,906	3,265	10,200	18,747	32,212	184,694	(43)
		Total		2,156	2,900	1,415	912	5,227	1,141	66	153	41	61	71	141	62	40	-	-	-	9,555,100	250,190	179,969	308,048	738,207	8,816,893	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*
# STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
**LINE 1—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA. IT MAINTAINS SEPARATE MEMBERSHIP ROLLS FROM WHICH STATISTICS ARE OBTAINED.
**LINE 2—A FEDERATED CONGREGATION WITH THE BAPTIST AND THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/3 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.
**LINE 21—A FEDERATED CONGREGATION WITH THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.
**LINE 23—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.

Chaplain
Kathy Jo Blaske
Jonathan Etterbeek
Sandra Louise Masters

Planting Minister
Yong Seung Ji
Sun Jong Ju
Paul Bongwoo Nam

Retired
Frank R. Ackerman
David S. Chen
Fred W. Diekman
Douglas W. Fromm
William H. Henkel
John E. Hiemstra
Charles P. Johnson
Jai Hun Jung
Lee L. Kester
Daniel Lawrence Ogden
Robert H. Pope
Alvin J. Poppen
Roland Ratmeyer
Louis Springsteen
Melchior H. Van Hattem
David C. Van Sickle
Frederick J. Vander Meer
George Howard VanSandt
Roy W. Wagoner
Dorothy Waters
E. Royden Weeks

Specialized Ministry
John R. Allen
Peter Dao-Nan Chen
Sanjiv Kattekola
En Young Kim
Jimmy Seong G. Lim
Pamela J. Pater-Ennis
James J. Reid
Keith Ross
Kristine Joy Veldheer

Without Charge
Daniel Sung Hyun Bae
Darwin K. DeHaan
Robert J. Greydanus
Santos Rivera

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	6,223	(3)	3,500	(11)	408,500	(1)	3,040
(3)	33,000	(5)	5,100	(24)	8,000	(3)	25,292
(5)	3,035	(11)	32,300	(27)	698	(5)	99,670
(6)	10,700	(23)	527	(30)	433	(6)	25,000
(8)	30,000	(24)	10,000	(33)	25,000	(8)	17,350
(10)	2,160	(25)	1,241	(34)	25,000	(10)	60,028
(13)	2,800	(27)	900			(12)	54,565
(15)	31,220	(29)	1,056			(13)	62,450
(17)	236,945	(31)	5,183			(14)	25,707
(18)	220	(32)	5,000			(15)	18,500
(19)	38,011	(33)	760,000			(17)	18,209
(20)	23,065	(34)	85,000			(19)	30,668
(21)	1,748	(40)	6,703			(20)	24,442
(22)	14,302	(42)	5,108			(21)	4,280
(23)	93,948	(43)	30,141			(22)	78,666
(24)	5,000					(23)	5,036
(25)	160					(24)	42,000
(27)	700					(25)	35,560
(28)	286,693					(26)	8,750
(29)	283					(27)	50,140
(30)	307					(28)	24,945
(31)	4,177					(29)	26,563
(32)	61					(30)	31,900
(35)	240,500					(31)	72,658
(38)	75,600					(34)	50,590
(39)	5,000					(35)	24,000
(41)	18,391					(36)	108,000
(42)	30,133					(38)	2,700
(43)	14,112					(39)	130,000
						(40)	20,927
						(41)	132,799
						(42)	55,104
						(43)	110,381

Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics CLASSIS OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Stated Clerk Eltje J. Brunemeyer, 105 Driftwood Dr, Bayville, NJ 08721-1954; 732-269-6858
Treasurer Liz Hance, PO Box 7807, North Brunswick, NJ 08902; 732-348-8016

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship					
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt						Contributions			
				Housihld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Dead	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
Maryland																										
(1)Ijamsville, Monocacy Valley	Mark H. Vander Meer		06/96	157	224	15	60	299	0	302	6	0	0	0	30	3	2	-	-	-	494,881	20,533	6,000	37,108	63,641	431,240	(1)
New Jersey																										
(2)Brielle	Louis J. LaFazia		09/09	98	143	57	25	225	110	86	11	0	0	3	7	1	0	-	-	-	239,893	13,721	3,411	1,812	18,944	220,949	(2)
(3)Colts Neck	Scott D. Brown		10/99	353	501	191	230	922	121	343	43	5	1	1	21	7	0	-	-	-	953,927	39,256	66,780	80,925	186,961	766,966	(3)
	Christopher L. Vande Bunte	AP	09/05																							
(4)Edison, Grace	David S. Martin		10/09	27	39	44	0	83	22	30	0	0	0	3	11	0	0	-	-	-	83,635	4,126	10,604	4,302	19,032	64,603	(4)
(5)Franklin Park, Six Mile Run	Osvaldo Nuesch	*	09/08	117	107	0	23	130	47	91	5	2	0	4	1	3	0	-	-	-	227,214	8,827	1,055	3,900	13,782	213,432	(5)
(6)Freehold	Christopher L. Jacobsen		09/08	46	76	34	6	116	25	50	0	0	2	5	0	1	0	-	-	-	124,807	6,812	1,550	3,025	11,387	113,420	(6)
(7)Hazlet, Faith	Vacant		12/03	35	46	11	0	57	6	30	0	0	0	3	1	3	0	-	-	-	118,951	4,893	110	3,147	8,150	110,801	(7)
(8)Highland Park	Seth Kaper-Dale		09/01	122	164	38	107	309	89	200	24	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	302,391	15,160	7,200	20,118	42,478	259,913	(8)
	Stephanie Kaper-Dale		09/01																							
(9)Keyport	Ellen-Jo (E. J.) Emerson	M/C	09/07	20	32	17	9	58	5	36	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	82,469	4,597	3,181	3,965	11,743	70,726	(9)
(10)Linden	David K. Groeneveld		10/98	65	93	12	9	114	16	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	348,034	8,060	5	5,742	13,807	334,227	(10)
(11)Long Branch, First	Jane Price	*	06/03	29	15	18	0	33	8	13	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	59,571	1,535	2,270	1,537	5,342	54,229	(11)
(12)Manahawkin, Ocean Community	Philip J. Bakelaar		11/95	124	160	49	4	213	91	169	14	3	4	9	0	1	3	-	-	-	334,513	20,341	6,000	17,195	43,536	290,977	(12)
(13)Marlboro, Old Brick	Vacant		10/10	42	56	97	18	171	1	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	155,782	4,606	2,260	2,100	8,966	146,816	(13)
(14)Metuchen	Richard Ruch		06/03	72	131	166	96	393	50	80	6	1	2	4	0	3	0	-	-	-	235,702	12,906	2,383	14,556	29,845	205,857	(14)
(15)Middlebush	George H. Montanari		02/03	75	127	82	78	287	27	70	12	8	0	2	83	2	1	-	-	-	255,002	11,610	11,650	5,798	29,058	225,944	(15)
(16)Middletown	Vacant		04/09	40	71	45	27	143	6	45	2	0	0	1	19	2	0	-	-	-	131,484	8,251	1,420	7,170	16,841	114,643	(16)
(17)New Brunswick, First	Hartmut Kramer-Mills		11/00	44	67	14	16	97	4	37	3	0	0	1	3	3	1	-	-	-	361,971	6,237	3,950	3,727	13,914	348,057	(17)
	Susan Kramer-Mills		11/00																							
(18)New Brunswick, Second	Douglas Shepler		04/08	36	67	0	0	67	2	37	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	232,699	7,196	905	0	8,101	224,598	(18)
	Nancy Beardslee	M/C	02/09																							
# (19)New Brunswick, Suydam Street	Vacant		09/08	36	65	37	18	120	56	112	0	0	14	1	0	3	0	-	-	-	141,004	11,797	3,000	0	14,797	126,207	(19)
(20)North Brunswick	Vicente Martinez	M/C	04/11	44	68	13	13	94	11	55	4	0	1	0	0	3	0	-	-	-	186,612	5,469	1,085	225	6,779	179,833	(20)
	Charles Chamberlayne	*M/C	05/03																							
(21)North Plainfield, Trinity	Vacant		12/10	49	60	0	0	60	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	1,617,069	6,908	66,564	25,434	98,906	1,518,163	(21)
(22)Perth Amboy, St. Paul's	Benjamin Alicea-Lugo		04/95	52	52	66	10	128	10	52	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	-	-	-	63,370	6,257	0	1,650	7,907	55,463	(22)
(23)South River, First	Donald J. Stager		07/95	25	39	26	4	69	37	28	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	47,101	4,318	1,250	3,730	9,298	37,803	(23)
(24)Spotswood	James E. Ribbans		01/01	96	152	46	10	208	25	73	12	0	2	1	63	5	0	-	-	-	232,490	15,500	5,675	4,800	25,975	206,515	(24)
(25)Tinton Falls	David W. de Forest		08/92	27	35	16	16	67	8	35	2	0	0	1	4	0	0	-	-	-	157,739	3,462	3,200	4,614	11,276	146,463	(25)
(26)Toms River, Pinelands	Allan D. Conover		07/09	142	174	141	0	315	4	146	4	0	5	5	1	0	0	-	-	-	223,284	21,780	1,106	34,587	57,473	165,811	(26)
(27)Whiting, Community	Vacant		01/11	200	211	42	0	253	53	169	0	14	3	27	0	0	0	-	-	-	306,882	24,467	38,362	3,000	65,829	241,053	(27)
	Stephen J. Hanson	AP	10/00																							

(28)Willingboro	Superseded		09/09	15	12	0	2	14	7	12	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	55,493	0	100	700	800	54,693	(28)
	Linda M. Lachesnez-Norment	M/C	01/10																								
		Total		2,188	2,987	1,277	781	5,045	843	85	153	33	36	85	249	41	7	-	-	-	7,773,970	298,625	251,076	294,867	844,568	6,929,402	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*
# STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Chaplain
John R. de Velder
Klaire Miller Jameson
Benjamin Rivera
Wilfredo Rodriguez
Samir Fouad Hanna Youssef

Graduate Study
Timothy J. Lowe

Retired
Robert G. Bender
Peter W. Berry
Clement Birkelbach
Eltje J. Brunemeyer
William Thomas Burns
Theodore L. Chandler
Thomas Charles Comella
Robert Dykstra
James R. Esther
John Hart
William H. Jewett
E. Joy Kulvicki
Donald A. Maxam
Rufus McClendon
Marvin Meeter
Frederick Mold
John P. Muilenburg
Raymond C. Ortman
David Peter Risseeuw
Paul M. Tanis
Gerald L. Vermilyea

Specialized Ministry
Richard D. Blake
Byung Chul Kim
Benjamin Lin
Ronald Earl Vande Bunte
Richard Hayes Weyer
Joseph W. Woods

Without Charge
Roberto A. Fois
Scott Robert Harris
Susan Ann Klimstra
Walter H. Schwedes

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	4,355	(2)	12,301	(17)	4,646	(1)	22,320
(2)	39,637	(3)	112,419	(26)	10,295	(2)	40,120
(3)	7,442	(5)	30,507			(3)	132,857
(4)	3,967	(7)	15,304			(4)	33,859
(5)	49,440	(8)	54,408			(5)	51,817
(6)	2,846	(10)	38,977			(6)	47,212
(7)	16,290	(11)	196			(7)	29,700
(8)	795	(16)	12,100			(8)	103,441
(9)	8,202	(17)	230,794			(9)	20,453
(10)	150,713	(18)	4,105			(10)	45,318
(11)	106	(19)	610			(11)	35,708
(12)	553	(20)	12,995			(14)	48,048
(13)	113,667	(26)	13,750			(15)	450
(14)	110,232	(27)	13,814			(16)	46,652
(15)	48,780					(17)	37,425
(16)	784					(18)	172,262
(17)	17,451					(19)	16,394
(18)	3,723					(20)	63,459
(20)	22,628					(21)	250,264
(21)	1,304,652					(22)	24,016
(22)	472					(23)	6,721
(23)	1,236					(24)	89,280
(24)	11,200					(25)	75,100
(26)	2,420					(26)	11,970
(27)	75,000					(27)	12,000
						(28)	33,610

Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics CLASSIS OF PASSAIC VALLEY

Stated Clerk Everett L. Zabriskie, III, 252 Highwood Ave, Ridgewood, NJ 07450; 201-819-7629
Treasurer Frank Chara, 41 Oping Rd, Pompton Plains, NJ 07444-1439; 973-476-2643

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship			Contributions				
				Househld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Actv (6)	Average Worshp Attend (7)	Gains Conf (8)	Gains Cert (9)	Losses Trans (10)	Losses Deced (11)	Losses Other (12)	Bapt Infant (13)	Bapt Adult (14)	Sun Sch (15)	New Mbrs Clas (16)	Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
New Jersey																												
(1)Bloomfield, Brookdale	Scarlet M. Gorton		06/04	28	28	18	8	54	11	31	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	-	-	-	118,949	2,399	4,500	9,349	16,248	102,701	(1)
(2)Boonton, First	Andrew J. Topp		04/97	38	44	49	44	137	36	38	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	80,484	1,564	1,300	6,142	9,006	71,478	(2)
(3)Clifton, Allwood Community	Carolyn S. Keith		03/03	34	40	0	31	71	31	57	2	0	6	9	0	1	0	-	-	-	104,862	5,000	0	0	5,000	99,862	(3)
(4)Clifton, Athenia	Vacant		02/93	26	28	38	0	66	6	35	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	-	-	-	68,239	2,896	1,850	2,647	7,393	60,846	(4)
(5)Clifton, Hope	Vacant		01/10	44	55	8	18	81	8	50	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	95,723	6,232	175	5,295	11,702	84,021	(5)
(6)Clifton, Primera Fuente de Salvacion	Harrison Sanchez	*PE	06/00	35	51	20	0	71	15	60	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	63,191	3,263	0	1,400	4,663	58,528	(6)
(7)Clifton, United	Michael A. Weber		03/09	33	65	19	5	89	35	60	13	0	0	1	2	0	0	-	-	-	171,956	4,551	11,355	7,998	23,904	148,052	(7)
(8)Fairfield	Vacant		08/07	30	45	11	0	56	9	40	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	-	-	-	111,600	3,890	200	5,800	9,890	101,710	(8)
(9)Hawthorne, First	Vacant		05/11	73	109	9	54	172	9	112	4	0	0	2	5	3	0	-	-	-	155,028	8,357	1,430	13,189	22,976	132,052	(9)
(10)Hawthorne, Rea Avenue	Juan J. Colon		10/04	48	50	28	5	83	10	40	4	0	0	1	4	0	1	-	-	-	82,330	3,288	457	3,137	6,882	75,448	(10)
(11)Irvington, Second	Peter A. Butler		11/04	15	16	9	9	34	9	21	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	54,767	1,489	712	712	2,913	51,854	(11)
(12)Kinnelon	Beverly B. Sullivant	M/C	10/10	30	54	31	8	93	13	35	2	0	0	0	37	1	0	-	-	-	82,662	5,048	405	594	6,047	76,615	(12)
(13)Lincoln Park, First	Eugene H. Voss		03/09	73	97	40	1	138	10	98	12	0	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	263,611	10,344	13,298	6,313	29,955	233,656	(13)
(14)Little Falls, First	Emily Rafering-Youngberg		09/02	40	68	5	12	85	11	45	5	0	0	1	0	1	1	-	-	-	116,699	6,599	3,550	1,300	11,449	105,250	(14)
(15)Little Falls, Second	Ed E. Hawkins		05/10	17	23	41	3	67	2	20	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	77,125	1,985	1,350	1,000	4,335	72,790	(15)
(16)Maplewood, Calvary	Jesus Cruz		10/91	25	14	1	2	17	8	25	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	-	-	-	38,000	1,050	0	1	1,051	36,949	(16)
(17)Midland Park, Faith	Scott D. Nichols		01/97	102	130	10	54	194	36	155	2	3	2	5	10	3	0	-	-	-	277,070	11,916	12,136	10,496	34,548	242,522	(17)
(18)Montville	Charles B. Bigelow		10/00	56	83	109	34	226	16	65	12	0	1	4	0	1	0	-	-	-	237,848	7,034	8,392	2,166	17,592	220,256	(18)
(19)Newark, First Hispanic	Rolnand Perez	M/C	11/04	20	16	0	37	53	14	45	6	0	0	0	3	0	5	-	-	-	38,934	1,324	982	10,005	12,311	26,623	(19)
(20)Newark, Grace	Lonzy C. McCarey		06/85	19	28	2	0	30	25	40	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	59,000	2,317	0	0	2,317	56,683	(20)
(21)Newark, North	Randal D. Van Doornik		07/07	14	18	8	4	30	50	35	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	-	-	-	91,229	2,731	0	2,450	5,181	86,048	(21)
(22)Newark, Trinity	Vacant		03/06	15	23	10	11	44	13	53	0	0	0	0	0	22	2	-	-	-	80,396	0	0	0	0	80,396	(22)
(23)North Haledon, Sixth	Michael D. Johnson		11/04	91	148	22	69	239	25	160	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	-	-	-	406,578	14,730	14,938	38,683	68,351	338,227	(23)
(24)Nutley, Franklin	Jill C. Fenske		09/85	38	48	24	12	84	18	40	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	108,213	3,889	600	3,560	8,049	100,164	(24)
(25)Oakland, Ponds	Nathan S. Busker		06/04	101	107	44	55	206	30	119	13	0	0	2	0	7	0	-	-	-	242,618	10,958	1,064	10,366	22,388	220,230	(25)
(26)Passaic, Iglesia Reformada Bethel	Vacant		09/04	14	8	4	0	12	3	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	9,264	0	0	0	0	9,264	(26)
(27)Paterson, Cristiana Ebenezer	Vacant		04/95	14	22	17	1	40	10	25	2	0	17	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	103,000	3,393	0	500	3,893	99,107	(27)
(28)Paterson, Faith Chapel	Darryl Redmond		06/10	37	76	11	2	89	15	98	4	0	2	0	11	0	8	-	-	-	3,345	6,536	0	3,500	10,036	-6,691	(28)
(29)Paterson, People's Park	Janet Benitez	*PE	08/03	20	25	10	0	35	55	75	0	0	6	0	4	0	5	-	-	-	51,009	2,483	360	3,249	6,092	44,917	(29)
(30)Pompton Lakes, Pompton	Thomas J. Bartha		09/02	160	260	123	80	463	42	161	14	0	5	6	17	0	0	-	-	-	412,337	28,301	18,340	9,216	55,857	356,480	(30)
	Debbie E. Rundecker	AP	10/10																								
(31)Pompton Plains, First	Kathleen M. Edwards Chase		10/06	245	364	216	58	638	74	266	13	1	1	7	0	16	0	-	-	-	658,875	34,762	36,139	38,217	109,118	549,757	(31)
# (32)River Edge, Hanaim	Vacant		04/11	150	200	50	10	260	30	240	20	30	50	1	10	5	3	-	-	-	1,155,000	20,000	2,000	110,000	132,000	1,023,000	(32)
(33)Saddle Brook, First	Christopher B. Wolf		12/10	49	77	37	19	133	10	65	2	1	1	1	3	1	0	-	-	-	109,028	5,958	9,942	1,000	16,900	92,128	(33)
(34)Upper Montclair, Montclair Heights	Superseded		01/10	16	4	20	2	26	2	12	0	0	0	0	44	0	0	-	-	-	80,280	1,821	0	1,848	3,669	76,611	(34)
(35)Wanaque	Sandra K. Sheppard		01/09	20	28	0	3	31	3	28	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	70,945	2,356	2,991	150	5,497	65,448	(35)

(36)Wayne, Pequannock	Vacant		12/10	46	67	67	29	163	28	45	3	0	0	3	0	1	0	-	-	-	146,111	5,876	15,719	2,973	24,568	121,543	(36)
(37)Wayne, Preakness	Eric G. Nichols		05/11	146	265	29	60	354	12	118	1	0	1	3	22	0	0	-	-	-	388,566	22,590	10,150	34,944	67,684	320,882	(37)
(38)Wyckoff	James J. O'Connell		05/04	227	425	68	89	582	74	228	20	1	6	10	0	10	1	-	-	-	645,498	35,648	58,750	25,784	120,182	525,316	(38)
	David J. Bach	AP	06/72																							
	William B. Norden	AP	09/07																							
(39)Wyckoff, Abundant Life	Thomas H. Larkin	M/C	04/09	110	161	36	33	230	4	100	4	2	3	3	0	1	0	-	-	-	603,284	12,661	20,213	25,545	58,419	544,865	(39)
		Total		2,299	3,370	1,244	862	5,476	812	76	158	43	106	78	185	81	26	-	-	-	7,663,654	305,239	253,298	399,529	958,066	6,705,588	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME
* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*
# STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Chaplain
Timothy Dunn
James D. Knol
Mara Joy Norden
Jose Manuel Serrano

Retired
Paul Babich
Robert W. Barrowclough
Ronald M. Franklyn
R. Jamieson Hallenbeck
Arthur C. Horst
Russell G. Johnson
Leonard A. Jones
Zoltan Kiraly
Ronald W. La Rose
Shirley Ann Montanari
John Oquendo
Gene A. Poll
Andrew R. Rienstra
Albert Studley
Larry G. Suntken
Everett L. Zabriskie

Specialized Ministry
Brigido Cabrera
Gabriel Gonzalez
Charles Lester Higgins
William L. Hill-Alto
Baktha B. C. Kumar
William Charles Moheit
Nelson Reese Murphy
Karyn Ratcliffe
Lynn Carol Van Ek

Without Charge
Hak Kwon Lee
Solomon Tivade
Steven Lee Wolters

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(2)	5,000	(1)	4,471	(15)	200	(1)	71,002
(5)	137	(2)	6,319	(22)	6,083	(2)	20,618
(7)	31,471	(14)	11,200	(29)	700	(6)	19,050
(8)	5,000	(15)	5,494			(7)	10,010
(9)	508	(16)	1,000			(8)	8,000
(11)	6,336	(17)	12,879			(9)	16,004
(12)	1,567	(18)	1,878			(10)	41,520
(13)	263,611	(24)	8,000			(11)	4,110
(14)	21	(25)	17,027			(12)	22,896
(15)	14,538	(29)	2,583			(14)	31,350
(17)	9,354	(30)	1,563			(15)	19,507
(18)	16,734	(31)	5,603			(16)	25,000
(19)	1,766	(32)	340,000			(17)	1,274
(23)	104,324	(39)	158,819			(18)	44,362
(24)	2,330					(19)	2,463
(25)	7,485					(20)	6,000
(27)	51,500					(21)	56,104
(30)	6,980					(22)	13,750
(31)	74,765					(23)	14,400
(32)	15,000					(24)	13,900
(34)	27,568					(25)	24,356
(35)	2,394					(29)	9,150
(36)	58					(30)	94,692
(37)	4,502					(31)	48,748
(38)	44,150					(33)	12,050
(39)	268,544					(34)	21,575
						(35)	2,780
						(36)	32,331
						(37)	98,650
						(38)	130,631
						(39)	9,300

Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF BROOKLYN

Stated Clerk Daniel D. Ramm, Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 890 Flatbush Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226; 718-284-5140
Treasurer Alice Williams, 145 Lincoln Rd Apt 1G, Brooklyn, NY 11225-4045; 718-284-6464

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worship Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Stewardship: Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Contributions: Congr Purpose (20)	
New York																											
(1)Brooklyn, Bay Ridge United**	Vacant		12/03	13	20	10	3	33	2	13	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	-	-	-	57,861	1,397	1,501	2,530	5,428	52,433	(1)
(2)Brooklyn, Bethel**	Samuel Atiemo	*M/C	10/01	65	55	30	74	159	85	88	0	10	1	0	0	7	0	-	-	-	173,785	6,328	4,795	1,210	12,333	161,452	(2)
(3)Brooklyn, Canarsie Community	Felix A. Busby		01/97	18	28	2	0	30	9	35	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	-	-	-	53,515	1,075	140	2,844	4,059	49,456	(3)
(4)Brooklyn, Flatbush	Daniel D. Ramm		10/90	78	98	10	19	127	20	87	3	0	1	0	0	11	1	-	-	-	334,180	7,611	12,582	9,000	29,193	304,987	(4)
(5)Brooklyn, Flatlands	Vacant		11/09	20	26	0	0	26	14	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	422,378	3,823	59,635	37,196	100,654	321,724	(5)
(6)Brooklyn, Grace	Douglas Banks		04/02	110	130	45	4	179	14	110	7	0	1	1	0	1	3	-	-	-	172,042	5,449	4,800	4,000	14,249	157,793	(6)
	Sharon M. Atkins	AP	04/09																								
(7)Brooklyn, Gravesend**	Vacant		04/10	12	15	0	1	16	16	20	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	-	-	-	42,875	1,202	0	863	2,065	40,810	(7)
(8)Brooklyn, Greenpoint	Vacant		06/00	21	26	10	13	49	24	35	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	(8)
(9)Brooklyn, New Brooklyn	Barbara P. Alexander		01/95	23	28	11	0	39	8	25	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	72,220	2,836	825	1,333	4,994	67,226	(9)
(10)Brooklyn, New Lots Community	De'Lafayette Awkward		11/02	100	125	84	0	209	0	70	4	0	0	1	50	4	0	-	-	-	247,630	5,671	0	1,955	7,626	240,004	(10)
(11)Brooklyn, New Utrecht	Vacant		07/91	26	34	16	5	55	10	25	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	97,102	2,331	2,775	750	5,856	91,246	(11)
(12)Brooklyn, Old First	Daniel J. Meeter		01/02	69	89	8	26	123	27	75	5	1	2	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	320,621	7,012	2,600	9,055	18,667	301,954	(12)
(13)Brooklyn, Redeemer	Carlos H. Rivera		01/84	46	59	0	0	59	22	136	16	0	0	0	0	1	5	-	-	-	94,700	4,200	0	3,500	7,700	87,000	(13)
(14)Brooklyn, South Bushwick	Vacant		06/08	15	22	0	13	35	5	18	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	-	-	-	43,101	0	675	0	675	42,426	(14)
		Total		616	755	226	158	1,139	256	56	43	12	6	5	67	34	9	-	-	-	2,132,010	48,935	90,328	74,236	213,499	1,918,511	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

**LINE 1—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.

**LINE 2—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE THOSE SUPPLIED BY THE CONGREGATION.

**LINE 7—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.

Chaplain
Jessica Lynne Bratt
Melody T. Meeter
D. Kim Nielsen
James Steward

Retired
William Thomas Coles
Kenneth L. Cumberbatch
Jonathan J. Hinkamp
Gilmore Ott
Robert W. Robinson
Leslie Theodore Seaton
Adrian G. Tenhor
Dennis A. Westbrooks

Specialized Ministry
Clara Moore Woodson

Without Charge
Christine Fay Dyke
Calvin Eugene Spann

FOOTNOTES							
A		B		C		D	
(1)	28,875	(2)	50,025	(4)	2,000	(1)	3,619
(4)	165,000	(3)	4,141	(6)	6,000	(2)	2,850
(5)	393,451	(9)	9,820	(9)	1,200	(3)	3,375
(6)	395	(11)	11,402	(12)	4,900	(4)	125,302
(7)	10,072	(12)	1,906	(13)	500	(5)	4,470
(10)	109,387					(7)	12,128
(11)	6,739					(9)	5,751
(12)	1,837					(10)	70,176
(13)	600					(11)	58,475
(14)	3,073					(12)	141,682
						(14)	19,220

Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF MID-HUDSON

Stated Clerk — Joshua Bode, Woodstock Reformed Church, 16 Tinker St, Woodstock, NY 12498; 845-679-6610
Treasurer — Alice V. Mongin, 500 E Marylyn Ave Apt D53, State College, PA 16801-6270; 814-238-1274

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership: Househld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Average Worshp Attend (7)	Gains: Conf (8)	Gains: Cert (9)	Losses: Trans (10)	Losses: Decd (11)	Losses: Other (12)	Bapt: Infant (13)	Bapt: Adult (14)	Education: Sun Sch (15)	Education: New Mbrs Clas (16)	Education: Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Stewardship: Total Income (18)	Stewardship: Assmnts (19a)	Contributions: RCA Contrib (19b)	Contributions: Other Contrib (19c)	Contributions: Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
New York																											
(1)Accord, Rochester	Vacant		08/00	39	78	36	20	134	11	45	4	0	0	1	11	3	1	-	-	-	90,389	4,143	5,740	3,125	13,008	77,381	(1)
(2)Beacon	Vacant		06/92	19	26	0	6	32	10	26	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	40,109	1,676	0	0	1,676	38,433	(2)
(3)Bloomington, United of Rosendale	Nickolas M. Miles		07/73	52	71	92	42	205	43	66	10	0	0	1	3	8	2	-	-	-	95,443	5,990	100	2,684	8,774	86,669	(3)
(4)Fishkill, First	Gloria J. McCanna		05/05	119	130	37	23	190	17	85	4	0	0	5	9	0	2	-	-	-	350,772	11,969	15,134	9,667	36,770	314,002	(4)
(5)Gardiner	Gary Sissel		09/89	42	55	20	12	87	10	55	0	0	0	4	0	7	0	-	-	-	97,434	4,407	189	11,400	15,996	81,438	(5)
(6)High Falls, Community	Vacant		02/08	35	52	26	18	96	35	57	6	0	1	1	0	5	1	-	-	-	61,817	3,571	0	2,271	5,842	55,975	(6)
(7)Hopewell Junction, Hopewell	Taylor Holbrook		10/98	268	447	183	441	1,071	381	442	42	5	5	6	16	7	0	-	-	-	835,398	38,828	33,575	47,682	120,085	715,313	(7)
	Mark E. Mast	AP	08/07																								
	Randall B. Prentiss	AP	06/07																								
(8)Hurley	Robert L. Gram		11/08	157	222	369	247	838	98	172	14	6	1	4	0	6	2	-	-	-	234,423	19,422	0	23,422	42,844	191,579	(8)
(9)Hyde Park, Dutch	Vacant		01/11	33	42	9	12	63	19	35	0	2	0	2	0	4	0	-	-	-	119,626	5,352	0	0	5,352	114,274	(9)
(10)Kingston, Comforter	David M. Brechter		09/96	41	55	110	67	232	16	47	1	0	0	5	0	2	0	-	-	-	88,559	4,560	7,000	2,430	13,990	74,569	(10)
(11)Kingston, Fair Street	Kendra L. Van Houten		11/10	93	153	195	38	386	38	76	4	2	2	1	19	1	0	-	-	-	161,503	13,642	2,165	657	16,464	145,039	(11)
(12)Kingston, Old Dutch	Kenneth L. Walsh		10/04	73	95	44	6	145	24	66	1	3	2	4	0	2	1	-	-	-	319,859	7,030	13,900	5,577	26,507	293,352	(12)
(13)Krumville	Superseded		03/11	1	1	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	208	291	400	0	691	-483	(13)
(14)Millbrook, Lyall Memorial Federated**	James A. Long		01/10	27	51	15	20	86	15	32	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	67,695	3,427	0	3,889	7,316	60,379	(14)
(15)Mount Marion, Plattekill	Vacant		10/08	39	63	81	45	189	13	60	0	0	0	1	7	4	0	-	-	-	90,141	5,809	345	3,005	9,159	80,982	(15)
(16)Mount Tremper, Shandaken	Vacant		06/10	5	7	3	1	11	5	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	18,287	583	350	1,012	1,945	16,342	(16)
(17)New Paltz	Howard B. Major		01/86	124	167	153	125	445	47	185	9	8	5	5	22	3	1	-	-	-	291,051	14,962	4,500	9,979	29,441	261,610	(17)
(18)Port Ewen	James G. Beukelman		10/01	55	91	78	12	181	30	47	3	1	1	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	132,282	8,468	18,144	10,030	36,642	95,640	(18)
(19)Poughkeepsie	E. Robert Geehan	*	09/98	62	100	7	10	117	22	80	5	3	2	6	0	1	1	-	-	-	255,199	9,460	3,000	4,968	17,428	237,771	(19)
(20)Poughkeepsie, Arlington	Randall B. Prentiss		02/10	36	54	21	1	76	21	60	5	3	5	2	0	2	0	-	-	-	87,453	5,971	1,040	1,788	8,799	78,654	(20)
(21)Red Hook, St. John's	Vacant		03/10	103	145	219	99	463	28	118	0	0	4	5	22	2	0	-	-	-	253,642	20,573	17,199	14,967	52,739	200,903	(21)
(22)Rhinebeck	Luis R. Perez		05/07	78	108	63	16	187	20	91	0	0	0	3	132	1	0	-	-	-	330,697	14,466	6,125	5,900	26,491	304,206	(22)
(23)Saint Remy	David M. Brechter		09/96	21	31	39	15	85	10	32	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	-	-	-	34,782	2,040	600	119	2,759	32,023	(23)
(24)Saugerties	Terrence P. O'Brien		11/08	51	60	35	42	137	21	65	6	2	0	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	101,965	3,478	2,957	965	7,400	94,565	(24)
(25)Saugerties, Blue Mountain	James Alley		10/05	19	23	61	14	98	40	20	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	42,197	2,478	0	215	2,693	39,504	(25)
(26)Saugerties, Flatbush	Jennifer M. Bendelius	M/C	07/09	29	44	29	17	90	4	31	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	34,447	2,769	1,194	1,275	5,238	29,209	(26)
(27)Saugerties, High Woods	Vacant		01/10	33	45	26	0	71	28	45	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	69,888	3,279	2,239	3,861	9,379	60,509	(27)
(28)Saugerties, Katsbaan	James Alley		10/05	31	36	21	31	88	46	21	6	0	1	0	0	3	0	-	-	-	37,771	2,405	1,930	0	4,335	33,436	(28)
(29)Shokan	Janet Fritzinger	*ST	09/10	9	12	7	0	19	10	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	19,256	874	0	540	1,414	17,842	(29)
(30)Stone Ridge, Marbletown	Vacant		12/05	54	91	20	106	217	35	85	5	0	0	0	0	5	3	-	-	-	156,668	6,473	8,300	10,885	25,658	131,010	(30)
(31)Wappingers Falls, New Hackensack	Keith W. Tamlyn		09/02	213	315	170	156	641	129	208	15	9	3	6	70	1	1	-	-	-	555,228	36,452	21,559	21,646	79,657	475,571	(31)
(32)Woodstock	Joshua Bode		12/07	58	83	33	47	163	31	54	4	1	0	2	106	3	0	-	-	-	139,557	6,520	1,946	2,316	10,782	128,775	(32)

North Carolina																									
(33)Cary, First	Charles Wiessner	11/00	72	120	15	40	175	22	104	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	227,600	10,942	5,375	6,385	22,702	204,898 (33)
	Total		2,091	3,073	2,219	1,729	7,021	1,279	77	158	47	36	75	417	81	15	-	-	-	5,441,346	282,310	175,006	212,660	669,976	4,771,370

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

**LINE 14—A FEDERATED CONGREGATION WITH THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND THE QUAKER CHURCH. IT MAINTAINS SEPARATE MEMBERSHIP ROLLS FROM WHICH STATISTICS ARE OBTAINED.

Chaplain
Denise Hagler

Missionary
Eric Titus

Retired
Gordon Alderink
Paul A. Benes
Robert L. Grupe
Herman Harmelink
Donald Healy
David W. Hondorp
Willis Arthur Jones
Roger M. Leonard
Calvin S. Malefyt
Helen M. McFadden
Joan Mitchell
Robert P. Mitchell
John A. Needham
Paul Z. Ruter
Robert O. Shaver
P. Stephan Sickler
Charles E. Stickley
Arvin Ten Brink
Robert L. Vanderlaan
Arlene R. Wilhelm
Thomas Winn

Specialized Ministry
Carol Cortelyou Cruikshank
Thomas W. Fiet
G. Ted Nace

Without Charge
Antonio Aquino

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	8,804	(1)	10,627	(6)	800	(1)	17,780
(2)	14,640	(3)	1,198	(7)	19,000	(2)	200
(3)	9,118	(4)	3,533	(20)	1,425	(3)	1,208
(4)	91,755	(6)	3,955			(4)	48,235
(5)	1,866	(7)	8,472			(5)	5,050
(6)	1,215	(8)	5,331			(6)	2,000
(7)	34,527	(9)	7,911			(7)	63,100
(8)	13,606	(10)	4,500			(8)	50,137
(9)	614	(11)	4,057			(9)	28,262
(10)	15,541	(12)	4,060			(10)	13,912
(11)	56,287	(14)	10,000			(12)	82,352
(12)	171,467	(17)	23,160			(14)	8,368
(13)	208	(18)	100			(15)	8,967
(14)	4,000	(19)	10,169			(17)	25,600
(15)	2,568	(20)	3,812			(18)	8,586
(16)	65	(21)	3,000			(19)	54,599
(17)	46,555	(22)	96,021			(20)	18,674
(18)	62,870	(24)	2,385			(21)	4,417
(19)	61,086	(26)	5,323			(22)	14,824
(20)	2,635	(28)	2,750			(23)	150
(21)	1,183	(30)	7,536			(24)	23,939
(22)	36,505					(25)	18,919
(23)	385					(26)	800
(24)	2,143					(27)	12,572
(25)	1,790					(29)	887
(26)	673					(30)	32,004
(27)	3,358					(31)	59,777
(28)	1,274					(32)	20,846
(29)	4,274					(33)	4,020
(30)	11,772						
(31)	65,417						
(32)	22,748						
(33)	1,409						

Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF NASSAU-SUFFOLK

Stated Clerk Joanne Albanese, 1645 Jefferson Ave, West Islip, NY 11795-1714; 631-321-5359
Treasurer Robert C. Engel, 418 Willow St, Westbury, NY 11590; 516-334-7939

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership															Education			Stewardship					
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt						Contributions			
				Housh'ld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decl	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Offr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
New York																											
(1)Brookville	Allan B. Ramirez Moncayo	M/C	10/83	80	53	101	0	154	36	55	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	173,246	5,464	6,000	35,280	46,744	126,502	(1)
(2)Hicksville, Parkway Community	Harold W. Lay		05/03	104	149	72	43	264	5	115	8	2	1	4	12	1	0	-	-	-	242,564	13,530	9,495	1,175	24,200	218,364	(2)
(3)Levittown, Community	Joseph Cusack		05/06	44	60	13	14	87	12	48	2	0	0	5	0	1	0	-	-	-	201,959	6,091	1,095	245	7,431	194,528	(3)
(4)Locust Valley	Paul J. Quevedo		02/07	66	95	7	2	104	16	75	4	0	0	6	0	2	0	-	-	-	148,829	9,047	3,839	3,500	16,386	132,443	(4)
(5)Manhasset, Community	Vacant		04/09	42	70	0	16	86	11	42	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	298,900	5,105	1,500	28,250	34,855	264,045	(5)
(6)Manorville, Community	Vacant		06/01	32	10	6	0	16	16	22	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	-	-	-	59,000	2,068	0	0	2,068	56,932	(6)
(7)Massapequa	Stephen T. Giordano		12/04	126	239	97	106	442	65	120	11	0	3	2	6	4	1	-	-	-	340,331	20,601	63,674	4,000	88,275	252,056	(7)
(8)New Hyde Park, New Hope Community	Wai Choon Tan		10/01	8	11	0	11	22	11	11	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	73,258	627	300	0	927	72,331	(8)
(9)North Babylon, St. Paul's	Conrad J. Strauch		02/84	50	68	66	21	155	13	51	7	0	0	0	8	2	0	-	-	-	227,113	8,151	2,278	3,743	14,172	212,941	(9)
(10)Plainview	Kent E. Huyck		03/07	48	60	19	16	95	28	59	2	0	7	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	139,496	6,270	2,900	2,200	11,370	128,126	(10)
(11)Roslyn Heights, New Church	Seung Ku Yang		11/06	124	154	44	58	256	18	235	15	12	8	0	10	5	12	-	-	-	794,279	19,000	0	118,260	137,260	657,019	(11)
	Yong Bok Kim	AP	06/03																								
	Kyunghoon Suh	AP	06/03																								
(12)Sayville, New Life	Scott A. Rees		08/07	181	192	90	108	390	126	284	13	11	0	2	26	6	0	-	-	-	615,484	21,318	6,500	58,705	86,523	528,961	(12)
(13)Stony Brook, Christ Community	Vacant		03/06	20	25	4	4	33	5	18	2	0	0	1	4	0	0	-	-	-	88,275	3,672	1,764	1,190	6,626	81,649	(13)
(14)Williston Park, Long Island Taiwanese	Shi-Yang Lin		10/10	29	40	21	2	63	2	46	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	-	-	-	111,516	6,270	4,350	15,470	26,090	85,426	(14)
		Total		954	1,226	540	401	2,167	364	84	66	27	21	26	66	23	16	-	-	-	3,514,250	127,214	103,695	272,018	502,927	3,011,323	

Graduate Study
Beverly Bell Winslow

Retired
Randall B. Bosch
Stuart E. Clark
Robert C. Engel
J. Harry Hall
Song Kuk Kim
David L. Maris

Specialized Ministry
John W. Smith

Without Charge
Jimmy Jinkyu Joo
Chong Sung Lee
Paul Huei-Long Lin
Darcy Pavich

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	29,391	(2)	7,260	(3)	7,000	(1)	58,710
(2)	137	(4)	8,639			(2)	69,302
(3)	46	(7)	7,920			(3)	134,976
(4)	18,837	(11)	3,475			(4)	32,679
(5)	39,556	(12)	15,428			(5)	201,723
(7)	2,901					(6)	4,000
(8)	14,357					(7)	101,370
(12)	1,520					(8)	43,831
(14)	2,295					(9)	80,914
						(10)	45,777
						(12)	52,745
						(13)	57,632
						(14)	19,262

Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF NEW YORK

Stated Clerk — Micheal Edwards, De Witt Reformed Church, 280 Rivington St, New York, NY 10002; 718-822-1783
Treasurer — John C. Chen, 52 Pitney Ave, Staten Island, NY 10309-1917; 212-719-6724

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education		Stewardship						
											Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Housh'ld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Deed	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
New York																										
(1)Bronx, Church of the Master	Vacant		10/98	23	33	1	1	35	4	28	13	0	0	1	0	3	5	-	-	-	55,639	1,890	1,754	100	3,744	51,895	(1)
# (2)Bronx, Fordham Manor	Irving Rivera		05/92	85	147	25	20	192	35	180	16	0	10	0	6	0	25	-	-	-	359,664	8,459	14,000	2,625	25,084	334,580	(2)
(3)Bronx, Highbridge Community	Cora Taitt	*PE	01/09	22	34	2	0	36	26	61	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	115,263	2,972	4,500	3,532	11,004	104,259	(3)
(4)Bronx, Mott Haven	Patricia Sealy		02/11	23	23	1	2	26	2	18	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	109,425	2,068	0	0	2,068	107,357	(4)
(5)Bronx, Williamsbridge Road United	Vacant		12/06	13	15	2	2	19	17	50	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	-	-	-	79,392	1,440	1,888	1,321	4,649	74,743	(5)
(6)Manhattan, Bethany Memorial	Paul E. Glover		09/07	10	17	10	4	31	12	25	0	0	2	0	8	0	1	-	-	-	26,409	1,080	720	525	2,325	24,084	(6)
# (7)Manhattan, Chinese Community**	Laura M. Lin		03/92	40	75	2	3	80	6	90	1	8	4	2	0	1	2	-	-	-	120,000	0	0	0	0	120,000	(7)
(8)Manhattan, Collegiate Corporation				2,522	3,309	3,802	351	7,462	2,353	1,509	129	4	5	23	60	47	5	-	-	-	5,178,546	300,420	38,263	373,756	712,439	4,466,107	(8)
(9)Manhattan, Collegiate, Ft. Washington	Charles D. Morris		09/97																								(9)
(10)Manhattan, Collegiate, Marble	Michael B. Brown		03/09																								(10)
	Steven D. Pierce	AP	10/08																								
	Shari K. Brink	M/C	11/10																								
(11)Manhattan, Collegiate, Middle	Jacqueline J. Lewis	*	02/05																								(11)
	Adriene J. Thorne	M/C	10/09																								
(12)Manhattan, Collegiate, West End	Michael S. Bos		11/09																								(12)
(13)Manhattan, Dewitt	Micheal Edwards		01/09	68	35	27	0	62	45	110	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	146,000	8,200	2,000	6,000	16,200	129,800	(13)
(14)Manhattan, Elmendorf	Patricia A. Singletary		09/02	62	55	30	2	87	15	102	4	0	0	3	11	2	0	-	-	-	131,820	3,533	1,100	300	4,933	126,887	(14)
(15)Manhattan, Japanese-American United**	Vacant		07/06	65	75	25	5	105	10	65	0	0	3	2	0	0	4	-	-	-	166,067	3,420	10,281	15,702	29,403	136,664	(15)
(16)Staten Island	Vacant		02/99	28	39	0	11	50	18	32	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	137,473	3,600	0	2,000	5,600	131,873	(16)
(17)Staten Island, Brighton Heights	James L. Seawood		01/02	92	101	35	6	142	49	134	9	0	0	1	0	1	1	-	-	-	251,642	8,910	18,589	23,600	51,099	200,543	(17)
(18)Staten Island, Grace Christian	John C. Chang		05/85	55	85	24	15	124	6	120	4	2	2	0	2	0	4	-	-	-	245,435	8,370	5,935	3,186	17,491	227,944	(18)
(19)Staten Island, Huguenot	Vacant		11/97	27	75	52	29	156	12	46	6	2	3	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	134,904	6,300	500	700	7,500	127,404	(19)
(20)Staten Island, Prince Bay	Adolf A. Pagliarulo	M/C	05/08	24	28	3	2	33	34	58	8	0	1	2	4	0	1	-	-	-	54,441	2,790	500	85	3,375	51,066	(20)
Virgin Islands																										
(21)Saint Croix	Rodney J. Koopmans		06/97	50	66	10	33	109	68	77	3	4	6	1	0	3	1	-	-	-	142,926	5,850	360	40,776	46,986	95,940	(21)
# (22)Saint Thomas	Jeffrey A. Neevel		02/08	135	176	20	2	198	50	190	20	1	0	0	4	2	0	-	-	-	305,000	15,500	2,500	44,078	62,078	242,922	(22)
		Total		3,344	4,388	4,071	488	8,947	2,762	132	225	21	39	38	97	61	52	-	-	-	7,760,046	384,802	102,890	518,286	1,005,978	6,754,068	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*
\# STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
**LINE 7—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.
**LINE 15—A FEDERATED CONGREGATION WITH THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.
TOTAL NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS IS 21—LINE 8 REPRESENTS THE COLLEGIATE CORPORATION.

Chaplain
Robert G. Anderson
Susan Lee Sgarlat

Graduate Study
Tiffany N. Houck-Loomis

Inactive
Rupert A. Clarke
John J. Piet

Missionary
Nathan Owen Brownell

Retired
E. Wayne Antworth
Bernita W. Babb
Arthur Caliandro
Gordon Rein Dragt
Boanerges Gomez
Kenneth A. Gorsuch
Andrew Kuo
John S. Peale
Gerald F. Phelan
Raymond Rivera
Douglas C. Smith
David E. White

Specialized Ministry
Kenneth R. Bradsell
Ronald W. Cadmus
Nathan Carl Hart
Debra L. Jameson
Raphael N. Johnson
Rebecca McDonnell
Franklin Simpson
Theresa Troia
Jodie Wu
Shuo-Min (Imos) Wu

Without Charge
Brent W. Backofen
Thomas Lawrence
Holly K. Vollink-Lent

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	54	(2)	29,105	(2)	11,689	(1)	4,145
(2)	2,084	(8)	3,433	(3)	10,000	(2)	16,500
(3)	2,200	(14)	7,270	(5)	7,000	(3)	18,000
(5)	14,000	(15)	48,482	(8)	950,949	(4)	80,500
(8)	1,188,755	(19)	1,400	(13)	7,000	(8)	660,954
(15)	13,299	(21)	5,795	(17)	9,600	(13)	60,000
(16)	6,574			(18)	4,800	(14)	33,186
(17)	3,157			(20)	18,000	(15)	1,690
(19)	54,687			(21)	2,300	(16)	2,300
(20)	488					(17)	62,527
(21)	39					(18)	6,089
(22)	25,000					(19)	5,822
						(21)	11,486
						(22)	15,000

Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF ORANGE

Stated Clerk Kenneth B. Kobza, 1145 State Route 208, Wallkill, NY 12589-3714; 845-895-3794
Treasurer Judith J. Randazzo, 489 State Route 17K, Rock Tavern, NY 12575; 845-291-2949

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership															Education			Stewardship					
												Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt							Contributions			
				Housh'ld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Actv	Worship Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Mbrs Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
New Jersey																											
(1)Montague, Minisink	Angelo Forleo		09/95	35	47	19	32	98	2	52	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	104,148	4,869	3,240	8,602	16,711	87,437	(1)
New York																											
(2)Claryville	Vacant		07/99	16	18	18	0	36	7	18	1	4	1	1	1	0	0	-	-	-	37,260	5,391	513	2,250	8,154	29,106	(2)
(3)Cuddebackville	Michael Sweeney	*PE	05/08	16	16	1	12	29	25	33	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	-	-	-	46,350	1,590	2,295	4,481	8,366	37,984	(3)
(4)Ellenville	Jay F. Vogelaar		05/99	25	28	14	5	47	13	38	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	-	-	-	104,255	4,571	2,500	2,035	9,106	95,149	(4)
(5)Grahamsville	Paul Z. Ruter	RET M/C	03/11	50	20	64	57	141	16	30	9	0	0	3	0	1	2	-	-	-	77,062	3,975	3,414	2,834	10,223	66,839	(5)
(6)Kerhonkson, Federated**	Vacant		01/01	9	12	20	0	32	0	15	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	13,500	1,230	0	0	1,230	12,270	(6)
(7)Montgomery, Brick	Brian J. Randazzo		06/04	31	43	0	25	68	27	67	8	0	4	0	3	3	0	-	-	-	98,434	4,869	0	9,340	14,209	84,225	(7)
(8)Newburgh, Meadow Hill	Vacant		02/10	21	29	23	4	56	5	23	1	0	2	5	69	1	0	-	-	-	133,852	6,360	4,500	6,500	17,360	116,492	(8)
(9)Pine Bush, New Prospect	Paul Rosa		11/98	12	20	4	7	31	21	40	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	56,430	2,450	0	0	2,450	53,980	(9)
(10)Port Jervis, Deerpark	Ann P. Rost		02/03	53	71	7	12	90	10	65	13	0	0	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	115,965	6,658	3,000	5,000	14,658	101,307	(10)
(11)Slate Hill, Faith	Albert V. Potgieter		07/08	58	108	0	26	134	16	66	12	0	0	2	0	2	0	-	-	-	121,375	9,540	3,400	0	12,940	108,435	(11)
(12)Walden, First	Robert L. Miller		09/06	60	109	10	21	140	39	115	2	8	0	2	2	5	0	-	-	-	187,412	9,839	1,000	5,379	16,218	171,194	(12)
(13)Wallkill	Toni L. Macon		09/04	105	147	34	36	217	21	95	9	0	3	3	26	5	0	-	-	-	223,477	16,696	3,100	8,578	28,374	195,103	(13)
(14)Wallkill, New Hurley	Kenneth B. Kobza		04/86	16	32	2	32	66	5	36	4	0	0	1	9	0	0	-	-	-	69,435	3,377	0	150	3,527	65,908	(14)
(15)Wallkill, Shawangunk	Vacant		10/02	105	47	98	43	188	20	50	1	2	0	1	2	2	0	-	-	-	155,388	10,015	3,678	196	13,889	141,499	(15)
(16)Warwick	Michael P. Otte		06/07	143	203	142	165	510	14	127	2	0	3	2	0	2	0	-	-	-	365,274	18,982	11,500	21,977	52,459	312,815	(16)
(17)Wurtsboro, Community	Robert Meyer		06/08	43	68	24	1	93	30	63	2	2	0	1	54	1	1	-	-	-	107,409	6,460	1,090	7,168	14,718	92,691	(17)
(18)Youngsville, United	Vacant		05/10	26	34	86	0	120	2	30	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	-	-	-	46,538	3,578	802	1,400	5,780	40,758	(18)
Pennsylvania																											
(19)East Stroudsburg, Bushkill	Steven Sayer		05/98	101	101	17	42	160	55	165	6	0	1	1	0	4	4	-	-	-	285,153	10,833	9,900	20,400	41,133	244,020	(19)
(20)Lords Valley, Hemlock Farms**	Herbert Jacobson	*	05/07	126	45	0	0	45	38	107	8	0	0	4	9	2	1	-	-	-	166,715	4,572	1,500	4,491	10,563	156,152	(20)
		Total		1,051	1,198	583	520	2,301	366	62	81	16	16	34	180	31	9	-	-	-	2,515,432	135,855	55,432	110,781	302,068	2,213,364	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*

**LINE 6—A FEDERATED CONGREGATION WITH THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.

**LINE 20—A FEDERATED CONGREGATION WITH THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.

Chaplain
Kim McDonald Donahue

Retired
Owen T. Bechtel
Vernon L. Dethmers
Donald A. Drewett
Thomas V. Hendricks
Glenn A. Hine
John H. Jenner
Alan M. Koller
Warren G. Martens
Theodore C. Muller
John Christian Nodop
Harlan P. Nyhof
Bruce E. Penn
Robert G. Schwander
James E. Vincent
Gerald L. Wondra

Specialized Ministry
Ann Akers
Kenneth J. Barnes
Thomas Neuviller
Paul F. Nulton
Kenneth D. Tenckinck

Without Charge
John A. M. Rottenberg
Kenneth M. Zorgdrager

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	9,867	(2)	2,197	(1)	900	(2)	5,016
(2)	6,333	(4)	3,606	(7)	900	(3)	24,452
(3)	2,101	(10)	3,110	(8)	1,029	(4)	20,400
(4)	16,042	(11)	11,162	(10)	300	(5)	20,594
(5)	5,175	(20)	1,789	(11)	4,900	(7)	1,510
(7)	2,062			(12)	8,660	(8)	2,037
(8)	79,902			(17)	9,750	(9)	450
(9)	280			(19)	900	(10)	7,157
(10)	35,134					(11)	12,218
(11)	734					(12)	7,662
(12)	15,850					(13)	22,033
(13)	44,636					(14)	9,031
(15)	17,838					(15)	10,301
(16)	148,680					(17)	3,310
(17)	814					(19)	3,771
(19)	83,092					(20)	18,088
(20)	1,437						

Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF QUEENS

Stated Clerk — Linda B. Gold, First Reformed Church, 118-17 14th Ave, College Point, NY 11356; 718-359-3956
Treasurer — Barbara C. Thompson, 222-28 92nd Ave, Queens Village, NY 11428; 718-464-0653

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership															Education			Stewardship						
										Average	Gains		Losses			Baptisms								Contributions				
				Houshld (1)	Conf Mbrs (2)	Inact Mbrs (3)	Bapt Mbrs (4)	Total Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Worshp Attend (7)	Conf (8)	Cert (9)	Trans (10)	Decsd (11)	Other (12)	Infant (13)	Adult (14)	Sun Sch (15)	New Mbrs Clas (16)	Othr Educ Pgms (17)	Total Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	RCA Contrib (19b)	Other Contrib (19c)	Total Amount (19d)	Congr Purpose (20)	
Massachusetts																												
(1)Framingham, Boston Taiwanese	Vacant		08/10	31	49	31	21	101	5	66	2	3	3	1	0	0	2	-	-	-	105,865	4,847	1,000	3,629	9,476	96,389	(1)
New York																												
(2)Bayside, Colonial	John Donahue		09/08	44	60	3	19	82	25	84	4	0	0	2	6	0	4	-	-	-	254,151	6,647	3,000	62,201	71,848	182,303	(2)
(3)Bayside, Shin Kwang	Jae Hong Han		03/87	300	270	100	13	383	5	500	15	30	10	0	0	4	13	-	-	-	820,300	22,000	15,000	14,000	51,000	769,300	(3)
(4)Bayside, Taiwanese American	Superseded		07/05	5	15	26	0	41	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	12,000	1,768	0	0	1,768	10,232	(4)
(5)Cambria Heights, Community	Victor Singletary		07/10	107	109	14	0	123	4	90	10	1	0	1	2	5	3	-	-	-	255,118	10,003	8,189	2,000	20,192	234,926	(5)
(6)College Point, First	Linda B. Gold		05/02	37	33	82	23	138	10	38	1	1	0	5	3	1	1	-	-	-	132,980	4,662	3,528	3,466	11,656	121,324	(6)
(7)Douglaston, Community	Linden De Bie		12/10	58	96	142	30	268	56	42	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	256,500	9,124	12,700	4,500	26,324	230,176	(7)
	Adrienne L. Hausch	M/C	09/95																								
(8)Elmhurst, Newtown	Norman Y. Chen		03/98	0	380	187	22	589	0	519	22	0	172	2	0	3	22	-	-	-	735,879	25,309	8,905	0	34,214	701,665	(8)
	David K. Su	AP	05/97																								
(9)Flushing, Bowne Street Comm**	Aaron Nan Hua Chen		03/11	38	64	11	6	81	20	75	13	2	2	1	0	0	6	-	-	-	370,606	5,487	1,000	8,950	15,437	355,169	(9)
	David Westcott		03/01																								
(10)Flushing, Choongsyn	Hae Taik Kim		06/06	63	92	2	37	131	10	135	15	4	5	1	0	6	6	-	-	-	597,588	0	2,500	0	2,500	595,088	(10)
(11)Flushing, Church on the Hill	Justin J. Meyers		09/07	112	158	124	35	317	60	135	10	1	1	1	16	8	1	-	-	-	572,243	15,729	13,807	13,876	43,412	528,831	(11)
(12)Flushing, Queensboro Hill	William L. Hanousek		07/09	16	19	2	8	29	80	30	2	0	0	0	0	3	2	-	-	-	74,121	1,555	2,040	400	3,995	70,126	(12)
	Lynn Hanousek	M/C	07/09																								
(13)Flushing, Siloam	Jong Duk Kim		04/89	50	55	35	0	90	10	85	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	204,400	6,000	0	0	6,000	198,400	(13)
(14)Glendale	Superseded		06/10	4	4	3	0	7	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	14,000	0	0	0	0	14,000	(14)
	Christudoss V. Theodore	M/C	08/04																								
(15)Jamaica, First	Mark S. Kellar		03/02	46	61	0	1	62	9	50	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	175,044	4,325	0	2,065	6,390	168,654	(15)
(16)Kew Gardens, Sung Shin	Jae Bong Lee		03/10	30	43	20	5	68	3	70	10	5	2	0	5	2	5	-	-	-	198,920	4,615	2,000	7,000	13,615	185,305	(16)
	Benjamin K. Jung	M/C	03/10																								
(17)Long Island City, First Astoria	Dwayne L. Jackson		01/00	23	25	22	0	47	14	41	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	58,025	4,390	0	100	4,490	53,535	(17)
(18)Long Island City, Korean Philippo	Sung-Nung Shin		09/90	23	9	5	7	21	3	19	0	2	7	2	6	0	5	-	-	-	54,412	640	0	850	1,490	52,922	(18)
(19)Long Island City, Steinway	Superseded		06/10	9	16	16	6	38	5	15	0	0	1	2	5	0	0	-	-	-	44,843	2,195	0	0	2,195	42,648	(19)
(20)Long Island City, Sunnyside	Neil A. Margetson		02/09	32	40	0	0	40	10	40	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	143,162	3,932	5,950	0	9,882	133,280	(20)
(21)Long Island City, Taiwan Union	Eric Y. Lai		08/99	54	107	25	12	144	23	119	4	0	0	2	0	2	2	-	-	-	292,958	9,694	200	8,000	17,894	275,064	(21)
	Marianne Lin	AP	02/07																								
(22)Queens Village, Iglesia de Cristo	Vacant		06/01	12	18	0	3	21	9	27	3	0	1	0	1	0	3	-	-	-	21,247	1,097	0	250	1,347	19,900	(22)
(23)Queens Village, Queens	Anna M. Jackson		11/00	20	28	42	8	78	25	31	9	0	0	0	0	1	1	-	-	-	152,406	1,006	0	0	1,006	151,400	(23)
(24)Ridgewood, Chiuyang	Paul Ki Ho Kim		11/06	20	20	0	0	20	40	55	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	-	-	-	60,000	1,900	0	0	1,900	58,100	(24)
(25)Ridgewood, Trinity	Thomas C. Goodhart		03/09	46	60	20	9	89	42	65	6	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	-	-	166,645	6,036	5,752	11,193	22,981	143,664	(25)

(26)Sunnyside, Nakwon	James Hwang Bryan Yi	10/06 11/10	50	72	5	8	85	33	73	11	0	2	0	2	1	3	-	-	-	239,895	4,508	0	22,369	26,877	213,018	(26)
(27)Woodhaven, Forest Park	Superseded	06/04	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	24,400	0	0	0	0	24,400	(27)
(28)Woodside, Winfield	Vacant	01/10	38	46	0	2	48	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	65,792	4,763	0	0	4,763	61,029	(28)
		Total	1,268	1,949	917	275	3,141	501	88	138	49	207	26	48	40	80	-	-	-	6,103,500	162,232	85,571	164,849	412,652	5,690,848	

SEE SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME

**LINE 9—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.

Chaplain
Hyeon Joong Kim

Graduate Study
San-Yi (Shirley) Lin

Missionary
Abraham Kist-Okazaki
Sayuri Kist-Okazaki

Planting Minister
Young Aie Na

Retired
Byung Ho Ahn
William M. Cameron
Norman Chang
Gordon S. Cook
Judith N. Gorsuch
Chang Whan Kim
Costas Kounadis
Leonard Kraemer
Hsin Chang (Bill) Lee
Soo Sik Lim
Chung-Sheng Lin
Paul S. Lin
Samuel C. Y. Lin
Antonio Lopez
Rong Hu Lu
John Hollebrands Meyer
Esther B. Min
Leroy Nixon
Robert A. Perless
R. Alan Plishker
Choan-Seng Song
Christian C. Spoor
Gerard Van Dyk
Wilbur T. Washington
John E. Zavacky

Specialized Ministry
Brenda Berry
Hsueh-Jen Cheng
Chung-Huei Cho
Derrick Jones
Michael J. Moran
Sebastian C. Ong
Thomas Hung Yong Song

Without Charge
Jeanne M. Boland
David Simpson Butler
James Daehyeong Cho
I. Douglas Estella
John Youngtaek Hahn
C. Kevin Kirkpatrick
Carl F. Lazzaro
Joshua Lee
Man Soo Oh
Mark Sanchez

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	518	(5)	4,300	(3)	2,300	(2)	65,355
(2)	2,836	(7)	34,000	(5)	4,600	(3)	1,000
(5)	1,079	(8)	73,636	(6)	700	(5)	80,000
(6)	31,020	(10)	123,130	(10)	25,000	(6)	19,180
(7)	21,100	(12)	5,276	(11)	900	(7)	67,400
(8)	31,102	(16)	3,237	(16)	7,000	(9)	118,332
(9)	125,000	(19)	1,243	(22)	1,500	(11)	120,144
(11)	262,684	(23)	250	(23)	1,125	(12)	39,521
(12)	1,973	(25)	12,320	(25)	800	(13)	14,400
(15)	4,000					(15)	101,390
(20)	18,014					(16)	683
(21)	145					(18)	16,500
(23)	123					(19)	33,539
(25)	43,433					(20)	52,639
(28)	32,371					(21)	40,120
						(23)	106,828
						(25)	2,345
						(26)	88,625
						(27)	24,400

Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF ROCKLAND-WESTCHESTER

Stated Clerk Thomas C. Danney, 37 Clinton Ave, Nyack, NY 10960; 845-300-5187
Treasurer Thomas C. Danney, 37 Clinton Ave, Nyack, NY 10960; 845-300-5187

CHURCHES	PASTORS			Membership														Education			Stewardship					
												Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt						Contributions			
				Houshld	Conf Mbrs	Inact Mbrs	Bapt Mbrs	Total Mbrs	Adh	Worshp Attend	Conf	Cert	Trans	Decd	Other	Infant	Adult	Sun Sch	New Clas	Othr Educ Pgms	Total Income	Assmnts	RCA Contrib	Other Contrib	Total Amount	Congr Purpose	
				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19a)	(19b)	(19c)	(19d)	(20)	
New York																										
(1)Bronxville	Kenneth C. Ruge		03/09	526	987	1,009	12	2,008	17	310	50	8	13	9	0	17	0	-	-	-	2,723,764	94,070	27,368	160,246	281,684	2,442,080	(1)
	Keith Dragt	AP	02/08																							
	Carilyn Pattison-Riley	*AP	10/07																							
(2)Elmsford	Donald J. Heringa	M/C	01/00	19	23	42	0	65	20	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	52,095	2,643	500	1,000	4,143	47,952	(2)
(3)Hastings on Hudson, First	Okke Postma		01/87	101	70	42	10	122	11	41	1	1	1	4	0	1	0	-	-	-	235,444	7,047	8,350	7,344	22,741	212,703	(3)
	Nancy Sorokoff	M/C	10/03																							
# (4)Hawthorne	George B. Higgins	*M/C	10/06	36	54	71	12	137	33	36	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	-	79,419	3,855	717	3,668	8,240	71,179	(4)
(5)Montrose, Cortlandtown	Vacant		10/09	45	66	41	18	125	17	32	0	0	0	1	11	0	0	-	-	-	122,804	5,107	1,950	2,937	9,994	112,810	(5)
(6)Mount Vernon, First	Alfred Gordon	*M/C	09/09	0	0	4	0	4	5	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	35,673	3,424	0	3,159	6,583	29,090	(6)
(7)Nyack, First	Vacant		01/11	33	41	112	12	165	8	26	5	2	0	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	174,053	3,259	1,423	394	5,076	168,977	(7)
(8)Piermont	John W. Vanden Oever		01/89	37	45	38	25	108	50	40	2	0	1	0	0	3	0	-	-	-	83,175	3,700	1,255	3,280	8,235	74,940	(8)
(9)Scarsdale, Greenville Community	Edward H. Schreur		08/09	63	91	16	21	128	40	60	4	1	0	2	0	2	1	-	-	-	279,107	7,425	2,760	4,250	14,435	264,672	(9)
(10)Spring Valley, Brick	Thomas E. Johnston		01/94	35	50	0	1	51	5	38	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	167,845	4,140	4,000	5,546	13,686	154,159	(10)
(11)Spring Valley, United**	Robert D. Williams		08/07	43	64	24	12	100	19	80	3	0	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	254,726	6,342	1,970	17,251	25,563	229,163	(11)
(12)Tappan	Donald J. Hoover		09/07	40	74	25	25	124	20	60	6	0	1	4	0	2	0	-	-	-	159,750	7,393	2,000	2,000	11,393	148,357	(12)
(13)Tarrytowns	Jeffrey H. Gargano		09/09	35	50	0	35	85	4	50	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	-	-	-	437,500	4,500	6,100	2,400	13,000	424,500	(13)
(14)West Nyack, Clarkstown	Vacant		07/09	25	36	8	0	44	8	46	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	-	-	-	170,891	8,473	0	4,890	13,363	157,528	(14)
(15)Yonkers, Chour-Thai	Somboon Tessalee	*M/C	10/02	15	28	4	1	33	19	40	5	2	0	0	0	0	3	-	-	-	66,154	1,938	0	555	2,493	63,661	(15)
(16)Yonkers, Crescent Place	Vacant		04/06	23	19	0	0	19	36	16	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	-	-	-	58,282	3,907	500	200	4,607	53,675	(16)
(17)Yonkers, New Hope	Poong Sam Lee		02/08	185	240	45	11	296	20	450	42	0	9	3	7	3	8	-	-	-	1,134,218	18,057	15,000	117,037	150,094	984,124	(17)
		Total		1,261	1,938	1,481	195	3,614	332	80	126	15	27	32	20	36	13	-	-	-	6,234,900	185,280	73,893	336,157	595,330	5,639,570	

* SEE SUPPLEMENT D, printed in the *General Synod Directory*
# STATISTICS PRINTED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
**LINE 11—A UNION CONGREGATION WITH THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST. STATISTICS GIVEN ARE 1/2 OF ACTUAL TOTALS.

Missionary
Douglas R. Leonard

Retired
Winston Messiah Clarke
Thomas Charles Danney
Robert R. de Forest
John D. Elliott
George Fiencke
James L. Johnson
Robert A. Jones
Norman J. Kansfield
Eun Soo Lee
A. Rand Peabody
Richard J. Skoog
Gerald P. Vander Hart
Jack E. Wahlberg
Carol P. Westphal

Specialized Ministry
Elias Dantas
Kyu Hun Lee
Moses Ka-Un Li
Jon N. Norton
Grace Jeeyoon Rim
Salome Seung-Ryee Ryew
Ronald J. Wiersma

Without Charge
Nancy Ann Weathers Callender
Karla Hay Diserens
Key Soo Jung

FOOTNOTES

A		B		C		D	
(1)	1,055,829	(1)	24,285	(11)	1,000	(1)	141,014
(2)	36,000	(3)	10,195	(12)	750	(2)	2,820
(3)	55,750	(5)	3,360	(15)	12,000	(3)	61,231
(4)	1,366	(11)	1,000			(4)	24,391
(5)	142	(12)	25,000			(5)	31,380
(8)	9,329	(14)	14,650			(6)	300
(11)	68,496	(17)	3,900			(7)	110,727
(12)	12,000					(8)	16,740
(13)	70,480					(9)	89,925
(14)	22,359					(11)	50,820
(15)	137					(12)	57,000
(16)	2,100					(13)	259,120
(17)	977					(14)	72,682
						(16)	36,797
						(17)	56,378

STATISTICAL SUMMARY 2010

		Membership														Education			Stewardship					
								Average	Gains		Losses			Bapt								Contributions		
		Houshld	Conf	Inact	Bapt	Total		Worship								Sun	New Mbrs	Othr Educ	Total		RCA	Other	Total	Congr
	#	(1)	Mbrs (2)	Mbrs (3)	Mbrs (4)	Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Attend (7)	Conf (8)	Cert (9)	Trans (10)	Decd (11)	Other (12)	Infant (13)	Adult (14)	Sch (15)	Clas (16)	Pgms (17)	Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contrb (19b)	Contrb (19c)	Amount (19d)	Purpose (20)
REGIONAL SYNOD OF ALBANY																								
Albany	20	1,402	1,945	1,245	669	3,859	547	66	62	17	20	46	121	33	6	-	-	-	3,888,270	159,798	132,142	164,449	456,389	3,431,881
Columbia-Greene	21	689	913	637	313	1,863	328	39	29	11	12	27	5	19	0	-	-	-	1,610,118	73,482	54,242	30,332	158,056	1,452,062
Montgomery	13	577	877	598	290	1,765	384	59	21	15	8	15	81	17	15	-	-	-	1,462,798	73,322	51,060	55,113	179,495	1,283,303
Rochester	13	798	1,199	406	369	1,974	318	73	7	10	13	23	4	11	3	-	-	-	1,681,466	99,173	117,199	132,389	348,761	1,332,705
Schenectady	18	1,896	2,678	1,327	780	4,785	878	102	116	13	33	68	72	38	6	-	-	-	5,222,699	214,352	216,184	314,821	745,357	4,477,342
Schoharie	15	612	807	477	236	1,520	284	46	20	7	4	32	24	16	5	-	-	-	1,434,390	61,203	54,890	44,414	160,507	1,273,883
TOTALS	100	5,974	8,419	4,690	2,657	15,766	2,739	64	255	73	90	211	307	134	35	-	-	-	15,299,741	681,330	625,717	741,518	2,048,565	13,251,176
REGIONAL SYNOD OF CANADA																								
British Columbia	11	438	666	270	96	1,032	474	88	18	7	3	12	6	6	8	-	-	-	2,012,230	54,612	37,962	165,297	257,871	1,754,359
Canadian Prairies	6	248	371	70	112	553	179	68	18	7	5	4	5	9	4	-	-	-	1,140,993	48,875	18,348	52,128	119,351	1,021,642
Ontario	22	1,523	2,451	323	736	3,510	474	106	44	65	71	44	12	42	19	-	-	-	4,422,342	293,046	288,448	488,982	1,070,476	3,351,866
TOTALS	39	2,209	3,488	663	944	5,095	1,127	95	80	79	79	60	23	57	31	-	-	-	7,575,565	396,533	344,758	706,407	1,447,698	6,127,867
REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE FAR WEST																								
California	32	5,777	4,939	4,802	2,131	11,872	7,918	362	299	26	71	138	429	69	284	-	-	-	23,926,443	423,551	241,512	805,475	1,470,538	22,455,905
Cascades	13	1,519	2,657	120	873	3,650	1,206	208	108	21	52	36	122	56	37	-	-	-	4,649,880	206,394	119,291	381,119	706,804	3,943,076
Central California	18	2,366	3,251	615	1,263	5,129	1,831	238	187	30	43	46	362	30	123	-	-	-	10,063,501	312,713	497,165	667,162	1,477,040	8,586,461
City	3	1,235	1,732	65	653	2,450	3,787	906	157	25	25	11	55	41	31	-	-	-	8,904,328	144,599	41,370	1,093,076	1,279,045	7,625,283
Rocky Mountains	10	729	1,134	172	393	1,699	525	117	80	9	9	13	40	21	5	-	-	-	2,532,444	110,160	40,216	112,985	263,361	2,269,083
Southwest	11	800	1,057	263	331	1,651	529	135	46	24	37	44	69	19	41	-	-	-	2,559,414	83,286	66,663	96,966	246,915	2,312,499
TOTALS	87	12,426	14,770	6,037	5,644	26,451	15,796	275	877	135	237	288	1,077	236	521	-	-	-	52,636,010	1,280,703	1,006,217	3,156,783	5,443,703	47,192,307
REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE GREAT LAKES																								
Holland	16	4,409	7,921	984	2,273	11,178	499	354	208	136	98	118	201	98	26	-	-	-	14,471,771	666,119	498,423	1,845,808	3,010,350	11,461,421
Lake Erie	18	1,137	1,866	342	621	2,829	1,038	112	112	34	21	24	55	41	33	-	-	-	3,500,393	148,407	82,412	123,939	354,758	3,145,635
Muskegon	19	2,347	3,956	794	1,466	6,216	1,125	205	173	83	54	80	193	73	34	-	-	-	5,460,485	273,748	136,399	287,234	697,381	4,763,104
North Grand Rapids	18	2,344	3,960	571	1,339	5,870	712	184	146	75	89	63	135	89	28	-	-	-	7,251,524	291,652	260,362	319,991	872,005	6,379,519
Northern Michigan	14	1,786	3,215	512	1,031	4,758	1,365	212	70	48	44	33	277	35	16	-	-	-	6,057,852	247,840	207,473	577,777	1,033,090	5,024,762
South Grand Rapids	29	5,260	9,257	1,003	3,486	13,746	1,634	297	341	156	138	93	384	163	35	-	-	-	15,406,562	724,363	725,576	1,038,989	2,488,928	12,917,634
Southwest Michigan	26	3,373	5,706	728	1,972	8,406	2,456	232	365	131	71	92	281	136	149	-	-	-	11,673,587	491,908	333,518	699,821	1,525,247	10,148,340
Zeeland	28	5,754	10,738	606	4,815	16,159	1,182	345	305	309	232	117	243	260	37	-	-	-	16,423,921	737,378	904,966	1,381,077	3,023,421	13,400,500
TOTALS	168	26,410	46,619	5,540	17,003	69,162	10,011	251	1,720	972	747	620	1,769	895	358	-	-	-	80,246,095	3,581,415	3,149,129	6,274,636	13,005,180	67,240,915

	Membership															Education			Stewardship						
								Average															Contributions			
			Conf	Inact	Bapt	Total		Worship	Gains		Losses			Bapt		Sun	New	Othr	Total		RCA	Other	Total	Congr
	#	Houshld (1)	Mbrs (2)	Mbrs (3)	Mbrs (4)	Mbrs (5)	Adh (6)	Attend (7)	Conf (8)	Cert (9)	Trans (10)	Deced (11)	Other (12)	Infant (13)	Adult (14)	Sch (15)	Mbrs Clas (16)	Educ Pgms (17)	Income (18)	Assmnts (19a)	Contrb (19b)	Contrb (19c)	Amount (19d)	Purpose (20)
REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE HEARTLAND																									
Central Iowa	19	3,988	6,848	1,335	2,628	10,811	2,440	394	267	159	63	84	146	188	47	-	-	-	14,090,142	601,471	723,728	1,176,837	2,502,036	11,588,106
Central Plains	11	1,037	1,687	451	608	2,746	571	156	68	28	10	19	42	43	21	-	-	-	4,106,527	139,473	137,941	204,885	482,299	3,624,228
Dakota	32	2,739	4,803	862	1,980	7,645	1,544	151	150	124	61	57	77	143	16	-	-	-	5,822,000	375,620	237,882	324,867	938,369	4,883,631
East Sioux	15	2,954	4,970	383	1,791	7,144	709	302	118	120	78	90	72	82	16	-	-	-	7,353,780	415,780	813,234	698,211	1,927,225	5,426,555
Minnesota	21	2,595	4,398	545	1,548	6,491	634	179	97	61	51	78	59	66	19	-	-	-	6,490,576	373,734	515,113	328,472	1,217,319	5,273,257
Pleasant Prairie	22	2,479	3,959	1,143	1,548	6,650	1,081	175	120	116	28	71	73	111	26	-	-	-	6,318,679	341,759	273,747	939,907	1,555,413	4,763,266
West Sioux	23	4,263	7,386	400	3,326	11,112	852	297	219	126	100	75	27	185	23	-	-	-	10,682,001	563,935	893,413	1,252,121	2,709,469	7,972,532
TOTALS	143	20,055	34,051	5,119	13,429	52,599	7,831	231	1,039	734	391	474	496	818	168	-	-	-	54,863,705	2,811,772	3,595,058	4,925,300	11,332,130	43,531,575
REGIONAL SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA																									
Chicago	11	991	1,852	296	571	2,719	282	153	58	36	50	36	224	37	7	-	-	-	3,681,343	129,739	169,115	245,690	544,544	3,136,799
Illiana	39	5,324	8,656	694	3,317	12,667	3,811	216	510	143	140	136	345	176	111	-	-	-	16,729,871	650,095	547,971	1,349,855	2,547,921	14,181,950
Illinois	23	2,151	3,378	639	1,144	5,161	380	114	78	53	27	69	38	56	12	-	-	-	4,807,280	239,756	336,968	198,253	774,977	4,032,303
Wisconsin	26	4,167	7,009	608	2,829	10,446	807	212	189	65	47	88	154	102	4	-	-	-	8,800,952	515,766	643,926	763,875	1,923,567	6,877,385
TOTALS	99	12,633	20,895	2,237	7,861	30,993	5,280	185	835	297	264	329	761	371	134	-	-	-	34,019,446	1,535,356	1,697,980	2,557,673	5,791,009	28,228,437
REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE MID-ATLANTICS																									
Delaware-Raritan	31	2,562	3,740	2,251	1,160	7,151	987	84	188	53	44	87	140	69	7	-	-	-	6,507,209	305,992	260,434	351,546	917,972	5,589,237
Greater Palisades	43	2,156	2,900	1,415	912	5,227	1,141	66	153	41	61	71	141	62	40	-	-	-	9,555,100	250,190	179,969	308,048	738,207	8,816,893
New Brunswick	28	2,188	2,987	1,277	781	5,045	843	85	153	33	36	85	249	41	7	-	-	-	7,773,970	298,625	251,076	294,867	844,568	6,929,402
Passaic Valley	39	2,299	3,370	1,244	862	5,476	812	76	158	43	106	78	185	81	26	-	-	-	7,663,654	305,239	253,298	399,529	958,066	6,705,588
TOTALS	141	9,205	12,997	6,187	3,715	22,899	3,783	77	652	170	247	321	715	253	80	-	-	-	31,499,933	1,160,046	944,777	1,353,990	3,458,813	28,041,120
REGIONAL SYNOD OF NEW YORK																									
Brooklyn	14	616	755	226	158	1,139	256	56	43	12	6	5	67	34	9	-	-	-	2,132,010	48,935	90,328	74,236	213,499	1,918,511
Mid-Hudson	33	2,091	3,073	2,219	1,729	7,021	1,279	77	158	47	36	75	417	81	15	-	-	-	5,441,346	282,310	175,006	212,660	669,976	4,771,370
Nassau-Suffolk	14	954	1,226	540	401	2,167	364	84	66	27	21	26	66	23	16	-	-	-	3,514,250	127,214	103,695	272,018	502,927	3,011,323
New York	21	3,344	4,388	4,071	488	8,947	2,762	132	225	21	39	38	97	61	52	-	-	-	7,760,046	384,802	102,890	518,286	1,005,978	6,754,068
Orange	20	1,051	1,198	583	520	2,301	366	62	81	16	16	34	180	31	9	-	-	-	2,515,432	135,855	55,432	110,781	302,068	2,213,364
Queens	28	1,268	1,949	917	275	3,141	501	88	138	49	207	26	48	40	80	-	-	-	6,103,500	162,232	85,571	164,849	412,652	5,690,848
Rockland-Westchester	17	1,261	1,938	1,481	195	3,614	332	80	126	15	27	32	20	36	13	-	-	-	6,234,900	185,280	73,893	336,157	595,330	5,639,570
TOTALS	147	10,585	14,527	10,037	3,766	28,330	5,860	84	837	187	352	236	895	306	194	-	-	-	33,701,484	1,326,628	686,815	1,688,987	3,702,430	29,999,054
GRAND TOTAL	924	99,497	155,766	40,510	55,019	251,295	52,427	163	6,295	2,647	2,407	2,539	6,043	3,070	1,521	-	-	-	309,841,979	12,773,783	12,050,451	21,405,294	46,229,528	263,612,451

SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME JANUARY 2009 THROUGH JUNE 2010

organized 2/10	Home Church Fraser Valley Langley, British Columbia	bc
organized 2/10	New Hope Community Church, Reformed Church in America Shelby, Michigan	nmi
organized, 6/10	Vanguard Church Kalamazoo, Michigan	swm
organized 8/10	The Branch Grand Rapids, Michigan	sgr

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disbanded, 10/08	First Reformed Church Amsterdam, New York	scho
disbanded, 1/10	First Reformed Church Monroe, South Dakota	dak
disbanded, 2/10	Faith Reformed Church Portage, Michigan	swm
disbanded, 3/10	Miraloma Community Church San Francisco, California	cc
disbanded, 3/10	First Reformed Church of Kew Gardens Kew Gardens, New York	que
disbanded, 4/10	Christ Community Church Utica, New York	mont
disbanded, 6/10	First Reformed Church Union City, New Jersey	gpal
disbanded, 6/10	Belleville Reformed Church Belleville, New Jersey	pasv
released, 10/10	DaSom Korean Reformed Church Long Beach, California	cal
disbanded, 10/10	Springford Reformed Church Springford, Ontario	ont
disbanded, 11/10	Maitland Community Reformed Church Maitland, Ontario	ont
disbanded, 12/10	Within Reach Ministries Kalamazoo, Michigan	swm

disbanded, 12/10	Hope Community Church Scottsdale, Arizona	sw
disbanded, 12/10	Woodbourne Reformed Church Woodbourne, New York	orng
disbanded, 3/11	Parma Park Reformed Church Parma Heights, Ohio	l-e
disbanded, 3/11	Leeds Reformed Church Leeds, New York	c-g
disbanded, 4/11	Good Shepherd Reformed Church Westland, Michigan	l-e
disbanded 4/11	Hanaim Church Paramus, New Jersey	pasv
disbanded 4/11	Immanuel Reformed Church London, Ontario	ont

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merged, 6/10	United Reformed Church, Somerville, New Jersey merged with Third Reformed Church, Raritan, New Jersey becoming: United Reformed Church Somerville, New Jersey	d-r
classis merged, 12/10	Classis of Illiana merged with Classis of Florida becoming: Classis of Illiana	

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classis change, 12/10	Winnebago Reformed Church Winnebago, Nebraska	from cp to ws
classis change, 12/10	Bethany Reformed Church Canton, South Dakota	from ws to dak
name change, 4/10	North Point Church Plainwell, Michigan formerly named North Point Community Church	swm

name change, 2/11	Living Word Family Church Allegan, Michigan formerly named Main Street Ministries	swm
name change, 2/11	West Coast Church of the Cross Sarasota, Florida formerly named Church of the Cross	ilia
name change, 3/11	Impact Christian Church Brentwood, California formerly named The Orchard Church	cc
name change, 6/11	Pembroke Fellowship Church St. Anne, Illinois formerly named Pembroke Community Reformed Church	ilia

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superseded, 12/09	Reformed Church of Willingboro Willingboro, New Jersey	nb
superseded, 1/10	Montclair Heights Reformed Church Upper Montclair, New Jersey	pasv
superseded, 3/10	Church on the Hill Norco, California	cal
superseded, 6/10	Steinway Reformed Church Astoria, New York	que
superseded, 6/10	Glendale Reformed Church Glendale, New York	que
superseded, 10/10	Riverside Community Church Riverside, California	cal
superseded, 3/11	Krumville Reformed Church Krumville, New York	m-h

Recent audited financial statements for the General Synod Council, RCA Fund, Endowment Fund, Church Growth Fund, Board of Benefits Services Insurance Fund, Board of Benefits Services General Fund, and Board of Benefits Services Retirement Fund are available at www.rca.org/financials. For questions about the statements, please contact the treasurer at (616) 698-7071, ext. 227; 4500 60th SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512; or bboers@rca.org.

The financial statements and audited reports from New Brunswick Theological Seminary and Western Theological Seminary are available from the seminaries. Copies are also housed in the RCA Archives.

As a matter of public record, copies of audited financial reports are always available by calling the treasurer's office at (616) 698-7071, ext. 227, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), Monday through Friday. These financial reports are now available online at www.rca.org/finance. Audited financial reports are also housed in the RCA Archives.