OFFICERS OF GENERAL SYNOD

1975-1976

President	Rev. Bert E. Van Soest
Vice-President	Rev. Louis H. Benes, Sr.
General Secretary	Rev. Marion de Velder
Treasurer	Mr. Anton E. Mickelsen

GENERAL SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1975-1976

MINISTERS	ELDERS
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Harry Buis	Harry E. De Bruyn
Rodger H. Dalman	Mrs. Edgar Dreyman
Marion de Velder, Sec.	Clarence H. Linder
Donald H. De Young	Mrs. Marien Lo Preto
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Norman J. Tellier	
Bert E. Van Soest	

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Appendix 2 — Directory

Set: $6.00

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1975

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(Ov) = Overtures Received re:

Calendar of Special Days

1975

Labor Sunday	August 31
Day of Commitment	September 15
Christian Education Sunday	September 28
Christian Education Week	September 28-October 5
World Wide Communion Sunday	October 5
One Great Hour of Sharing	October 5 or other Fall Sunday
Laity Sunday	October 12
World Order Sunday	October 19
Ecumenical Youth Week	October 19-26
Reformation Sunday	October 26
Religion in American Life Month	November
World Community Day	November 7
Stewardship Sunday	November 9
Thanksgiving Sunday	November 23
Universal Bible Sunday	November 16
National Bible Week	November 16-23
Thanksgiving Day	November 27
Board of Pensions Sunday	December 7
Christmas	December 25

1976

Epiphany	January 6
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	January 18-25
Reformed Church Youth Sunday	January 25 or other January or February Sunday
Boy Scout Sunday	February 8
Ash Wednesday	March 3
Day of Prayer for Crops and Industry	March 10
World Day of Prayer	March 5
Girl Scout Sunday	March 7
Passion Sunday	April 4
Palm Sunday	April 11
Holy Week	April 11-18
Maundy Thursday	April 15
Good Friday	April 16
Easter Sunday	April 18
National Christian College Day	April 25
May Fellowship Day	May 7
Rural Life Sunday	May 2
National Family Week	May 2-9
Festival of the Christian Home	May 9
Ascension Day	May 27
Pentecost	June 6
Children's Day	June 6

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General Synod, 1976	June 14-18

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ACTS AND PROCEEDINGS

THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-NINTH GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA CONVENED IN REGULAR SESSION AT ELMHURST COLLEGE, ELMHURST, ILL., MONDAY, THE NINTH DAY OF JUNE, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE AT TWO P.M., CENTRAL DAYLIGHT TIME, AND ADJOURNED ON FRIDAY, THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF JUNE, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE AT 8:30 P.M. CENTRAL DAYLIGHT TIME.

I. FORMATION OF THE SYNOD

ARTICLE 1

OPENING OF THE SYNOD

The Synod opened with a Service of Worship led by the Rev. Harold De Roo, Worship Leader.

ARTICLE 2

ROLL OF GENERAL SYNOD

President: Raymond Rewerts, 2012 Griggs Street S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 40506

Vice President: Bert E. Van Soest, 59 Hamburg Turnpike, Pompton Lakes, N.J. 07442

General Secretary: Marion de Velder, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10027

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF ALBANY

CLASSIS OF ALBANY

Ministers

Jack D. Cooper, 3 Chapel Lane, Glenmont, N.Y. 12077
Gerald Wondra, Feura Bush, N.Y. 12067
Peter Berry, Box 20, Knox, N.Y. 12107

Elders

Herbert Strumpf, R.D., Selkirk, N.Y. 12158
Elmer Smith, Feura Bush, N.Y. 12067
Dayton Smith, Elm Ave., Coxsackie, N.Y. 12051

CLASSIS OF COLUMBIA-GREENE

Ministers

John Dykstra, 310 Main St., Catskill, N.Y. 12414
C. Bruce Wierks, 66 Kinderhook Street, Chatham, N.Y. 12037

Elders

Henry DuBois, R.D.#3, Box 82, Catskill, N.Y. 12414
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CLASSIS OF MONTGOMERY

Ministers

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William Faulkner, Sprakers, N.Y. 12166

Elders

Roland Allen, 428 Ridgewood Dr., Syracuse, N.Y. 13206
Kenneth Spencer, 106 Elaine Ave., N. Syracuse, N.Y. 13212

CLASSIS OF ROCHESTER

Ministers

Robert O. Shaver, R.D. #1, Box 123, Clymer, N.Y. 14724
Nicholas VanderWeide, Box 335, Interlaken, N.Y. 14847
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Elders

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CLASSIS OF SARATOGA

Ministers

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Elders

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CLASSIS OF SCHENECTADY

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Stanley Bomgarden, Star Route, Rotterdam Junction, N.Y. 12150

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Dorothy H. Gleason, 40 Merritt Dr., Schenectady, N.Y.
Clarence Schmid, Pattersonville, N.Y. 12150
Jack Adam, R.D. #2, Charlton Rd., Scotia, N.Y. 12302

CLASSIS OF SCHOHARIE

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Charles Bridgman, 7 Trinity Pl., Amsterdam, N.Y. 12010

Elders

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PARTICULAR SYNOD OF CHICAGO

CLASSIS OF CHICAGO

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Elders

John Hamstra, 1009 Hiltop Dr., Morrison, Ill. 61270
Vernon Schaver, R. R. #1, Fulton, Ill. 61252
Andrew De Boer, R.R. #1, Fenton, Ill. 61251

CLASSIS OF WISCONSIN

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Calvin Tysen, 209 S. 4th St., Delavan, Wis. 53585
Gordon Van Wyk, 105 7th St., N.E., Orange City, Iowa 51041

Elders

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Gerrit De Boer, R.R. #2, Cambria, Wis. 53923
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PARTICULAR SYNOD OF MICHIGAN

CLASSIS OF HOLLAND

Ministers

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Ellsworth Ten Clay, 436 Van Raalte Ave., Holland, Mich. 49423
Henry Voogd, 86 West 21st St., Holland, Mich. 49423
Rudolf Kuyten, 538 Hamburg Tpke., West Milford, N.J. 07480

Elders

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Gerald Kruyf, 615 W. 24th St., Holland, Mich. 49423
William Strating, 126 E. 39th St., Holland, Mich. 49423

CLASSIS OF KALAMAZOO

Ministers

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Fred Dolfin, 1316 Barney Rd., Kalamazoo, Mich. 49007
John A. Vander May, 227 Brown St., Kalamazoo, Mich. 49002
Cecil Martens, 511 Park Ave., Kalamazoo, Mich. 49004

Elders

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Bart Vander Naald, 3308 Tampa Ave., Kalamazoo, Mich. 49001
William De Boer, R. #1, Mattawan, Mich. 49071

CLASSIS OF LAKE ERIE

Ministers

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Elders

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Roland Augustine, 10762 Lanark, Detroit, Mich. 48224
Arthur Hoffman, 26546 Barrington, Madison Heights, Mich. 48071

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Elders

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Richard Bates, 1224 David, N.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 40504
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John Zweir, Chaplain, Fitsimmons Army Medical Center, Denver, Colo. 80240
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Elders

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Edwin Van Houten, 1851 Crescent Dr., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49503
Joyce Tassell, 223 Brookside Dr., Flushing, Mich. 48433
James VanderSall, 509 Kenwood N.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49505

CLASSIS OF ONTARIO

Ministers

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Henry Van Essen, Box 872, Exeter, Ont. NoMiSo

Elders

Dirk Bosje, 347 Dalhousie, Brantford, Ont.
Andy Van Ryn, C/O 82a Shanty Bay Rd., Barrie, Ont. LyMiE8

CLASSIS OF SOUTH GRAND RAPIDS

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Charles Doornbos, 3444 Yellowstone Dr., S.W., Grandville, Mich. 49418

Elders

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Gerrit Osterink, 0-500 Port Sheldon Dr., Grandville, Mich. 49418
John Kolkman, 4303 Bill-Mar, Grandville, Mich. 49418
William Vander Zouwen, 1806 Greenwoods Dr., Jenison, Mich. 49428
Don Wyngarden, 2487 Baldwin, Jenison, Mich. 49428
Don Bekkering, 2025 Baldwin Drive, Jenison, Mich. 49428

CLASSIS OF ZEELAND

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Arnold Punt, 212 W. Central Ave., Zeeland, Mich. 49464
Jacob Dykstra, 4857 Port Sheldon Rd., Hudsonville, Mich. 49426
Sherwin Broersma, 8283 W. Hillsborough Ave., Tampa, Fla. 33615

Elders

John Dykhuis, 113 Timberwood La., Holland, Mich. 49423
Victor Elliott, 6653 40th Ave., Hudsonville, Mich. 49426
Bob Peterson, 7009 Continental Dr., Tampa, Fla. 33615
Lorenzo Meengs, 39 Lawrence St., Zeeland, Mich. 49464

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF NEW JERSEY

CLASSIS OF BERGEN

Ministers

Samuel J. Priestley, Jr., 39-23 Fair Lawn Ave., Fair Lawn, N.J. 07410
Jon N. Norton, 272 Whiteman Ave., Fort Lee, N.J. 07024
Eltje J. Brunemeyer, 360 Bogert Rd., River Edge, N.J. 07661

Elders

George A. Doremus, 144 East Magnolia, Maywood, N.J. 07607
Harold Soffel, 68 Baker La., Dumont, N.J. 07628

CLASSIS OF NEWARK

Ministers

John L. Magee, Jr., 17 Harvard Rd., Linden, N.J. 07036
D. Kim Nielsen, 88 Delavan Ave., Newark, N.J. 07104

Elders

Jack Cherry, 17 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, N.J. 08901
Gibbs Myers, 20 Windsor Place, Upper Montclair, N.J. 07043

CLASSIS OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Ministers

David W. Waanders, 17 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, N.J. 08901
Irving H. Decker, 23 South Second Ave., Highland Park, N.J. 08904
Gerard Van Dyk, 563 Old Post Rd., Edison, N.J. 08817

Elders

Volney Coffill, Jr., 134 Norris Ave., Metuchen, N.J. 08841
Hazel Rindone, 1424 8th Ave., Neptune, N.J. 07753

CLASSIS OF PALISADES

Ministers

J. David Muyskens, 2607 Palisades Ave., Union City, N.J. 07087
Robert G. Schwander, 409 60th St., West New York, N.J. 07092

Elders

William G. Bartholomay, 7709 Hudson Ave., North Bergen, N.J. 07047
Emma Rose, 218 Wegman Parkway, Jersey City, N.J. 07305

CLASSIS OF PARAMUS

Ministers

Robert Minnick, 500 East Saddle River Rd., Upper Saddle River, N.J. 07458
David Bach, Wyckoff Ave., Wyckoff, N.J. 07481
Lee L. Kester, Jr., 655 Church St., Oradell, N.J. 07649
Charles Johnson, P.O. Box 275, Harrington Park, N.J. 07640

Elders

James Amels, 34 First St., Midland Park, N.J. 07432
Norris Spencer, Neda Pl., Midland Park, N.J. 07432
Howard Mac Pherson, 23 Olney Rd., Mahwah, N.J. 07430
Elliott B. Erwood, 34 Knoll Rd., Pines Lake, Wayne, N.J. 07470

CLASSIS OF PASSAIC

Ministers

Marvin Wassink, 186 Washington Street, Clifton, N.J. 07011
Al Smith, 131 Church Lane, Wayne, N.J. 07470
Robert Jackson, 296 Lafayette Ave., Hawthorne, N.J. 07506
Raymond Pontier, 19 Belmont Place, Passaic, N.J. 07055

Elders

Fred Kaiser, 61 Pleasant Ave., Passaic, N.J. 07055
Richard Meyers, 574 Burrett Pl., Franklin Lakes, N.J. 07417
William Corsin, 115 Sylvan Terrace, Fayson Lakes, N.J. 07405

CLASSIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Ministers

Leonard Kalkwarf, 1409 Bernard Ave., Willow Grove, Pa. 19090
John I. Itzen, 505 Stonybrook Dr., Levittown, Pa. 19055
Nicolaos Tsianiklides, 635 Newtown Rd., Warminster, Pa. 18974

Elders

Raymond Thomas, 21 S. Westview Ave., Feasterville, Pa. 19047
J. Kenneth Deitz, 338 Stonybrook Dr., Levittown, Pa. 19055
George Boyd, 980 Manor Lane, Southampton, Pa. 18966

CLASSIS OF RARITAN

Ministers

Forest Decker, 136 Amwell Rd., Neshanic, N.J. 08853
John Pontier, P. O. Box 363, Bedminister, N.J. 07921
Paul Van Elk, 120 Old York Rd., Somerville, N.J. 08876

Elders

Elizabeth Landon, P.O. Box 317, Whitehouse Sta., N.J. 08889
Margaret Van Doren, R. #1, Ringoes, N.J. 08551
Patricia Herbes, 457 Bayberry Rd., Somerville, N.J. 08876

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF NEW YORK

CLASSIS OF BROOKLYN

Ministers

Norman Kolenbrander, 145 Neck Rd., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11223
David W. Hondorp, 155 Lincoln Rd., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11225

Elders

Harry Waugh, 2069 East 14th St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11229
Howard Hamann, 9307 Foster Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11236

CLASSIS OF MID-HUDSON

Ministers

Charles M. Stickley, Hurley, N.Y. 12443
LeRoy A. Suess, 173 Main St., Saugerties, N.Y. 12477
Rodney J. Koopmans, Gardiner, N.Y. 12525
Randall B. Bosch, 209 Fair St., Kingston, N.Y. 12401

Elders

William W. Sacher, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, 17 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, N.J. 08901
Kay Dutcher, Albany Post Rd., Cold Spring, N.Y. 10516
W. Miner Franks, Gardiner, N.Y. 12525
William Pratt, R.D. #1, Box 84, Stone Ridge, N.Y. 12484

CLASSIS OF NASSAU-SUFFOLK

Ministers

Peter F. Markey, 99 Campbell Ave., Williston Park, N.Y. 11596
Daniel L. Ogden, 306 Ocean Ave., Massapequa, N.Y. 11758

Elders

John Belanus, 96 Charles Ave., Massapequa Park, N.Y. 11762
Keith Rouse, 38 Sixth St., Garden City Park, N.Y. 11040

CLASSIS OF NEW YORK

Ministers

Allen Buurma, 5501 Ambey Rd., Staten Island, N.Y. 10312
Donald De Young, 171 East 121st St., N.Y., N.Y. 10035
Harold Hiemstra, 400 East 67th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10021

Elders

Edgar Dillard, 661 Rosedale Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10472
Arthur Buhlman, 67 Burbank Ave., Staten Island, N.Y. 10306
Willard Burbank, 510 East 23rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10010
William C. Dehn, 9 Stuyvesant Oval, N.Y., N.Y. 10009

CLASSIS OF ORANGE

Ministers

Richard V. Coffill, 30 East Main St., Port Jervis, N.Y. 12771
Albert Elswick, R.D. #1, Box 88, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589

Elders

Louis Ferrarini, R.D.1, Box 191, Pine Bush, N.Y. 12566
Hermina Reardon, P.O. Box 126, Walkhill, N.Y. 12589

CLASSIS OF QUEENS

Ministers

Herman De Jong, 21-65 41st St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11105
Robert Pitcock, 84-40 85th Rd., Woodhaven, N.Y. 11421

Elders

John Ashley, 4-25 Astoria Blvd., Long Island City, N.Y. 11102
George Rambousek, 51-01 39th Ave., Long Island City, N.Y. 11104

CLASSIS OF ROCKLAND-WESTCHESTER

Ministers

Charles L. Copenhaver, Box 397, Bronxville, N.Y. 10708
Bernard R. Brunsting, 270 Ardsley Rd., Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583
William Coons 65, Broadway, Hawthorne, N.Y. 10532

Elders

Arad Riggs, 339 Pondfield Rd., Bronxville, N.Y. 10708
Ellwood Gray, 70 Vernon, Yonkers, N.Y. 10704
Leland Meyer, 920 South Main St., Spring Valley, N.Y. 10977

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF THE WEST

CLASSIS OF CALIFORNIA

Ministers

Floyd Goulooze, 8629 E. McDonald Dr., Scottsdale, Ariz. 85253
Duane Tellinghuisen, 6575 Crescent Ave., Buena Park, Calif. 90620
Carl De Jong, 344 West Florence Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90003
Daniel H. Fylstra, 3507 North 12th Place, Phoenix, Ariz. 85014
Harmon Wierenga, 14692 Buckingham Place, Tustin, Calif. 92680
John Lucius, 2120 N. 61 Dr., Phoenix, Ariz. 85033

Elders

Cal Bensema, 8650 Calle Quebrada, Cucamonga, Calif. 91730
Tim Gambles, 5726 Eileen Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90043
Al Fikse, General Kearney Rd., Temecula, Calif. 92390
John Rouwenhorst, 17928 Arline Ave., Artesia, Calif. 90701
Marshall Lytle, 3523 Linwood Place, Riverside, Calif. 92503

CLASSIS OF CASCADES

Ministers

Robert Vander Aarde, 918 Ave. B., N.W., Great Falls, Mont. 59404
Frank De Vries, 33674 Mayfair Ave., Abbotsford, B.C., Canada

Elders

Floyd Warrior, Rte. 1, Box 490, Yakima, Wash. 98901
Chris Platteel, 2225 Mouldstadt St., Abbotsford, B.C.

CLASSIS OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Ministers

Samuel Williams, 457 Capistrano Dr., Oakland, Calif. 94603
Mark Schoon, 916 Baker Dr., Ripon, Calif. 95366

Elders

Robert Unger, 769 Upton Way, San Jose, Calif. 95123
Robert Bruce Daffern, 5340 Garfield Ave., #1, Sacramento, Calif. 95841

CLASSIS OF DAKOTA

Ministers

Adrian Van Wyk, 500 West 14th Ave., Mitchell, S.D. 57301
Henry Jager, Box 188, Armour, S.D. 57313
Donald Plantinga, 1210 Thresher, Dell Rapids, S.D. 57022

Elders

Wayne Kreun, 1802 Walnut Ave., Yankton, S.D. 57078
John W. Symens, Claremont, S.D. 57432
Rowlyn De Vries, Armour, S.D. 57313

CLASSIS OF EAST SIOUX

Ministers

Henry B. Poppen, 520 Tenth Ave., Sibley, Iowa
Donald Lenderink, 312 Albany Ave., N.E., Orange City, Iowa 51041
Stan Vander Weide, 111 5th St., N.E., Orange City, Iowa 51041

Elders

William Shattuck, May City, Iowa 51349
Donald Adkins, Hospers, Iowa 51238
Marion Vander Laan, 702 Central Ave., N.W., Orange City, Iowa 51041

CLASSIS OF MINNESOTA

Ministers

William Kolenbrander, 2560 Ironwood Ave., Slayton, Minn. 56172
William Kroon, Edgerton, Minn. 56128
William Hoffman, 308 N. Fairview Dr., Luverne, Minn. 56156
Harvey Hoekstra, RCA, 421 N. Brookhurst, Suite 218, Anaheim, Calif. 92801

Elders

Robert Alvey, Hollandale, Minn. 56045
Abram Westenberg, R.F.D., Edgerton, Minn. 56128
Wilbur Kroontje, 414 W. Luverne St., Luverne, Minn. 56156

CLASSIS OF PELLA

Ministers

Stanley Rock, 3500 Kingman, Des Moines, Iowa 50311
Lloyd Menning, 720 N.E. 52nd St., Des Moines, Iowa 50313
Frank J. Shearer, 605 Broadway, Pella, Iowa 50219

Elders

Clayton Uitermarkt, Rte. 1, Leighton, Iowa 50143
Gilford Steenhoek, Route 2, Pella, Iowa 50219
Arthur Bosch, 1111 Peace, Pella, Iowa 50219

CLASSIS OF PLEASANT PRAIRIE

Ministers

John E. Janssen, Titonka, Iowa 50480
Norman Ratering, Aplington, Iowa 50604
Gideon Wolbrink, Wellsburg, Iowa 50680

Elders

Erwin Wix, Allison, Iowa 50602
Lester Johnson, Aplington, Iowa 50604
Rionold Gerdes, Aplington, Iowa 50604

CLASSIS OF WEST CENTRAL

Ministers

Joseph Holbrook, Jr., 3939 W. Florida Ave., Denver, Colo. 80219
Gordon Damsteegt, Box 98, Holland, Nebr. 68373

Elders

Nelson Mc Pherson, 3541 So. Grape St., Denver, Colo. 80237
Le Roy Kallemeyn, 12315 Westwood Lane, Omaha, Nebr. 68144

CLASSIS OF WEST SIOUX

Ministers

Albert H. Ten Clay, 504 Iowa Ave., S.W., Orange City, Iowa 51041
James Brinkhuis, R.R. #1, Box 150, Ellsworth, Minn. 56129
Wendell Pyle, 602 So. 6th Ave., Rock Rapids, Iowa 51246

Elders

Frank Tjeerdsma, 207 N. Wicker, Canton, S.D. 57013
Arnold Humme, Hull, Iowa 51239
Elmer Vermeer, 155 Fourth Ave., N.E., Sioux Center, Iowa 51250

NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Hugh A. Koops
Virgil M. Rogers

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

James Cook
Richard C. Oudersluys

CORRESPONDING DELEGATES

GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL

George W. Crumley, Jr.
Herman J. Ridder

CENTRAL COLLEGE

Kenneth J. Weller

HOPE COLLEGE

Gordon Van Wylen

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

Raymond Weiss

THE CHURCH HERALD

John Stapert

CHAPLAINS COMMISSION
Raymond Van Heukelom
Earl Jabay
John Zwiers

REFORMED CHURCH WOMEN
Jean Cook
Betty Boerman

CENTRAL COLLEGE
(students)
Ed Maniscalco
Joyce Huibregtse

HOPE COLLEGE
(students)
Tim Mulder
Jim Beran

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE
(students)
Mary Ann Anker
Ned Van Dellen

NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
(students)
Richard Weyer
Steve Giordano

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
(students)
Steve Vander Molen
Murray Moreman

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF ALBANY
John C. Hintermaier

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF CHICAGO
William J. Bouwer

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF MICHIGAN
James Schut

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF NEW JERSEY
Herbert Van Wyk

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF NEW YORK
Albertus Bossenbroek

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF THE WEST
William Kroon

YOUTH DELEGATES
Ronni Nivala
Steve Bolda

BLACK COUNCIL
David E. Beale

AMERICAN INDIAN COUNCIL
Leeds Soatikee

HISPANIC COUNCIL
Raymond Rivera

FRATERNAL DELEGATE

Nelson Vanderzee — Christian Reformed Church

GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL MISSIONARIES

Jeanette Boersma
Keith de Jong
Marcine de Jong
Anne De Young
Harvey Doorenbos
Lavina Hoekstra
Helga Lucius
Gertrude Meengs
Henry Meeuwse
Marcia Meeuwse
Alfred G. Pennings
Mary Royster
William Royster
Hilda Staal
Bertha Van Wyk

CO-HOSTS

Bernis & Stuart Blauw

WORSHIP LEADER

Harold De Roo

UNPAID CLASSICAL ASSESSMENTS

The General Secretary reported that the classical assessments for California and Mid-Hudson had not been paid in full. It was noted that assessments are due by March 31 each year and that several attempts had been made to collect these assessments. Each General Synod must determine whether or not the delegates from classes having unpaid assessments can be seated as voting delegates. It was moved and seconded:

To refer the matter of the unpaid assessments of the California and Mid-Hudson Classes to the Committee of Reference (G.S.E.C.) for consideration and report to the General Synod as soon as possible. (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 3

Election of Officers

Reverend Bert E. Van Soest, pastor of the Pompton Reformed Church, Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, was elected President. Reverend Louis H. Benes, Sr., former editor of the *Church Herald,* Grand Rapids, Michigan, was elected Vice President.

The President appointed as Tellers:

Harmen Heeg	D. Kim Nielsen
Rodney J. Koopmans	Jon N. Norton
Reinhold Krone	Robert G. Schwander
Simon Nagel	Daryl A. Vetter

The Tellers were Elected as Temporary Clerks.

ARTICLE 4

Reading of the Minutes

The Minutes of the Sessions of 1974 were read by title.

The following corrections were noted in the 1974 General Synod *Acts and Proceedings* and attention was called to these changes in the October 1974 General Mailing to all pastors:

1. *Pg. 103—Overture 15—Quorum at Classis Meetings*

   Change committee recommendation from "approval" to "no action".

2. *Pg. 130—"Other Actions" of General Synod Executive Committee—Martha Antoinette Quick Memorial Fund Allocation*

   Add 20%—Student Aid Grant—New Brunswick and Western Theological Seminaries

3. *Pg. 300—under "Other Matters", add the following:*

   "The following resolution was made from the floor of General Synod:

   WHEREAS, inflation and self-indulgence are major competition for Kingdom outreach and support, and

   WHEREAS, the most serious inroads are made in mission, relief and shared Gospel programs, and

   WHEREAS, Biblical and historical tithing has been the oft-repeated admonition by Scripture to God's people, particularly in times of crises (e.g. Malachi "God's last Old Testament offer to His People"),

   NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that General Synod of the Reformed Church in America reaffirm its approval of these principles and urge the

members of the RCA to practice tithing and consistories to promote this program through individual commitments and tithing fellowships, so that through mutual encouragement within our membership, in these days of inflation it is our self-indulgence that suffers and not the cause of Christ and the Kingdom.

It was ADOPTED to refer this resolution with its suggestions to the General Program Council for implementation by various means."

4. *Pg. 301—Close and Adjournment*
Correct 1975 General Synod dates to read: June 9 and June 13, 1975.

II. ACTS OF THE SYNOD

ARTICLE 1

RULES OF ORDER

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

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

The hours of meeting and adjournment were fixed.

The limits of the house were designated.

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

ARTICLE 2

REVIEW COMMITTEES

GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL

Chairman: Hugh Koops (New Brunswick Seminary)
Vice Chairman: Daniel I. Ogden (Nassau-Suffolk)

Ministers

David Bach (Paramus)
Winfield Burggraaff (New York)
Gordon Damsteegt (West Central)
Carl J. De Jong (California)
Charles Doornbos (South Grand Rapids)
John P. Drost (Ontario)
Jacob Dykstra (Zeeland)
Evert H. Fikse (Chicago)
Thomas Hall (Saratoga)
Robert Hector (Wisconsin)
Harold Hiemstra (New York)
David W. Hondorp (Brooklyn)
Norman Kolenbrander (Brooklyn)
William Kroon (Minnesota)
Carlo Lazzaro (Saratoga)
Simon Nagel (North Grand Rapids)
Kim Nielsen (Newark)
Reuben Ongna (Illinois)
J. Mark Schoon (Central California)
Carl J. Schroeder (North Grand Rapids)
Robert G. Schwander (Palisades)
Charles Stickley (Mid-Hudson)
Leroy Suess (Mid-Hudson)
Robert L. Vander Aarde (Cascades)
Kenneth Vander Broek (Kalamazoo)
Robert Vander Schaaf (Illinois)
David W. Waanders (New Brunswick)
Samuel Williams (Central California)

Elders

Roland Allen (Montgomery)
Robert W. Alvey (Minnesota)
William G. Bartholomay (Palisades)
Carl Bensema (California)
Gerrit De Boer (Wisconsin)
Edgar Dillard (New York)
George A. Doremus (Bergen)
Kay Dutcher (Mid-Hudson)
John Eberly (Muskegon)
Rionald E. Gerdes (Pleasant Prairie)
Patricia Herbes (Raritan)
Lewis E. Johnson (Muskegon)
Marshall Lytle (California)
Richard Meyers (Passaic)
Chris Platteel, Sr. (Cascades)
George F. Posthuma (Wisconsin)
William W. Sacher, Jr. (Mid-Hudson)
Clarence T. Schmidt (Schenectady)
Norris Spencer (Paramus)
Gilford Steenhoek (Pella)
William Strating (Holland)
George Van Der Molen (Chicago)
William J. Vander Zouwen (South Grand Rapids)
Elmer Vermeer (West Sioux)
Harry Waugh (Brooklyn)
Stephen Wildeman (Wisconsin)

BOARD OF PENSIONS

Chairman: John Dykstra (Columbia-Greene)
Vice Chairman: Allen Buurma (New York)

Ministers

Don Bekkering (South Grand Rapids)
Peter Berry (Albany)
Bartel Bylsma (Lake Erie)
Paul B. Caley (Schenectady)
William H. Coons (Rockland-Westchester)
Henry M. Haga (Wisconsin)
Harold Irish (Schenectady)
William B. Kolenbrander (Minnesota)
Lloyd Menning (Pella)
Robert Minnick (Paramus)
Adrian Van Wyk (Dakota)
Harmon R. Wierenga (California)

Elders

James Amels (Paramus)
John Belanus (Nassau-Suffolk)
Dirk Bosje (Ontario)
Henry R. Du Bois (Columbia-Greene)
John Dykhuis (Zeeland)
Victor Elliott (Zeeland)
Elliott Erwood (Paramus)
Tim Gambles (California)
Wilbur Kroontje (Minnesota)
Gerrit Osterink (South Grand Rapids)
G. Clifford Southworth (Saratoga)
Herb Strumpf (Albany)
John Tysen (Illiana)
Bart Vander Naald (Kalamazoo)
Roscoe L. Williams (Saratoga)

HIGHER EDUCATION

Chairman: C. Bruce Wierks (Columbia-Greene)
Vice Chairman: Herman De Jong (Queens)

Ministers

James Brinkhuis (West Sioux)
Sherwin Boersma (Zeeland)
Eltje J. Brunemeyer (Bergen)
Jack Cooper (Albany)
Robert Jackson (Passaic)
John E. Jansen (Pleasant Prairie)
Reinhold Krone (Illiana)
John Lucius (California)
J. David Muyskens (Palisades)
John D. Pontier (Raritan)
Henry Poppen (East Sioux)
Stan Rock (Pella)
Ellsworth Ten Clay (Holland)
Gordon Van Wyk (Wisconsin)
Gerald Wondra (Albany)

Elders

Arthur J. Bosch (Pella)
Willard L. Burbank (New York)
Al Fikse (California)
H. John Kolkman (South Grand Rapids)
Lorenzo Meengs (Zeeland)
Leland Rickart Meyer (Rockland-Westchester)
Maurice L. Patterson (Rochester)
George Rambousek (Queens)
Hermina Reardon (Orange)
Keith Rouse (Nassau-Suffolk)
John Rouwenhorst (California)
Vernon Schaver (Illinois)
Dayton Smith (Albany)
Robert M. Unger (Central California)
Marion Vander Laan (East Sioux)
James VanderSall (North Grand Rapids)
Margaret Van Doren (Raritan)

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

Chairman: Richard Welscott (South Grand Rapids)
Vice Chairman: Henry Van Essen (Ontario)

Ministers

Bernard Brunsting (Rockland-Westchester)
James Cook (Western Seminary)
Charles L. Copenhaver (Rockland-Westchester)
Forest L. Decker (Raritan)
Floyd Goulooze (California)
John I. Itzen (Philadelphia)
Henry Kik (Muskegon)
John Maassen (Chicago)
John Magee (Newark)
Albert Smith (Passaic)
Stan Vander Weide (East Sioux)

Elders

Andrew De Boer (Illinois)
Rowlyn De Vries (Dakota)
W. Miner Franks (Mid-Hudson)
Dorothy H. Gleason (Schenectady)
Harold Glerum (Rochester)
Ellwood M. Gray (Rockland-Westchester)
Arthur Hoffman (Lake Erie)
Arnold Humme (West Sioux)
Fred Kaiser (Passaic)
Howard Mac Pherson (Paramus)
Neal Oorbeek (Kalamazoo)
Arad Riggs (Rockland-Westchester)
Kenneth W. Spencer (Montgomery)
John Symens (Dakota)
Joyce Tassell (North Grand Rapids)
Jacob Van Wyhe (Wisconsin)

OVERTURES

Chairman: Fred Dolfin (Kalamazoo)
Vice Chairman: Wilbur R. Ringnalda (South Grand Rapids)

Ministers

Randall Bosch (Mid-Hudson)
Albert Elswick (Orange)
William E. Faulkner (Montgomery)
Daniel H. Fylstra (California)
Harry J. Hager (Chicago)
Russell Horton (Illiana)
Leonard Kalkwarf (Philadelphia)
Peter F. Markey (Nassau-Suffolk)
Robert Nykamp (Zeeland)
Wendell G. Pyle (West Sioux)
Paul Reynen (North Grand Rapids)
Harold J. Schut (Schenectady)
James H. Stevens (Muskegon)
Albert H. Ten Clay (West Sioux)
Calvin Tysen (Wisconsin)
Paul Van Elk (Raritan)
Ralph Van Rheenen (Illinois)
Daryl A. Vetter (Lake Erie)

Others

Jean Cook (RCW)
Joyce Huibregtse (Central)

Elders

Jack Adam (Schenectady)
Elmer Andringa (Holland)
Hildagard De Lue (Rochester)
Tony Fafe (Illiana)
Louis Ferrarini (Orange)
L. Jack Fosheim (Muskegon)
Douglas Fowke (Schenectady)
John Hamstra (Illinois)
George Kelly (Illiana)
Cornelius Klein (Holland)
Elizabeth Landon (Raritan)
Henry Munsell (Schoharie)
Gibbs Myers (Newark)
William C. Pratt, Sr. (Mid-Hudson)
David M. Riley (Columbia-Greene)
Hazel Rindone (New Brunswick)
Keith Van Zoeren (Illiana)
Floyd Warrior (Cascades)
Gerrit Wiegerink (Muskegon)
Donald Wyngarden (South Grand Rapids)

NOMINATIONS

Ministers

Louis H. Benes, Sr. (South Grand Rapids)
William J. Bouwer (Wisconsin)
Richard V. Coffill (Orange)
Irving H. Decker (New Brunswick)
Morris G. Folkert (Muskegon)
Harmen Heeg (Illiana)
Joseph Holbrook (West Central)
Lee L. Kester, Jr. (Paramus)
Cecil Martens (Kalamazoo)
Arnold Punt (Zeeland)
Frank Shearer (Pella)
Nicolas Tsianiklides (Philadelphia)
John A. Vander May (Kalamazoo)

Elders

Howard Anderson (Schoharie)
John Ashley (Queens)
William Corsin (Passaic)
William C. Dehn (New York)
Donald Reeves (Kalamazoo)
Emma Rose (Palisades)
Harold Soffel (Bergen)
Andy Van Ryn (Ontario)
Edwin Van Houten (North Grand Rapids)
Erwin J. Wix (Pleasant Prairie)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Chairman: Calvin Malefyt (Lake Erie)
Vice Chairman: Walter Kline (Illiana)

Ministers

Stanley Bomgarden (Schenectady)
Charles Bridgman (Schoharie)
Donald Plantinga (Dakota)
Richard Oudersluys (Western Seminary)
Duane Tellinghuisen (California)
Nicholas Vander Weide (Rochester)
Gerard Van Dyk (New Brunswick)
Henry Voogd (Holland)
Gideon Wolbrink (Pleasant Prairie)

Elders

Donald Adkins (East Sioux)
George Boyd (Philadelphia)
Robert B. Daffern (Central California)
James L. Johns (Lake Erie)
Gerald Kruyf (Holland)
Robert Pitcock (Queens)
Clayton Uitermarkt (Pella)

BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Chairman: Paul Kranendonk (Montgomery)
Vice Chairman: Charles Johnson (Paramus)

Ministers

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Ronald Beyer (Holland)
Donald De Young (New York)
Harvey Hoekstra (Minnesota)
William Hoffman (Minnesota)
Rod Koopmans (Mid-Hudson)
Rudolf Kuyten (Holland)
Donald Lenderink (East Sioux)
Raymond Pontier (Passaic)
Samuel J. Priestley, Jr. (Bergen)
Norman Ratering (Pleasant Prairie)
Robert O. Shaver (Rochester)
John Zweir (North Grand Rapids)

Elders

Jack Cherry (Newark)
Volney Coffill, Jr. (New Brunswick)
William De Boer (Kalamazoo)
Lester Johnson (Pleasant Prairie)
Leroy Kallemeyn (West Central)
Nelson Mc Pherson (West Central)
Tunis Miedema (Chicago)
William Shattuck (East Sioux)
Frank Tjeerdsma (West Sioux)
Raymond Thomas (Philadelphia)

RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: Peter N. Vanden Berge (Rochester)
Vice Chairman: Jon N. Norton (Bergen)

Ministers

Richard Bates (North Grand Rapids)
Frank De Vries (Cascades)
Henry Jager (Dakota)
Virgil Rogers
(New Brunswick Seminary)
Donald Vanden Berg (Muskegon)
William Van Malsen (Holland)
Marvin Wassink (Passaic)

Elders

Roland Augustine (Lake Erie)
William Bouwkamp
(North Grand Rapids)
Arthur Buhlman (New York)
J. Kenneth Deitz (Philadelphia)
Vern Dykstra (South Grand Rapids)
Howard J. Hamann (Brooklyn)
Wayne Kreun (Dakota)
Robert Petersen (Zeeland)
Elmer Smith (Albany)
Abram Westenberg (Minnesota)

ARTICLE 3

COMMUNICATIONS

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

ARTICLE 4

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTION OF THE CORPORATION

The Board of Direction presents its annual report for the calendar year 1974. This is the 155th year since the incorporation of General Synod by a Special Act of the Legislature of the State of New York in 1819.

OVERALL VIEW OF INVESTMENTS

All of the investments under the control of the Board were carefully and continuously reviewed throughout the year. Members of the Board met as needed to consider the portfolio and to make changes when appropriate. On December 31, 1974, the market value of principal funds on hand was:

NEW YORK FUNDS

Bonds	$ 390,589	
Stocks	1,012,156	
Mortgages	1,071,997	
Investment in Interchurch Center	283,676	
Cash and short term investments	16,911	$2,775,329

NEW JERSEY FUNDS

Bonds & Stocks	$ 148,433	
Mortgage Note	21,179	
Cash and short term investments	34,041	$ 203,653

UNDESIGNATED FUNDS

Extension Foundation Notes	$ 10,000	
Cash and short term investments	3,843	$ 13,843
Total		$2,992,825

NEW YORK FUNDS

On December 31, 1974, the mortgage investments were in mortgages on residential and industrial property in Westchester County, Nassau County, New York City, New York and Bergen County, New Jersey. The mortgage investments were in the face amount of $1,071,997 with an unamortized discount of $432 which place endowment funds invested in mortgages at $1,071,565. There were 25 mortgage investments on December 31, 1973. One mortgage was paid off during 1974 and three new mortgage loans were made during the year. One mortgage loan for $75,000 was made with interest at 9¼ percent per annum, another for $50,000 with interest at 9 percent per annum and a third for $60,000 was made with interest at 9½ percent per annum.

There is also held in the investment account the Interchurch Center Second Mortgage 5½ percent leasehold bonds due January 1, 1998, in the amount of $270,000. The Leasehold ownership participation in the Interchurch Center is carried at $13,676 bringing the total investment in the Interchurch Center leasehold to $283,676.

DISCRETIONARY MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH U.S. TRUST COMPANY

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

During 1974 there was again a severe decline in value in the stock portfolio. In contrast to the position at December 31, 1973 when quoted market values exceeded book cost of securities by $435,666, at December 31, 1974, book cost exceeded quoted market values by $229,015. There was a net withdrawal of cash funds from the custody account in 1974 to enable investment in three mortgages at attractive interest rates.

There is set forth here a summary of the securities and cash held by the United States Trust Company for the account of the General Synod on December 31, 1974.

	Market Value	
	Amount	Percent
Bonds	$ 390,589	27.87%
Common Stocks	1,012,156	72.21%
Principal Cash	(1,088)	(.08%)
Total	$1,401,657	100.00%

INCOME DISTRIBUTED

The income distributed by the Board to the Beneficiaries from New York Funds in 1974 was $141,622, an historical high.

The following is a comparison of distributions in prior years:

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

As in prior years quarterly distributions of income were made in 1974 to the participants in the common investment fund.

THE QUICK MEMORIAL FUND

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

In 1974 the General Synod upon recommendation of the General Synod Executive Committee, allocated the income from the Quick Memorial Fund for the year 1975 as follows: 50% for the work of church planning and development; 20% to Hope, Central and Northwestern Colleges for scholarship funds (60% to be divided equally among the three colleges; 40% to be divided on the basis of student enrollment); 30% to the Board of Theological Education (20% for student aid grants; 10% for Para-Professional Ministries).

A statement of Income and Expenses for the year 1974 of the New York Funds follows:

Income from Securities	$ 65,346	
Less: Investment Counselling Fee	4,219	$ 61,127
Income from Mortgages	$ 76,141	
Less: Mortgage Servicing Fee	3,110	$ 73,031
Income from Interchurch Center Bonds		$ 13,850
Miscellaneous Income:		
Savings Bank		$ 1,207
		$ 149,215
Less: Net Expenses itemized below		8,739
Net Income for the Year 1974		$ 140,476
Carried forward from 1973		2,678
Net Available for Distribution		$ 143,154
Income Distributed during 1974		141,622
Balance carried to 1975		$ 1,532

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

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

Salaries	$ 9,863	
Benefits	2,181	
Rent	1,005	
Printing, stationery and supplies	10	
Postage	51	
Telephone	252	
Audit	2,000	
Insurance	57	
Miscellaneous	19	$ 15,438
Less:		
Portion charged to General Synodical Funds	$ 6,199	
Portion charged to New Jersey Funds	500	6,699
Net Expenses for New York Funds		$ 8,739

NEW JERSEY FUNDS

At the end of 1974, principal funds which are kept in New Jersey pursuant to Court Order of the Superior Court of New Jersey had a market value of $203,653.

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

On December 31, 1974, the New Jersey Funds were in investments and cash as follows:

Marketable securities at market value	$148,433
Mortgage	21,179
Cash and short term investments	34,041
Grand Total	$203,653

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Administration expenses of the New Jersey Funds were $612. The income and disposition of it in the New Jersey Funds was as follows:

Net Income from securities and mortgage	$ 13,668
Less: Administration and other expenses	612
Net Income for the year	$ 13,056
Carried Forward from 1973	43,363
Net Available for Distribution	$ 56,419
Distributed in 1974:	
Scholarships at Rutgers	16,291
Carried forward to 1975	$ 40,128

UNDESIGNATED FUNDS

At year end, the General Synod, also, had undesignated Endowment Funds of $13,843 in Extension Foundation Notes or deposited in banks in savings.

GENERAL SYNOD EXPENSES

Included in the Report to General Synod are statements showing 1974 assessments received and a comparison of 1974 expenses, 1975 Budget, and Askings for 1976.

ASSESSMENTS

All 1974 regular assessments of 1.70 per capita were received prior to 1974 General Synod and all 1974 special assessments for pensions $.75 per capita were received as of the year end.

Most of the 1975 regular assessments were received from the Classes before March 31, 1975. It would be helpful if more Classes would consider making partial or full payment if possible earlier than the "deadline" month of March. Meanwhile, the special assessments for $.75 per capita for 1975 is scheduled for payment by June 3, 1975 and the earliest possible payment of this assessment would be most helpful also.

BUDGET FOR 1976

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

AUDITORS

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

BOARD MEMBERS

Each year the General Synod elects two members of the Board to serve for a term of three years and it elects a member of the Board to be its President for a term of one year. This year the terms of John Schoon and Maurice Te Paske expire and their successors in the class of June 1978 should be elected.

1975 SYNODICAL ASSESSMENTS RECEIVED

Particular Synod	*Classes*	*Amount*
ALBANY		
	Albany	$ 6,162.50
	Columbia-Greene	4,794.00
	Montgomery	4,647.80
	Rochester	5,720.50
	Saratoga	4,017.10
	Schenectady	11,510.70
	Schoharie	3,486.70
CHICAGO		
	Chicago	7,743.50
	Illiana	11,401.90
	Illinois	8,931.80
	Wisconsin	14,042.00
MICHIGAN		
	Holland	14,839.30
	Kalamazoo	10,589.30
	Lake Erie	5,270.00
	Muskegon	15,182.70
	N. Grand Rapids	11,609.30
	Ontario	4,399.60
	S. Grand Rapids	16,422.00
	Zeeland	12,714.30

NEW JERSEY			
	Bergen		7,325.30
	Newark		4,367.30
	New Brunswick		9,712.10
	Palisades		4,275.50
	Paramus		12,105.70
	Passaic		11,694.30
	Philadelphia		5,365.20
	Raritan		8,872.30
NEW YORK			
	Brooklyn		2,663.90
	Mid-Hudson		11,031.30
	Nassau-Suffolk		4,872.20
	New York		10,543.40
	Orange		4,855.20
	Queens		5,038.80
	Rockland-Westchester		9,173.30
THE WEST			
	California		21,173.50
		Pd.	Due
		$9,000.00	$12,173.50
	Cascades		4,482.90
	Central California		2,575.50
	Dakota		6,788.10
	East Sioux		8,627.50
	Minnesota		7,757.10
	Pella		8,729.50
	Pleasant Prairie		7,180.80
	West Central		4,960.60
	West Sioux		10,048.70
	TOTAL		$367,710.00

ARTICLE 5

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND SEMINARIES

REPORT OF BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

This second year for our presidents Dr. Howard Hageman and Dr. I. John Hesselink appears to be productive and promising. Not only are enrollments up, but also the caliber of the students attracted to our seminaries this past year was especially high. Morale among faculty, staff, and students is excellent, and the level of commitment and dedication to Christ and his church augurs well for the future. We can be justly proud of our seminaries for their desire to be faithful to our great Reformed heritage while at the same time reaching out in new ways to be responsive to the special concerns and needs of our world. Relevance is not being sought at the expense of sacrificing our faithfulness to the Gospel.

Special Service to Church

Both seminary presidents see the need for close fellowship with the church. The fellowship is helpful to the seminaries in that it is a means of communication from the church to the seminaries. The seminaries continue to serve the church in various ways: conferences and special lectures on campus, and leadership in retreats, seminars, team ministries, preaching and teaching off campus. At New Brunswick Seminary two very popular and effective series were on the themes of preaching and hymnology. Western Seminary held institutes on the Holy Spirit and charismatic theology and on worship which attracted large numbers from all over the United States and Canada. New Brunswick Seminary sponsored a laymen's school of religion in the fall which proved so popular that three schools of this type with an enrollment of over 100 were scheduled for the second semester. Western Seminary offered two evening courses for wives during the winter term.

Placement of Graduates

A matter of concern that is being expressed by the church concerns the increased enrollment in the seminaries, 143 at Western and 59 at New Brunswick, and the fewer churches with ministerial vacancies. Although all the 1974 graduates were placed without difficulty and prospects for 1975 are good, the seminary presidents see the problem that can develop with relatively few vacancies in the church. The presidents also see that challenges and opportunities can come.

The interests of the students are becoming quite diverse. Approximately one-third of the students are interested in other than Master of Divinity Degrees. Of those that are interested in the Master Divinity Degrees several are interested in staff positions in churches and with other organizations that carry out programs of Christian concern.

The diversity is also shown by a review of the incoming students. Of the 57 new students at Western, five are Master of Religious Education candidates, seven are transfers from non-RCA seminaries. The new students coming to Western have not all come from RCA colleges but from 25 different schools. The full meaning of this diversity is not yet evident but it does indicate that interests are changing.

The seminaries are looking at this apparent over-supply of ministers as a challenge to our churches to provide opportunities and new forms of ministry in which

our graduates can realize their dedication and talents in meaningful and fruitful ways.

Staff and Faculty

Dr. Robert A. Coughenour has been appointed to a three year term as a professor of Old Testament. Dr. Coughenour comes from Hope College where he served as professor of Bible. He is noted for his scholarship, his effectiveness as a teacher and his warm evangelical faith.

Miss Mildred Schuppert has been named Librarian Emeritus. We are grateful for her long and friendly service. She will continue her volunteer labor of love as an organist for the seminary. Rev. Norman Kansfield was formally installed as librarian in a service held in Mulder Chapel on November 14.

Finances

Both seminaries continue to show concern over support of the seminaries. Neither school has a director of public relations and development. This responsibility falls largely on the presidents and their able assistants, Dr. Norman Thomas, provost at New Brunswick Seminary, and Mr. H. Kleinheksel, Assistant to the President at Western Seminary. Both seminaries have gone out to the churches in various ways in order to strengthen the ties between the seminaries and local churches. Both have tried to be responsive to the needs and desires of the churches in terms of special programs and lectures, and continuing theological education.

Total contributions to New Brunswick from all living sources in the 1974 calendar year was $152,176, the largest annual amount in the history of the school. While we are all jubilantly grateful for that response, we have to point out that expenses are the highest in history. To be comfortably solvent another $30,000 must be received from churches and individuals.

Although Western has been able to operate with nearly balanced budgets in the past, the combination of delayed maintenance in the past and rapidly increasing costs have caused substantial increases in the budget and a deficit this year.

Continuing Education

The major emphasis for study by the Board of Theological Education has involved education beyond the normal seminary curricula. A Continuing Education committee has been studying the matter of para-professional education and of continued education of those now in the professional ministry of the church.

The study mandated by General Synod 1972 on para-professional ministries, started out as a study to find a way of providing ministers to minority groups, who were able to speak the languages of the minority groups and had the background necessary to serve among the minority groups. At that time it appeared that time requirements did not permit these prospective ministers to receive the formal seminary training.

Due to the magnitude of the study, Rev. Richard Dietrich was engaged as Researcher for Para-Professional Ministries.

During the time that this study was being made it became evident that minority groups were asking for ministers with the training equal to that normally required of RCA ministers.

The report that was prepared by this committee and researched by Rev. Dietrich to cover the study of "para-professional ministry" was entitled *Rediscovering the Diaconate.* It was considered by BTE.

The BTE has taken action that recognizes the need for the kinds of servants which are recorded in Biblical record and that there are those persons within our churches who have demonstrated both the desire and gift of service but who may need additional training to enhance their effectiveness. The BTE is willing to assume responsibility for establishing guidelines for such training. This training should be practically oriented and functional. This training should be carried on in a way that will not require the student to move from his home normal environment. Recognition for completion of certain courses and seminars should be recognized through certification.

The BTE will assume responsibility for the assembly of training materials, developing instructional materials and certification if funds can be made available by the General Synod. This study has also led the Board of Theological Education to submit this recommendation:

R-1. In the light of the study made by the Board of Theological Education which resulted in the paper Rediscovering the Diaconate **we recommend that General Synod request its appropriate committees to make a study of the Office of Deacon in the Reformed Church in America.**

The BTE will continue to study continuing education for those now in the professional ministry. The committee of BTE is holding consultations with field people and others dealing with ministers in the RCA to determine the greatest needs. The BTE has authorized the Committee on Continuing Education to explore the concept of a joint venture with the advisory committee of OHR in servicing the Office of Professional Development. The seminaries are involved in education of ministers. The Office of Human Resources has contact with the ministers who are active in the church. The RCA regional centers are in geographic locations close to the churches. They could be helpful in carrying out the program of continuing education.

Referrals from General Synod 1974

In reference to R-11, page 39, *General Synod Minutes,* the Board of Theological Education has instructed the presidents of the seminaries to explore and measure the needs in churches that have staff ministries. Western Seminary and the Western Regional Center are preparing a day with the ministers who are in churches that have more than one ministry. This merely scratches the surface of the requirements of the action of General Synod. The BTE may be able to deal with this again in its May meeting.

In response to R-12, page 40, *General Synod Minutes,* both seminaries have had extensive contacts with the Hispanic Council. New Brunswick has had extensive contact with the Black Council. Both seminaries have Hispanic students. Western students work with Holland Classis in ministering to Hispanic people in Holland. New Brunswick recently sponsored a day on Black Ministry. They have two Black students and are hoping that several more will enter next fall. New Brunswick is investigating the possibility of working with New York Seminary to expedite the training of black ministers. Western has sought Black students but has been unsuccessful.

In response to R-13, page 40, *General Synod Minutes,* seminaries are actively trying to teach students regarding their dealing with alcoholism and drugs. Dr. Wanders, New Brunswick, has taken special training in alcoholism. He is director of Field Education so that he is readily available to students encountering these problems. He also makes this a part of his teaching program. Western Seminary recently brought Rev. Herman Kregel, an authority on this subject, to campus for a student seminar. Students are involved in an alcoholic rehabilitation house. Speakers from related organizations are brought into the course on ministry.

In response to R-III C. 3, page 221, *General Synod Minutes,* the seminaries are active in their efforts to avoid discrimination against women. Western Seminary has had and continues to have at least one woman on its staff. Western has 4 and New Brunswick has 5 women in Masters of Divinity programs. Women have enrolled in Master of Religious Education and Master of Arts in Theology programs. Since women have had no assurance that they will be ordained to the office of Ministers of the Word, it appears that the present enrollment of women is reasonable. Both seminaries try to provide the same kinds of field experience for women as men. Since no women students have yet graduated from the Master of Divinity program placement has not been a problem. Both seminaries intend to make the same efforts for women, within the rules of the RCA, as they do for men.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

A summary of the actions taken at the meeting May 6 and 7, 1975:

Continuing Education

The Report of the Board of Theological Education mentioned that the Committee on Continuing Education was authorized to explore the concept of a joint venture with the Advisory Committee of the Office of Human Resources in servicing the Office of Professional Development. That committee and the BTE have approved working together in the Joint Committee on Continuing Education, RCA.

The purpose of this committee says that the committee "shall be responsible for formulating policy for the establishment of new and for the coordination of existing programs of continuing education for RCA clergy."

Para-Professional Ministries

The report of the BTE explains the planning that was done to provide training for para-professional ministry. The BTE now feels that it ought to await the decision of the General Synod before proceeding. Funds from General Synod will be required for implementation.

Funding for the Board of Theological Education

Overtures from the Classes of Holland and New Brunswick have asked that the Budget of General Synod and its Assessments, beginning in 1976, include the cost of operation of the Board of Theological Education. The BTE enthusiastically approves this action.

The BTE is being asked to do things for General Synod. The work on continuing education and para-professional ministries are examples of this.

The BTE is the policy-making board for the two seminaries, New Brunswick and Western. The cost of the board operation is divided between the seminaries on a somewhat arbitrary basis. This cost comes from funds given to each of the seminaries for operating purposes. The members of the BTE are elected by the General Synod.

Election of Officers for 1975-1976

Chairman	John DeWild
Vice-chairman	Rev. Leonard Kalkwarf
Secretary	Richard Russ
Treasurer	Ekdal Buys

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-2. It is RECOMMENDED to General Synod that Jerry Sittser be granted dispensation from the professorial certificate.

R-3. It is RECOMMENDED to General Synod that Ronald Ver Wys be granted dispensation from the professorial certificate.

R-4. It is RECOMMENDED to General Synod that Richard Williams not be granted dispensation from the professorial certificate.

R-5. It is RECOMMENDED to General Synod that Antonio William Garcia-Rubio be granted dispensation from certain educational requirements and the professorial certificate.

R-6. It is RECOMMENDED to General Synod that Leslie Charles Tihaney not be granted dispensation from the educational requirements and the professorial certificate.

Degrees Approved

Degrees were approved for graduates of the seminaries as recommended by the respective faculties.

At New Brunswick Seminary:

Master of Divinity and the Professorial Certificate—10

At Western Seminary:

Master of Divinity and the Professorial Certificate—22
Diploma of the Seminary and the Professorial Certificate—1
Master of Religious Education—2
Master of Theology—1

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The Review Committee on Theological Education has considered the report of the President of the Board of Theological Education, Mr. John DeWild, and reviewed the Supplementary Report of the Board's actions, taken at the meeting of May 6 and 7, 1975. During its deliberations the committee was greatly aided by the presence of several resource persons, especially Dr. I. John Hesselink, Dr. Paul Fries and Mr. John DeWild, to whom we express our thanks.

We commend the seminaries for the manner in which they are fulfilling their primary responsibility by offering an excellent theological education to their students. We further commend them for their responsiveness to the educational needs of the church at large by offering a variety of workshops, seminars, etc., on timely topics for our pastors and church leaders.

ENROLLMENTS

We give thanks to God for the increased enrollments in the seminaries and see this as a challenge to the church to explore cross-cultural evangelism and the planting of new churches. We urge the seminaries to equip themselves and their students for whatever new tasks they may be called to do by the Holy Spirit. We believe that God is calling the Reformed Church to explore new forms of ministry in which our trained leaders can apply their dedication and talents in meaningful and fruitful ways.

FINANCES

We are grateful for the increased financial support given to the seminaries by the churches and we urge them to accept the challenge of the B.T.E. to provide an additional $30,000 during the current calendar year. Such a generous response will not only keep the schools solvent, but it will allow them to continue to operate without the expense of a development staff.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Inasmuch as the Minority Councils of the R.C.A. have shifted their concern from a desire for a para-professional ministry to a desire for a ministry with training equal to that normally required of an R.C.A. minister, and since the Regional Centers are actively involved in a variety of efforts to equip the laity for greater ministry by assisting local churches to acquire appropriate resources, *we recommend no action on R-1.* (See page 31.) Secondly, we commend the B.T.E. resources now available, including *"Rediscovery of the Diaconate"*, to the Regional Centers for their consideration and use as they continue to develop programs and resources for the laity in their regions.

We commend the B.T.E. for efforts being taken in the area of continuing education for those now in the professional ministry of the church.

DISPENSATIONS

R-1. We RECOMMEND that Jerry Sittser be granted dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

R-2. We RECOMMEND that Ronald Ver Wys be granted dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

R-3. We RECOMMEND that Richard Williams not be granted dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

R-4. We RECOMMEND that Antonio William Garcia-Rubio be granted dispensation from certain educational requirements and the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

R-5. We RECOMMEND that Leslie Charles Tihany be granted dispensation from the educational requirements and the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

REFERRALS FROM 1974 GENERAL SYNOD

1. In the light of our feelings expressed above concerning enrollments we make the following recommendations:

R-6. We RECOMMEND that the seminaries train and equip students for multiple staff positions and specialized ministries (as indicated on pages 138-140, M.G.S., **1974) with the same diligence in which individuals are prepared for preaching pastorates.** (ADOPTED)

R-7. We RECOMMEND that the General Program Council continue and expand the policy of allocating funds for the placement of specialized personnel in situations where they are urgently needed. (ADOPTED)

2. We affirm and support our seminaries' efforts on behalf of students from ethnic minority backgrounds in response to the instructions of R-12, page 40, *M.G.S.*, 1974. We encourage the seminaries to continue these efforts and suggest that they be extended to the American Indian Council, and other ethnic minorities where seminary assistance might be appreciated.

3. We are pleased with the initial response of the seminaries attempt to acquaint students with the problems of alcohol and drug abuse according to the instruction of R-13, page 40, *M.G.S.*, 1974. We urge that this be continued for the students and be available to persons outside the seminary who need training in these areas.

4. Whereas, the seminaries have been instructed by G.S. to be non-discriminatory in their recruitment, education and placement of women: *M.G.S.*, 1974, page 221, c.3:

> "c. Request the appropriate agencies of the Reformed Church in America to develop an immediate plan to correct its discrimination against women in the following areas of particular concern:
> 3. Seminary education, including enrollment, (recruitment), field service, experiences and placement."

Whereas, there is an inconsistency in some classes voting to receive women under their care for the ministry of the Word, but then voting against the ordination of women for that office;

Whereas, the B.T.E. is empowered to give a professorial certificate to women, but they are not considered eligible for ordination according to the commonly accepted interpretation of the *Book of Church Order;*

Whereas, all of this has produced a grave inconsistency in the policies and practices of our church:

R-8. We RECOMMEND that General Synod 1975, remove this inconsistency by adopting and referring to the classes for their approval an amendment to the Book of Church Order, **Chapter I, Part 1, Section 3** (BCO, **p. 2) changing the word "persons" (which prior to 1973 in practice encompassed only men), to "men and women" and that the rest of the** Book of Church Order **and the** Liturgy **be brought into conformity therewith.** (ADOPTED)

A motion was made from the floor and seconded:

To refer the para-professional ministry study back to the Board of Theological

Education for another year and that it prepare a report with a plan for implementation for presentation to the General Synod of 1976. (ADOPTED)

A motion was made from the floor and seconded:

That the Board of Theological Education make a serious study of the process of licensing ministers of Christian Education and prepare a plan for the licensing of Christian Education Directors for report to the General Synod of 1976. (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 6

HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Central College
2. Hope College
3. Northwestern College

REPORT OF CENTRAL COLLEGE

A complete report to General Synod on Central College for this past year would require individual reports from 1,350 young people whose lives have been affected by the College. Each of these students has private concerns and problems and each has an individual story. Each of them, however, must be viewed from the perspective of our institutional mission which stands both as a vision of our role and as a standard of measurement of our success. It is well expressed in our institutional *Statement of Purpose,* a new document developed and modified over a period of years and recently adopted by our faculty and trustees. We believe it is a document which will serve us well in charting our future course in the troubled waters which lie ahead for independent education. It sustains traditional strengths and adds new dimensions to what is meant by an education which is fundamentally Christian in its underlying philosophy.

Statement of Purpose

By choice, Central College is a liberal arts college in the Christian tradition.

I

As a liberal arts college, our goal is to expose members of this academic community to the content, organization, assumptions and values, as well as to analytic and communicative skills of a broad range of disciplines, i.e., arts, humanities, sciences, symbolic systems and cultural studies, and facilitate activity in these areas at a relatively sophisticated level.

As a College in the Christian tradition our goal is to have Christian attitudes and values operative within this academic community and between this and other communities, to encourage understanding of the Christian faith and promote dialog between the Christian faith and the various academic disciplines—their perspectives, values, methodologies—and, through teaching and modeling, provide the members of this community with assistance in their private and corporate lives.

II

Within this perspective, our goal is to maintain a learning environment characterized by a sense of community among students, faculty members and administrative staff members engaged in a variety of approaches to teaching/learning in seeking to develop the widest possible range of human potential in the members of this academic community.

III

With respect to the students our purpose is:

1. to assist each student in developing his identity, in discovering and en-

hancing his unique talents, in clarifying his values, and in finding a meaningful philosophy of life;

2. to assist each student in acquiring the communication skills which allow him to relate affectively and effectively with his fellowmen;
3. to assist each student in understanding the cultural tradition which he has inherited and in being an intelligent and creative member of the rapidly changing world in which he lives;
4. to assist each student in achieving competence in some intellectual or artistic discipline;
5. to provide each student with training—information, skills, and values—requisite to pursue an occupation.

IV

With respect to faculty members and administrative staff members our purpose is to maintain a sense of community which minimizes categories and titles and maximizes acceptance, mutual respect and individual worth; to model as persons and professionals wholeness, continuing growth and adaptation as well as the integration and application of learning; to pursue the most effective means of teaching/learning and organizational structure for the benefit of the entire academic community.

V

The College also has a function in the broader communities of society and church. The purpose of this mission is to serve as sustainer and critic. As sustainer, the College seeks to create an appreciation and perpetuation of the strengths, values and traditions of our heritage. As critic, the College encourages analysis and judgment of ideas, values, and institutions and seeks to provide leadership and support in reform.

I am pleased to list and briefly describe some of the major events and developments at Central College during the past year. They will give you some insight into our current situation.

1. Facilities. The new library/learning resource center was completed and opened for use at the beginning of school. It is the largest building project in Central's history and has had a significant effect on student life. The building provides study stations for over half of the resident student body and has had a marked effect on campus and dormitory life. It has truly become the focal point of academic life. It has received a number of architectural design awards including a merit award by the Iowa Association of Architects and an outstanding building award from American School and University Magazine.

   Under way are major remodeling projects at the vacated library which will become a home for our art department and the behavioral sciences. The vacated art building is undergoing substantial remodeling for use as a language and international studies classroom and office building.

2. Capital funds for the new building projects were raised in the Central Challenge compaign. The campaign had a total initial goal of $2,150,000 and a revised goal of $2,500,000 which currently seems to be assured.

In addition to the major advanced gift from the Collegiate Church several major gifts have been received designated for this campaign. They total approximately $30,000.

Many other churches have continued their contributions to the college operating and capital funds through normal channels. This performance when coupled with the fact that many of our alumni, parents, and friends are members of RCA gives ample evidence of the importance of the support of our church constituency.

During the past three years dinner meetings have been held throughout the country in areas in which there are concentrations of Central College alumni. These areas coincide almost exactly with Reformed Church areas and we have capitalized on this fact by including a majority of Reformed Church pastors in the information meetings. As president I have appreciated being able to bring the Central College story to ministers in all parts of the country. We plan to use a similar format during the next three year period in which we will mount another major effort to maintain a fiscally strong institution through communication with our broadly defined constituency.

3. The Northwest Area Foundation has made three significant grants to Central College. A $30,000 grant to help us in our admissions and recruiting effort, a $30,000 grant to improve educational productivity and a grant funding the establishment of a deferred giving program. The future of private colleges is closely tied to an adequate endowment. A deferred giving program is basic to endowment growth.

4. As indicated in the official church report, church gifts to Central have shown an increase commensurate with the increase in denominational giving. We are grateful for this increased support which was a major factor in maintaining a balanced budget.

5. An office of career planning and counselling (placement) has recently been established. We are concerned for career education in conjunction with the liberal arts and have developed a number of new programs to help students make effective career decisions and to prepare them for the world of work.

6. The North Central Association conducted its ten-year analysis and review this past year which resulted in a favorable report and commendation for strength in several areas.

7. James Graham who has served as academic dean since 1962 and served as acting president for one year has asked to be relieved of his duties as academic dean but will fortunately remain on our staff as Chairman of the Cross Cultural Division. The search for a new dean is underway.

8. We like to think that the overall quality of our program was reflected symbolically this year in the work of a group of faculty and students who through dedication, hard work, and liberal endowments of good fortune brought home a national championship in NCAA Division III football.

9. Chaplain Eugene Heideman conducted a conference on worship with David Main of Circle Church in Chicago as featured speaker. Home pastors of our students were invited, as well as all Reformed Church pastors in the area.

This provided an excellent opportunity for dialogue between chaplain and ministers and represented a fine cooperative effort between the college chaplain and the Reverend Don Jansma of the RCA Office of Evangelism located on our campus.

In February Dr. Heideman organized and conducted a conference for Reformed Church deacons. The subject of this year's conference was world hunger. College faculty served as resource persons.

10. While a number of campus organizations are very active in both Bible study and worship experiences, two are of special note. Inter-varsity Christian Fellowship has been extremely active and has sponsored retreats, conducted Bible studies, special public interest programs and has a growing membership. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is also an active organization and includes a good percentage of our student athletes.

Throughout the year I have many opportunities to visit with colleagues, corporation and foundation executives, to discuss with them the Reformed Church/Central College relationship. Ours is a fine and unusually strong relationship. Foundation executives time after time have pointed out the uniqueness of a church so generous in its support, demanding excellence but allowing autonomy. This gives us uniqueness and strength and is a relationship we strive hard to maintain and build.

11. A review of last year's reports by the three colleges reveals that all expressed a similar concern: That the percentage of students from the Reformed Church has decreased. Previous General Synod action has urged pastors to take steps to inform their young people of the opportunities at the Reformed Church colleges. This matter has received careful consideration by our administration and board of trustees and has resulted in a new program called Reformed Church Assured Grants. Our board has voted to use a portion of the monies received from the Reformed Church to establish a fund to insure that every Reformed Church student will receive a minimum grant of $400 per year if he attends Central College. This action is an expression of our keen desire to maintain a strong church/college relationship. It means that a significant percentage of the monies we receive from the church will be reinvested in the lives of your young people. We consider this an outstanding investment opportunity for us and, in turn, we feel a Christian higher education is the best investment for a Reformed Church young person.

The foregoing enumeration of new facilities, new programs, new students, and new opportunities will give you a sense of the confidence and determination with which we seek to fulfill our mission as it is outlined in our own documents and in the Covenant of Mutual Responsibilities between the Reformed Church and the colleges.

REPORT FROM HOPE COLLEGE

We are grateful that each year we have the opportunity to present a report from Hope College to the General Synod. Since this report is prepared in early March, it is, in many ways, a preliminary version of the more complete report which we write after our fiscal year closes June 30. Copies of this latter report are sent to each of our congregations.

We completed the 1973-74 fiscal year with a balanced budget, and began the new academic year with an excellent freshman class. This was the second largest freshman class in the history of the College, and was made up of an outstanding group of young men and women. The total enrollment was 2,198, of whom 2,011 were fulltime students, and 187 were part-time. The total operating budget for 1974-75 is $7,800,000.

The enthusiasm with which we began the year has been sustained, with a significant sense of fulfillment being expressed by many students and faculty members. There has been an excellent spirit on campus, marked by seriousness of purpose, a spirit of mutual concern and support, a sense of preparation for work and service in this world, and of personal wholeness and self fulfillment. These qualities have, in both quiet and more obvious ways, found their source in the Christian commitments and traditions of the College, which we continually seek to make vital and real to students who are living in a world marked by considerable stress, uncertainty, and pessimism.

One of the greatest joys of being associated with a college is to witness the great gifts and abilities of students in such areas as music, art, theatre, forensics, and athletics. Too often we minimize these gifts, and unconsciously feel that students will really not do much of significance until they complete college and probably graduate and professional school as well. In the history of the church, as well as in other areas, young men and women have made truly remarkable contributions, and we must continually develop an environment which promotes creativity, vision and purpose in our students and the young people of our churches.

One of the highlights of the year was to complete the renovation of the former science building, which has now been designated the Lubbers Hall for Humanities and Social Sciences, in honor of Dr. Irwin J. Lubbers, who served as President of Hope College from 1945-1963. It is a privilege to so honor Dr. Lubbers, and acknowledge his great contribution to the College and the Church, and in so doing, provide much needed facilities for our students and faculty members in the humanities and social sciences.

In regard to facilities, our major need is for a new physical education center. From time to time over the past two decades, this need has been reported to the General Synod. The present facility, built 70 years ago when the student body numbered 400, is woefully inadequate for the enrollment and programs we have today. During 1975 we are undertaking a major effort to complete the funding for this building. The estimated cost of this facility is $3,200,000. To achieve this goal will require the participation of alumni, friends, parents, our churches, as well as substantial support from foundations and major donors. As this is achieved, we will also bring to a successful conclusion the Build Hope capital fund campaign, which was initiated in 1972, with a goal of $8,850,000.

In July, 1974, Dr. David Marker, Professor of Physics at Hope College since 1966, was appointed Provost, the chief academic officer of the College. We also initiated a divisional system of organization, with a view toward achieving greater creativity and interdepartmental interaction, more effective and more personal leadership, and additional external resources for support of the College. We are pleased to be able to report the following appointments as Divisional Deans:

Humanities—Dr. Jack Nyenhuis, Wayne State University

Natural Sciences—Dr. Sheldon Wettack, Hope College

Social Sciences—Dr. Lars Granberg, Northwestern College

Fine and Performing Arts—Dr. James Malcolm, Boston University

We are grateful that these distinguished scholars and educators, who come from different backgrounds and yet share a common Christian commitment, will be giving leadership to our academic program.

As we look ahead, there appears to be a definitive role for a college such as Hope which, in the context of a undergraduate, residential, liberal arts college, seeks for excellence, for development of the whole person, and for a meaningful focus on values, doing so in a definitive and creative relationship to the Christian faith.

There are a number of specific matters which we would bring to the attention of the General Synod.

1. While we hear frequent reports of an overall increase in giving in the RCA, at this writing our gifts during this fiscal year (July 1, 1974 to the present) are 11% less than at the corresponding time last year. This is particularly surprising and disappointing since we have been making determined efforts to strengthen our relationship to individual congregations and to the RCA as a whole. We hope that the interest in Christian higher education, which has been for many centuries a distinguishing characteristic of the RCA, is not on the wane.

2. During the course of this year, Central College, one of our sister RCA colleges, initiated a program of assuring any student who is affiliated with the RCA a minimum grant of $400, without reference to financial need or scholarly abilities. This decision was made out of a bona fide desire, which is shared by all of our colleges, to encourage RCA young people to attend an RCA college. When Central's decision was announced, we received many inquiries regarding our interests in having RCA youths attend Hope College, and our policies in regard to financial aid. It seems appropriate in this report to the General Synod to summarize these policies:

    a. We are deeply interested in having RCA youths attend Hope College. Our commitment is to offer academic programs of excellence at the lowest possible cost. We seek to keep costs as low as possible by asking our alumni, friends, parents, and churches to support the Annual Fund, and thus share in the mission of the College. Further, we have developed a program of financial aid by which every student, who so desires, can have a Hope College education. Seventy percent of our students receive financial aid.

b. We believe that at Hope College a program of financial aid which differentiates on the basis of RCA or non-RCA affiliation is unwise for several reasons. First, such a program creates unnatural and undesirable divisions among the student body. Further, such a program could jeopardize our status as non-sectarian, and the eligibility of our students and the College for certain forms of financial aid. Finally, the basis of our appeal to our churches is support for our total mission in higher education, rather than for support of RCA students. We believe this is the traditional position of the Church, and we heartily endorse it.

A number of our churches have developed programs to provide financial support for their young people who attend an RCA college. We heartily endorse this on the local level. We believe, however, that gifts to the College should be for our total mission, rather than for support of RCA students. We do encourage RCA churches to develop local programs of support for students who attend an RCA college.

3. We live in an era of considerable uncertainty, confusion, and pessimism, and it is very difficult to accurately perceive the tenor of the times. We as a college would welcome the opportunity to explore ways in which we can serve the church in this era. One idea of particular interest to us would be to identify the major issues and concerns which the church as a whole and Christians as individuals face in the world today, and then work together to bring the best of Christian scholarship to bear on these issues. There are several possible formats for such interaction, such as seminars and workshops on campus, publications, and visits by faculty members to classes or congregations. We will welcome the opportunity for further discussion on these matters.

We appreciate all that our churches have done to share in the mission of the College. Through your gifts, your prayers, and through the young people who attend Hope College, you are partners in the vital and challenging work of Christian higher education. We acknowledge with gratitude the blessings of God, and trust that the full impact of a theistic and Christian world and life view might permeate the total life and work of Hope College.

REPORT OF NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

This will be the last of the nine reports to the General Synod I have been privileged to submit in the capacity of President of Northwestern College. Looking back over these years I feel a great deal of satisfaction and a certain measure of disappointment. One hopes for greater accomplishments than one can achieve. One's reach exceeds his grasp. Nevertheless I leave Northwestern College deeply grateful to the college trustees for this invitation to serve in this capacity and to the college faculty, staff, and students for their help and inspiration and patient instruction. To them I must often have seemed a slow learner, but being with them has enriched my life and been the source of much joy.

Since October a Presidential Search Committee has been active. The committee consists of faculty members, a student, college trustees, an "at-large" member representing the Reformed Church, a representative selected by the Alumni Association and the President of the Women's Auxiliary, with Dean Edward E. Ericson, Jr. representing the college administration. The search committee intends to have a recommendation or recommendations to present to the board of trustees at its annual meeting in late April and reports that at present they are on schedule.

The year to date has gone very well, indeed. It began with another fine increase in enrollment. Several program innovations are being received well by the students, most notably the Self-Expression Skills Center, which provides students, on an elective basis, with the opportunity to further reading, writing or study skills. Another such is a series of options called "Freshman Specials." These are courses designed to meet the expressed interests of entering students and to ensure that their early college experience isn't dominated by required courses. A sampling of Freshman Specials includes: Christianity and Americanism; The Youth Culture; Man, Science and Human Values; Loneliness in Literature; Contemporary Affairs; and Christianity and Marxism.

Professor Gordon Van Wyk, RCA missionary on furlough from the faculty of Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo, Japan, is serving this year as a visiting professor. In part he is filling in for Dr. Lyle Vander Werff, who is on leave this year and teaching Bible at Western Theological Seminary, and in part he is teaching a sequence for the junior year core course which is entitled "The Mind of Japan." The junior year core course is designed to provide a cross cultural experience or a course involving studying in depth a culture other than one's own and perferably a non-Western culture.

Dr. Ronald Nelson, a member of the Michigan State University faculty, is spending this year as a Visiting Professor of History. He is assisting in the freshman-sophomore core course, "Western Man," and directing the core program for the senior year, which is simply called "Senior Seminar," which is being taught for the first time. The purpose of the Senior Seminar is to encourage the development of an explicit expression of one's world and life view. To accomplish this the course focuses in a multi-disciplinary way bringing to bear upon contemporary issues and philosophies discussing how to evaluate these in Christian perspective. Each student is expected to write for the course a personal statement concerning his life perspective and values.

Currently the faculty is discussing a major curricular revision designed to provide students with better preparation both in the liberal arts (education for the

wholeness of life) and for entry into the job market (career sequence). This will involve a revision of the present program of majors and the development of a number of career sequences, these to be kept flexible in terms of the shifting job market and to be supported wherever possible by internships of varying length. During the current semester, for example, students are involved in internships in teaching, journalism (*The Sheldon Sun, The Church Herald*), public management (Iowa State Legislature), Christian Education (American Reformed Church—Orange City), and Urban Semester (Department of Children and Family Services, Morgan Park High School, Beacon Therapeutic School, Douglas Pubman Christian Center—Chicago.)

The year is going well financially. Everything points to finishing the year well in the black again. Inflation continues to be a problem, particularly since the college continues to make every effort to keep costs to students as low as possible. Northwestern's comprehensive fee (room, board, and tuition) is several hundred dollars less than most colleges. To augment the federal and state student aid programs, the sum of $225,000 from current funds (out of an income budget of approximately $1,500,000) is being used for additional student aid. For example, an average of $260.00 from college funds was given as a grant to each Reformed Church student requesting financial aid over and above any aid they may have received from state or federal sources. RCA enrollment continues at sixty percent of our student body.

The football team, the coaching staff, cheerleaders along with parents and other students spent approximately three weeks in Japan during the Christmas recess. The occasion was an invitation to the team from the American Football Association of Japan to come to Japan and play an all-star team in Osaka and another in Tokyo. Many of the students had the privilege of living in Japanese homes. This was of direct value to those enrolled in cross-cultural studies. The trip also had a profound effect upon the Christian awareness and concern of many of the students. Several groups of these students have been invited to share their experiences with Reformed Church congregations since their return.

Dr. Don De Young, pastor of the Elmendorf Reformed Church of New York City, gave excellent leadership and a spiritually challenging kickoff for the year at the fall spiritual retreat sponsored by the Student Christian Fellowship. A record attendance of students and faculty families greatly encouraged the SCF. In November the Rev. Ronald Beyer, pastor of Christ Memorial Church, Holland, Michigan led in the annual Consecration Week. Mr. Beyer's chapel talks and time with students helped the campus community to a clearer understanding of what it means to be in Christ and to live this out in a world of troubled, lonely people.

Day by day and year by year the Northwestern campus community is learning more fully what it means to be a community of learning committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life, learning, and endeavor. Mrs. Granberg and I are likewise grateful for the continuity of Orange City as well as the campus community. Each of these have enriched our lives through their encouragement, friendship and counsel.

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Participation in the Higher Education Review Committee provides a rare opportunity for dialogue between the Presidents of our colleges and representatives of the whole Reformed Church. The committee had the privilege of meeting with Dr. Kenneth Weller of Central, Dr. Gordon Van Wylen of Hope and Chaplain Raymond Weiss who represented Northwestern College. A pleasant surprise was accorded our committee when the new President of Northwestern, H. V. Rowenhorst joined us in our Tuesday afternoon session.

We reviewed the reports of the college presidents and discovered that:

A. The colleges have a clear understanding concerning their purpose and duties in the world of Education under the leadership of Christ.

B. The enrollment of the colleges remains constant or has increased.

C. The colleges are financially solvent. However, this is largely due to expert fiscal management. Inflation and other factors will clearly demand increased income in the future to avoid a lowering of standards and services.

D. The attitudes of the Presidents are positive, especially concerning the overall excellence of the schools.

The dialogue that proceded from these reports produced a new level of appreciation for the distinctive contribution made by the colleges to the Church. There was deep concern that the denomination is not sufficiently aware of this importance and excellence as evident in apparent priorities and in the structure for including the college in the planning and promotion of the total program of the Church. So to further advance the work of the colleges a resolution of the following issues would be most advantageous.

Therefore, the Higher Education Review Committee offers the following recommendations:

R-1. THAT the General Synod Executive Committee be requested to take steps in consultation with the colleges to insure that the colleges are adequately involved in the planning of the total program of the RCA and included in its promotion and that it report to the 1976 General Synod meeting as to the steps which have been taken. (ADOPTED)

R-2. THAT the colleges and the churches recommit themselves to the Covenant of Mutual Responsibilities. (ADOPTED)

COVENANT OF MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Reformed Church in America and Hope, Central and Northwestern Colleges, who constitute an expression of her devotion to truth and learning, covenant together so that their relationship may be one of mutual trust and responsiveness. For the sake of each other's life and that of the world, they promise to fulfill the following intentions:

I. THE COLLEGES COVENANT WITH THE CHURCH TO:

1. Fearlessly examine the words and works of God and man in the spirit of openness and humility, recognizing that all truth is one and that it is God's truth, in the unceasing search for God's self-disclosure in the Scriptures, in personality, nature and society.

2. Infuse and deepen a superior education in the liberal arts with a mature understanding of the sources and resources of the Christian heritage, maintaining a friendly appreciation for the Reformed tradition and its implications for faith and learning.

3. Provide an atmosphere of search and confrontation that will liberate the minds, enhance the discernment, enlarge the sympathies and encourage the commitments of all students entrusted to them, so that each may achieve the fullest personal development and self-definition.

4. Accompany education with a strong desire that the community of learning may also be a community of love and forbearance, fostering unity in the presence of a diversity of gifts and perspectives.

5. Engage the church in dialogue, providing it with courageous and timely intellectual leadership in order to help the church to understand herself and to strengthen her witness to a world in revolution; and giving earnest consideration to the views and counsel of the church.

6. Seek to inspire their students to a life of contemplation and self-giving, alerting them to the demands and needs of our itme and challenging them to dedicated service to their generation.

II. THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA COVENANTS WITH HOPE, CENTRAL AND NORTHWESTERN COLLEGES TO:

1. Assume them full freedom to pursue all truth, and concomitantly to encourage them in their responsibility toward society and their responsiveness to the Lordship of Christ in whom the fullest freedom lies.

2. Give to them its whole-hearted interest, favor and financial support; and commend them in their own pursuit of the resources needful for academic excellence and institutional vigor.

3. Urge and aid its sons and daughters to attend a Reformed Church College; and if appropriately gifted and motivated, especially to weigh the Christian vocation of the ministry and college teaching.

4. Help in interpreting to the church the nature of the educative process, its peculiar requirements, its unexpected fruits, what it can and cannot expect to accomplish in and for its students, and other such questions that arise between the colleges and segments of their constituency.

5. Encourage each college, within the relationship of this covenant, to constantly attempt to define its own image and to fulfill its unique role as an institution of higher learning in the time and at the place where God has called it.

6. Secure sufficient meaningful contact between church and colleges to maintain mutual trust and ready communication.

R-3. THAT the following action be taken by the colleges and the pastors and the consistories:

That a combined questionnaire be developed by the three colleges and that these be sent to the pastors of all Reformed Churches, asking them to supply, not only the names of potential students, but also information on the nature and organization of youth programs in the varying churches with a view toward opening the most effective channels of communication with potential students. (ADOPTED)

R-4. THAT the General Synod give high priority to convening at the Reformed Church colleges, Central, Hope and Northwestern on a rotational basis whenever this meeting is held in the midwest. (ADOPTED)

R-5. THAT we express our gratitude to the Presidents of the three colleges, Dr. Kenneth Weller of Central College; Dr. Gordon Van Wylen of Hope; and recently resigned Dr. Lars Granberg of Northwestern College, and to those who work with them at these schools, for their concerted efforts and dedication to making the RCA Colleges, Christian Liberal Arts Institutions of exceptionally high quality. (ADOPTED)

R-6. THAT Dr. Lars Granberg be given a special commendation and thanks for his nine years of inspired creative leadership at Northwestern College and that the Committee on Resolutions be requested to draft an appropriate resolution to Dr. Granberg. (ADOPTED)

R-7. THAT the new President of Northwestern College, H. V. Rowenhorst remain in our thoughts and prayers as he assumes the leadership of Northwestern College under the leadership of the Lord. (ADOPTED)

Donald Lenderink and William Faulkner, members of the Board of Trustees of Northwestern College, presented to General Synod the newly appointed President of Northwestern College, Mr. H. Virgil Rowenhorst and his wife, Shirley. Mr. Rowenhorst addressed Synod briefly.

ARTICLE 7

REPORT OF THE GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL

ANNO DOMINI—1974

What kind of a year has it been? Many commentators have reviewed the year 1974 in terms of crisis: a crisis of confidence in government, the crunch of simultaneous inflation and recession, critical world food shortages . . . and so forth. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we do not ignore the crises of our age. We wrestle with the issues of the day. But, in the last analysis, we look beyond the headlines of the news media and live by the promises of our Lord.

So, what kind of year was 1974? It was a year of grace! It was a year during which we saw many signs of the Lord's faithfulness. He does not forsake the work of His hands. His Spirit is at work in the world. We have witnessed His renewing power.

During 1974 *the members of the Reformed Church in America have substantially increased their giving to mission.* Considering the generally poor economic conditions in the country, this is indeed a cause for profound gratitude. Not only did the General Program Council end the year in the black, but was able to allocate funds for a number of advance in mission projects as well.

Since evangelism and church growth have been established as top priorities, major attention is being focused on those areas of our mission where opportunities for Christian outreach are greatest at this time, namely Mexico and Ethiopia. But in the meantime other areas of mission are not neglected. For instance, the need for training minority leadership in the Reformed Church was recognized and increased resources were made available for this purpose. Also, the response of RCA people to the desperate needs of the hungry in the world has been magnificent.

Compared with the enormity and urgency of the task that lies before us, our gains have been modest. Furthermore, it takes a major effort nowadays just to stay ahead of inflation. This should not dampen our joy about that which was accomplished, but should summon us to an even greater "partnership in the gospel, so that He who began a good work among us may bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)

During 1974 *the Centers completed their first full year of operation.* Closer ties have been established between GPC staff and regional leadership. A growing number of programs are being planned and executed jointly. Requests for staff services to local churches are increasing rapidly. All this has led to improved communication and hopefully will continue to strengthen support for our mission programs at home and abroad.

Every classis is represented on the General Program Council. Responding to concerns expressed by various people, the GPC executive committee has been working on ways and means to improve liaison with the Particular Synods. A constant effort is also being made to involve College and Seminary students and minority people in the deliberations of the Council. The broad-based representation on the task forces dealing with evangelism, church growth, and historical celebrations is another indication that the General Program Council seeks to do its

work in consultation with other Reformed Church agencies, institutions, and judicatories.

FOCUSING ON THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE

Certain phrases have recurred frequently in the GPC discussion during the past year. They are: historical celebrations, evangelism and church renewal, denominational growth, world mission planning, and world hunger. These terms express some of the major concerns with which the Council is wrestling these days. A few words should be said about each one of them.

Historical Celebrations

We have a heritage to commemorate, to celebrate, and to share! We want to look at our past, not in a spirit of false pride and self-glorification, but rather in a spirit of honesty and humility with an openness to the future into which the Holy Spirit is leading us.

A special meeting of the General Program Council was held June 14-15, 1974 at Marble Collegiate in New York City. Other RCA agencies, commissions and judicatories were represented as well. The participants, divided into "working parties", dealt with such matters as "Mission in the '80's and '90's"; publication of historical materials; national, regional, and local events; publicity and distribution of resources for use in RCA congregations.

The plan is to utilize all available media to capture the spirit of our heritage in such a way that we will be inspired to move on to new horizons. The GPC program at the 1974 General Synod did that in the form of drama. A film on our denomination's history is in production and will be ready for release during the summer of 1975. Dorothy Van Ess' book, *Pioneers in the Arab World*, tells of the days that were and points to the new frontiers in the modern world where Christ calls us to be pioneers and pilgrims.

The Centennial of the Woman's Board of Foreign Mission in 1975, the Bicentennial of the American Revolution in 1976, the 350th anniversary of the Reformed Church in America in 1978—these all become opportunities to rediscover the essence of our tradition and to reflect on what the Lord is calling us to in the future.

Evangelism and Renewal

The task force has met twice during 1974. Sometimes the emphasis was placed on "renewal and evangelism", expressing the belief that a truly renewed church will be a church that reaches out to others. At other times the members of the task force stressed the sequence of "evangelism and renewal" because of the conviction that churches will find renewal as, in obedience to the call of Christ, they venture forth in evangelism.

A number of factors which the members of the task force believe lead to church renewal were listed and explored. Three main "areas of action" were agreed upon: resource sharing, renewal communities, and theological reflection. A pilot project under discussion would involve long-term supportive relationships between several congregations eager to develop a deeper quality of Christian community life and ready to try methods of evangelism that might more effectively reach secular society. In short, rather than dealing with a broad spectrum

of issues, the members of the task force have decided to test their perceptions about the dynamics of congregational renewal through a specific experiment with a number of interested congregations.

Repeatedly the members of this task force have testified to the fact that they themselves have found renewal as they worked with this diverse group of people in the common task of making Christ and His power known to people everywhere. During the next few years the task force expects to report its findings to the church at large.

Denominational Growth

It is often pointed out that an emphasis on church growth can rather easily lead to a numbers game and narrow denominational self-aggrandizement. This danger is real. On the other hand, in the realm of the spirit as in the realm of nature, non-growth may well spell death. The General Program Council sees church growth as a legitimate and urgent concern for the Reformed Church in America.

The task force on church growth, whose work is a cooperative effort with the Particular Synods through the Field Secretaries and other interested parties, faces this basic question: How can we develop an overall national plan for denominational growth? In that context the task force has dealt with such questions as: What kinds of growth are we aiming for? Why is it important? How do we measure growth? What are the dynamics of growth? What strategies shall we pursue?

The whole task force has come to agreement on the following three points:

1) Real growth of the church occurs when persons become Christian.

2) Denominational growth can be measured by an increase in active communicants.

3) The RCA has a distinctive, viable theology and style, and therefore has a valuable contribution to make to the ministry of the world church.

Members of the task force have agreed to draw other people in their regions into the discussions, so that the mind and voice of the grass roots church may be reflected in the approaches that will be developed.

World Mission Planning

The executive committee of the General Program Council has discussed at length the mission of the Reformed Church as seen from a global perspective. Some of the issues dealt with were: world population growth, church growth compared with population growth, the almost 3 billion people who have not yet been reached with the gospel, the quality of life among the masses of mankind and what this means for mission, some developments in the RCA over the past decades, and the biblical perspectives that guide the GPC in its work.

A brochure on World Mission Planning has been published to encourage study of these crucial issues across the church. It will be given wide distribution in the denomination. The executive committee welcomes comments from anyone who wishes to share comments and insights on the future direction of our denominational mission program. A feedback page is included in the brochure.

World Hunger

The General Program Council is continually involved in problems of immediate urgency. Rapidly moving world developments constantly impinge upon the work of the church across the globe. While dealing with numerous questions of mission concern, the Council members focused special attention during the past year on the world hunger crisis. It became an integral part of its work and worship. Additional resources have been made available to programs that help feed the hungry.

A team of five staff members has assumed special responsibilities to help sharpen the general awareness of the crisis among RCA people and to ensure that our denomination's response can bring maximum results.

A special effort is being put forth in the areas of communication and education. Concrete ways will be suggested in which Christians can support programs that deal with the problem. Both emergency relief and long-range strategies that deal with the root causes of world hunger will continue to be stressed. Christians will be encouraged to explore how they—in their personal and family life as well as by exercising responsible citizenship—can make a difference.

"Man shall not live by bread alone." (Matthew 4:4) Yet, "if a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?" (James 2:15-16). In accordance with the scriptural witness, the General Program Council seeks to avoid a onesided approach as it responds to the needs of man. The mission program of the Reformed Church in America must embody the rich variety of ministry which was so supremely revealed in the life of our incarnate Lord Himself.

We shall now turn to a review of General Program Council actions taken during 1974 in the five major goal areas which it has adopted as an overall organizing principle for its work.

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

In this area of concern programs related to the following goals were reviewed:

Goal A: Congregations with an evangelistic outreach which demonstrate love and an eagerness to share the gospel.

Goal C: The use of modern communications media to share the gospel of salvation in Christ in a way understandable to modern man.

Equipping the Saints

The Secretaries for Evangelism play a key role in helping the church at large to fulfill its responsibility to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through training events, pilot projects, resource sharing and counsel, they seek to discover and implement methods of equipping various types of congregations in diverse social settings to become dynamic witnessing communities.

Much of the work undertaken by Mr. Donald Jansma and Mr. Herman Luben was necessarily of an exploratory nature. As recent appointees, they needed time to discover what is happening in our denomination and the world church,

to test the movement of the Spirit and to probe the directions in which He may be leading us during the coming years.

Over the past decades the Reformed Church has used various programs and approaches as vehicles for spiritual renewal and outreach. In the recent past the Lay Witness Mission movement has proved to be a blessing to hundreds of our congregations. Yet, one of the most pressing questions for many congregations today remains: How can we really effectively share the gospel with our neighbors? In other words, the spiritual forces released through renewal experiences often need to be reinforced by specific assistance in outreach methods. The task forces, which we mentioned earlier, and the Secretaries for Evangelism are focusing their efforts on this fundamental concern.

Hispanic Ministries

Most of the Hispanic congregations in the Reformed Church are experiencing encouraging church growth. The opportunities for a vital ministry to Spanish-speaking people are very great. The General Program Council has therefore increased its support in that area. Melrose Reformed Church in New York City and South Church in Brooklyn are now receiving substantial salary support for Hispanic pastors.

The Hispanic Council was officially organized during the past year. On a number of occasions members of the Council have shared concerns and dreams with members of the GPC and with staff. The shape of future relationships is not yet entirely clear, but we expect that our church will witness an increased vitality in work with and among Hispanic people.

Good News Abroad

Funds have been provided during the 1975-1977 cost/time frame for the "Faithful Servant" movement of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. The Faithful Servant Movement seeks to bring renewal to individual Christians and local churches through a house church movement, seminars and conferences for the laity, a renewal newsletter, and by exposing Taiwanese Christians to evangelistic movements and their leaders in other parts of the world.

The work of RCA personnel engaged in evangelistic work in Mexico, Japan, and the Middle East was also reviewed, and funds for these ongoing ministries were provided.

A Variety of Media

In supporting the World Association for Christian Communication, the Reformed Church in America is participating in a broad communication network which utilizes a wide variety of media. Through such joint ventures Christian broadcasting becomes possible on a scale which no single denomination could achieve by itself.

At the same time, some of our own missionaries are engaged in exciting ministries through the printed page as well as electronic media. The Radio and Bible course ministry in Sasebo, Japan was reviewed and funded for three more years. Bookshop ministries in Japan and the Arabian Gulf show encouraging growth. A printing press for our work in Mexico became essential for an expanding program of translation and literature distribution.

Loan Funds

During the latter part of the 1960's and the early part of the 70's few applications were received for help from our denominational loan funds, the Church Building Fund and the Extension Foundation. That pattern began to change in 1973, and during 1974 the General Program Council approved building loan applications from the Church Building Fund in the amount of $498,000. In that same year the Board of Directors of the Extension Foundation approved applications in the amount of $483,000.

Some of the loans were designated for new building projects. Others were for the enlargement of existing facilities at some of our "newer" churches. In a few instances loans were extended to facilitate the relocation of churches with a dynamic program and substantial growth potentials.

The Extension Foundation is in need of new investors. It has an excellent record. In fact, since 1958 it has not had a single "bad" investment and noteholders have received all principal and interest payments on schedule.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Programs related to the following goals under Christian Community were reviewed during 1974:

Goal A: Congregations where Christian fellowship and mutual caring are experienced.

Goal D: Corporate worship related to the daily life experiences and vocations of the worshipper which encourages lay participation, spontaneity, and diverse forms of communication.

Christian Communities in the Middle East

In most Middle-East countries Christians constitute a very small minority. Precisely because these congregations are so small, the need for pastoral care and a supporting Christian fellowship becomes extremely important.

The General Program Council reviewed ministries in Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait. In Oman, the missionary-pastor must maintain a low profile so that leadership can emerge from the Omani members. However, the Rev. James Dunham continues to be available to the Omani congregation. In addition, he is actively engaged in hospital and community work.

The GPC renewed its support of the Arab congregation of the National Evangelical Church in Bahrain. This church has been served by an Arab pastor since 1972.

The English language congregation in Kuwait is led by Rev. and Mrs. Lewis Scudder, Jr. This church serves expatriates from Asia, Europe, the United Kingdom, and North America. The congregation participates actively with the Arabic congregation and several Indian congregations in the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait.

Family and Youth Concerns

In these areas of concern the GPC discussed Junior High Ministries, re-

sources for family cluster educational experiences, and a program designed to prepare teens for marriage and family life. While youth and the contemporary family are often discussed today in terms of problems, Christians will want to focus on their potentials. Parents and church leaders are looking for help, and the church should supply them with the best assistance available.

As was reported last year, a Youth Ministries program has been worked out cooperatively with the staff of Camp Manitoqua. This arrangement has been working out satisfactorily. Although there is substantial diversity in youth programs across the denomination, Reformed Church Youth Fellowship continues to provide a national focus and identity as well as a network for communications among many young people in the church. Youth Resource Portfolios are now being published jointly with the Young Calvinist Federation of the Christian Reformed Church. Issues sent out during the past year received favorable reactions.

Strengthening Local Ministries

The GPC has not forgotten the needs of our inner city churches. The DeWitt Reformed Church in New York City is now receiving support for a Director of Christian Education and the South Bushwick Reformed Church in Brooklyn is receiving aid for a rapidly growing youth program.

The GPC responded affirmatively to an appeal for financial assistance, so that the Reformed congregation in Lawton, Oklahoma could receive the services of a fulltime pastor. This aid is being channeled through the Particular Synod of the West. The Lawton congregation is an integrated community of Indians and whites.

Educational Enrichment

The Christian church has always engaged in sharing faith and heritage through a process of nurture and education. In recent years, that ministry has been challenged both from within and without the church. Such challenges have produced serious reflection upon a congregation's educational ministry; they have also resulted in renewed commitment to enrich education within the congregation. Without a vital educational program (as well as a witness emphasis), a congregation may be a generation away from lifelessness.

Quality educational programs in congregations are imperative for the vital and energetic communication of the Christian faith. Such an emphasis not only enhances a congregation's interior life, but prepares Christians to more effectively share their faith with others. Assisting congregations in enriching their educational programs is an appropriate task for the General Program Council. The GPC staff is planning to devote major attention to supporting Christian Education in the congregation. This will not be a curriculum selling program, but a congregational support program known as EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT. In the next three years the GPC Centers will provide assistance to those congregations which request support in strengthening Christian Education.

Staff and Associates will be equipped to assist congregations in appraising their educational program, in making decisions about those programs and in training teachers. The resources suggested to congregations will include "The Bible Way" curriculum of the Christian Reformed Church, the resources developed by Joint Educational Development known as Christian Education: Shared

Approaches and other curriculums appropriate to our theological and educational commitments.

Further information on EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT can be obtained from your nearest GPC Center.

HUMAN WELFARE

Programs relating to the following goals came under review during 1974:

Goal C: Relief of acute human need due to natural disasters and man's inhumanity to man.

Goal D: A church concerned with the life and welfare of its own personnel, both active and retired.

Emergency Relief and Refugee Aid

The exciting story about our denomination's response during the past year to disaster and world hunger relief is familiar by now. Reformed Church World Service received total contributions in the amount of $476,129 an increase of $296,773 over the previous year.

Most RCA efforts in the areas of emergency relief and refugee aid are done through cooperative Christian agencies. The task is too massive and too complex for any single denomination to handle. Furthermore, the U.S. government offers surplus food and assistance in transportation to such agencies on terms far better than any single denomination could negotiate themselves.

GPC review of cooperative agencies usually includes discussions on the policies that guide their work and the effectiveness of their operations.

Mettu Hospital and Other Personnel Matters

Miss Arlene Schuiteman presents her Christian witness in the context of a Government Hospital Dresser's Training School at Mettu, Ethiopia. The GPC learned about the fine reputation the school enjoys and about the high quality of Miss Schuiteman's work and witness. The goal is to train an adequate number of Ethiopians in this kind of skill so that Miss Schuiteman can move on and repeat her successful efforts in another province.

In the area of human welfare, personnel concerns in Winnebago and the Arabian Gulf were considered as well. Miss Bernice Tegeler's work with families of the Winnebago tribe has received praise from the American Indian Council and her continued services in the region were requested. Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Garden, are now moving into the area of agricultural mission work in the Gulf Area. Mr. Garden, who also engages in evangelistic and educational work through audio-visuals, is well-equipped to develop rural community development projects in the context of Christian witness.

Missionary Pension Grants

Goal D under Human Welfare points to the church's concern for the welfare of its own personnel, both active and retired. This commitment finds concrete expression in the pension grants which are provided retired missionaries whose

total Social Security and pension income require supplements to reach a minimum standard.

Wheels for Witnesses

The General Program Council voted to allocate $14,500 for vehicles to be used by missionaries in Mexico and the Middle East. Mentioning such a concern may seem almost like space-filling, especially when placed side by side with the world hunger crisis. We add this little item as a reminder that wheels to travel through the desert and the jungle are also important to the welfare of people and cannot be ignored because of pre-occupation with world shaking events.

PERSONAL GROWTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

The two goals reviewed during 1974 were:

Goal A: Persons growing in self-awareness and interpersonal relationships and involvement in Christian ministry (retreats, growth groups, lay volunteers).

Goal C: Indigenous educational programs in developing societies which enable personal growth and leadership development.

Annville and Brewton

The members of the General Program Council devoted considerable time both at the April and November meetings to a review of developments at Southern Normal School. Because of the scope of the Brewton program, the amount of GPC funds involved ($210,000), and the interest of the church in the ongoing program at the school, an ad hoc committee was appointed by the Executive Committee in October, 1973, to conduct a comprehensive review. The Rev. Douglas Van Gessel served as chairman.

This committee submitted a report to the April meeting of the GPC. The members had focused their attention on six areas: the educational program; student life at the school; the institution's Board, its Constitution, and public relations; administration and supervision; the farm program; and budget and financing.

The following sentences from the ad hoc committee's report convey their basically positive feelings about the institution:

> "Southern Normal School is quite impressive as an educational institution and college preparatory school. The administration is able, hard working, effective and enterprising. The faculty appears dedicated and industrious. The students are generally interested in their studies. The school is responsive to the needs of its students and is open to suggestions."

The committee offered a number of suggestions which might further strengthen the program. These were shared with the school's Board and faculty for their consideration. The recommendations covered the following areas of interest:

—an elevation and expansion of the vocational program.

—a special education program for those students less able academically.

—expanded weekend activities.

—strengthening of the music program.

—a fulltime farm manager and courses in farm management.

—the development of specific goals for the school.

—a revision of the Constitution and By-laws to more clearly spell out the school's relationship to the denomination and insure healthy ties with the church in the future.

—the establishment of a Development and Promotion Committee.

—improved student counseling.

—a constant evaluation and improvement of curriculum in order to best meet the needs of the students.

The Board of Trustees of Southern Normal School has responded positively to the committee's report and immediate steps have been taken to implement some of the suggestions. A revised Constitution and By-laws, submitted to the Program Council at its November meeting, were approved.

A revised Constitution and By-laws for Annville Institute were also reviewed and approved at the April meeting. As in the case of Southern Normal School, both the Program Council and Annville's Board of Trustees are eager to maintain a continued vital relationship with the Reformed Church, while at the same time leaving ample room for local decision-making.

Stuart Post continues to help both these institutions secure increased funding from sources outside the Reformed Church. We hope that the substantial RCA funding can be held at its present level and that expansion of program and spiraling inflationary costs can be covered by additional funding from elsewhere. Only in this way will the GPC retain any measure of flexibility to channel resources to new areas of mission where opportunities beckon us.

Secretary for Young Adult Ministry

Ms. Patricia Stere, who served as Associate for Lay Ministries, was promoted to an executive position. Her new title is "Secretary for Young Adult Ministry and Christian Nurture". Ms. Stere continues to work out of the Schenectady office.

The objectives of this office are to provide ministry experiences for young adults through study, fellowship, worship and support for their personal involvement in lay ministry. The AIM Associate program is a prime example of this kind of involvement. Ms. Stere also provides broad resourcing to local congregations in Christian Nurture. In recent months a resource packet on work with young adults was sent to all RCA congregations.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Programs related to the following goal were under review:

Goal C: A church which stimulates and supports group and individual involvement in social concerns.

It should be clear from numerous references in the preceding sections that we do not at this point begin to report on programs that have implications for the social context in which people live. All the work of the General Program Council is guided by a Christian social concern.

Some Specific Issues

We shall now list a number of the specific programs in the area of social issues that were reviewed by the Council.

Research-Action: We live in an increasingly complex society. People often feel helpless in the face of social-political problems of a magnitude which seems to preclude any effective individual role to bring about change. This program seeks to give concrete assistance to those who want to express their Christian commitment through specific social involvement.

Education by Minority People: People who have experienced poverty, injustice, racism, and other social ills should not be seen merely as the recipients of our benevolence, but as brothers and sisters who can help the church at large to become better informed about and more sensitive to the issues of the day. This program seeks to facilitate that process.

Bread for the World: This is a Christian citizens' movement of people who are concerned about world hunger. People are helped to see that they can make a difference in dealing with this problem.

Faith in Action: This is a program for the discovery of human needs in one's own community. It also helps people discover the organizations and agencies in the community through which Christians can work to bring about changes.

Salary Supplements for Community Ministers: Under certain conditions the GPC will pay up to one-third of a community minister's salary for up to three years. Such ministries are sometimes sponsored by single congregations, but are more often the result of cooperation between a cluster of churches.

Ministry to the Vietnam Generation: Offers counseling for Vietnam era veterans and war exiles.

Drug Resources: This is a skills training program for pastors who want to deal with drug abuse problems.

Summer Opportunities for Minority Youth: This program is designed to locate summer jobs for minority youth in predominately white churches. Thus these young people will have an opportunity to work in a setting other than that to which they are accustomed.

GPC Statement on Taiwan

The denial of a re-entry visa for RCA missionaries Joyce and Wendell Karsen once again brought the issue of Taiwan before the General Program Council. The Council had previously expressed its concern about government recriminations against people who are suspected of sympathy with the Taiwanese desires for self-determination.

The Program Council felt compelled to publicly state its solidarity with our brothers and sisters of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan who suffer on account of their convictions. The church in Taiwan had strongly supported the Karsens in their desire to continue working there. The GPC also wanted to encourage U.S. Christians to appeal to our own government to review our policies in the light of the aspirations of the Taiwanese people themselves.

CONCLUSION

The General Synod of 1900 voted to publish an annual Year Book which was to contain reports on the life and work of the denomination as well as statistical information. This decision marked the beginning of our Orange Book!

As a fitting conclusion to this General Program Council report to the Synod of 1975, we quote (with a few small additions) a paragraph from the first issue of *"The Almanac and Year Book"*.

> "We would not exalt financial needs and success above spiritual. We praise the Lord for souls converted through the preaching of the gospel; but our gratitude is increased by the fact that the money cost of the year's work of the Board (GPC) has been met, and a small balance is shown in the treasury. This is a great encouragement to the Board (GPC), and should be to the Churches, and a strong inducement to them not to become weary in well doing. Enlarged contributions mean extended Missionary operations, and the Board (GPC) would gladly press a forward movement of our Church to all parts of our land (and the world!) if it were given the means."

General Program Council—Appendix I

RESOLUTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WOMAN'S BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Whereas 1975 is of great significance to the women of the Reformed Church in America as witnessed by the following historical events:

—As early as 1835 Dr. David Abeel, missionary pioneer, urged an organization of women to support missions, and in 1860 Mrs. Thomas C. Doremus initiated the first woman's missionary society in the RCA.

—The General Synod of 1874 called upon the women of the Reformed Church in America to organize a Woman's Board of Foreign Missions which should be auxiliary to Synod's Board. This call was based on "the efficiency of women in charitable undertakings" and "the growing recognition of their executive ability."

—On January 7, 1875 13 women assembled in Marble Collegiate Church, New York City, to consider the call of General Synod. The Woman's Board of Foreign Missions was founded on January 21, 1875, with 28 charter "managers", in Marble Collegiate Church.

—The 19 women's auxiliaries in 1875 had grown to 480 by 1895. In 1900, on the 25th Anniversary, there were 555 auxiliaries and over $447,000.00 had been contributed during the first 25 years.

—In 1905, history could record of the RCA women's work

> **"All had devoted talent, time and gifts of gold to the proper equipment and the structures which had been reared. Head, heart and hand had been freely used in the cause. No offering was too costly to lay at the Master's feet. No mosaic of thought and prayer and purpose, though it took 30 years to complete the pattern,**

was too precious for His use in the buildings erected in China, India, Japan and Arabia in His Name."

(Fifty Years in Foreign Fields" by Mrs. W. I. Chamberlin—1925)

—On the Fiftieth Anniversary, in 1925, four obvious lessons were drawn up for the New Decade

+"That believing prayer works.

+ That the Church's resources in life and money have never been fully released.

+ That God still honors the prayer for laborers for the harvest.

+ That He, by the action of His power within us, is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think." ("*The Sixth Decade*" by Sarella Te Winkel—1935).

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED

That the General Program Council express its gratitude for the legacy of faith, vision and commitment to world mission it has inherited from the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions and pledge itself to continue in that tradition;

That the General Program Council gratefully acknowledge its debt to all the women of the Reformed Church in America who throughout its history have pioneered in mission, have supported their sisters and brothers in mission and have challenged the Church to make Christ known throughout the world;

That the General Program Council extend hearty greetings to Reformed Church Women on the occasion of their Fifteenth Anniversary and express appreciation for their continued dedication to the Reformed Church mission program, demonstrated in part by their annual gifts to the General Program Council of approximately one half million dollars;

That the General Program Council assure Reformed Church Women of its prayerful hope that this joyous partnership in Christ's mission will continue during the next century and that our life and work together may be crowned with the rich blessings of Almighty God.

This resolution was adopted by the General Program Council at its April 3-5, 1975 meeting in Elk Grove, Illinois and by the General Synod at the June 9-13, 1975 meeting in Elmhurst, Ill.

General Program Council—Appendix II

MISSIONARY PERSONNEL

Furlough Missionary Conference

In August 1974 missionaries and staff met in Zion, Illinois, for a two day conference. The objectives of the conference were: contact and sharing between staff and missionaries; review experiences and perspectives; review recent developments in mission theory and practice; develop a commitment to a unified approach to a common task. Approximately 30 missionaries and 20 staff were in attendance.

Appointments

Appointed in September 1974 to the teaching staff at Annville Institute, Annville, Kentucky were the following:

Henry and Marsha Meeuwse: Marsha as Nurse; Henry to Direct Admissions and as Counselor.

Dean and Nancy Huisman: as 8th and 9th grades Dorm Parents; Nancy as Girl's Athletic Coach and Physical Education Teacher and Dean as Printer.

Miss Theresa Phillips as Art Instructor.

Miss Barbara Sue Gobbard as Home Economics Teacher.

Miss Kathleen Sprik as English Teacher

Mr. David Vander Broek as Mathematics Teacher.

Appointed in September 1974 to the Staff at Southern Normal School, Brewton, Alabama were the following:

Miss Augusta Montgomery as Physical Education Teacher.
Mr. Dean Greenslade as Farm Director.
Mr. Preston Fluker as Driver's Education Teacher.
Miss Wilma Quarker as French and English Teacher.

Resignations and Terminations:

Staff members at the Annville Institute, Annville, Kentucky who resigned at the close of the school year, June 1974 were:

Jack and Nancy Marema, after 12 years' service.
Mr. Earl Smith after 7 years' service.
Miss Ruth Ann Welscott after 5 years' service.
Miss Rhonda Hospers after one year of service.
Miss Phyllis De Vries after two years' service.
Miss Carol Brunsting after two years' service.

Staff members at the Southern Normal School, Brewton, Alabama who resigned August 31, 1974:

Miss Sandra Wright as Counselor after 1 year's service.
Mr. William Smith terminated after two years' service.

Interns who served fourteen months in Taiwan as English Teachers, serving with the Presbyterian Church there terminated in August were:

Myrna Muilenburg, Edgerton, Minnesota
John Boer, Modesto, California

Adventure in Missions (AIM) Volunteers who terminated in June 1974, after serving one year were:

Patricia Aiken, Morrison, Illinois
James Britt, Rock Falls, Illinois
Nilda Cruz, Bronx, New York

Caroline Donk, Kalamazoo, Michigan
Steven Pomp, Volga, South Dakota
Sharon Van Oort, Ireton, Iowa
William Verplank, Zeeland, Michigan
Ernest Walker, New Brunswick, New Jersey

Leaves of Absence:

William Burke, effective December 1, 1974, after serving 10 years with University Students in Taiwan.

John and Helene Zwyghuizen, effective November 1, 1974, for two years after serving in Japan for 10 years.

Reassignments, Special Assignments, Completion of Term Appointments:

Miss Darlene Nystrom appointed as a World Mission Associate serving as a volunteer nurse in India at the Mary Lott Lyles Hospital in Madanapalle for three months.

Miss Mary Bonnecroy reappointed September 1, 1974 to the Bahrain School as an English Teacher having served previously there from 1970 to 1973.

Wendell and Joyce Karsen reassigned in March 1974 to the Church of Christ in China, Hong Kong Council, after having served with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan since January 1969.

The following served an Intern Year (July 1974—June 1975) with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, teaching English:

Susan Olmstead, Palatine Bridge, New York (served two years)
Mary Kromminga, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Lois Vander Kooi, Fairview, Illinois (terminated August 20, 1975)
Susan Dunham, Altamont, New York
Warren Greving, Alton, Iowa

The following served one year in the Adventure In Mission Program—June 1974—June 1975:

Mia Boele, London, Ontario in the Other Way Youth Center, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Sandra Brehmen, Aledo, Illinois, in the United Reformed Church, Jersey City, New Jersey.

Vincent Delgado, Bronx, New York in the Melrose Reformed Church, Bronx, New York.

Marsha Jo Denial, Westland, Michigan, in the Bethany Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Susan Hoekenga, Spring Lake, Michigan, in the Reformed Church Inner-City Experiment, Muskegon, Michigan.

Elba Ortiz, Bronx, New York in her home church, Church of the Comforter.

Dorie Vande Zande, Waupun, Wisconsin, in the Bethany Reformed Church, Flint, Michigan.

Helen Vander Maten, Sheldon, Iowa, in Christ's Community Church, Phoenix, Arizona.

Rev. Harvey Hoekstra, RCA missionary in Ethiopia, is spending his furlough year at the Western Regional Center, Anaheim, California, assisting churches with Mission Budget opportunities.

Retirements:

Miss Jeanne Walvoord, effective August 1, 1974, after over forty-two years on the staff of Mackay Memorial Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan.

Miss Lois Marsilje is on an extended medical furlough until her retirement on March 1976. She served in India since February 1939, 35 years, at Scudder Memorial Hospital.

Miss F. Belle Bogard, effective January 1, 1974, after serving in Japan since August 1936, 38 years.

Deaths:

Miss Anna G. Berkenpas, Lafayette, Indiana, April 2, 1974. She served in Winnebago, Nebraska.

Miss Charlotte Kellien, Lincoln Park, Michigan, November 16, 1974. She served in the Middle East.

Mrs. William Angus, Grand Rapids, Michigan, September 7, 1974. She served with her husband in China.

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL

The Review Committee of the General Program Council was confronted with over three hundred discrete programs supported and supervised by the General Program Council as the program agency of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. The members of the Review Committee were much impressed by the tremendous variety of ministry in which our church is engaged, the dedication of many missionaries who personalized this ministry through their presence with the Committee, the competence and integrity of the General Program Council staff in supervising this ministry, and the style of management and decision-making exemplified within the processes of the General Program Council.

The members of the Review Committee initially surveyed their own prior relationships to the General Program Council and found them widely varied. Some had many and intense relations with various General Program Council programs and personnel; for others, General Program Council was but a name about which much was to be learned. Thus, the Review Committee discussed not only the challenging dimensions of its assignment, but also the peculiar constituency of the Committee as a representative microcosm of the Reformed Church in America.

The Rev. Arie Brouwer, Executive Secretary of the General Program Council, and the Rev. George Crumley, Jr., its Chairman, made initial introductions to the structure and style of the General Program Council. Subsequently, the Review Committee organized its task to parallel the five program areas of the Council, while adding three additional areas of concern. The Review Committee is indebted to the capable chairpersons of these various sub-committees as well as the helpful members of General Program Council staff who readily cooperated with the Committee in its review assignment.

It will be observed that there are no recommendations incorporated into the *Report of the General Program Council.* The recommendations of the Review

Committee are presented, however, in such a fashion as to follow the order of the General Program Council Report.

Last year General Synod encouraged the General Program Council to proceed with plans for historical celebrations in 1976 and 1978. Arrangements are being made for the Bicentennial celebration next year which is planned to be an intergenerational event, including within its program activities which appeal to and stimulate people of all ages and a variety of life-styles. The organizing motif for the event is the Biblical concept of Jubilee. Not only does Jubilee bring to our attention the celebrative nature of the 1976 anniversary, but it also highlights the economic and social goals of God's people in its advocacy of the distribution of capital, the delivery from economic hardship, the liberation from slavery. Jubilee proclaims "the acceptable year of the Lord."

Therefore, we RECOMMEND:

R-1. THAT the General Synod indicate its enthusiastic support for "JUBILEE/76" scheduled for August 13-16, 1976, in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, when the Biblical Jubilee will provide a vision for the future and criteria for judgment of the American dream. (ADOPTED)

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

The Committee delighted in the organization during the past year of the Hispanic Council, and rejoices in the revived concern of the church in the area of evangelism and church growth. Two recommendations flow from its examination of this area of General Program Council activity.

First, we RECOMMEND:

R-2. THAT the General Synod commend the General Program Council for its work in the area of Evangelism and Church Growth, and we ask for prayerful consideration in the planning and implementation of these programs throughout the Reformed Church in America without neglecting those areas where financial resources are severely limited. (ADOPTED)

Secondly, the Committee expressed its concern that evangelism and church growth persistently maintain a balance of ministry in both word and deed, and that successful models of this integration of word and deed in witness be placed before the attention of the church.

Therefore, we RECOMMEND:

R-3. THAT the General Synod instruct the General Program Council to identify and share with the denomination some of the ministries which are models of faithfulness to proclamation in both word and deed, and are seeing fruit upon their labors. (ADOPTED)

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The review of those goals falling under the general category of Christian Community was marked by appreciation for the variety of educational resources, procedures and consultants anticipated in the development of the congregational support program called Educational Enrichment. The Shared Approaches to Christian Education produced by Joint Educational Development and the Bible Way

curriculum of the Christian Reformed Church were identified as some components of this enrichment. But concern was raised, as it was last year, lest "the distinctive needs within our own denomination" be overlooked. Accordingly, we RECOMMEND:

R-4. THAT the General Synod encourage the General Program Council to continue its fine work in promoting the thrust of the Educational Enrichment Program and in assisting the churches in focusing their attention upon the direction of Christian Education in the Reformed Church in America. (ADOPTED)

HUMAN WELFARE

The Reformed Church in America is indebted to the General Program Council for its obedience to the mandate given by General Synod last year, and its dedication to confronting the Reformed Church in America with the magnitude of the problem of world hunger.

Therefore, we RECOMMEND:

R-5. THAT the General Synod commend the General Program Council for the way in which it implemented last year's requests for response to the problem of world hunger; we further recommend that the General Program Council continue to give visible attention to the needs of the hungry and explore programs that will involve people as well as food. (ADOPTED)

In order that the General Synod might show its visible attention to the problem of world hunger, the following motion was made from the floor and seconded:

To amend R-5 by adding the following:

That the General Synod meet next in 1977 at the designated place;

That in the interim the GSEC be responsible for administering the work of the denomination, as they usually do between sessions;

That the $100,000 plus usually allotted to General Synod meetings be given to Church World Service;

That this alternate-year structure be observed for ten years, guaranteeing approximately one-half million dollars to the food crisis;

That all reports voted due at the 1976 Session be deferred until 1977.

VOTED: **To refer the above recommendation to the Committee of Reference (GSEC) for discussion and decision for report back to this Synod meeting.** (See page 133.)

Additional concerns in the area of human welfare were raised by the Review Committee.

One of these concerns has become evident in the past few months. Both congregations and communities have responded to the challenge of relocation in the aftermath of the war in Southeast Asia.

Therefore, we RECOMMEND:

R-6. THAT the General Synod commend those congregations which have already indicated their intention to sponsor Vietnamese refugee families in relocation

and urge the General Program Council to promote their example and provide information to other churches. (ADOPTED)

However, the drama of relocation should not blind us to perpetual and contemporary needs within our own society. We also RECOMMEND:

R-7. THAT the General Synod instruct the General Program Council to make readily available to the churches the information necessary to facilitate the care and adoption of many children neglected and overlooked in an urban society, but much in need of the love and nurture of the Christian Home. (ADOPTED)

PERSONAL GROWTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

Two concerns, readily assimilated and easily complementary, emerged from the review of the varied portfolio of programs in this general area. They are the concern for support groups within churches and the concern for leadership development.

We therefore RECOMMEND:

R-8. THAT the General Synod commend the General Program Council for the implementation of the goals of growth in self-awareness, inter-personal relationships and leadership, and encourage the development of supportive group ministries incorporating pastors, missionaries, and the laity, and the promotion and facilitation of leadership development. (ADOPTED)

SOCIAL ISSUES

Here the issues are so vast, the resources so few, that it is easy to become discouraged. The General Program Council has identified programs and projects which can be undertaken with limited resources, yet produce valued and growing involvement with a sense of purpose and accomplishment. The task is ever before us; we RECOMMEND:

R-9. THAT the General Synod commend the General Program Council for its realistic understanding in bringing together the needs of the world and the interests of the church in the development of social issues programming. (ADOPTED)

PROMOTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The perennial problem of informing the church about its vast and varied involvement in ministry was much on the mind of the Review Committee. Somewhere between the vision of General Synod as demonstrated programmatically in the General Program Council and the typical member of an RCA congregation, there exist barriers to communication. We challenge anew the General Program Council to locate and remove these barriers. Meanwhile, we observe the success and interest of *HOTLINE*, and RECOMMEND:

R-10. THAT the General Synod encourage the General Program Council to make broader use of HOTLINE **(General Program Council Newsletter) by expanded distribution to the lay membership of the church, and by encouraging the use of excerpts from** HOTLINE **in church bulletins and newsletters.** (ADOPTED)

WORLD MISSION AND PLANNING

The Review Committee examined the recent publication, *WORLD MISSION PLANNING: AN INVITATION TO CONVERSATION AND COMMITMENT*, and found exciting both the content coverage and the study process. Many usages can be made of this booklet, from Adult Classes to Weekend Workshops. One hour of study by every consistory in the Reformed Church in America would undoubtedly be beneficial for the church.

We RECOMMEND:

R-11. THAT the General Synod affirm the distribution of the document WORLD MISSION PLANNING: AN INVITATION TO CONVERSATION AND COMMITMENT, **and recommend the document to the churches for study at both consistorial and classical levels. Their reactions should be shared with the General Program Council Executive Committee through the General Program Council representative from each classis.** (ADOPTED)

GOALS AND PROCESSES

Another area of concern to the Review Committee was the definition of the goals of the General Program Council and their correlation to budget allocations. More particularly, the Reformed Church has numerous opportunities for ministry in an urban setting, but those opportunities are also exceedingly challenging and make exhausting demands upon the church. Nonetheless, the world over is increasingly urban, and the development of both a ministry-style and a life-style in an urban society is a high priority for Christians. For such a task the Reformed Church in America is uniquely blessed with numerous urban locations in our older metropolitan centers. Therefore, we RECOMMEND:

R-12. THAT the General Synod instruct the General Program Council to work with the Particular Synods and other agencies and judicatories in analyzing the current state of urban churches and urban ministries in the Reformed Church in America in order to determine the level of priority which urban ministry is given by the Reformed Church in America; and further recommend that steps be taken to raise the consciousness of the entire denomination toward the perspective that urban ministry, like all ministry, includes meeting human need and thus is mission **analogous to mission in an overseas context.** (ADOPTED)

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

We further RECOMMEND:

R-13. THAT the "Resolution on the Occasion of The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions," as adopted by the General Program Council in April, 1975, be adopted likewise by the General Synod. (ADOPTED)

R-14. THAT the General Synod invite Principal M. J. John to address General Synod briefly on the challenges and needs of Voorhees College in Vellore, India. (ADOPTED)

Arie Brouwer, Executive Secretary, introduced M. J. John, Principal of Voorhees College, Vellore, India, who addressed the Synod.

BLACK COUNCIL REPORT

This is the first report from the Black Council to the General Synod which the Rev. B. Moses James did not have a hand in writing. Rev. James died in Kalamazoo, Michigan in January, after a long illness, one which prevented him from attending the 1974 General Synod. He was the first chairman of the Black Council, and on the 17th of January he would have completed his second term of Office.

During his years of service, the Black Council came to life and evolved into a viable organization. His influence on the Council is recorded in its Constitution and Bylaws as well as in its goals and objectives. No doubt, his hopes for what the Council can become will continue to be a source of inspiration for its members for some time to come. It was Rev. James who insisted, when the Black Council constitution was being drafted, that its preamble affirm racial reconciliation as a primary goal of the organization. He also insisted that this goal was possible in the Reformed Church in America only when Blacks and Whites were peers in Christian service within the denomination and in the society at-large. It was his position that as long as peer relationships were thwarted by racism and apathy, the Black membership would merely be objects of mission and of benign curiosity by their White counterparts.

He came to believe, in the midst of much criticism, that the work of reconciliation had to begin within the Black constituency, with minimal participation by Whites. Undergirding this position was his belief that no weak people could be genuinely reconciled to a people considerably more advantaged politically, economically and otherwise.

To help remove this obstacle to genuine reconciliation, Rev. James advocated Black leadership development and self-reliance among congregations in Black communities. He felt that Black members should be guaranteed access to the decision-making bodies of the Church, and he cautioned Black people not to abandon their rich religious heritage in order to "fit-in" as members of the RCA. Rather, he urged them to insist that this heritage be reckoned with by the whole Church before regarding reconciliation as a reality.

This Annual Report of the Black Council to the General Synod is given in memory of Rev. James, his work and his dreams.

The 1974 meeting of the Black Caucus was held in New York City, and the attendance and participation at this meeting were excellent. Highlights of this meeting included addresses by Rev. Arie R. Brouwer, Executive Secretary of the RCA and Dr. W. Sterling Cary, President of the National Council of Churches.

The theme of the '74 Caucus was "Self-Reliance: The Challenge of the 70's." Three persons gave presentations on this subject, and each stressed the need for Black RCA congregations to become less dependent on their classes and particular synods for financial support by exercising better stewardship. It was their view that Black congregations cannot be partners in mission, nor can they be prophetic voices, if they depend on mostly White congregations to pay their basic expenses. Although these congregations do not feel they have to "buy a voice" in Church policy, they do believe that paying their own way is more and more imperative.

Those speaking to the challenge of self-reliance urged caucus delegates to ex-

plore ways of initiating Church-sponsored economic development projects that could ease the load on individuals in the struggle for self-supporting local Churches. Delegates were also directed to consider means of eventual support for some Black Council activities.

Also at issue was the felt need to recruit Black ministers to be candidates for Churches in search of pastors. It was thought that some long-range planning should be initiated to encourage Black youth who have grown up in the RCA to consider ministry as a vocation. As of March 1975, there are five known predominantly Black congregations without pastors, and the availability of candidates who are willing to change to the RCA is not too promising. Black leadership is widely regarded as an asset to Churches seeking to be self-supporting, and to Churches seeking to increase their membership.

The Caucus identified four areas of work for the coming months, and task forces were appointed to do this work:

A. *Task Force on Self-Reliance Projects*:

This task force is considering ways by which local congregations can improve their own giving and underwrite an increased share of its local financial responsibilities; it is considering ways of initiating economic development projects, sponsored by the local congregations, to support the local Churches and supplement individual gifts. The Task Force is considering ways by which local congregations can assist in paying the costs of some Black Council activities.

B. *Leadership Development Seminar Committee*:

This Committee is charged with planning and implementing a series of seminars to equip Black members of Churches with skills necessary for assuming leadership roles. This Committee sponsored the first of its bi-monthly seminars on March 1, 1975. Its on-going focus will be on such areas as public speaking, Church government, parliamentary procedure and group dynamics. The seminar series will be implemented in the four geographical regions of the Black Council, and it is planned that a certificate will be awarded for completion of the series.

C. *Committee for the Colloquium on Black Religion*:

This Committee sponsored a Colloquium on Black Religion at New Brunswick Seminary on March 15, 1975. Its objective is to promote through an annual Colloquium, an understanding of the religious heritage of African people among RCA members. It is the contention of the Committee that this heritage does not find adequate expression in the RCA. This manner of crosscultural sharing is important if the RCA will look to the day when all people can *feel* welcome and an integral part of the Church's modern tradition.

D. *Seminary Consultative Group*:

This group of clergymen and lay-persons intend to consult with the seminaries on the issues of recruitment of Black students and of curriculum offerings that will be attractive to prospective Black ministers and Church leaders. Several meetings have been held, and more are planned during 1975.

At its January planning session, the Black Council received reports on each of the aforementioned areas of work, and authorized the conveners of these four groups

to continue their important assignments. The January meeting was attended by 22 of the 26 Black Council members. All other members offered written excuses for their absence.

Since the 1974 meeting of the General Synod, Black Council representatives have attended meetings of the Christian Action Commission, the Council on Youth Ministries, the National Conference on Black Churchmen, the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches, the General Program Council, and the IMPACT—Washington briefing. The Black Council's Executive Director continues to work in cooperation with other members of the RCA staff and the Council announces proudly that its Executive has been elected Chairperson of the Commission on Justice, Liberation and Human Fulfillment, the monitor of Third World Concerns in the National Council of Churches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-1. That this General Synod instruct the Board of Theological Education to take whatever action necessary to include the Annual Colloquium on Black Religion as a permanent part of the RCA's program of theological education; that ways and means be found within the General Synod budget to underwrite its costs; and that this Colloquium be presented each year in memory of the Rev. B. Moses James. (ADOPTED)

R-2. That the General Synod urge the Board of Theological Education to engage in conversation with the Black Council on curricula for inner-city ministries. (ADOPTED)

R-3. That the General Synod urge the GSEC to continue its conversations with the Black Council to lead to a Black Council representative's serving as a member of GSEC. (ADOPTED)

R-4. That the General Synod urge its Investment Committee to remain open to proposals from the Black Council on matters of investment policy. (ADOPTED)

AMERICAN INDIAN COUNCIL REPORT

The year of 1974 has been a fruitful one in the life of the American Indian Council, one for which we have cause to be proud as we review our goals and accomplishments. These achievements are very important to the life of Indian communicants and the Indian population in general. There is always a great spiritual awakening impact whenever we gather in fellowship to worship in host churches throughout our Indian communities.

At this point I must mention that the AIC has voted unanimously to thank you for assigning to us the Reverend Harold E. Brown. He has proven to be stable and courageous far in excess of his physical stature. We find him to be a true friend and an understanding advisor. We are well pleased and consider ourselves fortunate in having him with us.

Our fall session was held in the Comanche Reformed Church, Lawton, Oklahoma, October 24-27, 1974. The following highlights of the meeting are set forth for your enlightenment and as a glimpse of what sort of work is going on. Pastor and Mrs. Herman Van Galen and members of the Comanche Reformed Church were host to the AIC. The delegates and their pastors arrived in time for supper which was held in the church basement. With delegates and friends remaining after supper the session was called to order by Mr. Leeds Soatikee, Chairman. Mr. Phillip Narcomey, Elder of the Comanche Reformed Church, welcomed all present. Mrs. Dorothy Tomah read Scripture and Mr. Leeds Soatikee led in prayer. Response to the welcome was given by Mr. Soatikee by thanking the host church for their work and expressing his gratitude for all present. The Reverend Harold Brown introduced Mr. Don Jansma who was present in the area as special speaker for the Revival Service at Apache, Oklahoma. The Reverend Herman Van Galen explained the Scripture lesson read by Mrs. Tomah which was in reference to Paul on the Damascus road: "We are not to glory in the past, but to ever look forward. We are to reach for new goals. There is a challenge for all. As Christians we are to make a self evaluation. We all have a job to do."

The following reports from member Indian churches were presented:

Apache Reformed Church

The Reverend Andy Kamphuis, pastor of Apache Reformed Church, expressed his pleasure at being present. Mrs. Mildred Cleghorn reported that the Women's Guild of Apache Church was very busy quilting. Other activities of the church included a pancake supper, monthly prayer breakfast, young couple's night, pot luck suppers, Wednesday evening prayer meetings and Consistory prayer meetings before each Sunday morning worship service. Mrs. Cleghorn requested the prayers of all people. Mr. Soatikee spoke of the anticipated plans for remodeling the Apache Church which have also been presented to the Classis. At this date our dream has become a reality. A great big THANK YOU to our white friends and brethren the country over. PRAISE THE LORD! We are now awaiting the dedication celebration set for April 13. The church is happy for the participation of young children and is also in constant need of Church School teachers.

Comanche Reformed Church

Comanche Church reported increased activities in the last six months. Four new members have been received, baptisms have occurred, and dedication of new

homes and lives has taken place. A new sign has been installed and it is hoped that people will take more notice of the church and be attracted to it.

Mescalero Reformed Church

Mr. Berle Kanseah, a delegate, reported that more people are coming to church. They now have a new pastor, the Reverend Roger Bruggink, and are thankful to God for answered prayers. The Youth Group has been revived under the leadership of Mr. Bruggink. The Ladies Aid meets each Friday and they visit the home in Roswell, New Mexico, where elderly residents live. Evening services are held every other Sunday. Mrs. Dorcie Kazhe also reported that the church is thankful for its pastor and his family. He is an outgoing man and has established his friendship in the community. Mrs. Bruggink substitutes for the teachers in the school. The Youth Group has named its place "The Upper Room" and meets there for fun and fellowship. The offerings in the church have increased. Mrs. Lynette Kanseah said she has looked forward to representing her church at the AIC meeting. She reminded us that faith is not in the number of people who attend church but it is shown in the faithful who, by their love of Christ, are present on the Lord's Day. Mr. Bruggink commended those who have substituted in the absence of a pastor and expressed his thankfulness for all those who serve in the church.

Macy Reformed Church

From Macy, Nebraska, Mrs. Betsey Wolfe reported that she was very happy to be present. Through the AIC she has met many Christian people and has grown in Grace. She complimented the workers in Mescalero where she has made two visits. The Reverend Bill Vanden Berg is the new pastor at Macy Reformed. The mission at Macy is to "Lift Up Christ" recognizing that without His Church we are nothing. Mrs. Lillian Wolfe reported new interest shown as work goes on under the new minister. The hope is to win more people to Christ by reaching out into the community. Women of the church meet on Wednesday to distribute used clothing. There are five Sunday School classes as well as a young people's meeting and Bible classes. The congregation is thankful for its new pastor. Mr. Vanden Berg reported that there is never a dull moment in Macy. The church is in the middle of everything, an active place with plenty of potential. "I'm happy to be in Macy," he said. "Our aim is to preach Christ."

Winnebago Reformed Church

From Winnebago, Nebraska, Mrs. Geneva Ewing reported that, while hers is not a large community, there are many churches there. Winnebago Reformed is an open door church and everyone is welcome. Several programs are sponsored by the government, such as the halfway house for alcoholics. Faithful members tithe. The Reverend Wilbur DeCora often speaks at other churches and he and his family are very active. There are Church School classes for all ages and Mrs. DeCora works with the youth of the church. Vacation Church School is held in July. Other activities include sewing circles on Wednesdays and prayer meetings at homes including those of shut-ins. After being elected to Consistory, Mrs. Alice Porter was honored with a pot luck supper. "It humbled me," Mrs. Porter responded. "I am more eager than ever to do God's will." Alice reported that Mrs. DeCora took some young people to Toronto, Canada, to the Youth Convention. Mr. DeCora urged all of us to call upon God so that we may carry on our mission.

Jicarillo Reformed Church

From Dulce, New Mexico, the Reverend Russell Dykehouse reported that some delegates were not able to attend due to illness. Dulce Church is enjoying the services of a young man named Dirk who has come to work with the pastor and the church for one year. He recently accompanied the Youth Group to California. At present there are about 50 members and the Church School is growing. The Tribal Council has appointed Mr. Dykehouse to the Rehabilitation Board for Alcoholics. He covets the prayers of all people.

Synopsis of Remaining Portion of AIC Meeting

The Reverend Harold Brown reported that he has been in his present position as Secretary for American Indian Ministries for a year. He has found it very exciting and full of unusual experiences. At this point in time he has visited all the Indian churches except one. It was noted that so far there is no all-Indian Church Camp. With over 200 Indian churches this is a challenge we hope to meet. The AIC has a lot going; we cannot stand still.

Mr. Leeds Soatikee and Mrs. Mildred Cleghorn attended the meeting of the Task Force planning the Bicentennial Celebration held in Marble Collegiate Church, New York City, last June. While in New York City Mrs. Cleghorn attended services at Marble Collegiate and Mr. Soatikee worshipped in the Elmendorf Church where Dr. Donald DeYoung is pastor. Mr. Soatikee than proceeded to the General Synod meeting in Hempstead, Long Island where he presented the report of the AIC.

New officers of the AIC will be elected at our next meeting in May at Macy, Nebraska.

Dr. Robert P. Chaat was further honored by his appointment as Chaplain Emeritus of the AIC.

Mr. Leeds Soatikee journeyed to Schenectady, New York, last February at the invitation of Christian Youth Ministries conducted by the Northeastern Regional Center. This was an exploratory venture in search of new ideas to interest our youth in Christian service. We must become strong in faith to stand up against a strong movement of some Indians who advocate the idea that Christianity is a white man's religion and that God sanctions the Indian way of worship.

REPORT FROM THE HISPANIC COUNCIL

The Hispanic Leadership Development Program was organized primarily to serve the needs of the indigenous Hispanic Reformed Church members and to interpret the spiritual and socio-cultural ramifications of this ministry to the larger church.

To this end, the following projects and/or programs in 1974 and early 1975 were accomplished:

The First National Convention of Reformed Church Hispanics.

Held Nov. 15 and 16, 1974 at DeWitt Reformed Church in Manhattan. The Friday evening opening rally was well attended. As many as 65 persons from several areas across the United States were present for the workshops which were held all day Saturday.

This national convention helped to broaden the constituency of the Hispanic Council to include persons from Colorado, Florida, Michigan, and Iowa. The convention also served to develop a sense of teamwork and a renewed commitment among RCA Hispanics. It was a great time of fellowship, inspiration, and challenge.

Publication of the COMISION Y MISION, a book on evangelism by the Reverend Alberto Espada-Matta.

The book explains the motivations, methods, strategies, and challenges of evangelism in a Latin American cultural context. The book is being distributed to pastors and lay leaders in the Reformed Church and in other denominations. The book *COMISION Y MISION* has been received very favorably. Hopefully, its impact will be felt in local congregations as pastors become better equipped and motivated for evangelistic efforts.

Evangelism Workshop on October 25 & 26, 1974.

Hispanic pastors and lay leaders gathered together for an evangelism retreat at Bethel Reformed Church in Passaic, New Jersey. The book *COMISION Y MISION* was used as a basis for discussions and study. Topics for study were: 1) The Significance of Evangelism, 2) The Motivation for Evangelism, and 3) Evangelism in a Latin American context. Both pastors and lay leaders acquired much expertise which they could put to work in their local congregations.

Youth Retreat.

On January 3-5, 1975, the Hispanic Council sponsored a youth retreat at Camp Champion in Glen Spey, New York. For the first time in the history of Hispanic Reformed Churches, their youth came together for a time of spiritual renewal, fellowship, and recreation. The retreat was a great success—80 young people attended, the majority of whom were Hispanic although there were many Black and White youth present as well.

The program consisted of rallies, leadership workshops, and recreational activities. The two speakers for this event were Rev. Raymond Rivera, President of the Hispanic Council and Rev. Don Wilkerson, Executive Director of Teen Challenge, Inc. in New York.

For all youth who attended, the retreat was an opportunity for renewed spiritual commitment to Christ and His Church. For Hispanic youth in particular, the retreat promoted a feeling of oneness and commonality. One young girl said, "This has been one of the most enriching and exciting experiences of my life."

Publication of the HISPANIC COUNCIL MAGAZINE.

In 1974 the Hispanic Council published 2 issues of a magazine which served as a vehicle of expression and communication to the RCA Hispanic churches and to the RCA in general. Through the magazine both English and Spanish congregations are kept informed of the work of the Hispanic Council and of the activities of individual Hispanic churches. The second edition was bi-lingual. The council feels that the magazine contributes to a feeling of unity and oneness among Hispanic congregations and also promotes understanding of Hispanic culture and activities to the denomination at large.

Bible donation.

In support of the RCA Hispanic Council ministry through the Reverend J. Velez-Ramirez 125 Spanish Bibles were donated to the Holiday Inn in Lake Placid, Florida. Rev. Velez-Ramirez serves as a chaplain to the Holiday Inn.

Anniversary Banquet.

The Hispanic Council celebrated its first anniversary as an organization at the Statler Hilton Hotel in New York City on Saturday evening, February 15, 1975. A number of outstanding Christian leaders from the New York Metropolitan area plus key political leaders from New York City were invited to participate in a spirit of praise and celebration in what God has done through His church and in the Hispanic Christian community. Representatives from the mayor's office who spoke were Thomas J. Cuite, majority leader and vice-chairman of the Council of the City of New York, and the honorable Joseph Erazo, deputy mayor of the City of New York. A letter from Mayor Beame was read. The letter congratulated the Hispanic Council and recognized its work not only in the spiritual realm but also in the social, political, and cultural dimensions of the Hispanic community's life in the city. One of the political leaders present at the banquet pointed out that in inner-city areas where there is a large Hispanic population often the church is the only viable organization still in existence and any positive social changes would have to start with the church.

Youth Rally.

On March 15, 1975 the Hispanic Council served as sponsors of an inter-church, inter-denominational Youth Rally at Marble Collegiate Church. Highlighting the event was the Rev. Victor Torres, well-known youth speaker and author of the book *SON OF EVIL STREET.*

Women's Union of the Hispanic Council.

The Women's Union of the Hispanic Council was organized at the First National Convention of RCA Hispanics. This Union will be having their first Women's Spiritual Retreat in Passaic, New Jersey on May 2nd and 3rd. They will be entertaining women delegates visiting Reformed Church Women in the United States at that time. The theme for the retreat is "Women Created in God's Image". There will be outstanding women speakers at the retreat.

Dharma Seda, President of the Women's Union of the Hispanic Council has translated into Spanish two of the Bible Studies from the RCW portfolio for use by Hispanic Women organizations in Hispanic churches. These have already been mailed to them. She is also translating the other Bible studies into Spanish. The Union is encouraging Hispanic women to support the mission work of RCW.

In addition to the specific projects and programs described previously, the Hispanic ministers, on behalf of the Hispanic Council have been traveling to various parts of the United States to inform congregations, classes, synods, seminaries and colleges about the RCA Hispanic work and to serve as consultants to these groups. The Hispanic Council has also sent representatives to all GPC meetings, special mission conferences, and to many national and regional committee meetings. The Council has also sought to encourage Hispanic work in other areas of the country particularly where Reformed Churches are found in the midst of Hispanic populations.

CONCLUSION

Many times in the past the Reformed Church in America has had to make important decisions and looking back on them now we can see that they launched the church into a new future. We feel that again the church is at such a crossroad. God has opened a new door. The Hispanic Council invites the whole church to accept the responsibilities presented by this new frontier and with God's help serve the highest interests of the Kingdom of Christ by together educating, encouraging and inspiring the entire Reformed Church in America that all may share in the joys and struggles of this new day in our denomination.

R-1. That the General Synod urge the General Program Council and the General Synod Executive Committee to begin conversations about Hispanic Council representation on both church bodies. (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 8

PUBLICATIONS

REPORT OF THE EDITORIAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH HERALD

Dr. Louis Benes began his report to our Editorial Council with these words: "There is something quite unreal about this last report." And so there is something quite unreal about this report to the General Synod. For the first time in 29 years the *Church Herald* makes its report with someone other than Louis Benes as its editor. Many of us, in the years of our adult participation in the church, have not known another editor. We have sometimes disagreed with this man, more often agreed with his written opinions and insights, but have always loved and respected him as a man of firm conviction and yet of fine sensitivity. He received many plaudits as he retired at the close of 1974. The greatest praise, however, is seen in the record of the paper, in its growth in number of subscribers and its influence within and without the church. The record speaks for itself.

The retirement of such a notable leader as Dr. Benes might well leave the Editorial Council of the *Church Herald* apprehensive about the future. Such is not the case. Rather we are excited, confident, eager to get on with the work. We believe that we have, in the person of Dr. John Stapert, able, dynamic, and talented leadership. In the few short months he has been our editor he has gained our full confidence and inspired our enthusiasm. We are grateful to God for granting strong and capable leadership to follow strong and capable leadership. As Dr. Stapert grows in experience and expertise we are certain our confidence in him and his work will be shared by all of you.

These are not easy days for a new editor to assume leadership. The circulation of the paper dropped in 1974 for the fifth consecutive year. Our highest increases in costs for postage, paper, and rent were recorded. Per page costs increased from $291.13 to $381.61. We recorded a deficit of $26,410, $7,490 more than the deficit anticipated. Paper costs alone were $6,750 more than projected. Inflation left its mark upon us in heavy red ink. We are grateful that General Synod had raised its appropriation to the *Church Herald* from $14,000 to $25,000 for 1975. With that increase the fiscal picture this year should be less bleak.

Yet there was some cause for encouragement. The price of paper seems to have stabilized somewhat. Congress has slowed the scheduled rate of postage increases for publications, a rate still radical enough to threaten many magazines with the necessity of stopping their presses in the not too distant future. Our circulation dropped by only 150 subscriptions despite the fact that we reduced the number of issues from 45 to 26 per year. Though the cost per subscription went up by 25¢ on the first of the year our readership remained faithful to the paper.

Despite all the problems, the *Church Herald* continues to do an excellent job in witnessing to the faith and interpreting the mission of the church. On its 832 pages, sent to 74,485 subscribers this past year articles appeared on Biblical themes, the Christian life, issues before the church, and social concerns. There were also such regular features as the editorials, the Children's Page, Religion in the News, Focus on the World, In My Opinion, and The Whole Picture. The program and the mission of the Reformed Church was presented in special articles and on

advertisements purchased at cost. Perhaps an indication of the effectiveness of these presentations may be seen in the fact that the General Program Council received over $145,000 last year in direct response to the coupons printed on their pages in the *Church Herald.* We feel that the paper, by God's grace, is doing a job for the Kingdom, and deserves the support and the reading of the membership of the Reformed Church.

The Editorial Council is very pleased with the *Church Herald* staff. We believe our staff to be competent, conscientious and committed. The staff assembled by Dr. Benes has remained to work with Dr. Stapert, and we are grateful for that. Will you continue to join with us in faithful prayer for them as they fulfill their ministry through the *Church Herald?* We particularly ask for your prayers for Dr. Stapert as he develops his plans for the paper.

The Editorial Council presents the following recommendations to the General Synod:

R-1. That because the purpose of the Church Herald **is to publicize and to promote the total witness and mission of the Reformed Church in America, and because through its articles and features it tries to show the relevance of the Gospel to everyday life, and to encourage readers to greater faith and more complete obedience to Jesus Christ, the General Synod urge every congregation to subscribe to the** Church Herald **on the Every Family Plan, making use of the special One-Year Introductory Offer.** (ADOPTED)

R-2. That the General Synod, through its various boards and agencies, continue to use the Church Herald **as its primary means of communication with the constituency of the Reformed Church in America.** (ADOPTED)

R-3. That the General Synod urge all of its congregations to encourage the reading and discussion of articles appearing in the Church Herald **and use the paper as an evangelistic instrument by sending it to students, military personnel, prospective members, business and professional offices, hospitals and other institutions.** (ADOPTED)

R-4. That the expiration of the first terms of Robert Dykstra and David Hondorp, and the second term of Arlene Owen, and the expiration of the partial first terms of Betty Reeverts, Tom Stark and Marie Walvoord be referred to the Nominations Committee. (ADOPTED)

R-5. That the Editor and the staff of the Church Herald **be commended for their competence and their dedication which is evidenced by the quality and attractiveness of the magazine and the interesting and relevant articles.** (ADOPTED)

R-6. That pending the adoption of these recommendations, the Editor be heard. (ADOPTED)

Dr. John Stapert, Editor, addressed General Synod. Dr. Louis H. Benes, Sr. former editor, was recognized. It was announced that the Rev. Leroy G. Koopman will succeed Mr. Thomas Bast, on the staff of the *Church Herald.*

ARTICLE 9

OVERTURES—1975

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OVERTURES TO GENERAL SYNOD, 1975
REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES

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

Due Date for General Synod Assessments

1. **Classis of Mid-Hudson respectfully overtures the General Synod to affirmatively consider changing the time when assessments fall due to General Synod, allowing for a three payment plan: namely, the first ⅓ due on March 31, the second ⅓ due on June 30th, and the third on September 10th of each year.**

   Reasons:

   1. Each Church receives its funds from its weekly offerings. To expect it to pay its assessments in one lump sum is not reasonable from a fiscal standpoint.
   2. The three payment system will reduce the burden of assessments upon the local church by allowing budgeting at stated intervals.
   3. Since General Synod expenses do not occur at one particular date, it will adequately meet their budget needs as well as the present system with some adjustments in view of the Annual Meeting.
   4. To expect the full assessment to be paid the first third of the year is unrealistic. This year at this date, our Classis has $30,000.00 still outstanding as a real example of this problem.
   5. This problem, which could be tolerated in days past, has been compounded by the addition of numerous "benevolences" of the General and Particular Synods.

We RECOMMEND that the principle of Overture 1 of the Classis of Mid-Hudson be approved; and that assessments fall due for General Synod, allowing for a three payment plan: the first 1/3 due on March 31, the second 1/3 due on May 15, and the third on September 30th of each year. (ADOPTED)

Infant Baptism for Communicant Member

2. **The Classis of Orange overtures the General Synod to amend the** Book of Church Order, **Chapter 1, Part I, Article 5, Section 2a, adding the following as a second sentence: "They shall consider requests for infant baptism, providing at least one parent or guardian is a communicant member of the Christian Church."**

   Reasons:

   1. Baptism is one of the sacraments of the Church and should properly come under the jurisdiction of the Board of Elders.
   2. Our *Liturgy* already states that one of the parents or guardians should be a communicant member of the Christian Church, and this officially places it in the *Book of Church Order*.

The Committee RECOMMENDS amending the Book of Church Order, **Chapter 1, Part 1, Article 5, Section 2a, adding the following as a second sentence: "They shall consider requests for infant baptism, providing at least one parent or guardian is a communicant member of a Christian Church" and that it be referred to the Editorial Committee of the** Church Government. (ADOPTED)

Assessment for the Board of Theological Education

3. **The Classis of New Brunswick overtures General Synod to include in the Budget of General Synod and its Assessments, beginning in 1976, the cost of the operation of the Board of Theological Education.**

   Reasons:

   1. The Board of Theological Education which is charged with the responsibility of Theological Education in the Reformed Church in America and the Seminaries of the church (Western Theological Seminary and New Brunswick Theological Seminary) serves the whole church.

   2. Further, The Board of Theological Education presently must use monies contributed by the churches as Benevolence to function and operate as a Board.

   3. Since the Board of Theological Education is elected by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America and is responsible to the General Synod, it follows that the cost of the operation and function of said Board should be borne by the General Synod Assessment and not by Benevolence contributions. Thus, the whole church would directly support the Board of Theological Education.

4. **The Classis of Holland overtures General Synod to include in the Budget of General Synod and its Assessments, beginning in 1976, the cost of the operation of the Board of Theological Education.**

   Reasons:

   1. The Board of Theological Education which is charged with the responsibility of Theological Education in the Reformed Church in America and the Seminaries of the church (Western Theological Seminary and New Brunswick Theological Seminary) serves the whole church.

   2. Further, The Board of Theological Education presently must use monies contributed by the churches as Benevolence to function and operate as a Board.

   3. Since the Board of Theological Education is elected by the General Synod the Reformed Church in America is responsible to the General Synod, it follows that the cost of the operation and function of said Board should be borne by the General Synod Assessment and not by Benevolence contributions. Thus, the whole church would directly support the Board of Theological Education.

The Committee RECOMMENDS that the cost of the operation of the Board of Theological Education be included in the budget of General Synod and its Assessments and that this budget be referred to the General Synod Executive Committee for implementation. (ADOPTED)

Pastor-Church Relationships

5. **The Classis of Holland is aware that increasingly church/pastor relationships are being terminated in our denomination without constitutional authority or guidance, therefore, we submit the following overture for General Synod.**

   1. **Whereas the tenure of the minister in the parish is of such a permanent nature that congregations are now moving to what seems to be extra-constitutional means to terminate such relationships;**

   2. **And whereas most problems of pastoral relationships are not due to doctrine and morals but to inadequate function and unproductive or divisive relationships;**

   3. **And whereas the present means of terminating a relationship is weighed to the benefit of the pastor as opposed to the church organization;**

   4. **And whereas there is no widely-recognized provision for a performance evaluation for either the pastor or the church;**

   5. **And whereas in current practice the role of the Classis appears to be limited to judicial and appellate functions;**

   6. **Therefore, we recommend that the General Synod modify the** Book of Church Order:

      a. **To give better clarity to a pastor's lines of accountability to his consistory, board of elders and Classis;**

      b. **To legitimitize the intervention by a Classis in fostering healing in a deteriorating relationship;**

      c. **To clarify grounds for termination of a relationship requested by a consistory but not concurred in by the pastor. (BCO, Part II, Art. 10, Sec. 9)**

      d. **To better define whether "the superintendence of the churches" (BCO, Part II, Art. 7) includes active continuing superintendence or is limited to an appellate role.**

We RECOMMEND no action because this matter was referred by the 1974 General Synod to the Church Government Committee who have reported their recommendation that the Book of Church Order **needs no amendment to achieve the intent of this overture.** (ADOPTED)

Board of Elders Inquiry

6. **The Classis of South Grand Rapids overtures the General Synod to amend the** Book of Church Order, **Chapter 1, Part I, Article 5, Section 4: "The Board of Elders shall make a faithful and solemn inquiry at least four times a year,** before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, **to ascertain whether any members of the congregation** have departed from the faith or have behaved unworthily of their Christian profession **and are in need of special help regarding their spiritual condition.** They **shall provide Christian ministry** and/or discipline **to such persons** according to their need."

Reason:

The primary purpose of making the above inquiry is to exercise Christian discipline according to the Word of God. The supervision of the spiritual condition of the congregation is a constant privilege and responsibility of the Board of Elders.

We RECOMMEND no action as the intent of the overture is covered by Part 1, Article 5, Section 3 regarding the Board of Elders' responsibility for discipline. (ADOPTED)

Clarify Communicant and Non-Communicant

7. **The Classis of Rochester overtures General Synod to clarify the terms "communicant" and "non-communicant" members regarding removal of names from membership roll.**

(See Chapter 1, Part I, Article 5, Section 2, Para. d, the *Book of Church Order*.)

Reasons:

1. The terms "faithful" and "extenuating circumstances" are too subjective and general to serve as a practical guide in determining member status.
2. The term "hearing of the Word" is not understood to mean the same thing to all ministers, elders and churches.
3. There is no uniformity among the churches as to the exact criteria for classification.
4. Within a given Classis many churches do not follow the procedure as presently set forth—generally for good and valid reasons.
5. Conscientious attempts within the local church to carry out present procedure are misunderstood by the congregation and in the end only serve to be divisive and harmful to the unity and life of the church.
6. Within a local Board of Elders it is generally impossible to agree on a working set of criteria as to what constitutes "faithful use of the means of grace".
7. The terms "active" and "inactive" have ceased to be useful as statistical data.
8. Assessments would be more equitable since the present system reduces the total payment from churches which are more strict in their obedience to, and their interpretation of, this section.
9. Removing these two classifications would bring the basis for Classis delegation size into line with the basis for General Synod delegation size. (See Part IV, Article 1, Section 1)
10. In many churches an honest classification results in such a large number of "inactive" that it is beyond the capability of the elders to deal with them as presently required.

We RECOMMEND no action because the present statement in Part 1, Article 5, Section 2, Para. d is sufficiently clear on this matter, and that the determination of "communicant" and "non-communicant" be the responsibility and prerogative of the local Board of Elders. (ADOPTED)

Provisional Ministerial Membership

8. **The Classis of Rochester overtures General Synod to amend the** Book of Church Order **to provide for provisional membership in Classis of a minister from another denomination who is serving as pastor of a Reformed Church congregation in an approved cooperative parish. (Part II, Article 10, addition.)**

   Reasons:

   1. A Reformed Church in an approved cooperative parish, served by a minister of another denomination, does not have ministerial representation at Classis.
   2. Reformed Church ministers, when serving a cooperative parish with a Presbyterian and Reformed Church, have been granted provisional membership in the Presbytery, including voting privileges.
   3. Presbyterian ministers, serving the same cooperative parish, have been recognized as pastors of the Reformed Church, but listed as Stated Supply, are seated as corresponding members of Classis, without voting privileges.
   4. The Presbyterian minister is expected to promote the causes and carry out decisions of Classis without the right to vote on same.

Your Committee endorses the intent of the Classis of Rochester to amend the Book of Church Order **to provide for provisional membership in Classis of a minister from another denomination who is serving as pastor of a Reformed Church congregation in an approved cooperative parish and therefore RECOMMENDS the following change in Part II, Article 7, Section 8 as follows: "The Classis shall be asked to approve the request of two or more churches to call a minister to serve them jointly.** This relationship may be approved only if his ordination meets the requirements of the Reformed Church in America Book of Church Order, Part II, Article 10, Section 8. **This relationship shall be terminated only by action of Classis.** When such a minister comes from a denomination which affords ministers of our denomination the right to vote at its judicatories, we shall afford him the same voting privileges at ours." **We further recommend that this be referred to the Editorial Committee for editing.** (ADOPTED) (See page 161.)

Form for Transfer of Church Membership

9. **The Classis of West Sioux overtures General Synod to change the form for the Certificate of Transfer of Church Members to include blanks for dates of birth, baptism, confession-of-faith and wedding for the communicant members.**

   Reasons:

   1. Dates are important items for the records.
   2. When the form has no blanks for them they are often not transmitted from one congregation to another.

The Committee approves the intent of West Sioux Classis to change the form for the Certificate of Transfer of Church Members to include blanks for dates of birth, baptism, confession of faith, and wedding and therefore RECOMMENDS that Synod authorize the change. (ADOPTED)

Pastoral Assignment

10. The Classis of West Sioux overtures General Synod to institute a study of the matter of formulating a plan whereby pastors can be assigned to other congregations when either the pastor or congregation seeks a change.

Reasons:

1. Increased number of seminary students being graduated each year.
2. No longer sufficient vacant churches to keep a normal amount of movement of pastors from one church to another.
3. An increase of movement of pastors from one church to another could be of blessing to pastors and congregations alike.

The Committee agrees with the sentiment of the West Sioux Classis to institute a study of the matter of formulating a plan whereby pastors can be assigned to other congregations when either the pastor or congregation seeks a change and therefore RECOMMENDS that the General Synod instruct the General Synod Executive Committee to appoint a special committee to make a study of the matter and report to the next General Synod meeting. (ADOPTED)

Clarification of Suspension

11. The Classis of Illiana overtures General Synod to instruct the Church Government Committee concerning the need for clarification of what is meant by "suspension" in the section on Discipline in the Book of Church Order.

(See Chapter 2, Part I, Article III of the *Book of Church Order.*)

The Classis of Illiana asks for clarification of what is meant by "suspension" in the section on discipline in the Book of Church Order. **The Committee feels that the word has been dealt with in the revision as approved by the General Synod of 1974 (Minutes of General Synod, p. 194, IV) and ratified by the Classes in such a way as to make the meaning self-explanatory and therefore RECOMMENDS no action.** (ADOPTED)

Salary Supplement through C.A.F.

12. The Classis of Rochester overtures General Synod to study the feasibility of raising the Pension Fund payments from 11 percent to 12 percent. We recommend this 1 percent increase be used, in a separate and distinct account, for the purpose of assisting churches who request salary supplements.

Reasons:

1. We have smaller churches that are finding it very difficult to maintain the minimum salary.
2. Other denominations such as the American Baptists have been able to meet this problem with a special fund of 1% assessments on Pension Payments.

3. Our Pension Payments are lower than some other denominations; therefore, the additional 1% should not create hardship on churches.

4. Frequently, the resources of a single Classis might not be adequate to handle this, but on a denominational basis it might be feasible.

5. Many smaller churches unable to support full time ministers have been turning to other arrangements, some of which may be less desirable, such as part time ministerial help. If they had some help in maintaining a full time minister, this in turn might be adequate to strengthen the church to be self-supporting.

We recognize that this is a serious matter for a number of churches. However, we question the wisdom of using the method of adding a percentage assessment to the Pension Fund payment since this would be a confusion of Pension Fund monies. Therefore, we RECOMMEND no action. (ADOPTED)

Day of Prayer for Crops and Industry

13. The Classis of Zeeland overtures the General Synod to consult with the Christian Reformed Church on the possibility of setting a common day of Prayer for Crops and Industry.

Reasons:

1. There is merit in a unified expression of prayer by both denominations particularly as we find ourselves working in the same geographical areas.

2. A common day of Prayer for Crops and Industry would give concrete expression to the cooperative efforts which are being sought through conversation with our Christian Reformed brothers and sisters.

3. We question the advisability of the practice now being followed which sets the Day of Prayer for Crops and Industry and the World Day of Prayer so close together.

4. This note of suggestion is added to the overture if it is considered affirmatively by Synod. To those given the responsibility of researching a common day between the two denominations, we ask that they consider a later date which would more nearly coincide with "seed time."

Because of the reasons given in support of this overture and since we presently are in conversation with the Christian Reformed Church through the Interchurch Relations Committee, we look with favor upon this overture and RECOMMEND that it be referred to the Interchurch Relations Committee for implementation. (ADOPTED)

Clarification on Tent-Maker Ministry

14. The Classis of Columbia-Greene overtures the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America that the Book of Church Order **be clarified and amended pertaining to Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 2—"The classis shall install a minister of the Word each time he enters a form of ministry appropriate to the office (see Art. 9, Sec. 4 above)."**

so that—

the "tent-maker" ministry may be defined and included as concerning a minister of the Word duly installed and under the full jurisdiction of the classis by the signing of the "Declaration for Ministers".

Reasons:

1. That the term "tent-maker" questions the local church's responsibility in temporal matters, i.e. pension fund, etc.
2. That the relationship between a church and its "tent-maker" pastor may have a stronger spiritual relationship with greater dignity being attracted to both parties as well as to the classis which hold jurisdiction over the relationship.
3. That the church which can not realistically afford a "full-time" minister may be affirmed in having a valid ministry and witness with in its community.
4. That a "tent-maker" ministry fulfills the requirements of Art. 9, Sec. 4 as an occupation requiring theological education, being performed under the jurisdiction of the RCA, and is aimed at the edification and equipment of Christians for their ministry in the world.
5. That our Reformed Church examine the implications of the term "call to the ministry", i.e. Apostle Paul.

The 1974 General Synod approved an overture from the Classis of Pleasant Prairie for the insertion of additional words in the Book of Church Order, **Chapter I, Part II, Article 9, Section 4. This was approved by General Synod and sent to the Classes which approved the insertion of the additional words.**

The Theological Commission's report of the nature of the ministry (Minutes of General Synod, **1968, pages 185, 190) defines the Ministry of the Word as a function and not as an office. Since the prerogative for determining specific cases belongs to the Classis and since the** Book of Church Order **provides a broad guideline consistent with the statement on the nature of ministry, we RECOMMEND no action.** (ADOPTED)

Addition to Liturgy for Lord's Supper

15. The Classis West Central overtures the General Synod to instruct the Committee on Worship, in its "issuing a periodical publication of liturgical suggestions" (Pg. 210, 1974 G. S. Minutes), to prepare a liturgy for the celebration of the Lord's Supper that will include the elements of the present order found under the heading "The Meaning of the Sacrament," both I and II, on pages 63 and 65 of the Liturgy and Psalms, **and also the words that begin "That we may now be fed with the true heavenly bread, Christ Jesus" and end with "as we receive the holy bread and wine in remembrance of him," found in an Alternate Order on page 91 of the same** Liturgy and Psalms.

Reasons:

1. The words that we request to be restored to the place they held in the Order for many years, namely that we "lift up our hearts *on high in* heaven, where Christ Jesus is our Advocate, etc.," are based on Scripture that is central to a biblical understanding of the Gospel. The following

are a few relevant passages: Colossians 3:2, "Set your minds on things that are above . . . for your life is hid with Christ in God." 2 Corinthians 4:18, "We look not to things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen." Philippians 3:20, "Our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Hebrews 11:16, "But they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city." Hebrews 12:2, "Looking to Jesus . . . who is seated at the right hand of God." Acts 2:32, "This Jesus God raised up . . . being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, etc." I Peter 3:22, "Jesus has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers subject to him."

2. These words have held an honored place in the Order for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Reformed Church in America for many years and ought not to be removed without convincing biblical and theological explanation to the church.

3. The Liturgy Committee itself in its report to General Synod in 1973 responded to "questions placed before us by the General Synod," one of which related to celebrating communion more than four times a year. In reply, the Committee recommended "That they be encouraged to do so, provided that such services include the *Sursum Corda,* etc." (Pg. 202, 1973 G. S. Minutes).

4. The *Sursum Corda,* which is mentioned in the Liturgy Committee 1973 Report, is this call to "Lift up your hearts" that is included in the words which we request to be reinstated. We do not believe that it is accurate to introduce the communion prayer with the words, "Let us lift up our hearts unto the Lord!" and then describe the communion prayer as the *Sursum Corda.* Neither do we believe that it is accurate to describe the Meaning of the Sacrament, either I or II on pages 63 and 65 of the *Liturgy and Psalms* as the *Sursum Corda,* simply by calling them, as the Chairman of the Liturgy Committee does in the 1973 report, "the lifting up of our hearts to Christ in remembrance, communion and hope." (Pg. 202, 1973 G. S. Minutes).

5. The Reformation liturgies included the *Sursum Corda* as an integral part of the Order for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper and we feel that it is an important theological and historical contribution that the Reformed churches have to make in today's ecumenical climate. James Hastings Nichols, in his *"Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition"* says, "They (the Reformation liturgies) did stress communion in the Spirit with the ascended Christ as the aim of the 'Lift up your hearts.' There was usually a polemic reference criticizing the focusing of devotion on the physical objects on the table, and then a summons to address ourselves to the reigning Lord of life." (Pg. 48). In the *Heidelberg Catechism,* Question 80, we are taught "The Lord's Supper testifies . . . that through the Holy Spirit we are incorporated into Christ, who is now in heaven with his true body at the right hand of the Father and is there to be worshipped."

6. Today's climate of sentimentality and religious subjectivity needs the cor-

rective that the use of the *Sursum Corda* gives. We need to have our faith centered not so much on what happens inside ourselves, but on the one who died, was buried, rose again, and ascended for us.

We RECOMMEND that this overture be referred to the Committee on Worship for its consideration and that it report back to the General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Licensure/Ordination of Joyce Stedge

16. We, the Particular Synod of Michigan, respectfully overture the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America to declare the granting of the dispensation from the professorial certificate to Joyce Stedge, and her subsequent licensure and ordination as a minister of the Word and her installation as pastor of the Accord Reformed Church, Accord, New York, null and void.

Reasons:

1. The *Book of Church Order* has by custom and practice excluded the ordination of women.

2. The interpretation of the President and Stated Clerk on this issue was ambiguous and ill-advised (see *Church Herald,* July 13, 1973). The granting of the dispensation from the professorial certificate was ill-advised because the *Book of Church Order* makes no provision for licensure, ordination and installation of a woman as minister of the Word in the Reformed Church in America.

   a. That this is commonly accepted as fact was indicated by the action of General Synod in sending to the various classes, for their approval or disapproval, a change in the *Book of Church Order* which would permit the licensure and ordination of women to the ministry of the Word in the Reformed Church in America.

      The very fact that such change was being submitted to the classes makes it evident that a woman cannot be licensed and ordained to the ministry of the Word at the present time.

3. The foregoing infraction of the *Book of Church Order,* if allowed to remain valid and go uncensored, may encourage further infractions of the *Book of Church Order* with resultant erosion of sound principles of Church government and discipline.

The Committee RECOMMENDS no action. (ADOPTED)

A motion was made from the floor and seconded to adopt the Review Committee's recommendation on Overture 16.

VOTED: **That the vote on the Review Committee's recommendation on Overture 16 be taken by secret ballot.**

A motion was made and seconded that action on Overture 16 be postponed until after Overture 21 has been dealt with. The motion was DEFEATED.

VOTED: **To call for the previous question.**

VOTED: **To adopt the Review Committee's recommendation on Overture 16. (158 votes cast in favor; 97 votes cast against)**

Contributions to NCC/WCC Voluntary

17. The Particular Synod of Chicago overtures the General Synod maintain support of the National Council of Churches only by voluntary contributions of an individual member or church.

Reasons:

1. Support on basis of voluntary contributions by individual church and members would allow each church to exercise their Christian liberty of Freedom of Conscience.

2. The *Acts and Procedures* of the General Synod of 1974, Volume LIV, Pg. 182, states "Items 38 and 39 (National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches) are not included in the 1975 assessment on the classes. The General Synod Executive Committee will use other sources of funds for these payments such as interest earned on synodical accounts, endowment income, fund balances and special gifts." Therefore, the church is in reality making the payments.

The Committee RECOMMENDS approval for Reason 1. (NO ACTION)

The Chair ruled the recommendation of the Review Committee on Overture 17 out of order on the basis of the previous General Synod action on R-5 of the Report of the Review Committee on Interchurch Relations.

Book of Church Order *Amendments Every Third Year*

18. The Particular Synod of Chicago RECOMMENDS that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America amend its Book of Church Order **that any and all changes in the** Book of Church Order **will only be considered every third year.**

Reason:

Constant consideration of changes in the *Book of Church Order* causes a feeling of instability and uncertainty within the church.

The Committee RECOMMENDS no action. (ADOPTED)

Minority Representation on G.S.E.C.

19. The Particular Synod of New Jersey overtures the General Synod:

To Provide for Minority Representation on the General Synod Executive Committee.

Reasons:

1. The present make-up of G.S.E.C. does not take into account the various minority groups that are present in the membership of the Reformed Church in America.

2. The minority groups play a very important role in the life of the R.C.A. and should have a voice on a committee whose responsibilities include: the implementation of General Synod decisions and policies, the support and correlation of the work of the several boards, institutions and agencies of the R.C.A., and the increase of the effectiveness of the mission and witness of the church.

The Committee RECOMMENDS that General Synod shall work toward minority representation on the General Synod Executive Committee. Representation shall be encouraged through Particular Synod nomination and representation shall be sought through the appointment of members-at-large as vacancies occur. (ADOPTED)

Women on GPC and GSEC

20. The Particular Synod of New Jersey overtures the General Synod:

To provide for a larger representation of women on the General Program Council and on the General Synod Executive Committee.

Reason:

Many years ago there existed in the Reformed Church a Woman's Board of Domestic Missions and Synod's Board of Domestic Missions, a Woman's Board of Foreign Missions and Synod's Board of Foreign Missions. When the two boards of Domestic Missions were merged and when the two boards of Foreign Missions were merged, provisions were made for proportionate representation of women on these boards. When these boards were absorbed into the General Program Council, no provision was made for a specific quota to assure that women would receive proportionate representation. The result has been that proportionately fewer women are serving on the General Program Council than formerly served on the Mission Boards. The number fluctuates from year to year.

The Committee RECOMMENDS no action because to do so would involve changing or altering the method by which members are seated in these positions. Presently they are elected by the Classes and Particular Synods. Implementation of this overture would require some other means to provide these seatings. (ADOPTED)

Interpretation of "Persons"

21. The Particular Synod of New Jersey overtures the General Synod:

To instruct the Committee on Church Government to interpret the word "Persons" in Part 1, Article 1, Section 3, of the Book of Church Order, **as elsewhere in the same, and in common usage, to mean both men and women.**

Reasons:

1. It eliminates ambiguous use of the word "persons" in the *Book of Church Order.*

2. It appears to be in keeping with the original intent of the *Book of Church Order.*

3. It is consistent with the report of the Committee on the Ordination of Women adopted by the General Synod of 1958 which found no theological reason to bar women from ordination to the ministry.

The Committee RECOMMENDS approval of the overture. (NO ACTION)

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the Review Committee's recommendation on Overture 21.

The Chair ruled that this motion is out of order because of the action taken by General Synod to adopt R-8 of the Review Committee on Theological Education.

The ruling of the Chair was appealed.

Following an oral vote to sustain the ruling of the Chair, the Chair declared the motion carried. A division of the house was called. The vote was 178 in favor of the motion and 71 against. The ruling of the Chair was sustained and *the recommendation of the Review Committee on Overture 21 was declared out of order.*

Drop Constitutional Inquiries from P.S. Minutes

22. The Particular Synod of New Jersey overtures the General Synod:

To drop the requirement of having the replies to the Constitutional inquiries reported in Tabular **form to the Particular Synods by the classes.**

Reasons:

1. The *tabular* format no longer provides a useful purpose.
2. The information was not even published in the 1974 *Minutes of the General Synod.*

The Committee RECOMMENDS no action because the Book of Church Order **does not require a report in** tabular **form.** (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 10

SYNODICAL MINUTES

See General Synod Executive Committee Supplementary Report (Pg. 117) for review of Synodical Minutes.

ARTICLE 11

JUDICIAL BUSINESS

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL BUSINESS

No report.

ARTICLE 12

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

In this connection, the General Synod Executive Committee met on October 16-17, 1974; February 5-6, 1975; April 9-10, 1975 and is scheduled to meet during the sessions of the 1975 General Synod. The 1971 General Synod adopted a recommendation that the General Synod Executive Committee serve as a Committee of Reference during future sessions of Gentral Synod. (MGS, 1971, p. 128)

A. REFERRALS FROM GENERAL SYNOD 1974

1. *Alternatives to Abortion* (MGS, 1971, p. 101)

The 1974 General Synod adopted an overture from the Classis of South Grand Rapids to "review ways in which RCA programs and agencies can aid in providing alternatives to abortion" and referred this matter to the GSEC for implementation. At its October 1974 meeting the GSEC took the following action:

> "It was moved, and seconded and CARRIED that the Editor of *the Church Herald* be encouraged to continue to feature articles on programs and agencies providing alternatives to abortion; and further,
>
> To request the Christian Action Commission to assist in reviewing ways in which RCA programs, personnel, and agencies can assist in publicizing, encouraging, and, if possible, assisting financially in providing alternatives to abortion, and to make a progress report to the April GSEC meeting; and further,
>
> We suggest that President Raymond Rewerts convey to the Christian Action Commission at its October 21, 22, 1974 meeting the discussion held at GSEC and explore with the CAC ways of dealing with the concerns over abortion."

It was reported to the GSEC at its April 1975 meeting that the Commission

had appointed a sub-committee to study how the RCA could "provide alternatives to abortion" and that a recommendation would be presented to the 1975 General Synod on abortion. (See Report of Christian Action Commission under "Abortion" and "A Minority Report on Abortion")

2. *General Synod Travel on the Lord's Day* (MGS, 1974, p. 106)

The 1974 General Synod adopted the overture which had been presented to it by the Classis of Ontario requesting that General Synod meet at such a time and place to eliminate traveling on the Lord's Day as much as possible and requested GSEC to use this overture as a guide in planning future General Synods.

At its October 1974 meeting the GSEC took the following action:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED to use the overture from the Classis of Ontario as a guide in planning General Synod sessions".

3. *Study Guide for Contemporary Confession* (MGS, 1974, p. 169)

In compliance with the 1970 General Synod directive (MGS, 1970, p. 208) that a "Contemporary Confession" be prepared for the Reformed Church in America, Eugene Heideman submitted to the 1974 General Synod the proposed confessional statement entitled *"Our Song of Hope"*. General Synod designated *"Our Song of Hope"* as a Provisional Standard for a period of four years ending in 1978. Eugene Heideman also prepared a study guide to accompany *"Our Song of Hope"* 'to help the churches in their educational ministry'. *"Our Song of Hope"* and Study Guide have been printed and distributed throughout the churches in the RCA.

R-1. WE RECOMMEND that General Synod reaffirm the use of Our Song of Hope **and the Study Guide as a Provisional Standard for a period of three years ending in 1978.** (ADOPTED)

4. *Study on Kirkside* (MGS, 1974, p. 184)

The Review Committee on the Board of Pensions recommended that "the appropriate body make a feasibility study of maintaining Kirkside as a denominational project".

At its October 1974 meeting, the GSEC took the following action:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the Board of Directors of Kirkside, in consultation with GSEC members, Arnold van Lummel and Arad Riggs, be requested to make a feasibility study of maintaining Kirkside as a denominational project; and further
> that a final report on feasibility be presented to the February 1976 GSEC meeting for its report to General Synod".

5. *Feminism* (MGS, 1974, pgs. 214-221)

The Christian Action Commission presented to the 1974 General Synod a study on the role of women in the church (See MGS, 1974, pgs. 214-221) and proposed several recommendations as a result of this study. These recommendations were adopted by the General Synod and referred to various agencies within the denomination including the Board of Theological Educa-

tion, the General Program Council, the Reformed Church Women and the General Synod Executive Committee, for follow up. (See Reports of BTE, GPC and GSEC for action taken regarding these recommendations.) (The referral to the GSEC relating to a Task Force on Women is found in this report under Section B,4.)

Recommendation "R-III,C-4" which requested "the appropriate agencies of the Reformed Church in America to develop an immediate plan to correct its discrimination against women in the following areas of particular concern: Reformed Church in America liturgy, examine for sexist bias including opportunities for women to actively participate in the leadership of worship," was adopted by the General Synod and referred to the Reformed Church Women for consideration and report to General Synod through the General Synod Executive Committee. Reformed Church Women appointed Gerard and Eloise Van Heest to chair a committee to study this matter. The committee of 16 members met on March 3 and 4, 1975 and submitted a report to GSEC. At its April meeting the Executive Committee considered the "Report of the Committee on Sexist Bias in the R.C.A. Liturgy" and took action to refer the report of this committee to the Committee on the Revision of the Liturgy (Committee on Worship) for its consideration and report to the 1976 General Synod.

6. *Consultation on Church Funding* (MGS, 1974, pgs. 275, 283)

In response to a recommendation which was made by the President of General Synod and adopted by the 1974 General Synod relating to the GSEC calling a consultation on church funding, the GSEC appointed the following persons to serve on a Special Committee on Church Funding:

Carl Ver Beek, Chairman	Bert Van Soest
Harry De Bruyn, Secretary	Arthur Bridgeman
Nelson Hymans	Edward B. Murray
Elizabeth Clark	Harold De Roo
Terry Nagelvoort	

and further;
recommended that this Committee be responsible for receiving and coordinating the concerns from all levels of the judicatories of the church relating to church financing; and further;

that interested parties be given an opportunity to meet with the Special Committee and to have an opportunity to review the report of the Committee prior to its being presented to the GSEC; and further;

that progress reports be made to the GSEC in April and October of 1975 and that a final report be made to the GSEC in January of 1976 for presentation to the 1976 General Synod.

The Special Committee met on December 12, 1974, February 17, March 26, and May 13, 1975. On April 9, several members of the Special Committee on Church Funding met with the GSEC for a progress report and an indepth discussion of concerns and directions. Additional progress reports will be made and a final report to the GSEC in January 1976 for presentation to the 1976 General Synod.

7. *Study on Non-Violence* (MGS, 1974, p. 225)

In its report to the 1974 General Synod the Christian Action Commission recommended and General Synod adopted "that the General Synod appoint a study committee to explore the meaning of non-violence in all of life, which is rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, particularly in its relation to war, as a viable option to be pursued by Christians and the church".

The GSEC took the following action:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the Christian Action Commission be charged with the task of studying the meaning of non-violence in all of life; and further,
> that President Raymond Rewerts convey to the CAC the discussion regarding this matter by the GSEC."

The Christian Action Commission reported to GSEC that a proposal will be made to General Synod concerning a *Peace Priority Study Committee.* (CAC Minutes, Feb. 1975, p. 18)

B. GSEC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENERAL SYNOD ACTION

1. Amendments to BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER

a. *Amendments to THE GOVERNMENT*

The General Synod of 1974 approved six proposed amendments to *The Government* which were referred to the classes for approval. These are specified in the *Minutes of General Synod, 1974,* pgs. 200-202.

Proposed Amendment	*Yes*	*No*	*No Action or Abstained*
1. Ordination of Women at Ministers of the Word (Chap. 1, Part I, Art. 1, Sec. 3)	28	15	1
2. The Lord's Supper (Chap. 1, Part I, Art. 2, Sec. 6)	36	7	
3. Transfer of Congregations (Chap. 1, Part II, Art. 2)	40	3	
4. Prerequisites for Ordination (Chap. 1, Part II, Sec. 4)	40	3	
5. Rights of Emeritus Ministers (Chap. 1, Part II, Art. 10, Sec. 11)	35	8	
6. Disciplinary Procedures (Chap. 2, Parts I, II, III)	36	6	

Since the two-thirds requirement (30) votes was met on amendments 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

R-2. WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod now pass the declarative act incorporating the classes-approved amendments in The Government **of the RCA.** (ADOPTED)

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

b. *Amendments to the Bylaws and Rules of Order* (MGS, 1974, pgs. 200-202; MGS, 1973; pgs. 179, 180)

The 1974 General Synod adopted the following changes in the *Bylaws and Rules of Order*:

1. Christian Action Commission Membership and Term of Offiice (Chapter 3, Part I, Art. 5, Sec. 2)

A. Membership

The commission shall have eighteen members. Each particular synod shall nominate two members, (at least one of whom shall be a lay person) who shall be elected to the commission by the general synod. The other six members shall be nominated by the nominating committee of general synod in consultation with the Chairman of the Christian Action Commission. Special attention shall be given both by the particular synod and the general synod nominating committees to minority groups in these nominations, and to those persons with particular competence in areas of special concern. All members shall be persons who have a strong desire to make the Gospel and the Christian way of life applicable to contemporary social issues.

B. Term of Office

Members shall serve for a six year term. As members' terms expire, a minister shall be replaced by a lay person, and a lay person shall be replaced by a minister, except when filling unexpired terms.

C. Responsibilities (No change subparagraph b)

R-3. WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt the above as an amendment to the Bylaws of General Synod in Chapter 3, Part I, Art. 5, Sec. 2 (BCO, p. 57) for implementation at this General Synod. (ADOPTED)

2. Commission on Interchurch Relations, Membership and Responsibilities (Chapter 3, Part I, Art. 5, Sec. 4)

The Interchurch Relations Committee made a careful study during the past year of the proposed amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, page 58, adopted by the General Synod of 1974 (MGS, 1974, p. 201, 202, R-6) which provides for a *commission* on Interchurch Relations. (See Report of Committee on Interchurch Relations under *"From Committee to Commission"*). After considerable discussion it was felt that some slight alteration could be made in the proposed amendment which would improve it, provide continuity between the old and the new,

and at the same time not do violence to the intent of the General Synod 1974 action.

The GSEC gave careful consideration to the recommendations of the Interchurch Relations Committee and

R-4. WE RECOMMEND that General Synod adopt the following amendment regarding a Committee on Christian Unity: (ADOPTED)

That Section a, MEMBERSHIP, **be revised with the following wording:**

a. MEMBERSHIP

The committee shall have eighteen members. Each particular synod shall nominate two members, (at least one of whom shall be a lay person) who shall be elected to the committee by the general synod. Four members at large shall be nominated by the nominating committee of general synod in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee on Christian Unity. The general secretary and the executive secretary of the RCA, by virtue of their offices, shall be members of the committee.

b. OFFICERS

There shall be a chairman, a vice-chairman, and a secretary.

c. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **The committee shall supervise and initiate action with respect to the Reformed Church in America membership in or affiliation with ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches.**
2. **It shall engage in interchurch conversations and recommend fraternal delegates to other church bodies.**
3. **It shall seek to manifest Christian unity.**
4. **It shall keep the church informed about RCA participation in ecumenical relations and witness.**
5. **It shall fulfill assignments given to the committee by the general synod or its executive committee.**

and further, that the 1975 General Synod adopt the amendment to the Bylaws approved by General Synod 1974 (MGS, 1974, p. 201, 202) including the above revisions,
and further, that if the above amendment is adopted, General Synod authorize the GSEC to implement this amendment by electing those nominated by the respective Particular Synods or their executive committees, according to the following vacancies in the membership classes:

Committee on Christian Unity
Membership

Particular Synods (12)			Class
Albany	M	David Risseeuw*	1977
	L		1978
New York	M		1976
	L	Dorothy Kraemer*	1977
New Jersey	M	Kenneth Schields*	1976
	L		1978
Michigan	M	John Piet*	1976
	L	Robert Visscher*	1977
Chicago	M		1978
	L	Hazel Rauwerdink*	1977
West	M	John Opmeer*	1976
	L		1978
At large (4)			1976
		Harold Vande Berg*	1977
		Charles J. Wissink*	1978
(*incumbent members)			1978
General Secretary (1)		Marion de Velder*	
Executive Secretary (1)		Arie R. Brouwer*	

It was moved and seconded to adopt R-4. It was noted that the General Synod had adopted the recommendation of the Review Committee on Interchurch Relations "to change the word 'Commission' to 'Committee' on Christian Unity".

3. **Transfer to Commission on History the duties of the former Committee on Necrology (Chapter 3, Part I, Art. 5, Sec. 6 deleted and Art. 5, Sec. 3b revised)**

In Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, delete Section 6, 'The Committee on Necrology', and renumber Sections 7, 8, 9 and 10 as Sections 6, 7, 8 and 9.

In Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 3b, rearrange the material including the new material as indicated as follows:

Section 3b. Responsibilities

1. **The commission shall collect the official records and documents of the Reformed Church in America, its churches, judicatories, boards and institutions.**

2. **It shall maintain a permanent archive where such data are preserved for historical research.**

3. **It shall promote an interest in the history and traditions of the Reformed Church in America and make this information available.**

4. **It shall engage in further research in the history and traditions of the Reformed Church in America.**

5. **(new) It shall secure and preserve information concerning ministers who have died during the year and shall make an annual report of these matters to the General Synod.**

R-5. WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt the above as an amendment to the Bylaws of General Synod for implementation at this General Synod. (ADOPTED)

4. **Name of Committee on Revision of the Liturgy (Chapter 3, Part I, Art. 5, Sec. 9, change to Committee on Worship)**
Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 9 (BCO, p. 62): The "Committee on the Revision of the Liturgy" to be changed to "Committee on Worship".

R-6. WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt the above as an amendment to the Bylaws of the General Synod for implementation at this General Synod. (ADOPTED)

5. **The Order of the Synod's Business (Part I, Article 2, Sections 1 and 2)**

R-7. WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt the following as an amendment of Part I, Article 2 of the Bylaws of General Synod for implementation at this General Synod:

Section 1: The General Synod Executive Committee shall have responsibility for the program of the General Synod. This responsibility shall include the preparation of the booklet containing committee reports; the arrangement of the order of business for all the meetings of the synod; the fixing of time limits for the presentation of committee reports and formal addresses, without placing any restriction upon free debate in the transaction of synod business; and the disposition of all religious, devotional, and other extra synodical meetings. It shall report as soon as possible after the opening of synod.

Section 2: The committee shall instruct all committees, commissions and agencies to consult with other agencies before bringing recommendations which affect the latter, and to have their recommendations in the hands of delegates at least three hours before presenting the same to the synod. In the absence of such consultation, and concurrence by such other agency, any recommendation affecting another agency shall be referred to the Committee of Reference for report back to that synod. (ADOPTED)

6. **Part I, Article 3, Section 4e Responsibilities**

R-8. WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt the following as an amendment of Part I, Article 3, Section 4, subparagraph e for implementation at this General Synod:

"To prepare an agenda and program for the sessions of the general synod, and to serve as the committee of reference during the annual sessions of the general synod." (ADOPTED)

7. Referral of Resolutions to Committee Part II, Article 1, Section 8

R-9. WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt the following as an amendment of Part II, Article 1, Section 8 of the Rules of Order of the General Synod for implementation at this General Synod:

a. A resolution which rises out of the business of the synod and which is not immediately associated with any board or committee of the synod shall be referred without debate to an appropriate committee.

b. A resolution which in effect would alter the budget of any agency shall automatically be referred to the committee of reference, which committee, in consultation with and approval of the officers and agency members present, shall return to procedural recommendation to synod. (ADOPTED)

2. Ad Interim Appointments

To the General Program Council:

Rev. Calvin Malefyt, Class of 1975, as a representative from the Lake Erie Classis, to replace *Rev. Frederick Kruithof.*

Rev. James Vincent, Class of 1977, as a representative from the Orange Classis, to replace *Rev. Everett L. Zabriskie, III.*

Rev. William G. Geiger, Class of 1976, as a representative from the Newark Classis to replace *Rev. Lorenz Proli.*

Rev. George C. Poppen, Class of 1977, as a representative from the Illinois Classis, to replace *Rev. Robert Wander Schaaf.*

Miss Mildred Wieberdink, Class of 1977, as a representative from the Wisconsin Classis, to replace *Mr. Clarence Vande Zande.*

To the Board of Theological Education:

Rev. Russell Horton, Class of 1975, as a representative from the Particular Synod of Chicago, to replace *Rev. Jerome De Jong.*

To the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches

Mrs. Anna Gonzales, Class of 1975, to replace *Rev. B. Moses James.*

R-10. WE RECOMMEND that General Synod approve the ad interim appointments of the GSEC. (ADOPTED)

GSEC appointed Mrs. Julie Fielding as a member of the Advisory Committee in the Office of Human Resources, Class of 1978. This appointment does not require approval by General Synod and is reported for information only.

3. General Synod Dates and Sites

In accordance with a procedure for advance planning for General Synod meeting places, the GSEC selected the New Jersey area as a potential site for the 1976 General Synod. Several commercial sites were investigated, but the costs for all of them were prohibitive. Investigations for a site have focused on college and university campuses in northern New Jersey.

R-11. WE RECOMMEND that the 1976 General Synod meeting be held at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, New Jersey from June 14 through 18, 1976. (ADOPTED)

An invitation to hold the 1977 General Synod meeting in Sioux Center was received from the First Reformed Church of Sioux Center, Iowa.

R-12. WE RECOMMEND that General Synod accept the invitation of the First Reformed Church of Sioux Center to entertain the Synod of 1977, as part of their 100th Anniversary celebration. (ADOPTED)

The GSEC is presently making plans for holding the 1978 General Synod in the New York City area in commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the denomination, and for holding the 1979 General Synod on the West Coast.

It was noted that the Collegiate Church Corporation had sent an invitation through the GSEC for the 1978 General Synod to be held in New York City in commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the denomination. Plans are currently underway to hold the 1978 General Synod in New York City.

4. Feminism

a. *Task Force on Women*

The GSEC was "requested to develop an immediate plan to correct its discrimination against women in the following areas of particular concern including political structures of the RCA, adequate representation on consistories, classes, synods, and General Synod" (See MGS, 1974, pg. 221)

The GSEC took the following action at its October meeting:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the GSEC, during the February 1975 meeting, discuss appropriate plans for implementing the directive contained in the recommendation of the Christian Action Commission; and further,
> That Lorraine Dreyman and Raymond Rewerts be appointed as cochairpersons to design the indepth discussion in connection with this recommendation."

A request was received from the Executive Committee of the Reformed Church Women, to the GSEC, as follows:

> "appoint a TASK FORCE ON WOMEN for a period of three years beginning at the Synod of 1975; and further,
>
> fund such meetings and materials as will be required to give satisfactory consideration to these issues and the implications for the Reformed Church; and further,
> to require an annual report from the Task Force."

In response to this request, the GSEC took the following action:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the chairman of the GSEC when meeting as the ex-officio member of the Permanent Committee on Nominations urge consideration for Recommendation C,2 on 'Feminism in the Church' as adopted by the General Synod of 1974 (See MGS, 1974, pg. 221); and further,

to adopt the TASK FORCE ON WOMEN in principle and to assign responsibility to the Chairman of the GSEC and the General Secretary for recommending the design, in consultation with Reformed Church Women, for consideration by the GSEC at the April 1975 meeting."

A proposed design for the Task Force on Women was presented to and adopted by the GSEC at its April meeting.

R-13. WE RECOMMEND that General Synod approve the appointment of a Task Force on Women in the RCA, as outlined below, for the period of three years—1975-1978. (ADOPTED)

NAME: Task Force on Women in the Reformed Church in America

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Task Force shall be to help the Reformed Church in America to identify the issues and to provide counsel on churchwide policies relating to the role of women within the church.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The responsibilities of the Task Force shall be:

1. **To make a study of the extent to which women are involved in program and policy-making decisions at all levels of the Reformed Church in America.**
2. **To review the language of the** Book of Church Order **(including the** Liturgy**) in the light of the issue of the role of women in the denomination.**
3. **To develop an awareness of the issue of the involvement of women in the life of the denomination, the factors contributing to the present situation, and the changes which are needed.**
4. **To formulate some recommendations to the Reformed Church in America and its constituent parts to enable and facilitate the involvement of women in the life and work of the church.**

MEMBERSHIP: The membership of the Task Force shall be composed of:

a. **Two members of the General Synod Executive Committee.**

b. **Two members of the General Program Council.**

c. **Five women named by Reformed Church Women, including one representative each of the Black, Hispanic and Indian constituencies.**

d. **Four members at large named by the General Synod Executive Committee (consideration to be given to geographical representation).**

ACCOUNTABILITY: The accountability of the Task Force shall be to the General Synod through the General Synod Executive Committee. BUDGET: The Task Force will request $4,000.00 from the 1976 budget. Expenses for 1975 are to be assigned to budget balances as designated by the General Synod Executive Committee.

STAFF SERVICES: Staff services shall be provided by the General Secretary, Executive Secretary of the Reformed Church in America and the Executive Director of Reformed Church Women, all serving ex-officio without vote.

5. Proposed Amendment to Constitution of the General Program Council

a. *Proposed Amendment*

After consideration of particular synod membership on the General Program Council, the GPC at its April 3-5, 1975 meeting voted:

"To recommend to the General Synod Executive Committee that it recommend to the General Synod the amendment of the Constitution of the General Program Council, Article III, Section 1, as follows (additions are in light face type; deletions are enclosed in parentheses):

'ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

1. Composition—The Council shall consist of one member from each Classis and each Particular Synod **of the Reformed Church in America and one member at large for each (three)** five **members, or remaining portion thereof, from the Classes. One college and one high school youth shall be additional members. The General Secretary shall be a member ex officio but without vote.'**

and further,
to recommend to the General Synod Executive Committee that it recommend to the General Synod the amendment of the Constitution of the General Program Council, Article III, Section 3, as follows (additions are in light face type):

'ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

3. Nominations and Election—All members of the Council shall be elected by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. One member from each Classis shall be elected upon nomination by that Classis. One member from each Particular Synod shall be elected upon nomination by that Particular Synod.' **(THE REST OF THIS SECTION CONTINUES AS IS.)**

R-14. WE RECOMMEND that General Synod approve the above proposed amendments. (ADOPTED)

b. *Proposed Implementation*

The chairman of the General Program Council proposed that it would be desirable to enable the Particular Synods to name members immediately after General Synod approval of the amendment, without excluding current Council members at large whose terms expire but are eligible for re-election.

R-15. WE RECOMMEND that General Synod authorize the General Program Council to suspend Section 1 of Article III of the General Program Council Constitution in order that the Council membership may be temporarily expanded by six, effective July 1, 1975, and reduced by two in each of the years 1977, 1978 and 1979; and further,
that the Particular Synods be requested to nominate persons to the following classes:

Michigan and New York	**— Class of 1977**
New Jersey and Chicago	**— Class of 1978**
Albany and the West	**— Class of 1979** (ADOPTED)

The GSEC also recommended to the GPC that the General Program Council consider an amendment to its Constitution to insure continuing diversity in GPC membership.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. *Study of the Role and Function of GSEC*

At its October meeting, the GSEC took the following action relating to its role and function:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the meetings of the General Synod Executive Committee, the Trustees of the General Program Council and the Board of Pensions be ordinarily scheduled as follows:
>
> *First Day*
>
> 2:00 p.m. — GSEC opening, including worship, schedule and agenda, followed by reports of the President of General Synod and the General Secretary
>
> 3:00 p.m. — Sub-committee meetings
>
> 5:30 p.m. — Dinner
>
> 7:00 p.m. — Committee of the Whole—full group discussion of selected issues. These issues would include agenda items which seem to require full group discussion and matters of continuing concern to the GSEC in its pastoral function. To increase the effectiveness of this discussion, the Chairman of the GSEC should meet with staff prior to the meeting for a full review and briefing concerning the issues to be discussed in the Committee of the Whole.
>
> 8:30 p.m. — Sub-committees conclude their business
>
> *Second Day*
>
> 9:00 a.m. — GSEC meeting
>
> 11:30 a.m. — Lunch
>
> 12:30 p.m. — TGPC meeting, including Executive Secretary's report

2:00 p.m. — Board of Pensions meeting

4:00 p.m. — Adjournment

(THE SCHEDULE FOR THE SECOND DAY COULD BE ROTATED OCTOBER, FEBRUARY, APRIL)

It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the sub-committee structure of the GSEC, TGPC, and BOP be amended to provide for:

(1) General Synod Committee

(2) General Program Council Committee

(3) Pensions Committee

and further,

that during this interim experimental period, the functions of the Administrative and General Synod Committees be combined with the understanding that the Ad Hoc Committee on Role and Function of the GSEC will develop a detailed list of responsibilities for the sub-committees for report at the April meeting of the GSEC; and further, that to expedite this committee arrangement, the membership of the sub-committees for 1974-1975 be reassigned as follows:

General Synod Committee

Donald H. De Young, Chm.
Raymond H. Rewerts
Harry E. De Bruyn
Clarence H. Linder
Lorraine Dreyman
Bert Van Soest
Marion de Velder, Sec.

GPC Committee

Melvin A. Redeker, Chm.
James A. Neevel
Adrain J. Newhouse
Marien Lo Preto
Rodger Dalman
Cornelius Ausema
Henry B. Poppen

Pensions Committee

Arnold J. van Lummel, Chm.
John Schoon
Christian H. Walvoord
Jack H. Hascup
Maurice A. Te Paske
Vincent P. Sumerfield
Arad M. Riggs

2. *Staff Consulting Group* (See MGS, 1973, p. 125 and MGS, 1974, p. 127)

The Staff Consulting Group, which organization was authorized by the 1973 General Synod, has continued to have constructive interchange among its members. In fulfilling its projected functions; namely—sharing of plans; development of guidelines for coordination and cooperation and the submitting of reports to GSEC, subjects discussed at its October 31, 1974 and March 13, 1975 meetings have ranged from 1974 General Synod concerns—including the study of feminism in the church; the consultation on funding; elders serving communion; observations of the President of General Synod regarding the church at large—to the centennial celebration in 1975 of women's work in the RCA;

financial and housing concerns of the seminaries; interregional funding among the particular synods; plans for the 350th celebration of the Reformed Church in America; the role of laity in the church; the role of the Hispanic Council; clergy support consultation, etc.

At its March 13, 1975 meeting, the members of the Staff Consulting Group agreed on the following:

> "The Consultation feels that it would be wise for the General Synod Executive Committee to take steps:
>
> (1) to clarify for the churches the categories and institutions, judicatories, and programs that by virtue of their accountability come under the 'benevolent' program of the RCA; and
>
> (2) to explain the method of specific designation that operates in the provision of financial support.
>
> The Consultation urges each of the various agencies, institutions, and judicatories to include in their efforts to gain the designation of support a conscious attention to the total program of the RCA and to provide advice and assistance insofar as feasible to individual churches seeking to increase their overall level of stewardship."

At the April meeting, the GSEC requested staff to study this matter and bring proposals to the June GSEC meeting for consideration.

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

Minority councils in the Reformed Church in America date from the formation of the Black Council by the General Synod of 1969. The American Indian Council was formed three years later in 1972 and the Hispanic Council was formed in 1974. In order to assist these councils in relating to each other and to the denomination as a whole, the GSEC took the following action at its February meeting (GSEC Action 75-6):

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

When all appointments have been received from the participating groups, the Joint Committee will be convened and begin to function as soon as possible.

D. LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Liaison Committee is made up of two members from the GSEC and two from the GPC, named according to the bylaws of the respective units. One of the two GSEC members is elected by the committee to serve as its chairman. Presently, the members are: Harry De Bruyn, Chairman; Lorraine Dreyman (GSEC representatives) and George Crumley, Jr.; Carl Ver Beek (GPC representatives).

The Committee has four principal accountabilities:

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

At its meeting held January 16, 1975, the Liaison Committee presented the following proposed amendment to Section 1-7 regarding the responsibilities of the Committee: (See GSEC Minutes, Feb. 5, 6, 1975, pg. 6)

> Reports of the Liaison Committee are to be presented to the GSEC as a part of the regular agenda process. The preparation of these reports is a staff responsibility.
>
> The GSEC is to hold two Executive Sessions annually in February and June. The February meeting Executive Session will be preceded by a careful statement of the Liaison Committee's responsibility and the processes through which it works. These materials will be noted in the agenda packet for review by GSEC.
>
> The June meeting is to include a report on staff performance by staff, following which there will be a full Executive Session in which there is a particular focus on the Liaison Committee's responsibility for supervision and oversight of the General Secretary. This meeting is to be carefully scheduled as part of the GSEC agenda.

This proposal was adopted by the GSEC.

E. SERVICE OFFICES

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

Appendix 2—Report of the Office of Communications

Appendix 3—Report of Office of Finance

Appendix 4—Report of Office of Human Resources

F. FRATERNAL RELATIONS

a. *Delegates*

The Christian Reformed Church has appointed as fraternal delegate to our General Synod the Rev. Nelson Vanderzee, pastor of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. He will bring greetings in connection with the Report of the Review Committee on Interchurch Relations.

The Interchurch Relations Committee recommended and the GSEC appointed the following as fraternal delegate and alternate to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church:

Fraternal Delegate	*Alternate*
Rev. Edwin G. Mulder Pastor, Second Reformed Church Hackensack, New Jersey	Rev. William Brownson, Jr., Th.D. Temple Time Preacher

The Christian Reformed Synod meets from June 10-20 at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Appreciation was expressed by the Chairman of the GSEC for members of the Committee who will be retiring at the end of the General Synod session; namely, Adrian Newhouse, James Neevel, Melvin Redeker, Arnold van Lummel, Vincent Sumerfield and Christian Walvoord.

b. *Report of Joint Committee CRC/RCA for Study of Theology of Evangelism*

I BACKGROUND

This committee was appointed by the GENERAL SYNOD EVANGELISM COMMITTEE in 1973, and given the following mandate:

> "to serve on a study commission with representatives from the Christian Reformed Church to prepare a theology of evangelism for presentation to the General Synods of the two denominations."

The appointment of this committee was occasioned by a *"Report of the Sub-Committee for Christian Reformed-Reformed Church Relationships."* The General Synod of 1973 adopted the following recommendation from that report:

> "R-2.—That we invite the Christian Reformed Church to join with us in the appointment of a study commission of ten members, five from each denomination, who will be instructed to prepare a theology of evangelism to the two Synods."

The Christian Reformed Church at their Synod also adopted the recommendation for joint action. The following persons were appointed to represent the Christian Reformed Church:

Dr. Richard Wierenga
Dr. Richard De Ridder
Dr. Roger Greenway
Dr. Carl Kromminga
Rev. Wesley Smedes

The appointments for the Reformed Church were:

Dr. William Brownson
Dr. Jerome De Jong
Dr. Paul Fries
Rev. Edwin Mulder
Rev. Richard Rhem

In a series of meetings the Joint Committee conscientiously addressed itself to its mandate. The wording of the mandate could be taken to suggest that there already exists a clear, agreed-upon Reformed theology of evangelism which the committee was charged to study. It is obvious that this was not Synod's intention since no such theological statement exists. We understood our mandate to mean that we were to study the subject of evangelism in the light of Reformed theology and try to *articulate* a Reformed theology of evangelism.

The Joint Committee made a serious address to this task. Initially and as background to our study all the members of the Joint Committee agreed to write papers on specific subjects. These papers were presented and extensively discussed at one of the joint sessions. The papers covered such subjects as *"Presuppositions of Reformed Evangelism," "Modern Strategies of Evangelism," "Jewish Evangelism," "Liberation Theology,"* and the like. Differences in perspective and accent were candidly discussed as they became evident in the meeting. The differences, incidentally, did not necessarily follow denominational lines.

It became apparent that with this mode of operation much time would be required to work through to mutual understanding and possible agreement among the ten members of the Joint Committee. We became acutely aware of the fact that an extensive, definitive report on the theology of evangelism would require time and resources not available to a committee of this kind. In the growing conviction that we should try to work out a more limited report, one, if possible, on which we all agreed, we asked ourselves how we could honor the general thrust of the mandate without engaging in this kind of exhaustive and time consuming research and without producing the extensive report which it seemed to require.

During the time we were at work, the Lausanne conference was held (July 1974) and the Lausanne Covenant appeared. From this event and others like it, from the Lausanne Covenant and reactions to it, and from our own discussions it became apparent that there are two very prominent concerns in current thinking on the church's mission, both of which demands serious attention. All communications, all mission-minded congregations and various missionary conferences experience the tensions. First, how are word and deed related in Christian witness? Is social action, born of Christian conviction, evangelism? Is evangelism oral testimony only, and are deeds of demonstrated Christian concern in connection with that testimony merely optional? But behind this tension lies a more fundamental concern. *What* is the word, the message, in evangelism? What is the message which deeds are to demonstrate? We felt that the clue to answering these essential questions was to be found in the historic Reformed accent on the *kingdom of God.* Twentieth century biblical studies provided an added impetus toward centering our study on the great theme of the kingdom.

One of our discussion papers treated the question, *"What Does it Mean to Evangelize?"* This basic New Testament study dealt with the use of the expression "to

evangelize" as it is used in the New Testament. Other studies had dealt with such subjects as *"The Holy Spirit and Evangelism," "Sociological Aspects of Evangelism," "The Rebirth of a Congregation as an Instrument of Evangelism."* In practically every paper submitted and throughout our discussions the idea of the "kingdom of God" surfaced in some form. The good news is about what God has done to establish a new order, new relationships, a new life, a new fellowship.

Further, as we reflected on recent statements on evangelism by groups of concerned Christians, it seemed to us that a clear understanding of the gospel as the gospel of the *kingdom* was missing. Kingdom "notes" and "nuances" were present, but the central importance of the kingdom concept and its relation to gospel preaching was not fully recognized.

Two main influences, therefore, led us in the direction of deciding to try to articulate a brief theological statement of a particular and focused character: the limited time and resources available to us and the gap in modern missionary thinking, a gap which we felt Reformed Christians are uniquely qualified by doctrinal commitment and traditional practice to repair. In the spirit of humbly trying to contribute from the Reformed perspective to current discussions of mission, we devised and herewith submit *"An Evangelism Manifesto."* We acknowledge that it is not a complete theology of evangelism. We further recognize that the theological propositions which underlie this Manifesto are not articulated as doctrinal theses, but are woven into the fabric of a testimony. We are persuaded, however, that what we are presenting is a significant contribution to the discussion of God's mission through his church. We rejoice in the unanimity which God worked among us as we drafted and approved this Manifesto. It is in a spirit of profound gratitude to the Lord of the church that we lay this joint testimony before our respective Synods and the churches. Hopefully, there will result from the discussion of this testimony a well articulated, biblically based, full theology of evangelism.

II AN EVANGELISM MANIFESTO

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

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM

We affirm that to *evangelize* is to proclaim the good news of God's reign. The sense of *public proclamation* is always dominant in the biblical use of the term. Evangelists are "bringers of the gospel." The direct object of the verb "to evangelize" is rarely the hearers or recipients of the message. That is, the apostles are not usually said to "evangelize" *people*. They "evangelize" a word, a content, *to* people. *What* they "evangelize" is variously described as "the gospel,: "the Word of the Lord," "the faith," "Jesus," "Christ," or, comprehensively, "the kingdom of God."

The proclamation is *"good news."* The note of gladness is an essential part of it. To evangelize is to bring "good tidings of great joy" at which believing hearers "break forth into singing." The kingdom of God is like a treasure. . . ."

In both Testaments, to "evangelize" is to proclaim a victory, to *herald a new reign*. At heart, it is to testify that "the kingdom of God has drawn near!"

This "kingdom," in biblical usage, refers not primarily to the divine sovereignty in a general sense, but to the active, saving reign of the Triune God in history. The coming kingdom is not static by dynamic, not so much a concept as a ruling power. To proclaim "the kingdom of God has drawn near" is to herald those mighty events in which God's royal rule has invaded the earth in the coming of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is to bring the thrilling news of God's victory in the death and resurrection of His Son over all the dark powers that enslaved mankind and made His good creation subject to bondage. It is to tell of what God has done to bring forgiveness to the guilty, help to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, deliverance to the oppressed. It is to announce to the whole creation a divine reign of justice and peace.

Together with this grand announcement, the proclamation of the kingdom brings a summons. Hearers are called to renounce all sin, each false lord, every rival sovereignty, and to submit through repentance and faith to God's saving reign in Christ. The proclamation demands commitment to God's lordship and obedience to His will in the world. Although the decisive victory over the forces of evil has been won, the conflict still rages. Christ is risen; the Spirit has been poured out upon the church; the powers of the coming age are at work in the world, but the end is not yet. Hosts of darkness resist God's sovereignty; rampant evils oppose His will. To repent and believe is to side with God's purpose in this conflict—assured of ultimate victory, while contending for God's righteousness in every sphere of life.

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

THE SIGNS OF THE KINGDOM

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

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

THE IMPERATIVE OF THE KINGDOM

Christ sends His church to make disciples of all nations. The gospel of the kingdom brings the only hope of salvation for lost mankind. All stand under the judgment of which it warns; all need the forgiveness and new life it offers; all are summoned to the commitment it demands.

The same good news preached to the world must be constantly heard afresh in the church, for the call to repent and believe, to submit to God's gracious reign, is a call to growth as well as to conversion. The church lives by the gospel it proclaims.
The Spirit calls God's people to live in genuine community and to pursue love and justice in the world. Thus the church by its life and work points to the ruling power of the risen Lord.

We affirm, therefore, our responsibility to proclaim, to manifest and to serve the kingdom of God. We confess our dependence on the Holy Spirit for power to fulfill our calling until Christ comes in glory. In gratitude for the grace given us, and in confidence that our labor is not in vain, we commit ourselves anew to this mission, praying as we go, "Thy kingdom come!"

III RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Committee makes the following recommendations to the General Synod:

R-1. That The Evangelism Manifesto **be referred to our churches, agencies, and General Program Council for study and reflection.** (ADOPTED)

R-2. That the Joint Committee CRC/RCA for study of a theology of evangelism be continued for an additional two years to enable the Committee to receive and review the responses received to the Manifesto. (ADOPTED)

R-3. That the Joint Committee be instructed to prepare a report defining the practical implications of this Manifesto for the evangelistic outreach of our churches; and that recommendations be made as to how the Evangelism Manifesto can be jointly implemented by our denominations. (ADOPTED)

R-4. That an additional member be appointed to fill a vacancy on the committee representing the Reformed Church in America. (ADOPTED)

It was noted that the GSEC, which is responsible for ad interim appointments, will make the appointments called for in R-4 upon receiving recommendations from the Joint Committee.

GSEC SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

QUICK FUND

The GSEC has reviewed the requests from the Quick Memorial Fund. In addition to the requests granted in 1974, there was a request from the Office of Human Resources for continuing education for RCA pastors, being planned jointly between the Board of Theological Education and OHR.

The GSEC has continued to follow two guidelines in its review of requests received: (a) Allocation of the Quick Fund should be made to the boards and agencies of the RCA. It should not be involved in intensive program review; (b) A portion of the Quick Fund should be reserved for those programs/issues/studies which arise out of the General Synod itself.

The recommendation allocates the 10% for issues arising out of the General Synod itself to the Office of Human Resources for continuing education for RCA pastors.

R-1. We RECOMMEND that the budget allocation for the Quick Fund be as follows:

50% to the General Program Council for Church Planning and Development

20% to Student Aid Grant—New Brunswick and Western Seminaries

20% to Student Aid Grants—Northwestern, Hope and Central College

10% to Office of Human Resources for Continuing Education for RCA pastors. (ADOPTED)

SYNODICAL MINUTES

It was reported that the 1975 Minutes of the Particular Synod of Albany, the West, Chicago and New Jersey were examined and found to be in good order. The Minutes of Michigan and New York could not be submitted in time for examination at General Synod. These will be reviewed upon receipt by the General Synod Executive Committee.

ELECTION OF ARAD RIGGS AS PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTION

R-2. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod elect Arad Riggs to serve as President of the Board of Direction for one year. (ADOPTED)

TRANSFER OF CHURCHES BETWEEN PARTICULAR SYNODS

The following requests for the transfer of churches from one particular synod to another were received for consideration by the GSEC and recommendation to the General Synod: (1) Elmwood Reformed Church of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada be transferred from the Classis of Minnesota, Particular Synod of the West to the Classis of Ontario, Particular Synod of Michigan; (2) Churches which are located in Florida and belong to the Particular Synod of Michigan be transferred to the Particular Synod of Chicago.

R-3. We RECOMMEND that General Synod authorize the transfer of the Elmwood Reformed Church of Winnipeg, Manitoba, to the Classis of Ontario, of the Particular Synod of Michigan. (ADOPTED)

R-4. We RECOMMEND that General Synod authorize the transfer of the Clearwater Community Church; the Trinity Church, Deerfield Beach; the Faith Church, Pompano Beach; the North Dade Community Church, Miami; the Bathany Church, St. Petersburg; the Sky Lake Park Church, Orlando; and the First Church of Tampa from the Particular Synod of Michigan to the Particular Synod of Chicago. (ADOPTED)

PROPOSED REVISED CONSTITUTION OF THE BOARD OF PENSIONS

The Review Committee on the Board of Pensions has suggested to the GSEC that additional changes be made to the proposed revised Constitution of the Board of Pensions (distributed to delegates at the time of registration). An additional

amendment was suggested by the Board of Pensions to insert in Article II, Section 11B (pg. 123) after the words "in the State of New York" (third line) the following: "or in Canada for ministers residing in Canada".

The GSEC has considered the recommendations of the Review Committee and the additional amendment by the Board of Pensions.

R-5. We RECOMMEND to General Synod that it adopt the proposed revised Constitution with suggested changes. (ADOPTED)

See next and following pages for the revised Constitution as changed and amended.

THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE BOARD OF PENSIONS

(Revised 1975)

FOREWORD

The Board of Pensions of the Reformed Church in America was established by the General Synod of the Reformed Church 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.

The purpose of The Board of Pensions is to provide annuities, supplemental pensions, assistance grants and insurance benefits for all ordained ministers and their families, and for lay workers of the Reformed Church in accordance with the rules prescribed in the two major divisions of The Board of Pensions and their departments as outlined herein, viz., (I) The Reformed Church Annuity Fund; and (II) The General Fund.

The Constitution of The Board of Pensions given herein, and the rules prescribed in each department of the two divisions are the official Constitution and Rules adopted by The Board of Pensions 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 Orphans' Christmas Fund

ARTICLE I

DEFINITION

1. The word "Board" shall mean "The Board of Pensions of the Reformed Church in America".

2. The words "Reformed Church" shall mean the Reformed Church in America.

3. The word "salary" as herein used means fixed salary. In case a member receives free house rent, the same shall be considered as equivalent to a percentage of fixed salary as the Board may from time to time determine and added thereto in order to determine the salary basis. If free board and lodging are received by the member, then an equivalent value as agreed upon shall be added to the fixed salary to determine the salary basis. Regular annual bonuses should be added to the fixed salary to determine the salary basis as agreed upon between the church, the member and the Board.

4. The words "Reformed Church Annuity Fund" shall be held to mean and refer to the annuity plan as provided herein.

5. The words "member payments" shall be held to mean the payments made by members themselves and not by their church or other employer. Member payments shall be credited, as appropriate, to either the member account or the deferred annuity account. These accounts are defined in Article III, Section 1.

6. The words "church payments" shall be held to mean the regular payments of the church or other salary-paying organization (also referred to as "church") enjoying the services of the member as provided in Article III, Section 2.

7. The words "Effective Buying Power per Household" (EBPH hereafter) shall be held to mean an amount based on U.S. Bureau of Census data for selected countries and annually approved by the Board as the minimum base on which member and church payments are calculated.

8. The word "accumulations", where applied to member or church payments, shall be held to mean the total of such payments together with any interest additions credited, as provided hereinafter.

9. The words "joint life and survivor annuity" shall mean an annuity payable during the lifetime of the member, continuing thereafter in part to a second person, if the second person survives the member.

10. The words "actuarial equivalent" shall mean that the value of an annuity entered upon shall be equal to the accumulated funds available to provide such annuity, as actuarially determined upon the basis of the tables of rates adopted by the Board for that purpose.

11. The word "retirement" shall mean the relinquishment of any or all salaried relationships in connection with any service to the particular church or organization in which the member is serving at the time of application for the annuity or pension.

12. The words "minor child" shall be held to mean a child of a deceased member who has not attained the age of twenty-one years.

13. The words "good standing" shall mean that required payments shall have been made for each year of eligibility.

14. The word "eligibility" shall mean that any ordained minister of the Reformed Church or any lay employee of the Reformed Church or of any organization or institution officially connected with it, who gives full-time service in his or her employment, shall be eligible for membership in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund.

ARTICLE II

MANAGEMENT

Section 1—The management shall be vested in a Board of Directors composed of twenty-one directors, all members of the Reformed Church of whom not less than five shall be ordained ministers and not less than five shall be lay members, including the Executive Secretary ex officio without vote. One-third of the members of the Board of Directors shall be elected annually for terms of three years. All shall be eligible for re-election for a second term of three years, but may not be eligible for an additional term unless there is a period of at least one year in which the director does not serve.

As the terms of the directors expire, their successors shall be nominated for periods of three years each by the General Synod at its regular annual meetings. The directors thus nominated shall be elected by the Board of Directors at its first meeting following that of the General Synod.

Section 2—The Board of Directors shall have power to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors occuring by reason of death, resignation, or otherwise, until the next morning of the General Synod.

Section 3—The Board of Directors shall have and, except as provided in Section 11 hereof, shall exercise all the power necessary to receive, accumulate, manage, invest and dispose of the funds and property entrusted to it, not inconsistent with the laws under which the Board has been incorporated or with any action of the General Synod of the Reformed Church.

Section 4—The Board of Directors is empowered to make rules for the administration of its work in accord with plans approved by the General Synod and not inconsistent with this Constitution.

Officers and Committees

Section 5—The Board of Directors shall elect annually a President, Vice-President, and a Treasurer. The President and Vice-President shall be elected from the membership of the Board.

Section 6—The Board of Directors shall appoint as Executive Secretary, the General Secretary of the Reformed Church in America, who shall be the Secretary of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may engage such additional assistants as may be necessary for the performance of the work of the Board of Directors.

Section 7—The Board of Directors shall appoint such committees as may be necessary to carry on its work, with the further provision, however, that

(a) An Executive Committee shall be appointed to consist of the President and Vice-President of the Board of Directors and three other directors.

(b) A Finance Committee shall be appointed to consist of five persons, three of whom must be directors.

Duties of Officers

Section 8—The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall perform such other duties as are usually required of that officer, or as may be requested by the Board of Directors. The President shall be a member, ex officio with full privileges, of all committees of the Board of Directors.

The Vice-President shall, in the absence of the President, perform the duties of the President.

The Executive Secretary shall have general supervision and direction of the work of the Board of Directors; shall attend the meetings of the Board of Directors and of the regular committees, and such other meetings as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors; shall have custody of the minutes and other records and papers of the Board of Directors and the Corporate Seal, and shall also perform the duties ordinarily required of a recording and corresponding secretary; shall prepare an annual report for the Board of Directors to act upon and present to the General Synod, and shall use every opportunity to bring the work of the Board before the church.

Meetings

Section 9—The Board of Directors shall hold four regular meetings each year or as called by the President of the Board of Directors. Eleven directors present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors preceding the annual meeting of the General Synod, the reports prepared by the Secretary and the report of the auditors shall be submitted and considered for presentation to the General Synod.

The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held in June, at which time the directors and officers shall be elected and the committees appointed.

Section 10—Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held when called by the Chairman.

The Executive Committee shall transact any necessary business between the meetings of the Board of Directors, subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors. It shall put into execution the resolutions of the Board of Directors, insofar as this cannot be done by the officers; it shall have power to authorize the payment of money for purposes that are in harmony with the settled policy of the Board of Directors; it shall keep complete minutes of its proceedings and present them for approval at the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors. Three directors present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 11A—The Finance Committee shall have general oversight of the financial operation of the Board and shall have power to invest all funds of the Board.

The Finance Committee may in its discretion transfer all, or any part, of the Board's funds, whether or not endowed or restricted, to such bank or trust company organized or existing under the laws of the State of New York (or to a national banking association whose principal office is located in the State of New York) as may be designated by the Finance Committee, to the end that such custodian shall hold such property in safekeeping, collect the income thereof and pay over the same to the Board at such times and in such manner as the Finance

Committee shall specify. The Finance Committee, in its discretion, may also delegate and grant to the custodian so designated all or any portion of the authority possessed by the Board of Directors with respect to the retention, investment and reinvestment of assets of the Board, or any part thereof, on condition:

(1) that such custodian's purchase, sale and exchange of Board assets be conducted in accordance with such investment standards and policies and such other terms and conditions as may from time to time be established by the Finance Committee;

(2) that such custodian's designation and authority and such investment standards and policies and terms and conditions shall be subject to modification or revocation at any time at the discretion of the Finance Committee or of the Board of Directors; and

(3) that notification of all purchases, sales and other transactions effected by such custodian pursuant to such authority shall be given promptly to the Finance Committee by the custodian. The Finance Committee shall submit a report to the Board of Directors covering all Board investment transactions and any changes in investment standards and policies or in the authority or identity of any custodian of the Board's funds since the prior meetings of the Board of Directors. The Finance Committee shall provide annually for the auditing of the books of the Board.

Section 11B—The Finance Committee shall also have the power to cause the Board to enter into a group annuity contract or contracts with a life insurance company duly authorized to do business in the State of New York or in Canada for ministers residing in Canada under which the Board may pay all or any part of its funds to the insurance company to be applied by such insurance company as provided in the contract or contracts. Any such contract may contain allocation provisions under which all or any part of the funds transferred to the insurance company or payments subsequently made may be invested in common stocks and other investments through participation in a separate account or accounts maintained by the insurance company; provided, however, that the contract shall be terminable by the Board without unreasonable delay or charge and shall provide for periodic reporting to the Board in reasonable detail of transactions and investment results.

Amendments

Section 12—The Constitution and Rules of the Board may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of the directors present at any regularly constituted meeting of the Board of Directors; provided that the proposed alteration or amendment has been presented in writing at a previous regularly constituted meeting. The alteration or amendment shall become effective only after approval by the General Synod.

Section 13—The Constitution and Rules of the Board may be altered or amended by the General Synod by a majority vote of those present and voting at any regularly constituted meeting; provided that the proposed alteration or amendment has been submitted in writing to the Board of Directors for its consideration at least 30 days before the meeting of the General Synod, in order that the Board may be able to present its views on the matter.

ARTICLE III

DIVISION I—REFORMED CHURCH ANNUITY FUND

This division combines the functions of the former Contributory Annuity Fund and the Retirement Fund for Lay Workers. The holders of the certificates of membership in these two funds issued prior to January 1, 1955 shall continue to hold such certificates subject to their provisions. New certificates shall be issued to members whose membership becomes effective on and after January 1, 1955, which shall preserve the provisions of the former Contributory Annuity Fund certificates and shall preserve also the special provisions of the former certificates of the Retirement Fund for Lay Workers as herein set forth.

Section 1—Definition of Accounts

The Reformed Church Annuity Fund maintains three accounts for its members.

(a) Member Account. Funds contributed personally by the member are credited to this account. The income tax liability for the deposit has already been completed. Deposits made following January 1, 1975 may be withdrawn without penalty.

(b) Church Account. Payments made by a church on behalf of a member shall be credited to the member's account. The income tax liability for the deposit becomes due as the funds are received through an annuity.

(c) Deferred Annuity. A member may elect to have funds paid into a deferred account in lieu of salary. The income tax liability for the deposit becomes due as the funds are received through an annuity.

Section 2—Church Payments

The church's payments shall be 11% of the member's salary, or the EBPH rate, whichever is larger.

Section 3—Interest

Interest shall be added on amounts credited to or accumulated for a member out of the earnings on investments, at rates to be determined annually by the Board.

Section 4—Age Retirement Annuity

Upon the retirement of a member, the entire accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments shall be applied as the actuarial equivalent, according to the tables of rates adopted by the Board for such purposes, to provide an age retirement annuity on the joint life and survivor basis with a fixed percentage of such annuity continued to the surviving spouse of the member, if their marriage took place before the member entered upon such age retirement annuity; however, a single life annuity may be granted to the member if requested. Upon retirement a member who chooses a joint life and survivor annuity shall select one of the following fixed percentages:

a. one hundred percent (100%) for the life of the member with sixty percent (60%) of such annuity continued to surviving spouse of the member;

b. one hundred percent (100%) for the life of the member with seventy percent (70%) of such annuity continued to surviving spouse of the member;

c. one hundred percent (100%) for the life of the member with eighty percent (80%) of such annuity continued to surviving spouse of the member;

d. one hundred percent (100%) during the life of both the member and spouse with one hundred percent (100%) continued to either survivor;

e. one hundred percent (100%) during the life of both the member and spouse with eighty percent (80%) continued to either survivor;

f. one hundred percent (100%) during the life of both the member and spouse with seventy percent (70%) continued to either survivor;

g. one hundred percent (100%) during the life of both the member and spouse with sixty percent (60%) continued to either survivor.

If the member has no surviving spouse or if the member is a woman, the member may, subject to the approval of the Board, name a beneficiary under a joint life and survivor annuity; otherwise, there will be provided for the member a single life age retirement annuity.

Upon the retirement of a member before attaining the age of 65 years, the entire accumulation to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments may, at the request of the member, be applied in accordance with the provisions of the preceding two paragraphs, to provide an early retirement annuity.

In lieu of the age retirement annuity provided by the Board for the member in accordance with the first or third paragraph of this section, upon the request and authorization of the member at or before the date of retirement, the Board shall pay to a commercial annuity organization selected by the member the entire accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments, to be applied as a single premium for an annuity to be provided for the member by such annuity organization.

Upon attaining the age of 60, a member may elect to receive the annual dividends earned by the accumulations from both member payments and church payments in his or her account, thus leaving the accumulation in the account intact until such time as the member requests that an annuity be provided. However, this option may be elected only by those whose accumulations are already sufficient to provide an annuity in excess of the Board's established guaranteed income from annuity sources alone.

Section 5—Disability Retirement Annuity

In the event of the member's total and presumably permanent disability, with resultant loss of salary, before entering upon an age retirement annuity, the entire accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments shall be applied as the actuarial equivalent, according to the tables of rates adopted by the Board for such purposes, to provide a disability retirement annuity for the member, similar to and in accordance with the provisions outlined in Section 4 for an age retirement annuity.

Should such disability prove temporary and not permanent, when it has been removed the disability retirement annuity shall be terminated and the church shall resume making payments to the Reformed Church Annuity Fund, receiving

as a credit the reserve remaining under the disability annuity at the date of the termination of such annuity.

Section 6—Survivor Annuity

In the event of the death of the member before entering upon an age or disability retirement annuity, the following options are available to the surviving spouse, if any, or, if there is no surviving spouse, to such surviving beneficiary as may have been designated by the member:

a. The entire accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments may be applied as the actuarial equivalent, according to the tables of rates adopted by the Board for such purposes, to provide an annuity for the designated beneficiary.

b. The entire accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments may be retained in the Fund until such time as the beneficiary requests that an annuity be provided.

c. The entire accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments may be retained in the Fund, but the annual dividends earned by the account following the death of the member may be paid to the beneficiary until such time as the beneficiary requests that an annuity be provided.

Section 7—Death Benefits Other Than Survivor Annuities

In the event of the death of the member before entering upon an age or disability retirement annuity, leaving no spouse surviving, but a minor child or minor children surviving, the entire accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments may be applied by the Board for the benefit of such minor child or minor children. If, however, after making reasonable provision for such minor child or minor children there remains any balance of such accumulations, an amount equivalent to such balance may be paid by the Board of other dependents or kin or to the legal representative of the member.

In the event of the death of the member before entering upon an age or disability retirement annuity, leaving no spouse or no minor child or minor children or designated beneficiary surviving, the Board may pay to other dependents or kin or to the legal representative of the member, an amount equivalent to the accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments; but the accumulations to the credit of the member from the church payments shall be credited to the Contingent Account provided for in Section 11.

Section 8—Withdrawal Benefits

If an ordained member remains in the ministry of the Reformed Church or if a lay member remains in the employ of the church, but payments on his or her account are discontinued, the member will be classed as inactive and during such status will be entitled to no credits other than interest.

If the ministerial standing of an ordained member in the Reformed Church is terminated before entering upon an age or disability retirement annuity, no further payments shall be received by the Reformed Church Annuity Fund of his

or her account. However, the entire accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments may be left to the credit of the member, to be increased thereafter by interest additions and to be applied to provide at a later date annuity benefits as herein set forth.

If the ministerial standing of an ordained member is terminated before entering upon an age or disability retirement annuity, the member may elect to withdraw the accumulations of the member payments; but the other accumulations to the member's credit from church payments shall then be released and credited to the Contingent Account provided for in Section 11. This release shall not apply to payments made to the Member Account after January 1, 1975.

If a lay member withdraws from the service of the church before entering upon an age or disability retirement annuity, no further payments shall be received by the Reformed Church Annuity Fund on the member's account. However, the entire accumulations to the credit of the member from the member payments and the church payments may be left to the credit of the member, to be increased thereafter by interest additions and to be applied to provide at a later date annuity benefits as herein set forth.

Upon the termination of the ministerial standing of an ordained member or termination of employment of a lay member with the Reformed Church in America, the total amount in both church and member accounts credited to the member may be transferred to another pension or retirement program, providing the program meets such withdrawal and benefit requirements as the Board may from time to time determine.

Section 9—Additional Optional Payments

Subject to the approval of the Board, the member may pay into the Reformed Church Annuity Fund, or there may be paid in on the member's account, such optional amounts as the members may elect, in addition to the regular member and church payments, to be increased by interest additions as provided in Section 3 for the purpose of increasing the member's annuity benefits.

Section 10—Annuity Payments

All annuity payments shall be made in monthly installments at the end of the month.

In the event that the accumulations available for providing an annuity when effective are not sufficient to provide an amount equal to or greater than five dollars per month, the Board shall have the right to make a settlement in cash in lieu of such annuity benefits.

Section 11—Contingent Account

The Contingent Account shall consist of all credits from any sources released under the rules of the Reformed Church Annuity Fund together with contributions, gifts, legacies and funds from any other sources, which may be applied to provide additional benefits or applied in such other way as the Board may determine.

ARTICLE IV

DIVISION II—GENERAL FUND

Through this division there shall be administered (a) the supplemental pensions, annuities, assistance and children's benefits formerly administered through the Widows' Fund, the Ministerial Pension Fund, the Disabled Ministers' Fund and the Children's Christmas Appeal Fund, and (b) the benefits in illness or accident and death benefits provided under the Insurance Department in accordance with the rules as herein set forth.

WIDOW'S FUND DEPARTMENT

The benefits payable in this department shall be those formerly provided through the Widows' Fund.

Eligibility

1. The Widows' Fund was closed to new members by the General Synod in 1925. The beneficiaries shall be those currently on the annuity roll, those members retired in good standing, or their widows, when they become eligible for annuity benefits.

Benefits

2. Benefits to be paid to members and their widows shall be the maximum benefits prescribed under the original plan, as follows:

(a) To a member disabled by sickness, accident, or age—$200 per year

(b) To a widow of a member—$200 per year

3. A widow of a member shall be entitled to a full benefit from the date of the death of her husband, upon making application to the Board on the form provided for the purpose. If the husband was receiving an annuity prior to his death, the benefit paid to him shall be continued in full amount to the widow.

4. A widow who remarries forfeits her right to any benefits from the date of remarriage.

5. A widow shall be entitled to an annuity only if her marriage to a member occured prior to his retirement from active service.

6. In case of disability after retirement from active service, a member may apply for a disability annuity.

7. If the member applies for a disability annuity after retirement from active service his application, together with a medical statement from a physician, shall be sent to the Board for its consideration and action.

8. Upon termination of disability, the annuity shall cease.

9. All benefits shall be paid on a semi-annual basis, in advance.

Termination of Membership

10. No further contributions shall be credited to this department out of the receipts from the General Benevolence Budget of the Reformed Church, unless

in the course of time subsequent valuations of the benefits payable show the balances in the Principal Account and the income thereof, to be insufficient to meet the benefit payments as they fall due, assuming both principal and income to be expendable as well as legacies and individual gifts creditable to this department.

MINISTERIAL PENSION DEPARTMENT

The supplemental pension benefits payable through this department shall be those formerly provided through the Ministerial Pension Fund.

Eligibility

Those eligible shall be ordained ministers of the Reformed Church in America and General Program Council missionaries, who meet the following requirements:

a. For a full supplemental pension benefit must be sixty-five years of age or over upon retirement.

b. Must have maintained ministerial standing or employment in the Reformed Church in America for at least twenty-five years, of which the last ten years must have been immediately prior to retirement.

c. Those who have maintained ministerial standing or employment in the Reformed Church for less than twenty-five years, but for at least fifteen years, will be eligible for a proportionate share of the supplemental pension benefits, provided that at least the last ten years of service in the Reformed Church occurred immediately prior to retirement. In calculating the amount of such proportionate share a fraction shall be used, the numerator of which shall be the number of years of service in the Reformed Church and the denominator, twenty-five.

d. An ordained minister of General Program Council missionary who has completed forty years of service in the Reformed Church, with at least the last ten years of such service immediately prior to retirement, shall be eligible for a full supplemental pension benefit, irrespective of age.

e. In unusual circumstances, the Board may approve a supplemental pension benefit.

An ordained minister or General Program Council missionary who has retired after reaching sixty years of age, but before reaching sixty-five years of age, and who has served in the Reformed Church for less than forty years, may elect to receive an early retirement supplemental pension benefit, beginning as of the date of such retirement in a reduced amount which will be the actuarial equivalent as determined by the Board, of the pension otherwise payable on retirement at sixty-five years of age. In determining the amount of such early retirement supplemental pension benefit, only the years of service to the date of retirement shall be taken into consideration.

Once a supplemental pension benefit is established on a reduced basis, the same rate of reduction would apply upon retirement in the future if the person returned to active service and retired again at a later date.

Benefits

1. For those who are eligible according to the above, the amount of supple-

mental pension benefits shall be as listed below for those who qualify in the following years:

1975	$1,000
1976	900
1977	800
1978	700
1979	600
1980	500
1981	400
1982	300
1983	200
1984	100

No further supplemental pension benefits shall be paid to those who would otherwise be eligible in 1985 and thereafter.

Termination of Supplemental Pension Benefits

2. If active service status is resumed, supplemental pension benefits will cease.

3. If ministerial standing in the Reformed Church is terminated, supplemental pension benefits will cease.

Widows' Department

4. This department within the original Ministerial Pension Fund was established by the General Synod in 1932 and was closed in 1940.

5. Those widows of ordained ministers of the Reformed Church who were beneficiaries of this department prior to its closing by the General Synod in 1940 will continue to receive benefits in such amount as may be determined from time to time by the Board.

ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENT

The benefits payable in this department shall be those formerly provided through the Disabled Ministers' Fund.

Eligibility

1. An ordained minister or General Program Council missionary of the Reformed Church shall be eligible for assistance benefits in the event of total and presumably permanent disability while in active service, with resultant loss of salary.

2. The surviving spouse of an ordained minister or General Program Council missionary of the Reformed Church shall be eligible for assistance benefits when financial need exists.

3. The surviving spouse of an ordained minister or General Program Council missionary of the Reformed Church shall be eligible for a death benefit immediately upon the death of the spouse, on the basis set forth in paragraph following.

4. Dependent minor children of deceased ordained ministers or General Program Council missionaries of the Reformed Church shall be eligible for assis-

tance benefits when financial need exists. Such benefits may be continued, at the discretion of the Board, in any cases where the children are studying in institutions of learning.

5. Eligibility for benefits from this department shall be limited to those ordained ministers or General Program Council missionaries of the Reformed Church and to the families of those ordained ministers or General Program missionaries who shall, with their churches, be members in good standing in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund. However, should a situation arise in which an ordained minister or General Program Council missionary upon incurring disability while in active service, or upon death, is adjudged not a member in good standing in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund, the member, upon disability, or the surviving spouse upon the member's death, may apply to the member's Classis for special consideration. If the Classis then by a two-thirds or more majority votes to recommend special consideration of the case by the Board, such recommendation will be considered and acted upon by the Board, the Board reserving final authority in the matter.

Amount of Benefits

6. The amount of the assistance benefits in all cases shall be determined by the Board on the following basis:

(a) The facts presented to the Board.

(b) The resources available from the invested principal funds of this department, and from a share of the receipts from the General Benevolence Budget of the Reformed Church.

7. The amount of the death benefit to be paid to the surviving spouse of an ordained minister or General Program Council missionary of the Reformed Church shall be as the Board may from time to time determine.

8. Temporary emergency benefits may be paid to ordained ministers and General Program Council missionaries of the Reformed Church, retired from active service, and to surviving spouses of ordained ministers and General Program Council missionaries at the discretion of the Board in such amounts as may be determined by the Board.

Application for Benefits

9. An application of a person disabled in active service must be accompanied by a medical statement from a physician and submitted to the Board for its consideration and action.

10. An application of the surviving spouse must be submitted to the Board for its consideration and action.

11. A new application may be requested by the Board annually in order that it may keep informed of the financial need in all instances and thus be better able to determine whether grants should be increased or decreased; thus also affording the applicant an opportunity for full expression in the light of possible financial changes.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS APPEAL DEPARTMENT

Special gifts for orphans at Christmas time, or at times of emergency, shall be provided through this department out of the receipts of the special annual Christmas appeal.

Eligibility

1. Benefits from this department are payable to or on behalf of a dependent minor orphan whose parent was an ordained minister of the Reformed Church at the time of death.

2. Benefits may be continued, at the discretion of the Board, in any case where the orphan is studying in an institution of learning.

3. Benefits are payable only where financial need exists.

4. Eligibility for benefits from this department shall be limited to those families where the ordained ministers, with their churches, were members in good standing in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund. However, should a situation arise in which a minister was not in good standing in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund, application may be made to the Classis of which the minister was a member for special consideration. If the Classis then by a two-thirds or more majority votes to recommend special consideration of the case by the Board, such recommendation will be considered and acted upon by the Board, the Board reserving final authority in the matter. However, in instances where an ordained minister had attained age 50 by January 1, 1955 benefits from this department shall be payable regardless of the minister's membership or good standing in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund prior to death.

5. The amount of the benefits shall be determined from time to time by the Board on the basis of need and of income available for the purpose.

INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

For ordained ministers, General Program Council missionaries, and lay employees of the Reformed Church in America, the Board of Pensions shall maintain various insurance programs, including medical, long term disability, and life coverages.

The benefits and administration of these plans are financed through premium payments in amounts determined from time to time by the insurance company and the Board. All rules and provisions governing these insurance plans are stated in detail in the Master Policies issued by the insurance company or companies retained by the Board.

COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE

The following matters were referred to the Committee of Reference by the 1975 General Synod:

NON-PAYMENT OF CLASSICAL ASSESSMENTS BY CLASSES OF CALIFORNIA AND MID-HUDSON

The GSEC, acting as a Committee of Reference, noted that the Classis of California and the Classis of Mid-Hudson did not pay their respective synodical assessments as of the opening date of Synod. In consultation with the delegates from each classis, it was determined that internal classical problems caused this non-payment in both instances. The delegates were unaware of this fact and apologized for themselves and their classes.

The respective classical delegations each agreed, on behalf of their classis, that these assessments would be paid in full not later than June 30, 1975. Based on that agreement the delegations were allowed to retain their seats at the 1975 General Synod.

The Committee of Reference discussed ways and means of preventing a recurrence of this problem.

CR-1. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod sustain the seating of the delegates of the Classes of California and Mid-Hudson. (ADOPTED)

The Committee of Reference, in reviewing the situation with the Classes of California and Mid-Hudson, feels that in light of Overture 1 (calling for the new payment schedule of classical assessments) it wants to enforce the long standing General Synod policy that delegates are properly seated only when assessments are paid.

CR-2. We, therefore, RECOMMEND that the requirement for seating of delegates is payment of those classical assessments current to May 15 of that year. (ADOPTED)

GENERAL SYNOD EVERY TWO YEARS

The following recommendation from the floor of General Synod was considered by the Committee of Reference:

"That the General Synod meet next in 1977 at the designated place; and further,

that in the interim the GSEC be responsible for administering the work of the denomination as they usually do between sessions; and further,

that the $100,000 plus usually allotted to the 1976 session be given to Church World Service; and further,

that this alternate year structure be observed for 10 years, guaranteeing approximately a half million dollars to the food crisis; and further,

that all reports voted due at the 1976 session be deferred until 1977."

CR-3. We RECOMMEND no action. (ADOPTED)

GSEC: Appendix 1

SALARY ADMINISTRATION

Background Information on Salary Administration

The General Synod of 1962 (MGS 1962, p. 277) adopted a recommendation "that the President of General Synod appoint a committee of seven, selected from the membership of the Executive Committee of the General Synod. The Committee shall be composed of four pastors of congregations and three laymen and these shall be representative of the various areas of the church. This committee shall study the adequacy and equity of the salaries and benefits which constitute the remuneration of the Executive and other secretaries of the Boards and the Officers of the Synod; and shall report to the General Synod of 1963 the results of this study with recommendations."

The "Report of the Special Committee of the Study of Salaries of Executive Secretaries" to General Synod is found in MGS 1963, pages 296-299. Upon their recommendation the 1963 General Synod voted that the "boards and agencies classify all positions, both at the executive level and below, and adopt uniform salary scales covering the classifications," and charged the Executive Committee's Subcommittee on Salary Study with implementing the action.

Two meetings were held by the Special Committee during 1963-64 with representatives of the boards and agencies. Acting upon their suggestion, the General Synod Executive Committee approved an *annual meeting of the presidents and treasurers of all boards and agencies* to be held at the call of the President of General Synod.

The GSEC RECOMMENDED in June 1964, and General Synod ADOPTED, the following: (MGS 1964, pp. 165-166).

1. That General Synod approve an *annual meeting of presidents and chairmen of finance committees of all boards,* at the call of the President of General Synod, to confer on matters relating to salaries as outlined in the recommendations approved by the General Synod of 1963 and any other joint concerns of the boards;
2. That the boards and agencies be commended for their cooperation in working out employment policies looking toward more equitable compensation to their executives and other employees, and be charged with the implementation of the program as approved by the 1963 General Synod.

In November 1964 the General Synod Executive Committee took the following action: (64-128).

> It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the Office of Stated Clerk be instructed to secure necessary information and to maintain the file for use by the annual meeting of presidents and chairmen of finance committees of all boards, at the call of the President of General Synod, to confer on matters relating to salaries of executive secretaries and any other joint concerns of the boards.

Following up the 1964 General Synod action, meetings of the Board Presidents and Treasurers/Finance Committee Chairmen were held to discuss executive salaries in March 1965, February 1966 and January and September 1967. In January 1967,

it was decided that a sub-committee of four would meet "to explore and study the salary structure of the executives in depth and to come with specific recommendations" to the September 1967 meeting of the full committee. The sub-committee met four times during the year and made recommendations to the full committee on September 27, 1967.

The GSEC at its November 1967 meeting received the report of the Executive Salary Study Committee and approved the recommendations with several minor amendments.

Subsequently, in April and June 1968 the GSEC received recommendations from Edward N. Hay and Associates regarding the administration of salaries which are included in this appendix for information. At its meeting in June 1968 (Action 68-121), the GSEC approved the "Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges for Executives" that were recommended by Edward N. Hay and Associates, as follows:

> After extended discussion, it was moved, seconded and CARRIED to adopt the following recommendations as reported by the chairman:
>
> a. That GSEC approve the "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges" submitted by Edward N. Hay and Associates (to the April 16-18, 1968, meeting) as a guideline for employment of personnel and payment of salaries; and further
>
> b. That the compensation of each executive employee be reviewed annually by the General Secretary, the Secretary for Program and the GSEC Executive Salary Sub-Committee, and approved by the GSEC; and further
>
> c. That the Fringe Benefits program, as adopted by the GSEC at the November 14-15, 1967, meeting, Action 67-216, be continued; and further
>
> d. That GSEC appoint four members of the GSEC to serve as the Executive Salary Sub-Committee and that the appointments be made by the chairman (Action 68-121).
>
> Later in the sessions, Chairman Beckering appointed the following:
>
> Leslie K. Waggoner, Chairman
> Wilbur L. DeRevere
> Charles J. Boonstra
> Maurice A. Te Paske
>
> It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that these appointments be approved (Action 68-122).

Subsequent to June 1968, changes of staff positions required a revised "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges of Executives." In September 1968 the GSEC adopted a suggested "Procedure for the Administration of Salaries." In addition, it approved the functioning of the Liaison Committee as the Executive Salary Committee for the GSEC.

Finally, subsequent to the September 1968 meeting of the GSEC, Salary Mid-

points and Ranges have been prepared for the administrative and office staffs. The procedure has been redone so that the entire package fits together in a better way, but there were no content changes. The memo on "Procedure for Administration of Salaries" and the Salary Midpoints and Ranges for Executives are included in this appendix for information.

Procedure for Administration of Salaries
(Adopted by GSEC, September 1968, Action 68-173)

Introduction

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

I. EXECUTIVE STAFF

General Secretary

— Salary is to be determined by *Liaison Committee*
— In consultation with the *GSEC*
— In accordance with "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges for *Executives*" and the "RCA Salary Increase Guide for *Executives*"

Executive Secretary

— Salary is to be determined by the *General Secretary*
— In consultation with the *Liaison Committee*
— In accordance with "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges for *Executives*" and the "RCA Salary Increase Guide for *Executives*"

Secretary for Operations, Secretary for Program Interpretation, Coordinator of Human Resources, Secretaries for Regional Services, Secretary for World Ministries, Secretary for Church Planning and Development:

— Salaries are to be determined by *Executive Secretary*
— In consultation with the *General Secretary* and the *Liaison Committee*
— In accordance with "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges for *Executives*" and the "RCA Salary Increase Guide for *Executives*"

Other Executives

— Salaries are to be determined by the *Executive* to whom the "Other Executive" is accountable
— In consultation with the *Executive Secretary*
— In accordance with "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges for *Executives*" and the "RCA Salary Increase Guide for *Executives*"
— In turn, the *Executive Secretary* to consult with the *General Secretary*
— The *General Secretary* to MAKE AN ANNUAL REPORT of such decisions to the *Liaison Committee*

NOTE: The "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges for *Executives*" and the "RCA Salary Increase Guide for *Executives*" REQUIRE GSEC APPROVAL for any changes upon recommendation.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

— Salaries are to be determined by the *Executive* to whom the Administrative Staff member is accountable

— In consultation with the Coordinator of the Office of Human Resources

— In accordance with the "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoint and Ranges for *Administrative Staff*" and the "RCA Salary Increase Guide for *Administrative Staff*"

— The *General Secretary* is to be INFORMED OF ALL CHANGES and is to MAKE AN ANNUAL REPORT to the *Staff Council* and to the *Liaison Committee*

NOTE: The *Executive Secretary* is RESPONSIBLE FOR DECISIONS ON CHANGES to the "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges for *Administrative Staff*" and the "RCA Salary Increase Guide for *Administrative Staff*" in consultation with the *Committee on Human Resources and the Staff Council.*

III. OFFICE STAFF

— Salaries are to be determined by the *Work Supervisor* to whom the Office Staff person is accountable

— In consultation with the appropriate executive(s)

— In accordance with "RCA Recommended Salary Midpoints and Ranges for *Office Staff*" and the "RCA Salary Increase Guide for *Office Staff*"

— The *Executive Secretary* is to be INFORMED OF ALL CHANGES through appropriate channels and is to MAKE AN ANNUAL REPORT to the *Staff Council*

— The *Coordinator of Human Resources* is RESPONSIBLE FOR DECISION ON CHANGES to the "RCA Recommended Salary Increase Guide for *Office Staff*" in consultation with the *Executive Secretary* and the *Staff Council*

NOTE: Changes in the "PROCEDURE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF SALARIES" (including the above I. EXECUTIVE STAFF, II. ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, and III. OFFICE STAFF) are to be APPROVED BY THE GSEC.

GSEC Approved Salary Midpoints and Ranges—April 1975
(Includes Housing Allowance)

Executive Staff

CLASSIFICATION	POSITIONS	LOW (80%)	MID-POINT (100%)	HIGH (120%)
I A	General Secretary	20,150	25,200	30,200
I B	Executive Secretary	17,700	22,100	26,500
II	Operations, Secretary Program Interpretation, Secretary Human Resources, Coordinator Regional Services, Secretary World Ministries, Secretary	13,750	17,200	20,650

	Church Planning and Development, Secretary Executive Director, Reformed Church Women, Adult Voluntary Services			
III	Information Services, Secretary Treasurer Development Officer for RCA-related Institutions Assistant Treasurer Development, Secretary Parish Life and American Indian Ministries, Secretary Evangelism and Renewal, Secretary Black Council, Executive Director Social Ministries, Secretary Asian Ministries, Secretary Media Coordinator; Director of TRAVARCA New Life and Evangelism, Secretary Production Coordinator Young Adult Ministries and Christian Nurture, Secretary	12,800	16,000	19,200
		(85%)	(100%)	(115%)
IV	Assistant in Development Services Assistant Treasurer of Board of Pensions Consultant for Church Tutorial Programs Associate for Youth Life	9,850	11,600	13,300

Recommendation from the Liaison Committee

A. *Procedure for Publicizing Salaries and/or Salary Ranges*

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

1. *Publicity of Executive Salary Ranges*

Under former salary administration policies, the Executive position determined the salary level and adjustments thereto were made as the result of cost-of-living changes, general wage levels, etc., more than on the basis of individual merit. There was no provision or machinery for the evaluation of qualifications, background, experience and performance such as we now have formulated, and to our mind the publication of salaries had no personal

flavor. In such circumstances it seems to us no valid objection could be raised to the practice of making executives salaries public.

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

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

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

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

GSEC: Appendix 2

PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Challenge and Response

Our work in PAC is based on certain basic convictions. Let us mention three:

—The story of the mission program of the Reformed Church in America is worth telling and worthy of support.

—Let people know what the urgent needs are and many will respond.

—In addition to letting people know what is happening, help them catch a vision of the greater things which, by God's grace, can happen and they will be inspired to even greater efforts.

These convictions have been wonderfully confirmed during this past year of 1974:

—The ongoing program of our denomination received solid support. The General Program Council has ended the year in the black.

—Special needs, particularly in the areas of emergency relief and world hunger, have brought an outpouring of sacrificial gifts.

—The challenge to advance in mission was not merely accepted as a good idea, but was turned into a reality.

Services and Resources

One way to review the activities of PAC staff members is to look at the services they provide and the resources they produce. Perhaps these terms sound a bit cold and formal. In actual practice, however, they give promotion and communication a quality of aliveness and partnership.

Promotion becomes more than just fund raising when the Secretaries for Development, or—as they are often referred to—the "development men", visit pastors and their consistories or whole congregations to talk very concretely about what the Lord is doing through the Reformed Church in America and how all of us can become partners in mission.

Communication becomes something more than PR or a one-way street when we realize that beyond the printed page, the film, and the radio voice there are interrelationships which are enriched through personal contact, correspondence, and a desire to listen to each other.

We offer the following list of services and resources for your information, but also as an invitation to work with us in the task of developing a greater understanding of what our church is doing and increased support for an expanding ministry.

Speakers

Every year we receive hundreds of requests for people who can tell the story of RCA missions. Missionaries on furlough, retired missionaries, volunteers, and staff members are eager to respond to such appeals. The Speakers Bureau attempts to coordinate the requests in order to economize on rising travel costs. We are particularly happy when a number of churches sponsor an event jointly, because it enables us to reach more people for the money spent.

As of July 1, 1975 the Speakers Bureau will be handled by Mr. Harry Pofahl and Mrs. Doris Ten Elshof in the Grandville, Michigan office.

Workshops and Seminars

Are you planning a stewardship workshop? Or would you like to discuss ways and means to improve your Every Member Canvass? The Secretaries for Development are willing to help.

The Media Coordinator is available for some workshops on the utilization of films, radio, and Cable T.V. PAC staff also participate in retreats and mission festivals. Again, for the sake of good stewardship of both time and money, we

encourage churches to sponsor such events jointly with other congregations whenever possible.

PIM Shares and Projects

Through Partnership-in-Mission shares congregations assume responsibility for a part of the total cost of keeping our missionary personnel in the field. An effort is also made to establish a relationship between missionaries and their supporting congregations through letters and visits during furlough.

The GPC supports many exciting mission challenges in which RCA missionary personnel are not directly involved but which constitute a vital part of our total mission program. With more and more of our missionaries fully underwritten, these projects take on ever greater importance. We urge congregations to invest in such projects, which include Christian work among the tribal mountain people of Taiwan, scholarships for minority youth, motor scooters for evangelists in India, aid for the church in South Sudan, and numerous others.

Our Secretaries for Development will be delighted to discuss PIM shares and Projects with you.

HOTLINE and Hotline of the Air

The HOTLINE mailing list keeps on growing. You too can receive this bi-weekly newsletter free of charge. The radio program *Hotline of the Air* is now heard in the following States: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Michigan, Iowa. A list of participating stations is available on request.

Mission of the Month

This constantly expanding program is used by some 300 RCA congregations as a tool for mission education and stewardship support. A different field is featured every month. Resource packets are part of the program (posters, envelopes, articles, "Minute for Mission", fact sheet, youth page, etc.). *Church Herald* articles and ads further reinforce the total impact of the program. We recommend this as an *extra gift approach* to missionary giving. Local churches can adjust the program to their individual needs.

Link of Love

This is another extra mile program, which some churches use in conjunction with Day's Wage for Christ. The emphasis in the Link of Love program is on family participation. How can we and our families become a special link in that great chain of love which spans the earth through Christian mission?

TRAVARCA

A revised film catalog has been published and has been sent to all RCA churches. Write TRAVARCA if you can use an extra copy.

In addition to the old system of per title rental for films, a new subscription system has been introduced which allows a congregation an unlimited number of films for an annual subscription fee of $35.00 and a $2.50 (plus postage) service

charge per film. This new approach has already meant a substantial increase in film rental.

YOU and the General Program Council

A new folder has been produced which explains how the General Program Council is organized and what it does. Quantities for distribution among RCA members are available free of charge.

Mission on the Move brochures

Attractive folders are available on Annville, Brewton, Japan, and Arabia. A brochure on India is in the process of being produced. For American Indian Ministries, Mexico, Taiwan, and Ethiopia we have other resources available.

Maps and Fact Sheets

Maps and Fact (information) sheets on the various fields of mission will give you a brief outline of what the RCA is doing and where. These can be used for educational and display purposes.

Acquaintance Sheets

We are constantly updating our supply of acquaintance sheets. These pieces, which can be used for display and bulletin inserts, feature photographs of RCA missionaries, some biographical data, and information on the work they are engaged in.

World Mission Planning Brochure

We hope this will be widely used in the church as a study document. It raises questions about developments in mission and about future directions of RCA mission programs. It has a feedback page, so that you can voice your opinions about present RCA programs as well as future directions.

DVBS Mission Emphasis

Summer provides an opportune time for children to be creatively involved in Christian education. A greater awareness about our church's mission program should be part of that education. With this in mind, a mission resource packet is being prepared by Mr. and Mrs. Peter Theune in order to encourage giving to RCA mission projects through Vacation Bible Schools. Brewton and Japan are featured in 1975. If you are not participating this year, perhaps you will want to consider it for next summer.

Posters

We have a large supply of beautiful posters with the motto "A Heritage of Mission. . . . A Mission of Hope." They are available to you free of charge. Perfect for your church's bulletin board or for use during a special congregational occasion.

Check your Plan Calendar for other items

The plan calendar contains a wealth of information: names, addresses, telephone numbers, and order cards for specific materials. There you will find further

suggestions on bulletins, One Great Hour of Sharing and Worldwide Communion materials, resources produced by Reformed Church Women, etc.

Promotion and Communication Directory

Secretaries for Development:

Mr. Roland Ackerman
Eastern Metropolitan Center, RCA
475 Riverside Drive, 18th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10027

also:
Northeastern Regional Center, RCA
1790 Grand Boulevard
Schenectady, N.Y. 12309

Mr. Harry Hakken
Western Regional Center, RCA
421 North Brookhurst, Suite 218
Anaheim, California 92801

Mr. Harry Pofahl
Midwestern Regional Center, RCA
Box 247
Grandville, Michigan 49418

For information about Partnership-in-Mission, Projects, and various stewardship concerns, contact the development man in your region. Mr. Stuart Post works particularly with Annville Institute and Southern Normal School in the area of grants and support from outside the RCA. He can be contacted at the Grandville Office.

Mr. Hakken is in charge of the Link of Love program. After July 1, 1975, Mr. Pofahl will arrange speaking engagements.

The Rev. Isaac C. Rottenberg (Room 1810, 475 Riverside Drive) coordinates the work of the communications team. General inquiries, particularly related to policies and programs, should be directed to him.

Mrs. Lois Joice (Room 1807, 475 Riverside Drive) serves as editor of HOT-LINE, carries responsibility for the Mission of the Month program, designs ads, and relates to the secular press. She also writes articles and is available for some speaking engagements.

The Rev. Peter Paulsen (Box 247, Grandville, Michigan 49418) is the Media Coordinator. All inquiries relating to celluloid and electronic media should be directed to him.

Miss Lorraine Heitmann is on sick leave.

Miss Grace Ridder is in charge of the RCA Distribution Center (18525 Torrence Ave., Lansing, Illinois 60438). Many materials are being sent from that address. During the present transition period, some resources are still being stocked in the New York Office. These include the following items: Mission on the Move brochures, Maps and Fact Sheets, posters and Acquaintance sheets as well as various other materials on our mission fields.

Mr. Hugh Gambaro (Room 1805, 475 Riverside Drive) is Production Coordinator, and orders for materials stocked in New York should be sent to him.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Theune (Eastern Metropolitan Regional Center, RCA, 475 Riverside Drive, 18th Floor) prepare the DVBS Mission Emphasis materials.

GSEC: Appendix 3

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance was established by the 1966 General Synod upon the recommendation of the General Synod Executive Committee. The purposes for establishing the Committee were to integrate the various accounting systems and administrative procedures.

The years since 1966 have been spent in carrying out the original mandates given to the Committee.

The Committee now functions with two sub-committees. They are: Investments, and Auditing/Banking and Legal.

INVESTMENTS

The Committee on Finance manages the Investment Portfolios of the Board of Direction, the General Program Council, the General Fund of the Board of Pensions, New Brunswick Seminary, and Western Seminary. In addition, several local churches and Classes have placed their assets in the Commingled Fund managed by the Committee.

Investment management is carried on through investment counsel. The investment counselors have discretionary investment authority, within the guidelines provided by the Committee on Finance. From 1968 through 1972 the United States Trust Co., New York, was the sole investment counselor employed by the Committee. During 1972 plans were made to divide the Commingled Fund into one million dollar segments and employ three additional investment counselors. The three counselors selected were: Old Kent Bank and Trust Co., Grand Rapids; N.N. Investment Service, Milwaukee; and Wright Investors Service, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The Committee receives monthly reports from each of its investment firms. The reports show the transactions for the period, the present value of the portfolio and compare the performance of the portfolio to standard market indicators—like the Dow Jones average and Standard and Poors. Representatives of U.S. Trust present report at the quarterly meetings of the committee, and the other counselors meet with the committee semi-annually.

The two year performance of the four investment counselors for the Commingled Fund has been:

N.N. Investment Services: —11.18%
Old Kent Bank and Trust: —20.54%
Wright Investors Services: —15.14%
U.S. Trust Co.: —24.75%

Dow Jones Industrials: —23.58%
Standard and Poors: —26.35%

The Sub-Committee on Investments met with the four counselors at its February meeting. After a careful review of the two year performance of the four, it was decided to continue the present arrangements through 1974. Beginning with Jan-

uary 1975 new arrangements will be made for the management of portfolios committed to the Committee.

ACCOUNTING

When the Committee was formed in 1967, separate accounting systems were being maintained for: the Board of World Missions; the Board of North American Missions; the Board of Education; the Board of Pensions; the Stewardship Council and the Board of Direction. Each separate system performed its own services for: receiving income and issuing receipts; issuing checks for expenses; maintaining bank accounts and maintaining a full set of accounting records. The Committee was charged with the task of integrating these accounting systems in order to provide more efficient services and reduction of costs.

Several intermediate steps were taken to implement the integration. Merging the Boards of World Mission, North American Mission and Education and the Stewardship Council to form the General Program Council made those various systems the natural place to begin. Subsequent developments have placed the Board of Pensions and the Board of Direction within the task of the Committee and its staff.

Beginning in the summer of 1972 the staff developed a computerized accounting system to serve all the units related to the Committee on Finance. Several principles were developed to govern the design of the system:

(1) the accounting system should be compatible with policy board decision-making systems and staff administrative systems;

(2) the accounting system should produce, from the initial input for receipts and disbursements, all financial reports and records required for the policy bodies, the staff, tax reporting, audit purposes; etc.

(3) the accounting system should have the potential for serving all of the organizations served by the Finance staff.

The initial phases of the system were implemented in March of 1973. Initially, because its transactions are the most numerous, only the General Program accounting was placed on the system. The General Synod and the Board of Pensions were placed on the system in 1974. The Reformed Church Women voted, in the fall of 1974, to join the system. Their financial transactions were added to the system on January 1, 1975.

The process of integrating the financial systems of the national agencies of the Reformed Church, begun in 1967, has almost been completed. Several major benefits have been gained from this integration:

(1) the finance staff has been radically reduced. Since 1972 there has been a 50% reduction in the finance staff. Prior to 1972 several reductions had already been made from the 1967 level of staff employed for financial purposes.

(2) the cost of equipment and staff for record keeping has been kept constant for three years. Equipment and staff costs in 1972, the last year prior to implementing the computer system, were $45,000. The total cost for the 1974 computer contract was $51,600. In addition to services performed in 1972, the following are now performed: maintaining individual Contributory

Annuity Fund accounts; maintaining insurance records and accounts; maintaining the accounts of the Reformed Church Distribution Center; maintaining records for 26,000 people instead of 8,000.

(3) the system, even at peak volume periods, functions promptly. For example, the avalanche of December receipts have previously created major delay problems. For 1974, the postmark for 1974 receipts was January 6. By January 14 all monies were deposited in the bank and the information had been prepared for the computer service. All receipts had been printed and returned by January 16. The receipts had all been mailed by January 21.

(4) banking procedures have been simplified producing greater utilization of cash. Previously, between twenty-five and thirty checking accounts were being used. One major checking account serves the present system. This makes it possible to have one small balance for all the organizations. The balance of cash is invested for maximum earning. In 1974 approximately $75,000 was earned for the R.C.A. through this efficient, careful management of cash.

(5) the system provides detailed reports for all staff.

Because all financial records have been integrated into one system, the Committee on Finance began and completed procedures for engaging one auditor. By engaging one auditor for 1975 and subsequent years, the Committee has been able to reduce costs from $32,500 for 1973 to a guaranteed annual maximum of $23,000 for 1975 and 1976.

INSURANCE

The Committee on Finance also provides insurance counsel to the staff. Property, travel, liability, etc. insurance are periodically reviewed by the Committee. The last extensive review was conducted in 1971. A major review of insurance will be conducted at the October 1975 meeting.

Mr. Vernon Poest, a Senior Vice President of the Herman Miller Co. in Zeeland, Michigan, has served on the Committee since its formation in 1967 and has been its chairman since 1970. The Committee and the Reformed Church have richly benefited from his professional competence and personal commitment.

Two members, Roscoe Ingalls, Jr., and the Rev. Leonard Kalkwarf, complete their terms this June. Both have contributed greatly to the work of the Committee.

GSEC: Appendix IV

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The work of the Office of Human Resources goes on quietly and behind the scenes, which is consistent with the confidential and semiconfidential nature of good personnel practice. One of the more visible aspects of OHR activity is the profile system for helping ministers find new opportunities and churches find pastors. This year, as before, hundreds of minister's profiles have been sent to churches and other agencies with staffing needs. However, it is also true that the system is "tight" in that the numbers of those seeking different vocational opportunities far

exceed the opportunities themselves. This is a matter which has been given serious attention in meetings of the Advisory Committee to the Office of Human Resources, the Council of Field Secretaries, and the Board of Theological Education. Throughout the year, increased attention has been given to discovering short-term and long-term opportunities for RCA clergy. Among these has been an increasingly active relationship with the National Council of Churches' Office of International Congregations.

One of the objectives set by OHR during this year was the formation of clergy support groups through which ministers in proximity to each other meet to deal with felt needs which may range from loneliness to professional development. In cooperation with the Clergy Support Consultation, an Eastern RCA consortium in the Synods of Albany, New York and New Jersey, 18 Classes have sent representatives to meetings designed to lead to the establishment of relevant clergy groups in as many local areas as possible.

Recruitment is a continuing responsibility of the OHR. During the year recruitment and screening has been going on for new missionary personnel in the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Taiwan. Following the April meeting of the General Program Council, recruitment began for new missionaries to serve in Mexico, Oman, and Japan as well. In addition, reassignment of missionary personnel has also been an OHR responsibility. During the months of January and February, more than 60 interviews were conducted for staffing the 1975 Summer English Experience and Intern in Mission programs in Taiwan.

Counseling services continue to be supported through contractual arrangements with the Rev. Leonard De Beer in the New York Area, Dr. Arthur Riewald of Psychological Studies and Consultation Inc. in Michigan, and through a cooperative program with the Synod of Albany. The opportunity for career evaluation at a Career Development Center continues to be available to all RCA clergy and their wives.

Second careers and financial planning workshops have been held for clergy and their wives in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Particular mention should be made of the leadership in these events by Mr. Lance Banninga of South Holland, Illinois.

The OHR also provides staff services to General Synod's Nomination Committee, the Minority Education Fund, the New Jersey Beneficiary Funds, and the Student Loan Revolving Fund.

The Adult Voluntary Services Program, for which OHR maintains a contract with Dr. Beth Marcus, Director of Reformed Church Women, has again had a year of significant accomplishment. 138 volunteers from throughout the Reformed Church filled assignments in North America, Asia and Africa. Their accumulated time was 22 years, 4 months.

1976 BUDGET FOR GENERAL SYNOD MISSION

The G.S.E.C. has the responsibility of recommending a Mission Budget for 1976 to the 1975 General Synod. The G.S. Mission Budget includes: the Trustees of the General Program Council; the Board of Pensions and Kirkside; New Brunswick and Western Seminaries; and Central, Hope and Northwestern Colleges.

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

(1) establish the General Synod's priorities for the various national mission programs of the R.C.A.;

(2) provide guidance for local churches as they review their giving to the programs of the General Synod;

(3) co-ordinate the fund raising planning of the participants in the General Synod Mission budget;

(4) provide mission income expectations for the participants in the General Synod Mission budget.

Budget projections begin with a review of previous experience. Actual General Synod Mission giving from 1968 through 1974 has been:

	Total	Increase (Decrease)
1968	$4,616,581	
1969	4,413,757	$(202,824)
1970	4,271,896	(141,861)
1971	4,211,080	(60,816)
1972	4,313,999	102,919
1973	4,796,475	482,476
1974	5,481,430	684,955

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

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

	Total	Designated	Undesignated
1968	$4,616,581	$3,916,727	$699,854
1969	4,413,757	3,849,504	564,253
1970	4,271,896	3,812,316	459,580
1971	4,211,080	3,739,375	471,705
1972	4,313,999	4,012,333	301,666
1973	4,796,475	4,585,213	211,262
1974	5,481,430	5,304,837	176,593

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

the budget, it seems feasible to project a continued increase in the G.S. Mission budget.

Appendix I gives a third schedule. This schedule shows the designated giving received by each of the units between 1970 and 1974, and the approved budget for 1975. A column has been added for the 1976 requests. Because the radical decline in undesignated giving has been absorbed by increases in designated giving and because 1974 giving exceeds the 1975 budget by 12% the General Synod Mission budget for 1976 is recommended for $6,193,000.

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

R-1 THAT the General Synod approve a 1976 General Synod Mission budget of $6,193,000, and further (ADOPTED)

R-2 THAT the General Synod approve the proposed allocations of the 1976 General Synod Mission Budget. (ADOPTED)

(*See Chart page 150*)

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

	Actual				Budget	Request
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
General Program Council						
Operating	$2,488,836	$2,730,310	$3,166,875	$3,471,497	$3,552,000	$4.260,000
R.C.W.S.	114,054	119,698	178,030	476,129	165,000	300,000
Total GPC	2,602,890	2,850,008	3,344,905	3,947,626	3,717,000	4,560,000
Board of Pensions	121,691	83,618	71,988	91,422	175,000	140,000
Kirkside	(1)	(1)	20,828	18,488	22,000	22,000
Board of Theological Education	333,249	———	———	———	———	———
New Brunswick	———	93,960	111,967	133,636	120,500	155,000
Western	———	226,123	251,067	264,196	272,500	296,000
Colleges						
Central	142,540	152,000	166,696	208,720	206,340	210,000
Hope	263,643	316,700	379,840	341,263	233,060	350,000
Northwestern	212,760	228,033	247,922	307,486	170,600	310,000
Total—Designated	3,676,773	3,950,442	4,595,213	5,312,837	———	6,043,000
—Undesignated	471,705	301,666	211,262	176,593	———	150,000
TOTAL	$4,148,478	$4,252,108	$4,806,475	$5,489,430	$4,917,000	$6,193,000

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

GENERAL SYNOD ASSESSMENT BUDGET

The General Synod Executive Committee, in 1969, was given the responsibility of reviewing the General Synod Assessment Budget. The GSEC began this year's review at its April meeting. This had made it possible for correspondence to be conducted with those committees and/or commissions whose request has been revised. The General Synod may wish to place additional items in the Assessment Budget. Thus, it cannot receive a final approval at this time. If the General Synod makes additions to the budget, they will be referred to the Committee of Reference.

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

The Assessment Budget is raised by a per member levy. In recent years the per member figures have been: 1970 - $1.26; 1971 - $1.26; 1972 - $1.32; 1973 - $1.35; 1974 - $1.40, and 1975 - $1.70.

A special assessment of $.75 per member for retirement income was levied by General Synod in 1971. This continues to 1981 (M.G.S., 1971, page 168).

Several comments on the proposed changes in the budget:

(1) The $5,000 increase in the General Synod meeting cost has been projected because of increases in food and travel costs.

(2) No increase has been recommended for General Synod printing because a new firm has been engaged for the printing. The projected savings for 1975 from this new contract means the 1976 budget should be sufficient.

(3) For several years the General Synod staff was not complete. During each year there were vacancies which reduced the actual salary costs. 1974 was a fully staffed year, and therefore salary costs were more than the 1975 budget. The 1976 budget has been increased to cover a full staff year and some salary increase. This also applies to the increase in employee benefits.

(4) The Christian Action Commission had requested a $2,000 increase for its meeting costs, but the G.S.E.C. voted to print the 1975 figure.

(5) The Chaplains Commission had requested a $1,000 increase for conferences because they expect to have a conclave of Chaplains, but the G.S.E.C. voted to print the 1975 figure.

(6) The Church Government Committee has not had a sufficient budget for reprinting the *Book of Church Order*. This increase should cover the printing costs.

(7) The History Commission has increased their secretarial staff to process archival material at New Brunswick.

(8) The Commission on Worship, which will become the new name of the Committee on Revision of Liturgy after this General Synod, has requested a major increase because they expect to hold hearings on liturgy and worship throughout the Church. They desire to hold these hearings prior to beginning a major revision of the *Liturgy*.

(9) The Interchurch Relations Committee has requested the increase for their committee expenses and the ecumenical agencies in the budget.

The total budget of $410,500 will require a per member assessment of $1.90.

PROPOSED 1976 GENERAL SYNOD ASSESSMENT BUDGET

	Actual 1974	Budget 1975	Budget 1976
I. General Synod Meeting			
G.S. Meeting	$ 71,641	$ 75,000	$ 80,000
Other Meeting Expenses	824	1,200	1,200
Printing Minutes	21,686	22,500	22,500
	$ 94,588	$ 98,700	$103,700
II. General Synod Office			
Salaries (2 exs, 4 staff)	84,054	82,000	95,000
Employee Benefits	12,729	9,000	14,500
Staff Travel	7,924	6,500	8,000
Rent-Office & Chapel	16,196	18,000	19,500
Office Equipment and Repairs	201	750	750
Office Supplies	200	1,000	800
Office Mimeo & Printing	2,500	3,000	3,500
Postage & Mailing	3,188	3,200	3,500
Telephone	2,167	3,000	3,000
Audit & Legal	1,250	1,500	1,750
Banking/Accounting	6,199	6,250	6,250
Insurance	572	500	700
Miscellaneous	4,838	3,400	3,400
Staff Consulting Group	2,618	2,500	2,700
	$144,808	$140,600	$163,350
III. Other General Synod Expenses			
G.S.E.C.	$ 9,750	$ 8,000	$ 8,500
President's Expenses	2,205	3,500	3,500
Church Herald	14,000	25,000	25,000
CAF for Active Chaplains	5,000	5,000	5,000
Ad Hoc South Africa	501	500	500
Project Equality	2,000	2,000	2,000
Corporate Information Center	1,500	1,500	1,500
Task Force on Women	—	—	4,000
Contingent Fund	2,247	4,000	4,000
	$ 37,204	$ 49,500	$ 54,000
IV. G.S. Permanent Committees			
Christian Action Commission	$ 6,834	$ 5,650	$ 5,650
Other Meetings	—	1,550	1,550
Literature	1,783	800	800

Chaplains Commission	2,107	2,000	2,200
Literature, Print	183	600	400
Conferences	1,078	800	800
General Commission Dues	1,300	1,500	1,500
Secretarial Work	1,200	1,200	1,200
Church Government Committee	1,779	2,300	2,300
Printing	810	350	1,000
History Commission	1,741	1,500	2,000
Stationery Expenses	821	350	600
Archivist Fee	900	900	1,000
Secretarial Work	3,253	3,400	4,300
Historical Directory	—	100	100
Judicial Business	720	300	500
Revision of Liturgy	1,084	800	2,500
Nominations	807	850	900
Theological Commission	1,705	1,500	1,700
Interchurch Relations	2,291	3,000	4,000
C.R.C.	1,307	1,000	1,000
Board of Theological Education	—	—	15,000
	$ 31,880	$ 30,450	$ 54,000
V. Representatives Interchurch Bodies			
N.C.C. General Board	$ 1,660	$ 1,500	$ 1,800
W.C.C. U.S. Conference	69	500	500
W.C.C. Assembly-Niarobi	—	4,000	—
Travel Contingency	911	600	800
	$ 2,640	$ 6,600	$ 3,100
VI. Participating Shares in Interchurch Bodies			
Alliance Reformed Churches	$ 4,600	$ 4,600	$ 5,000
*N.C.C.	10,500	11,500	12,500
*W.C.C.	6,000	6,600	7,200
Religion in American Life	1,500	1,650	1,650
	$ 22,600	$ 24,400	$ 26,350
VII. Minority Councils			
Black Council	$ 14,906	$ 15,000	$ 15,000
American Indian Council	5,000	5,000	5,000
Hispanic Council	1,388	5,000	5,000
	$ 21,295	$ 25,000	$ 25,000
	$355,017	$375,250	$426,500

*Not paid for from assessments.

WE RECOMMEND

That the General Synod Assessment Budget for 1976 total $426,500 and further,
That the per member assessment for 1976 be $2.00 and further,
That the General Assessment Budget be approved. (ADOPTED)

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF PENSIONS

One of the most significant features of the life of the Board of Pensions in 1974 was what didn't happen; another was what did!

What didn't happen was the direct result of an investment contract which the Board entered into with the Travelers Insurance Company, in which the company committed itself to an 8.1% interest payment from 1974 through 1978. The contract covers the entire Reformed Church Annuity Fund, both present assets and those still to be contributed. To take advantage of this contract, the Board had liquidated all other investments of the Contributory Annuity Fund by January 1974. Thus, the Annuity Fund did not participate in the great stock market decline of 1974. In this instance at least, hindsight is a cause for rejoicing!

What did happen was a result of the recommendation of the Synod of 1974, to replace the policy of providing a "guaranteed minimum" of $3,000 per single individuals and $4,600 per couple from all sources of income for those who retired prior to 1972 by providing an annual benefit of up to $300 over the current income from social security and Board of Pensions sources alone for single individuals retired prior to January 1, 1972, and a benefit of $400 over the current income from social security and Board of Pensions alone for couples who retired prior to January 1, 1972, provided that the combined income from these two sources did not thereby exceed $3,300 per single individual or $5,000 per couple. Thus, significant additional help was given to pre-1972 retirees who were suffering the worst of the effects of inflation. In order to meet these increases, the Board also launched the "Thanks!" program, in an attempt to solicit benevolence income from individuals and churches to meet the very sharply increased needs of the older retirees. Thus far, the "Thanks!" program has received gratifying support though the amounts received have not been overwhelming and certainly not adequate. Significant and substantial increased giving will be necessary in the future if the pressing financial needs of the pre-1972 retirees are to continue to be met.

A time of anxiety for all related to the administration of the Board of Pensions is the periodic review by examiners from the New York State Department of Insurance. Accustomed to the supervision of commercial insurance companies, the insurance examiners go over each detail of the Board's activity in a painstaking investigation which extends through several weeks of physical presence in our offices. It was therefore highly satisfying to receive a good report from the examiners, in which their minor recommendations were of a helpful rather than a critical nature.

The Reformed Church Annuity Fund has become one of the first, if not the first, to permit transfers to the pension funds of other organizations, with the stipulation that such funds be compatible with our own. However, one of the effects of the increased interest return in 1974 was that very little use has been made of the portability feature. Instead, there has been an increasing interest in the opening of supplementary deferred annuity accounts by individuals. In these supplementary accounts, employers are permitted to withhold and contribute a portion of salary over and above the usual annuity dues payments. Such contributions are also tax deferred.

The Senior Pastors continue to play an important role in the work of the Board

of Pensions. Since last year's General Synod, The Rev. Edwin Thomas Jones found it necessary to resign and was replaced by The Rev. Robert Geddes. Other Senior Pastors are The Rev. Peter De Jong, The Rev. John de Maagd, The Rev. Frederick R. Bosch and The Rev. Marion E. Klaaren.

The Insurance Department of the Board experienced sharply increased activity as a result of the improved Comprehensive Reformed Church Insurance Program. Adverse experience in the Comprehensive Medical portion of the plan resulted in a rate increase on January 1, 1975.

For the past 22 years, Mrs. Wilma Bentzen has served the Board of Pensions of the Reformed Church. At the 60th Annual Meeting of the Church Pensions Conference held in New York in December, Mrs. Bentzen was elected Secretary of the Conference. The Church Pensions Conference is made up of the Pensions Departments of 28 Protestant Denominations, The Catholic Mutual Relief Society, The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and other religious agencies.

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF PENSIONS

The Review Committee of the Board of Pensions met to review the various responsibilities and concerns of the Board of Pensions to note how these were met by this Board. We would like to commend the Board and its staff for its dedicated efforts in aiding the retirees to meet present inflationary pressures by providing up to $3,300.00 per single individual and $5,000.00 per couple for those who have retired prior to 1972, and guaranteeing to members of the Annuity Fund an 8% interest rate until the year 1978.

The Committee is grateful for the Good Samaritan work being done by the Senior Pastors in their respective areas on behalf of the Board of Pensions among our retirees and expresses the hope that a suitable person may be found to serve the area of New Jersey-Pennsylvania.

The Committee reviewed the proposed revisions to the Constitution and Rules of the Board of Pensions and made a number of suggestions for the removal of male/female designations and deletions of irrelevant material. These have been referred to the General Synod Executive Committee and the revised document will be presented by that body in its report.

Your Committee RECOMMENDS the following:

R-1. THAT the General Synod offer a prayer of gratitude to Almighty God for all those who serve Him as ministers and ministers' wives, missionaries *and minis*ter's widows and others on the rolls of The Board of Pensions for their great and abiding influence upon the church and the Kingdom, and that the

Reverend Allen Buurma, Vice Chairman of the Review Committee, lead us in this prayer. (ADOPTED)

R-2. THAT the Board of Pensions consider the advisability of setting the annual Pensions Sunday for 1976 and following years so that it does not coincide with the Advent Season, and,

That the churches use this day of observance as an opportunity to acquaint the membership of the RCA with its program of pensions, stressing the "THANKS" program. Here it may be added that though the special 75¢ assessment has been in effect, it is our hope that other churches will follow the commendable example of the Pleasant Prairie Classis, which, in view of the inflation especially affecting these retirees, has voluntarily increased its assessment for this cause to $1.00 per member. (ADOPTED)

R-3. THAT the General Synod endorse the Annual Children's Christmas Appeal, thus enabling our church to minister to the needs of the dependent children of deceased and disabled ministers and General Program Council missionaries. (ADOPTED)

R-4. THAT the Board of Direction continue the policy of making funds available to provide lifetime complimentary subscriptions to the Church Herald **for all retired ministers or their surviving spouse, and missionaries who are not already receiving it.** (ADOPTED)

R-5. THAT the General Synod note the commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of Kirkside, the home for retired ministers, missionaries, and lay-workers at Roxbury, N.Y., and the retirement of its manager, the Rev. Herbert Schmalzriedt, after many years of faithful service, wishing the Rev. Schmalzriedt and his wife God's rich blessing in their retirement. (ADOPTED)

R-6. THAT the feasibility study concerning maintaining Kirkside as a denominational home be carried out by an objective group determined by the General Synod Executive Committee and the Board of Directors of Kirkside jointly. (ADOPTED)

R-7. THAT the possibility of accepting short-term residents at Kirkside be considered in order that these facilities may be utilized more fully. (ADOPTED)

R-8. THAT, in our concern for our Canadian brothers who are not covered by our present (CAF or) Annuity Fund because it is illegal in Canada, we encourage the Board of Pensions to pursue this matter until appropriate and acceptable coverage is provided. (ADOPTED)

KIRKSIDE — 1974

To many of the people who had any interest in, or connection with Kirkside, the year 1974 would look very much like any recent year. The home was operated very ably by our Manager, the staff handled its responsibilities very efficiently and saw that the Kirkside residents were comfortably housed, well-fed and well-cared for. The portions of the church and the community which had shown special concern for Kirkside by means of gifts and visits to the residents also continued to do so in 1974.

In the course of the year we lost three residents and gained four new guests. We were saddened by the death of Rev. Cornelius Lepeltak, a former Manager (1952-1964) as well as resident, and of Mrs. Elizabeth T. Van Woert, who died at the age of 99 years. She was the oldest member of the Kirkside family, both in years and in length of stay.

Regular repairs and maintenance of the house and grounds continued and railings were installed in the Home to meet New York State requirements.

Kirkside was well remembered by our churches with the largest donations of food commodities during this administration. We were again fortunate to receive a large donation of canned, dried, and frozen food from a major national corporation. Such gifts in these days of inflation and high food costs were great helps in the operation of the Home and for all of these we are most grateful. The list of all the churches who gave toward the work of the Home and contributed gifts is long indeed, and to each we give our sincere thanks.

However, for the second consecutive year, our audit report will indicate a deficit at the end of the year. Benevolence contributions were $1,600 less than the previous year. We cannot stress often enough our present need for the benevolence support of churches and individuals, if we are to continue this worthwhile ministry to the aging of our denomination.

To the Kirkside Directors, the year of 1974 was one of frustration and indecision, not entirely caused by the energy crunch and the gasoline shortage. Somewhat belatedly we had requested clarification of our role in planning and improving the Kirkside situation by means of adding some apartments to the grounds. Early in '74 we were disappointed to learn that we had no authority in such a venture.

Also, in 1974, the General Synod raised questions about Kirkside's continuation as a denominational home. Late in the Fall of '74 we received word from the General Synod Executive Committee requesting us to begin a feasibility study, to be completed by Spring 1976.

In the meantime, and obviously for some time to come, regardless of the outcome of the feasibility study, the work of Kirkside must continue and the Directors will continue to do their best to fulfill their responsibilities.

I wish to express appreciation for the interest and support of the Directors and Officers. Their work in 1975 will be even more important to Kirkside as we work

our way through not only organizational problems but also the transitional upsetting caused by the retirement of our Managers.

We give thanks for the leadership and inspiration we have received from the Reverend and Mrs. Herbert Schmalzriedt during their years as Managers of Kirkside and we wish them many enjoyable years.

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT REPORT

Your Committee on Church Government met only once this past year, in New York City on October 21 and 22, 1974. We hereby submit to you a report of our recommendations dealing with referrals from the General Synod of 1974.

I. Overture 24 to the 1974 General Synod (p. 107, MGS, 1974) from the Particular Synod of Chicago requested the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America to delineate and clarify the constitutional grounds and required procedures for termination of a relationship requested by a consistory but not concurred in by the pastor, or vice versa. This is dealt with in the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 9.

Your committee feels that the present structure provides a workable procedure for pastoral termination but it cannot work if it is not invoked in its entirety. Your committee, therefore, feels that the *Book of Church Order* needs no amendment to achieve the intent of the overture.

II. Overture 25 to the General Synod of 1974 (p. 107, MGS, 1974) from the Particular Synod of Chicago which requests the Reformed Church in America to delineate and clarify the role of classis in the superintendence of churches as to whether this is active continuing superintendence or limited to an appellate role. This reference is to the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 2, Sections 1, 2, and 7.

Your committee feels that the wordings of said sections are adequate, sufficient, and explicit to meet the objectives of the overture specifying that the superintendence is initiatory as well as appellate. Therefore, these sections need not be changed. (Attention of the Synod is drawn to a later item in this report.)

III. Item No. 3 of the Report of the Theological Commission (p. 206, MGS, 1974) deals with the roles of Elders and Deacons. The Theological Commission recommended that the question of the roles of Elders and Deacons be referred to the Committee on Church Government since this issue is primarily one of church management. A similar issue was raised in the President's Report, Item IV (p. 282, MGS, 1974).

The *Book of Church Order* in Part I, Article 1, Sections 7 and 9 spells out what the differences are in the roles of Elders and Deacons according to the traditional understanding. The committee feels that this is properly a theological issue and until some changes are designed for these offices, we do not know in what way the *Book of Church Order* should be changed. Your committee has been in consultation with the Chairman of the Theological Commission and said Commission has agreed to reconsider the matter. We, therefore, are making no recommendation to change the *Book of Church Order* on this issue at this time.

IV. The President's Report, Item II (p. 281 and 282, MGS, 1974) deals with the issue of professional development and a referral was made to the Committee on Church Government in consultation with the Office of Human Resources and Professional Development to consider these needs and the possibility of amending the *Book of Church Order.*

Your committee engaged in this consultation and makes the following recommendation:

R-1. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt and refer to the classes for their approval an amendment so that in Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 1f, after the word "housing" the following words be added, "arrangements for professional development". The new statement will then read, "Do the salary, housing, arrangements for professional development, and all other benefits received by the minister(s) meet the terms of the original call, subsequent revisions thereof, and the minimum standards of the classis?" (ADOPTED)

V. Item 3 in the President's Report (p. 282, MGS, 1974) deals with the matter of performance review of the pastors, requesting that the *Book of Church Order,* Part II, Article 7 be amended to satisfy the needs expressed above and that the Church Government Committee in consultation with the Office of Human Resources be requested to bring proposals to the next meeting of General Synod.

Your committee engaged in this consultation and makes the following recommendation:

R-2. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt and refer to the classes for their approval an amendment so that in Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 1 the present g. is changed to h. and a new g. is added as follows: "Does the consistory have and regularly use a procedure by which the performance of its minister(s) is reviewed?" (ADOPTED)

(If this is adopted an instrument is to be designed by the Office of Human Resources to be used in this evaluation.)

REPORT OF THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

To the Editorial Committee were referred several items for review to insure conformity to the format of the *Book of Church Order*. We present our recommendations as follows:

RE: CHAPLAINS' COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

R-1 We RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt the following wording as an amendment to the Bylaws of General Synod **in Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 1a** (BCO, **p. 56) for implementation at the 1976 General Synod. (no classical action required):**

A. Membership
The Commission shall have six members, two of whom are from the laity.

B. Officers (same)

C. Responsibilities (same) (ADOPTED)

RE: INFANT BAPTISM

R-2. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt and refer to the Classes for their approval the following amendment to the Book of Church Order, **Chapter 1, Part I, Article 5, Section 2a as a second sentence: "They shall consider requests for infant baptism, providing at least one parent or guardian is a communicant member of a Christian Church."** (ADOPTED)

R-3. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt and refer to the Classes for their approval the following amendment to the Book of Church Order, **Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 8: (amended portions in light face type) Sec. 8. The classes shall be asked to approve the request of two or more churches to call a minister to serve them jointly.** This relationship may be approved only if the ordination meets the requirements of the Reformed Church in America **Book of Church Order,** Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 8. **This relationship shall be terminated only by action of classis.** The right to vote shall be granted to a minister from another denomination serving a Reformed Church under the above conditions if the right to vote is reciprocated under the same conditions. (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 13

THEOLOGY AND LITURGY

REPORT OF THE THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

The Theological Commission met in two regular sessions: October 16-18, 1974, at Western Theological Seminary, and February 19-21, 1975 at New Brunswick Seminary.

The Commission is pleased to submit its report on the following assignments given to it by the General Synod.

1. BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

General Synod, 1973, at the request of the Particular Synod of Chicago, directed the Theological Commission to study the biblical concepts concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage, and to develop a set of guidelines speaking to the social problems of today. The Commission believes that the statement *"Divorce, Remarriage and Planned Parenthood"* presented to General Synod, 1962, by the Christian Action Commission merits continued usage. Nevertheless, a further effort to clarify the Reformed Church's understanding of what the Bible says on these matters appears desirable.

PROBLEM STATED

Our age is characterized by many conflicting philosophies and value systems. Some advocate a variety of marriage forms (e.g. contractual, communal, "living together," etc.), easy divorces, and experimental sexual relationships. There is growing evidence that such life styles produce tragic results: growing numbers of disillusioned persons and many deprived, disturbed children. What is to be the church's response? Only the leading of God's Word and Spirit can provide the needed perspective. Each biblical concept offers positive guidance and combats numerous misconceptions. When taught with sensitivity by elders and pastors, teachers and parents, God's design for married life and human sexuality can prevent many pained lives and offer therapy to others. Surely the Word calls us to repentance and deeper maturity in these matters.

Biblical Goals for Marriage

The biblical understanding of marriage is related to the nature and purpose of God. Biblical views of man, marriage, sex, and family refuse to explain life in terms of man's self-chosen aims. The Bible insists that attempts to understand life apart from the divine purpose are ultimately folly. The Creator's design establishes the dignity of the divine gift of marriage. Within the Word three goals for marriage emerge.

A. Marriage is for Fellowship.

Men and women were created for fellowship with God and for his glory. Their dignity rests in their relational capacity. Men and women were designed for fellowship with each other and for fellowship in human community (Gen. 2; Ex. 20:2-17; Isa. 11:6ff; 54:1-3; Matt. 19:4-11; Jn. 15:1-17; 17:6-26; Acts 2:42-47; Eph. 1:9-10; 2:13-21). Marriage and human sexuality cannot be understood simply as the result of physical drives, rational formulations, social imposition, or religious moral-

ism. While marital union is not in the realm of things commanded (as are fellowship with God and his people), it is a divine gift not to be profaned. The intimacy of marriage gives expression to the human desire for relatedness. The relationship of husband and wife is often compared to the reciprocal relationship of God and his people and is described in the language of the covenant (Isa. 5:1ff; 61:10; Hosea; Jn. 3:29; Eph. 2:21-33). Marriage is a covenant bond designed by the Creator, is redeemed in Jesus Christ, and is best realized amidst the covenant people.

B. Marriage is for Human Fulfillment.

It is designed to bring persons into their God-intended human fullness. Humanity in its wholeness involves both male and female. The interdependence so essential to human completeness can be expressed in marital union and also in larger community. In marital union husband and wife become "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). This unity involves far more than sexual encounter, it is a joining of lives at many levels. With it come mutual love, knowledge (Gen. 4:1; I Cor. 13:12; I John; etc.), and joy prompting persons to celebrate it in poetic refrain like Adam (Gen. 3:23). Marriage provides opportunity for mature love so vital to the wholeness of persons (Gen. 24:67; Prov. 5:15-19; Song of Sol. 1:1ff.; 2:16; 8:6f.; Eph. 5:21-33; I-II Jn.). Marriage is a covenant commitment which protects the mutuality of sex and the meaning of personhood. It acknowledges responsibility for the continued well-being of the other. God is concerned about marriage because he is concerned for persons (Mal. 2:13-16). Christ healed those broken by marital and sexual sins that they might again become whole persons.

C. Marriage is for Family and the Community of Faith.

No better means has been devised for the rearing of each new generation and for the nurture of persons than the family. Concern for the family is found in the Old Testament (Deut. 6:7, 20ff.; Hosea; Proverbs; etc.), in Jesus' ministry (Matt. 19:13-15), and in the life of the early church (Acts 2:39; 16:15, 31-33; 18:8; I Cor. 1:16; 7:12-14). Much of the responsibility for a child's instruction in the faith and for his incorporation into the covenant community rests with the parents. Husband and wife are often the means for each other's consecration (I Cor. 7:14ff.). In covenant theology, marriage and family are regularly linked to God's saving work. Through godly households, the promise of salvation is transmitted to future generations. Although marriage and family are repeatedly threatened by sin, we are convinced they will remain as channels of God's grace.

Old Testament Light on Marriage and Divorce

A. Marriage in Light of Creation.

Men and women are created in God's image with a capacity and a need to communicate and to relate (Gen. 1:26). They need to relate to each other as well as to their transcendent Maker. It was because man was alone that God created a helper for him. The institution of marriage results from the Creator's action (Gen. 2:18-25). Marriage gives expression to man's capacity for relating, for knowing and loving, for choosing and covenanting. "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Marriage expresses the Creator's love for mankind. God's love is reflected in the mutual love of husband and wife. Male and female, each with uniqueness, come together to produce a special oneness. Such was the divine intent.

B. Marriage as Affected by the Fall.

Approaches to marriage which neglect the impact of the fall often naively suggest that education and sexual experience can produce marital bliss. Unfortunately the consequences of sin remain clearly evident in most marriages. Many unions are ruined not so much by ignorance as by selfish willfulness. Violation of God's design still exchanges beauty and ecstasy for chaos and judgment. Immediately after their revolt, the first couple experienced distortion of their self-image (Gen. 3:10) and sensed evil at work (Gen. 3:14f). They also experienced other disruptions. For woman, sin marred the joy of child bearing and rearing, and her relationship with her husband. She feared lest he lord it over her and use her (Gen. 3:16). Man became aware of the tendency to deify his wife's wish, of his twisted relation to nature, and of his warped estimate of labor, and of his mortality (Gen. 3:17-19). Only because of God's providential grace were they able to face these complications together.

Alienation from God brought about other distortions of marriage and sex. Fornication, incest, homosexuality, and adultery ("to pollute," Heb. naaph, Gr. moicheia) violate covenant life and mar the riches of humanity. Inasmuch as persons and families were destroyed by adultery, it was considered the equivalent of murder and deserving the death penalty. Even in the earliest stages of human history, a breach of the marriage relationship was regarded with disfavor.

Divorce is the result of our sinful condition and an expression of our sinfulness. The Hebrew term for divorce (*garash*) means to cast out a mate as one drives out cattle or an enemy. Such rejection, alienation, and covenant breaking are also conveyed by the Greek terms (*kerithuth; apoluo*). The bill of divorce legislated in many ancient societies was intended to protect the rights and continued existence of deserted women. That such a need existed in Israel indicated the presence of sin, of "hardness of heart." The famous passage, Deut. 24:1-4, recognizes divorce on grounds of indecency of infidelity, but is no wholehearted approval of the practice. It aimed to curtail any returning to a former mate following divorce and remarriage. Such switching of mates was considered a defiling abomination polluting the land (Jer. 3:1) and inviting judgment (Ezk. 16:38). Divorce was tolerated in the community of faith only because it was sometimes the lesser of two evils. Nevertheless divorced persons were not excluded from the covenant community.

C. Marriage in the Light of Grace.

Marriages are redeemable because of God's gracious activity in history. As persons experience God's liberation, they discover that his transforming power affects every aspect of life including marriage. The Old Testament law abounds with instruction concerning marriage and family. The law moreover was an expression of grace, a gift of God to his redeemed people for their welfare. The law must not be separated from the cradle of the covenant of grace. Only as persons experience God's saving power and share in the new life of his covenant people can they begin to appreciate the Old Testament estimate of marriage and family (Deut. 5:16; 18, 21), warnings against sexual impurity (Lev. 18:6-30), protection for wives, widows and other women (Ex. 21:9-11; Nu. 30:1-16; Deut. 22:13-27), etc. Here clothed in the language of the times is concern for marriages within the covenant community (Nu. 5:11ff.; Josh. 23:12f.). The people of God realized that the influence of these marital unions would continue to the third and fourth generations (Ex. 20:5; 34:6f.; Deut. 5:9). There was an effort to keep all accountable in

their marital and familial relations regardless of rank (II Sam. 11-12). The family was indeed both the object and the agent of God's redemptive work.

The prophets often recount how God's grace works in marriage. They find a prototype for marriage in the divine marriage, in God's persisting love for his people (Isa. 5:1ff.; 54:8; 61:4f.; Jer. 3:8ff.; 5:7; 9:2; 13:27; 23:10; 29:23; Ezk. 16). The covenant union between God and his people involves mutual obligations intended to foster fellowship and growth. Even when God's people are apostate or adulterous, his husband-like love will not let them go (Hosea). God's relationship to his people can provide an analogy for marriage among the faithful in that one should love the other in spite of difficult circumstances. In some sense the prophets suggest that marriage can serve as a channel of God's grace. Marriage is a covenant intended to sustain and renew the lives of persons and their children. God "hates divorce" and infidelity because of the violence it does to persons and to covenant life (Mal. 2:13-16).

Poet and sage likewise magnify the joy of marriage and desire to safeguard it (Song of Sol.; Prov. 2:16ff.; 6:24ff.; 7:5, 27; 9:13ff.). Pure marital relations are extolled: "Drink water from your own cistern. . . rejoice in the wife of your youth. . . . be infatuated always with her love" (Prov. 5:15ff.). Aware of the conflicting views of marriage and human sexuality, the sages offer models for wives as well as husbands (Prov. 18:22; 31:10-31). Blessed are those households which fear the Lord (Ps. 128).

Jesus Teaching on Marriage

Jesus established norms for his followers both by what he said and did. In the gospels, discussion of marriage, adultery, divorce, and remarriage is concentrated in several chapters (Matt. 5; 19; Mk. 10; 12; Luke 16:18; 20:27ff.; Jn. 2; 4; 8).

A. Marriage in the Kingdom Perspective.

Jesus set marriage in proper perspective by emphasizing the primary importance of God's rule: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt. 6:33). Love within the family must be subordinated to the king's claim (Luke 14:26). To deify marriage is to destroy all chances that it might be Christian. "I have married a wife" (Luke 14:20) is no excuse for neglecting Christ's call. Believers may suffer loss of mates and homes for his sake (Matt. 19:29). Nevertheless, Christ enriches the marriages of his followers. They discover that the kingdom's values fill and enrich every dimension of wedded life.

B. Jesus on the Nature of Marriage.

One cannot understand the divorce issues until he understands human nature and the Creator's plan for marriage. Thus when questioned about the grounds for divorce, Jesus replied, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female" (Matt. 19:4; also Mk. 10:6). The differentiation and mutuality of the sexes are part of man's makeup. Male and female were created to complement and complete each other in marriage and in community. Marriage gives expression to this original intent. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. So they are no longer two but one" (Matt. 19:5-6a; Mk. 10:7f.). Affirming truths long accepted in the covenant community, Jesus indicates that marriage requires the maturity to leave one household to risk founding another.

It means to assume the responsibilities of husband and wife, to covenant with each other before God, to embark upon a lifetime of selfgiving (agape). In Hebraic parallelism, Jesus stresses the unity of two who consumate their marriage. The one flesh concept central to his thought may be seen as both real and ideal. It suggests a reality which couples experience, yet something towards which they strive as long as they live.

C. Jesus on Divorce.

On the basis of God's design, Jesus opposed the practice of divorce. "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6b; Mk. 10:9). For Christians, marriage is never simply a social institution or a civil contract. It is a sacred union formed by God. The two are one before God. Divorce may occur but it is not in God's intent. Conscious of the Judaic debate on divorce, Jesus' listeners queried: "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" (Matt. 19:7; also Mk. 10:3f.). Jesus insisted that while Moses permitted divorce, he had not advocated it. Moses was curbing the practice of depriving a wife of her rights through desertion and of switching back to a former wife after her remarriage to someone else. He sought a remedy where sin had worked havoc. Of this Jesus says, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8; Mk. 10:5). It is one thing to recognize the existence of human failure; it is another to sanction it. Jesus insisted that the design of creation had precedence over the Mosaic concession.

Most significant is Jesus' declaration, "And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery" (Matt. 19:9; compare to Mk. 10:11f.; Luke 16:18. The exceptive clause is found in variant form in Matt. 5:31f.). Only in Matthew 19:9 do we have the exceptive clause and the remarriage clause coordinated. The primary thrust of the verse is Jesus' ruling on divorce. Here Jesus abolishes every other ground for divorce permitted in Mosaic provisions and Jewish practice *except* adultery (*porneia-* unchastity, fornication, illicit sexual intercourse). Jesus is especially hard on the man or woman (Mk. 10:12) who divorces the partner in order to marry another. This is labeled adultery, a sin against one's spouse and God. This enlarged understanding of adultery bids us not to define it simply as sexual infidelity.

Jesus recognizes then but one basis for divorce. Note that while divorce is permissible, it is *not* obligatory. A strict interpretation of Jesus' words might tolerate divorce only where there has been sexual infidelity. However, a broader understanding of adultery would include other expressions of unfaithfulness and covenant breaking that pollute and destroy a marital union (see "Divorce, Remarriage and Planned Parenthood," General Synod, 1962). Adulterous attitudes (Matt. 5:27f.) and certain acts of non-sexual infidelity can also violate and kill a union (thus Paul's reference to desertion in I Cor. 7:15 is included under Jesus' exception). Yet one must beware of missing the intent of Jesus' words. He does not allow for an open-ended list of reasons for divorce as one's culture or times may dictate. He calls for determined, covenantal fidelity even where adultery has occurred. Jesus' words might have appeared harsh had we no further indication of his ministry of forgiveness, but such is not the case.

D. Jesus' Ministry of Forgiveness.

The sin of adultery must not be magnified so as to obscure our common need

for grace. Knowing the reality of their own sins, all Christians should be humbled by Jesus' words (Matt. 5:21-30). Nowhere is the compassion of Jesus more evident than when he deals with those broken by sexual sin. Noteworthy is his attitude towards the woman of Sychar, whose marital failures and adulterous situation had left her empty. By restoring her relation to the Father, Jesus laid the basis for renewing all of her relationships (Jn. 4). Confronted by a woman taken in adultery, Jesus ruled out the death penalty and offered God's grace. He forgave and urged her to sin no more (Jn. 8:1-11). His actions disclose understanding of the widespread problems men and women face. His forgiveness provides the basis for a fresh start. Where sin and guilt are confessed, healing can begin. Every person caught in the snares of adultery, marital discord, or divorce is redeemable. No sinner stands beyond Christ's reach. Disciples are called to seek forgiveness for their own failures and to minister the gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation to others (Luke 7:36-50; Matt. 18:15-22). Jesus nowhere suggests that forgiveness should be denied to divorced persons nor that remarriage should be denied to those who have experienced his forgiveness.

E. Marriage as Vocation.

While marriage will continue throughout history (Matt. 24:38; Luke 17:27), it remains a temporal, not eternal, institution (Matt. 22:23-30; Mk. 12:18-25; Luke 20:27-36). Like the sabbath, marriage was made for the benefit of mankind and not the reverse. To exaggerate its merit to the point of making it imperative for the full development of persons is a mistake. Although marriage is a holy calling, it is not for all. Jesus spoke of marriage as a vocation, stressing the disciples' choice in the matter. Christians may prefer to remain single for legitimate reasons (Matt. 19:10-12). Such persons may find fulfillment and completeness in the family of faith, the church, and in their respective callings. To the suggestion that celibacy might be preferred, Jesus responded, "Not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given" (Matt. 19:11). In other words, most disciples will choose to marry. With Christ, either married or single life can be a beautiful venture.

Discussion of marriage, divorce, and remarriage is closely related to questions about family and children (Matt. 19:13-15; 18:1-6). Woe to those who lead a child into a life of sin, who restrict entrance into the kingdom. Those who choose to marry should be prepared to be responsible parents who will nurture their children in the Christian life. Even where a marriage is broken, this duty remains. This high obligation should condition any discussion of divorce and remarriage.

Marriage and Family in the Early Church

A. An Apostolic Voice in the World.

The first century world abounded with proponents of new ethics, marital experimentation, and sexual freedom. Yet the Christian view of marriage caught on at Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome. The greatness of the early church lies in that it offered an uncompromising model rather than an ethic of accommodation. Its prophetic voice in a pagan world provided a new ideal of marriage and family. The church insisted that marriage was a holy estate in which partners were accountable to God and to each other so long as they lived (Rom. 7:1-4). Christians exhibited a quality of love in marriage as well as in congregational life. Theirs was a lofty ideal. "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage

bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous" (Heb. 13:4). Congregations worked for these goals and called members to be accountable. Immorality was identified for what it was. Those afflicted by sin were called to repent and to reshape their lives after Christ's Word. Where this was not forthcoming, disciplinary action was exercised for the sake of the parties concerned, and for the sake of the church's life and witness (I Cor. 5:1f.). Apostolic exhortation was anything but permissive (I Cor. 6:9-11)! Persistence in sexual deviation or in marital discord was viewed as incompatible with life in the kingdom. Yet the church was not recriminatory in spirit. Grace abounded as believers acknowledged Christ's forgiveness. Sin-broken persons were being transformed and so were their marriages (I Cor. 6:9ff.: Eph. 2:1ff.).

B. Application of the Gospel to New Situations.

Under the leading of the Holy Spirit, the early church found itself with the exciting task of working out the implications of Jesus' teaching in new situations. It engaged both in proclaiming its view of marriage to a troubled world and in problem solving in behalf of those troubled with marital discord. The challenge was to apply the gospel without surrender to the spirit of the times. Paul's letter to Corinth provides many examples of this type of activity (especially I Cor. 7).

1. Paul counters those forbidding marriage and advocating celibacy. Marriage and its sexual dimensions are to be acknowledged as God's gifts. Marital love involves responsible caring for each other, self-control (not prolonged continence), and self-giving (I Cor. 7:1-7; also cf. I Tim. 4:1-3).

2. Single persons and widows may remain single (which Paul prefers), marry, or remarry. Whatever be the case, love not lust must prevail (I Cor. 7:8f.). Elsewhere he advises young widows to remarry (I Tim. 5:11-14).

3. Acknowledging Christ's command, Paul advises against divorce where both are Christians (I Cor. 7:10 and 11b). Paul also discusses what should be done if separation or divorce does occur. He personally thinks that reconciliation should be attempted and where that fails, members should remain single (I Cor. 7:11a).

4. In a mixed marriage (one between believer and unbeliever), the union should continue as long as the unbeliever consents. The believer should not initiate separation. If the unbeliever leaves, the believer "is not bound" to the marriage vow. Paul apparently held that desertion is comparable to the unfaithfulness of adultery. Desertion by the unbeliever can thus end a union. Yet as long as the union endures the believing mate can be used of God to reach the other and to consecrate the children (I Cor. 7:12-16).

The above illustrations reveal God at work in and through the early church. The church operated on the basis of the apostolic Word. When the Word spoke to a given situation, it was applied with firmness. Where the particular problem was not expressly covered, the church prayerfully sought the Spirit's guidance. This precedent remains valid. The stewardship of divine gifts always involves deliberation and decision.

C. Instruction Regarding Marriage and the Family.

The early church apparently felt it necessary to embark upon a program of instruction concerning sex, marriage, and family. The New Testament letters con-

tain such a body of catechetical materials: I Cor. 11-14; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-25; I Tim. 3:1-13; 5:1-16; Titus 2:1-8; I Peter 3:1-9. This was to be taught by elders, teachers, pastors, and parents. Church leaders were also expected to exemplify these standards in their households (I Tim. 3:2-5). A brief survey will disclose the substance of these teachings.

1. There is order and beauty in God's creative plan which includes family and congregational life (I Cor. 11-14; I Pet. 3). Paul and Peter saw this order in creation as providing sense and stability for life. Differentiation of the roles of husbands and wives (I Cor. 11:3; I Pet. 3:1) in no way diminishes the equality of male and female before God (Gal. 3:28). Each person has unique gifts. Interdependence of members is desirable in both church and home.

2. The most excellent way of love (agape) transforms Christian marriage as well as the rest of life (I Cor. 13). Love is the key to right-relatedness, the end for which men and women were created. The capacity to love is a gift of God and not inherent in man. Deep in the human heart is a longing which will not be satisfied until the love of God is expressed in all relationships.

3. Explicit instruction is offered regarding the relationships of husbands and wives, parents and children, single members, orphans, and widows so that all members might understand their responsibilities and privileges in family living (Eph. 5:21—6:4; Col. 3:18-25; I Tim. 3:1-13; 5:1-16; Titus 2:1-8; Heb. 13:4; James 1:27; I Pet. 3:1-9). It is understood that love for Christ and for each other is the determinative force in Christian marriage and family-life. The overriding emphases are mutuality, reciprocity, and love which seeks the development of the other's potentiality. Members of Christian families are "joint heirs of the grace of life" (I Pet. 3:7).

These instructions are valid still. Love and fidelity are to be learned of Christ through the Word. Respect for persons, appreciation for one's sexuality, the beauty of chastity before and in marriage, and how to deal with human failure are to be learned within the context of the covenant people. There is little doubt that the quality and hope of life for future generations are dependent on the continuation of the Christian family. A positive educational approach must exist in every congregation and home if great ill is to be avoided, true human maturity to be attained.

Guidelines for Today

The Christian community should provide the best environment for dealing with the concerns of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and human sexuality. The church knows the One who is able to transform all human life and as a redeemed fellowship has the capacity to reach those afflicted by loneliness, divorce, or marital discord because it realizes their true potentiality in Christ. It can also provide for its members a distinctive foundation for marriage in God's Word. Where the members are concerned for and accountable to each other, there will be concern for each union. There will be corporate concern for each marriage, each divorce, and each remarriage because the church is aware of the impact on the children, on her common life, and on her witness in the world. In each case, the church can acknowledge Christ as Redeemer and Lord. In these crucial moments of life, she is called to proclaim his grace and to declare his claims. If the church is to be a redeemed fellowship, she must offer acceptance and establish expectations in accord with Christ's Word. There are several things which the church has a right to expect of

and must be willing to demonstrate to those considering marriage. These include the following:

A. Covenantal Fidelity

Christian marriage involves making a covenant before God and his people in accord with his Word. The church's liturgy embraces this covenant concept. A covenant calls for mutual responsibility and faithfulness. This fidelity, a kind of loyalty or stubborn commitment to the marriage and to the partner is a necessary part of marriage. Each marriage relationship has its own ebb and flow with varying degrees of happiness and tension. In light of these changes in every marital relationship, fidelity is absolutely essential to the growth of individuals and to the growth of their marriage. Too often people enter marriage without understanding that God requires fidelity, an act of the will, not the emotion of "being in love." In a society where a lack of commitment seems to characterize so many marriages, this dimension of fidelity must be reviewed regularly.

B. Forgiveness

Marital disruption is one of the most severe tests of the Christian idea of grace. The church is called to be a fellowship where those who falter and fail can rebuild and where the divorced can find love and patient support. Some congregations (including elders and ministers) have not developed their ability to exercise the forgiveness of Christ toward repentant adulterers and divorcees. Yet the Bible indicates that failures or sins in this area are no more grievous than other sins nor any less forgivable. Paul rightly admonishes, "Let grace abound," not that there might be more sin, but that there may be new life (Rom. 5:20—6:2). Christian realism includes acknowledging the new possibilities included in God's forgiveness. Where the one flesh relationship has been irreconcilably shattered, there one has divorce (*de facto*) and it must be recognized. In fact, where a marriage has been destroyed, the Christian community may even counsel severance to prevent further damage to persons involved. Likewise, in counseling divorced persons considering remarriage, a minister and the elders are often compelled to decide which is the better to two difficult alternatives. Each case must be examined on its own merits. Should the minister either agree to officiate at the remarriage or not, he should share his reasons with the couple. The Word and Spirit, the mind of the church, and one's own conscience must be considered in making the decision. The action of the Reformed Church in America (*"Divorce, Remarriage and Planned Parenthood"*, General Synod, 1962) remains valid:

> "A pastor may with good conscience officiate in the remarriage of divorced persons if in his judgment, and the judgment of the congregation's Board of Elders, the persons have met the following requirements: Recognition of personal responsibility for the failure of the former marriage, penitence and an effort to overcome limitations and failures, forgiveness of the former partner, fulfillment of obligations involved in the former marriage, and a willingness to make the new marriage a Christian one by dependence upon Christ and participation in His Church."

Those who have undergone the trauma of divorce need time to reflect upon their experience and time to rebuild. *First,* persons should take time for reflection on the causes of the previous failure. Repentance is necessary. It involves not only penitence for one's own part, but a change in one's attitude and actions. Harmful

personality traits and behavioral patterns should be modified before any remarriage. *Second,* personal realization of God's forgiveness is a vital part of one's readiness for remarriage. This includes forgiving the former partner and seeking forgiveness. Otherwise a residue of bitterness can cloud future interpersonal relations. Continuing obligations to the former mate or children, financial and otherwise, should be met. *Third,* there must be a vision of what the new marriage can mean and the determination to make it Christian. Recognition of human limitations at this point rightly leads one to a reliance on Christ and on the supportive family of faith. Willingness to be a full participant in the people of God is prerequisite to proceeding with remarriage. Where the forgiveness of God has been accepted and life redirected to obedient service, the prospects for a sound marriage exist.

C. Growth

Growth within a marriage relationship is vital if joy and gratitude for God's gift are to continue. Where only individual development, personal pleasure, and professional advancement are stressed, the result is generally a moving apart. Such priorities dominate many social circles with corrosive effect. In contrast the church offers three goals which call for mutual growth and service. First, marriage as designed by God calls for couples to strive for a heightened sensitivity to each other and a deepening relationship in the Spirit. Second, God intends that each may uphold and complement the other over the years that there may be mutual fulfillment. Finally, God desires both that couples guide their own children in the Christian life and that they as a family be Christ's witnesses in their community.

Much can be accomplished in a congregation when couples join together to support each other in Christ. Local congregations can provide the atmosphere and activities which promote growth by focusing on goal setting in marriage, problem solving, child rearing, and husband-wife communication. Continuing education on how to handle stress, conflict, and crises is needed in every marriage. Conflicts and difficulties can be viewed not as the start of disintegration of a marriage, but as a reminder of the couple's need for God's grace and healing power. In such a Christian context, second and third marriages also have potential for achieving God's design. Couples do need to work at reaffirming their vows and at enriching their marriages. Continual reaffirmation can occur not only at anniversaries, but at meals, in family prayer, and in sexual intimacy. Congregations can also provide opportunities at the Lord's Table and on designated Lord's Days for couples to renew their commitment to each other and their mutual commitment to Christ and to his work.

Marriage remains a beautiful but fragile gift because, like the gospel, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." Nevertheless, we rejoice in this gift because God's transcendent power works in and through it (II Cor. 4:7). Therefore, in marriage our goal is always that "the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (II Cor. 4:11).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We Recommend that General Synod:

R-1. Approve the above document for use in the Reformed Church in America; and distribute copies of the same to every minister and elder in the church. Additional copies should be made available through regional offices and secretaries. (ADOPTED)

R-2. Encourage congregations to engage in biblical study and discussion of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, thus providing a continuing educational program for its youth, for those preparing for marriage, and for those sharing in married life. (ADOPTED)

R-3. Continue to provide financial resources to regional secretaries which will enable them to assist congregations and classes in Marriage Communication Labs, Family Clusters, and such. Regional secretaries should make available to congregations a list of professional Christian counseling services available in the area and an annotated bibliography of books, films, and tapes. (ADOPTED)

2. CONCERNING REBAPTISM

Two overtures were received by the Synod of 1974 concerning rebaptism. The Theological Commission had already begun work on rebaptism prior to 1974. Our report and recommendation follow.

The issue of rebaptism emerged in the Christian church at an early date. Controversy arose already in the third century about the validity of the baptism of certain fringe or sectarian groups, and the need to rebaptize those who later sought re-entry into the traditional church. While the African and some Eastern churches demanded rebaptism, the churches of Rome and Alexandria did not. The latter recognized "sectarian baptism" as valid as long as it had been administered in the name of the Trinity, and those so baptized were again received into the church with only the solemn laying on of hands. Subsequently the Roman and Anglican churches have practiced rebaptism, and the Baptist churches likewise with the regularity of a custom, although it is noteworthy that some Baptist theologians are now raising serious objections to the continuance of the practice. (1)

Historically, our own church has never made any pronouncements with respect to rebaptism, although in practice we have never sanctioned it and have always accepted as valid previous baptisms, if administered in the name of the Trinity. The issue of rebaptism emerging in our church at the present time does so in the wake of various evangelistic and renewal movements in which baptized and confessing Christians have fresh experiences of God's grace in Jesus Christ through the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and who then seek rebaptism.

The Problem: Why Do Baptized, Confessing Christians Seek Rebaptism?

A. The desire to authenticate a revitalized faith.

Those seeking rebaptism have often been reared in Christian homes, baptized in infancy, and later have made confession of their faith in Jesus Christ, but who have viewed their previous Christian lives as nominal and passive. Then some new experience of divine grace triggers spiritual renewal. When this happens, some assume that prior to their recent experience, they had no real relationship to Christ and the Holy Spirit. Others conclude that their previous relationship to Christ and the Spirit were simply elementary and initiatory, and that they now have something which can be called a "fulness of the Spirit." For one reason or the other, believers often seek rebaptism to give expression to their renewed faith and life, and in so doing are often registering no more than a public affirmation of the new thing God has done in their lives.

B. The desire to be obedient to the word of God.

Renewal experiences are commonly associated with and stimulated by a new interest in the study of the Bible. Participants in renewal movements often have a genuine desire to be obedient to the Word of God, but some, being unskilled in the Scriptures, may too easily be persuaded to accept some simplistic or slanted reading and interpretation of a particular passage. A case in point is Acts 2:38 where we read, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Pentecostalism understands this passage as presenting a sequence of responses (repentance, baptism, forgiveness, Holy Spirit) which is binding and normative. (2)

Another case in point is that believers who experience the "baptism in the Spirit" are often persuaded to accept "believer's baptism" when they are confronted with the claim that such baptism is "the clear and obvious pattern of Scripture." It is not sufficiently acknowledged that the New Testament does exhibit various sequences.

C. The doubt of the validity of infant baptism.

Those who seek rebaptism may do so because they have been persuaded to call into question the adequacy and validity of their previous baptism in infancy. Not all Neo-Pentecostalists seek rebaptism. Roman Catholic Neo-Pentecostalists do not contest their infant baptism, and interpret "baptism in the Spirit" in terms of "confirmation," a new experience of the presence and power of the Spirit given them in infant baptism. Unhappily, in Protestant churches this is not always the case, and one observes instead a questioning tendency with respect to infant baptism which has weakened the doctrine and practice of infant baptism.

This new questioning of the doctrine and practice derives not only from Pentecostalism, but from a variety of factors and forces characteristic of the spiritual climate of our time. For over a decade, mass evangelism programs and revival movements have concentrated largely on adult decisions and believer's baptism. A continuing anti-establishment mood of distrust still fosters indifference or opposition to the church, its liturgy and sacraments, its offices and discipline. The new individualism of our time evidences a mistaken impatience with the corporate concepts and relationships of Scripture. Even in contemporary theology, there is to be noted a perceptible shift from the objectivity of God's action on our behalf to the subjectivity of man's response to God's action. All of these factors together with the impact both of Pentecostalism and American fundamentalism have had an eroding effect on the doctrine and practice of infant baptism. Undiscerning capitulation to changing winds of doctrine (Eph. 4:14) however, needs to be resisted lest the church become a captive of cultural and religious change that is only faddish and temporary, and lest the church lose its evangelical and confessional character.

Response to the Problem

A. To expressing a revitalized faith.

It is important to interpret carefully the nature of the new spiritual experience which seeks the validation of rebaptism. When believers speak of having been "baptized in the Holy Spirit," they often refer to a new experience in which Christ became more real to them, in which the fellowship of prayer and study of the Word took on new joy and vitality, in which they became empowered in some par-

ticular way for specific forms of service for Christ. Such experiences or times of spiritual refreshment from the Lord are not occasions for adverse judgments about one's previous baptism or relationship to Christ, but rather occasions for gratitude that God continues to confirm and renew his earlier work of grace in the lives of his chosen people. Indeed, we deny on scriptural grounds that such experiences should be interpreted as "baptism in the Holy Spirit." (3)

Our churches and pastors do well to encourage new and continuing responses to the grace of Christ, new depths of commitment to him, new fillings of or yieldings to the Spirit, but as affirmations of God's earlier work of grace both in baptism and in confirmation of baptismal vows. Indeed, believers should be encouraged to anticipate many continuing experiences subsequent to their baptism, and not merely a "second" or even a "third blessing." Such continuing experiences marked believers in the apostolic church (Eph. 5:18; Phil. 1:6), and should be more characteristic of the church today than is often the case. Such experiences, however, are new fillings of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and ought not to be interpreted as "baptism in the Spirit." While all true believers have the indwelling of the Spirit (Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:13), it is possible for them to avoid or evade the continued infilling of the Spirit, even "to grieve the Spirit" (Eph. 4:30), and "to quench the Spirit" (I Thess. 5:19). Therefore the church does well to gird itself for interpreting such experiences of sanctifying grace biblically and confessionally, and to be more earnest in its call for daily repentance and renewal. (4)

It needs also to be stated that a second baptism is an inappropriate and mistaken symbol for validating an experience of spiritual renewal. Baptism appears in the New Testament as a one-time sacrament by which the Spirit introduces us into the covenant of grace, into Christ and the body of Christ. The sacrament is a dramatic representation and confirmation of the gospel and not first and foremost of our experience. We affirm that other and more appropriate ways of authenticating renewal experiences should be cultivated in our churches such as services of confirmation, reaffirmation or reconsecration, times of sharing in koinonia groups, prayer and testimony opportunities. It is also fitting to make the celebration of the Lord's Supper an occasion for expressing repentance, deepened communion with Christ and commitment of all gifts to him.

B. To the desire to be obedient to the word of God.

Those seeking rebaptism often do so for alleged biblical reasons. As noted above, some find such incentive in the particular sequence of responses mentioned in Acts 2:38: "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The sequence of believer's baptism, repentance-baptism-forgiveness and then Holy Spirit baptism as a second experience, separable from and subsequent to conversion, is often taught as a sequence that is normative for all believers. The history of biblical interpretation should warn us against building important doctrines on the precarious base of a pattern or sequence contained in one or a few biblical passages.

The New Testament does correlate repentance, faith and baptism in examples of adult conversion (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:13, 38; 9:18, etc.), and in the missionary situation of the early church it is understandable that adult conversions are emphasized in the Book of Acts. Such is still the case today, and adults are received into the membership of Christ's body and receive the sign of God's promises to his people (baptism), following upon their faith and repentance. This must not be

understood to mean, however, that faith and repentance must precede baptism in every instance, as in the case of infants. Scripture teaches that God's promises are not only to believing individuals, but also to families, to believers and their children (Acts 2:39; 11:14; 16:15, 33; 18:8; I Cor. 1:16; 7:14). Moreover, the sequential pattern of Acts 2:38 is reversed at Acts 10:48, thereby cautioning the reader against claiming too much for supposed "clear and obvious patterns of Scripture." When it is contended, therefore, that obedience to the word of God is the ground of a rebaptism practice, the contention must be judged to be unscriptural.

C. To the doubt of the validity of infant baptism.

Those seeking rebaptism may do so because they have been persuaded to doubt or reject the validity of infant baptism in favor of so-called "believer's baptism." In the face of many factors and forces which prompt a new questioning of infant baptism in our time, it is incumbent upon the church to present again this basic doctrine for our time. While we do not believe that this is our task now, we do remind the church that baptism signifies and seals to us the whole treasury of Christ's benefits, and that we spend the rest of our days living out of that treasury. Baptism signifies and seals to us the whole gospel, all the promises of God's grace and not simply a grace suitable for babes. And we affirm again that baptism is the sign and seal of God's saving work for his covenant people, including their children. The following is offered as a brief statement of our basic doctrine:

First, baptism is the sign and seal of God's gracious action.

> Every baptism whether adult or infant testifies first and foremost to what God has done and will do for his people, and not only to what has happened or will happen to a particular individual. Baptism signifies, therefore, inclusion in God's covenant of grace (Acts 2:38, 39; Rom. 4:11), ingrafting into Christ and union with him in his death, burial, and resurrection (Col. 2:11, 12; 3:5-17; Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27, 28), cleansing from sin and free forgiveness (Acts 22:16; I Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26), regeneration and renewal (John 3:3-8; Tit. 3:5b; I Pet. 3:21), and confession of Christ (Acts 8:36f.; Rom. 10:9; Eph. 5:26; I Pet. 3:18f.). All this rich treasury of God's grace is represented to us in baptism and sealed to us by the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13f.; 4:30). Grace always precedes faith, and faith is the effect and not the condition of grace (Eph. 2:8).

This emphasis on the objectivity of God's gracious deeds in Christ is understandably present in our Reformed standards.

> We believe that our good God, mindful of our infirmity and weakness, has ordained the Sacraments to seal unto us his promises, to be pledges of his good will and grace to us, and to nourish and strengthen our faith. He has joined these to the Word of the Gospel the better to present to our senses both that which he gives us to understand through his Word and that which he does inwardly in our hearts, assuring and confirming in us the salvation which he imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of an inward and invisible action, whereby God works in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. The signs therefore are not vain or empty so as to deceive us; for Jesus Christ is their reality, without whom they would have no significance. (5)

A theologian of a former day has well said, "We should remember all this specially in connection with Baptism, where the subjectivity and humanism of the day tempt us to think more of the child, or of the family, than of the Church as the center of Christian action and interest . . . An undue subjectivity, by way of sectarian individualism, is the worst depreciation of Baptism. We are not to measure the worth of any Sacrament by the way we feel after it. (6)

Second, baptism signifies and seals our incorporation into the body of Christ.

It marks the beginning and initiates a continuing life in Christ through the Holy Spirit within the body of Christ. Baptism even as Old Testament circumcision is not a private rite but a corporate act with corporate dimensions. Children of believers as well as individual adult believers are considered heirs of the kingdom and participants in the body of Christ. Both Old and New Testaments clearly show provisions for incorporating households into the membership of God's people (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:7; Mark 10:13f.; Acts 2:39; I Cor. 7:14, etc.). The covenant initiated by God with Abraham maintained with faithfulness to Israel, envisaged by the prophets to be renewed to include all the families of the earth, provides the key to the church as the covenant people of God today (Gen. 12:13; 15; 17:7-14; Jer. 31:31-34; Matt. 26:38; Rom. 11:17-24; Gal. 3:7-14, 26-29; Eph. 2:11-22; Heb. 8:12f.; etc.). Jesus delegated his ministry, including baptism, to the church and the church began with vigor to incorporate adult individuals and believing parents with their households into its fellowship (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:39; 8:12; 9:18; 10:47f.; 16:15, 33; 18:8). Baptism, therefore, signifies and seals not only reception into the church as institution or nurturing and supportive community, but into Christ and his body. And to be introduced into Christ is to be introduced into the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:17; 12:13; II Cor. 3:17-18), for as has been well said, "Christ and the Spirit are not so divided that each must separately and at appropriate times baptize into each other. Baptism into the body of Christ is not a Spirit-less matter upgraded later by a *spiritual* baptism into the Holy Spirit." (7)

Third, baptism signifies and seals entrance into the covenant life.

Baptism introduces the baptized into a continuing covenant life in the course of which he or she appropriates God's promises. These promises are the same for adults and infants. The blessings of baptism are equally prospective for adults and infants. Both are called to appropriate these promises by faith, the child as he matures, the adult at the time of his conversion. Because Baptism is the sacrament of beginning and of initiation into a continuing life in the covenant and the covenant community, its efficacy must not be limited to what precedes it or to what happens to the recipient at the moment of baptism. Baptism seals to us all that Christ intends for us, present, past, and future. It ushers one into life in the covenant community where God shows himself faithful to his promises, where his Word is proclaimed and taught, where obedience, nurture and prayer are the working out of his salvation, and where these keep one in the way of salvation. We affirm that baptism is not only a sign and seal, but also a means of grace.

Fourth, baptism issues in crucial responsibility for the church.

> Baptism involves not only the baptized but also the church. In baptism, the members of the body of Christ pledge themselves anew to faithful teaching and to the maintenance of a fellowship of faith and life in which baptized persons are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits. At baptism the whole church engages by life and nurture, first, to lead the baptized to an understanding of their ingrafting into Christ, second, to an understanding of their engagement to be the Lord's and, third, to the privilege of confirming in their own person the vows of their baptism.
> Every occasion of infant baptism is an occasion when every member of the household of faith should reflect on the meaning of his own baptism, and examine himself with respect to the faith for which he was claimed, and to the Cross by which he was bought. As has been well said, "Baptism does not mainly concern the child or parents. It is an act principally for the church. The whole church in faith and spirit enters the cleansing stream. It revives by faith its sense of the new and eternal life of forgiveness. It measures its own faithfulness to its regenerative redemption . . . And it resolves anew, prays anew, to be faithful to the end, to keep and renew its Baptism till death." (8)

Baptism, then is not wrong when applied to children but it is wrong when separated from the Word of the Gospel and from the nurture which is provided by the church through its faith and life. Jesus' death and resurrection were one time, unrepeatable acts on behalf of our salvation (Matt. 20:22f.; Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50), signed and sealed to us in "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27f.). This has been the confession of our church through the centuries:

> For this reason we believe that every one who desires to enter eternal life ought to be baptized but once with this unique Baptism without ever repeating it, since we cannot be born twice.
>
> This Baptism, however, is not only efficacious so long as the water is on us and received by us, but through all the days of our years. That is why we reject the error of the Anabaptists, who are not satisfied with the one only baptism they once received, and who moreover condemn the baptism of children of believers, whom we believe ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the Covenant, as the infants in Israel were circumcized upon the same promises that are made to our children. (9)

Nothing can alter God's saving deeds on our behalf, and no sin of man can undo them. It is possible for one to deny or renounce his baptism, but even when so denied, one cannot undo his baptism for it remains to become his judgment (Heb. 6:4f.; 10:26-27). God's promises to such a person will be realized, however, when he comes to repentance and becomes again as a little child and takes refuge only in the grace of Christ.

It is for these reasons that rebaptism poses serious difficulties for the Reformed Church in America. On the grounds of Scripture and the Confessions, the church affirms the validity of infant baptism, and the validity of all baptisms in the name of the Triune God. (10) Rejection of the doctrine and the practice of infant baptism does not jeopardize one's membership in the one holy catholic and apostolic church, but it does jeopardize the peace and unity of the Reformed Church and places one in conflict with its confessional position. (11)

ENDNOTES

(1) A. Gilmore, *Baptism and Christian Unity* (1966), 13f., 75ff.
(2) Donald Gee, *God's Great Gift* (no date), 55ff.
(3) Cnf. "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Theological Commission Report,* General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, 1975.
(4) John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* Book III, ch. 15.
(5) *The Belgic Confession,* Art. 33, Cnf. also Art. 34; *Heidelberg Catechism* Lord's Days 26, 27 (*Liturgy and Psalms,* R.C.A.).
(6) P. T. Forsyth, *The Church and the Sacraments* (1949), 190, 208.
(7) F. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (1973), 293.
(8) P. T. Forsyth, op. cit., 181f.
(9) *Belgic Confession,* Art. 34. Likewise *the Second Helvetic Confession,* a widely accepted confession in the Reformed tradition, declares: "There is but one baptism in the church of God; for it is sufficient to be once baptized or consecrated unto God. For baptism once received does continue all a man's life, and is a perpetual sealing of our adoption to us." Art. 20 (Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom,* Vol. III).
(10) "A Statement on Infant Baptism," The Theological Commission, Reformed Church in America, *Minutes of the General Synod* (1967), 189-196.
(11) *Belgic Confession,* Articles 32-34; *Heidelberg Catechism,* Questions 66-74; "The Order for the Sacrament of Infant Baptism," (*Liturgy and Psalms,* R.C.A.); Canons of Dordt, Headings 3-4 (Articles 8-11), 5 (Art. 10, 14); *Book of Church Order,* R.C.A., Formulary, "The Declaration for Ministers."

Counsel commended to the Church

The following counsel is commended to the church relative to the issue of rebaptism:

1. We cannot be but grateful to God for the evidences of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our time. It is an occasion for rejoicing when the faith and life of believers is invigorated by new infillings of the Spirit, when there is new appreciation of the fruit and gifts of the Spirit, when there is new earnestness in the study of the Word and new depth of commitment to Jesus Christ. Ministers and elders should freely communicate this attitude, and full acceptance in brotherly love of those who claim "charismatic" experiences should be the rule among us. Members of our churches with new experiences of revitalized faith should be encouraged to share them with us and not withdraw to groups outside their own church, and be given counsel on how best to express and affirm their new experiences. Those who desire to participate in groups outside their own congregation should recognize their Christian duty to exercise brotherly affection and love, and do all in their power to promote the unity and peace of the church.

2. Ministers and elders are urged to give new emphasis in preaching and teaching to the doctrine of God's covenanting grace and the sacraments which are signs and seals of that covenanting, and the sacrament of infant baptism in particular. They are also urged to give renewed attention to discipline with respect to the sacrament. The church ought not to baptize indiscriminately.

It is disconcerting to discover how much misunderstanding and superstition attach to infant baptism in the popular mind. Spurious understandings of it may be due in part to neglect of it in our preaching and teaching or to some ill-advised

departures from our liturgy in its administration. In some of our churches, a review of Christian education and nurture may be in order. In other churches, more may be needed by way of supportive structures for those who yearn for a sense of belonging and of Christian worth. A ministry of caring by both pastors and elders is a great need in many of our churches.

3. Ministers and elders are urged to respond to the issue of rebaptism with discernment and restraint. Not all who have sought it and who may seek it, do so for identical reasons. When rebaptism has been entered upon because it represented at the time a seemingly appropriate, familiar expression of a revitalized faith, the matter calls for loving and patient counsel. Misunderstanding of the sacrament is involved in such cases. Instruction is needed to show that it is unscriptural to use baptism as a means for expressing an experience of renewal. Those who may seek rebaptism for this reason or because they have been influenced by a "believer's baptism" reading and interpretation of certain passages of Scripture also need instruction in the differences between interpreting Scripture from the Neo-Pentecostalist, individualist stance, and the covenantal orientation of our own tradition. As long as such members evidence the fruit of the Spirit and cherish the unity and peace of the church and do not oppose the doctrine and good order of the church, it appears that pastoral counsel rather than disciplinary action should be our response.

4. When those rebaptized display active, open antagonism to the doctrine of infant baptism and make propaganda for "believer's baptism," it is the duty of ministers and elders to advise them that their action is contrary to the doctrine and practice of the church and disruptive of its peace and unity. In such instances, it is an act of Christian love to allow dissident members to transfer without prejudice to some other Christian church which practices adult baptism only, in advance of the disciplinary action required by our *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 2.

5. When the situation arises where ministers and elders in the Reformed Church do not subscribe to its doctrine and practice and are not loyal to its witness and work, it may be well to advise both ministers and elders that any departures from the ordination vows of their offices as specified in the formularies of the church should be submitted to their appropriate judicatory for counsel and decision, according to the ordinances of our church.

6. When rebaptized persons leave the active membership of our church for a period of fellowship with groups outside their congregation, the church should be slow to terminate their membership without their express consent, and allow generous time for counsel, reflection, and reconsideration. When those who have been rebaptized, after a temporary departure from the church, indicate a desire to return, the church should welcome them in a conciliatory manner, ascertain whether they still consider themselves members of the Reformed Church in America, and whether they are willing to submit themselves to the doctrine, discipline and practice of the church.

While we believe this issue calls more for pastoral than judicial action on all levels of our church life, we do deem rebaptism a serious doctrinal error, and deem it a seriously mistaken action for any minister or Board of Elders to voice or record a policy or position of advocacy of rebaptism, and one contrary to the confessional standards and the *Book of Church Order.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-4. We recommend that the General Synod accept and approve this report of the Theological Commission as pastoral counsel to the churches, and as its response to the overtures of Classis Cascades and Classis of North Grand Rapids presented to the General Synod of 1974. (ADOPTED)

R-5. We recommend that the General Synod request the Liturgy Committee to examine the liturgical and theological advisability of creating new forms or orders which may serve to affirm, celebrate and express a new experience of revitalized faith and which, hopefully, will obviate the need for any recourse to repeated baptism. (ADOPTED)

3. THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

This study of the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" (1) has been undertaken in response to an increasing number of questions raised by the consistories and classes of the R.C.A. concerning the rapidly spreading charismatic movement. Although "Spirit-baptism" is not the only issue raised by Neo-Pentecostalism (2), it is perhaps the central theological problem. The manner in which this New Testament concept is understood has far reaching implications for the life and practice of the church.

It should be made clear at the outset that this paper does not question the claim that a great number of Christians have experienced a new sense of the activity of the Holy Spirit in their lives as a result of their participation in the charismatic movement. Neither does it challenge the validity of that event described by Neo-Pentecostals as "the baptism in the Holy Spirit". It is not the validity of the experience but its *nature and meaning* that is under discussion here.

The question, then, which will be explored in this paper might be formulated in this fashion: Is the Neo-Pentecostal doctrine concerning the infilling of the Holy Spirit and the attendant exercise of one or more of the charismata (gifts) (3) to be equated with the New Testament doctrine of Spirit-baptism? To answer this question an examination of Neo-Pentecostal teaching on this matter must be provided. This will be followed by a study of Spirit-baptism in the New Testament and a consideration of the implications of the scriptural witness for the life of the R.C.A.

Spirit-Baptism in Neo-Pentecostalism

Neo-Pentecostalism teaches that "the baptism in the Spirit" is an experience distinct from (and usually following) conversion which brings the fullness of the Spirit into the life of the Christian and enables him to exercise certain gifts given by the Spirit. Don Basham, a Neo-Pentecostal leader, writes in his guide *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism*: "The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a second encounter with God (the first is conversion) in which the Christian begins to receive the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit into his life." (4) Commenting that the New Testament teaches two baptisms, water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism, Basham goes on to say "According to Scripture, these two baptisms are indicative of two separate, major experiences of the power of God. The first is conversion; the sinner's acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior which brings salvation . . . Here we see the new believer as the *object* of God's redemption. But the Lord is not satisfied with our conversion alone; He has promised us power to be his wit-

nesses. So a second time we are confronted with the power of God; this time in the baptism in the Holy Spirit through which the Christian is brought into a deeper relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit for the purpose of making him—not an object, but an instrument of redemption." (5)

Basham's views are characteristic of Neo-Pentecostalism. (6) Anthony Hoekema's summary of Neo-Pentecostal teaching on Spirit-baptism draws the same distinction between the work of the Spirit in conversion and in Spirit-baptism.

> Expanding on this a bit, the common Neo-Pentecostal position is as follows: though the Spirit regenerates a man and enables him to repent and believe in Christ at the time of his conversion, the Spirit does not come into the believer's heart as a Person who fills his life completely and who now dispenses the full complement of His gifts until the time of the Spirit-baptism . . . which is an experience distinct from and usually subsequent to conversion. In other words, though the Spirit touches a person's life at the time of conversion, He does not come into one's life in His totality until the time of the Spirit-baptism. In Neo-Pentecostal circles, therefore, one is not considered to have available to him the full power of the Holy Spirit until he has experienced Spirit-baptism; hence all Christians are urged to seek such a Spirit-baptism. (7)

The point is clear. Conversion alone does not enable the Christian to receive the full empowering of the Spirit nor to exercise the gifts of the Spirit. He jerks along, as one Neo-Pentecostal put it, on four cylinders when he might have the use of all eight were he to receive the Spirit baptism.

Spirit-Baptism in the New Testament

The Neo-Pentecostals are correct in asserting that the New Testament teaches the necessity of being baptized with the Holy Spirit. The question is not whether this baptism is necessary, but rather when it takes place in the life of the Christian. Does the New Testament in fact teach the need for a second encounter with the Holy Spirit? Does the believer who has been baptized with water and has made confession of his faith in our Lord yet require a subsequent and distinct encounter with the Spirit before his life will be fully empowered and the gifts of the Spirit manifested? Several relevant points can be made from the New Testament concerning the question of Spirit-baptism.

1. The New Testament teaches that any man who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord does so only through the Holy Spirit. (I Cor. 12:3, Rom. 8:9, Eph. 1:3) Indeed, Neo-Pentecostals do not deny that the Spirit is at work in the life of every Christian. Don Basham is again representative of Neo-Pentecostal teaching: "Certainly the Holy Spirit is present in conversion." (8) Present, but for Neo-Pentecostals, not fully and powerfully present for witness and service until Spirit-baptism.

2. The phrase "the baptism in the Holy Spirit" never appears as such in the New Testament. (9) A form of the verb "to baptize" is used when referring to the Spirit rather than the noun "baptism", and it refers to the incorporation of the Christian into the community of faith. There is no scriptural warrant to justify opposing "Spirit-baptism" to "water-baptism".

3. A third observation relates to Spirit-baptism in the four gospels. There are four passages in the gospels which speak of the Spirit-baptism (Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, and John 1:33). In none of these passages is there any suggestion of a second anointing of the Spirit. The verses in question are all in sections dealing with the ministry of John the Baptist and in each instance it is John who speaks of Jesus as the one who will baptize with the Spirit. John makes clear that although he baptizes with water he is not to be regarded as the bearer of the messianic salvation. He merely prepares the way for the one who will come and bring the Kingdom. Unlike John, the Messiah will not baptize with water, but with the Holy Spirit, i.e. he will work what John can never effect, an internal, regenerative change in man. The intention of these four passages is to make plain that although the Baptist towers above his contempories as the herald of the Kingdom, Jesus' gift to man far surpasses anything John can offer. To find evidence of a teaching concerning a "second blessing" here is to make these verses carry a weight they simply will not bear.

4. Acts refers to Spirit-baptism in only two places (Acts 1:5, 11:16). In the first instance the risen Lord refers to the words of the Baptist speaking of the Messiah's power to baptize with the Spirit. This prophecy is employed here not so much to testify to the superiority of Jesus over John but to point to and provide interpretation for the Pentecost event described in Acts 2. For Luke, John's prophecy is fulfilled when the Christian community is baptized with the Spirit on Pentecost Day. Again no notion of a "second blessing" is present—Acts two describes the promised blessing of the church with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 11:16 also provides no support for the Neo-Pentecostal position. This verse is situated near the conclusion of a passage in which Peter defends himself to the "circumcision party" for baptizing the Gentile Cornelius and his household. Peter's justification for his action culminates when he points out that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles as the gospel was proclaimed to them. If, as Peter recalls, the Lord taught that it is he who baptizes with the Spirit, then the fact that the Gentiles received the Spirit must mean that they received it from the Lord—that they too were eligible for the Kingdom of God. Surely water baptism could not be denied them. The intention of the passage, then, is to show that the Holy Spirit led the church to accept Gentiles within its fellowship. Nothing is said here concerning "the baptism in the Spirit" as a "second encounter" with the Spirit. The Cornelius story actually challenges Neo-Pentecostal teaching for the sequence of events sketched here indicates that the Gentiles heard the preaching of the word, received the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues, and then received water Baptism. (Acts 10:34-48). If this story teaches anything about the experience of salvation, it is that faith, repentance, confession, the reception of the Spirit, and tongues came simultaneously.

5. Reference to Spirit-baptism occurs only in one other place in the New Testament. In I Cor. 12, Paul delivers his well known teaching on the unity of the body of Christ. In the thirteenth verse he indicates the basis of that unity: the work of the Holy Spirit within the body. "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body—Jew or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit." Here "the baptism in the Spirit" is not mentioned to affirm the superiority of Jesus over John the Baptist, to point to Pentecost, nor to establish a justification for the baptism of the Gentiles, but rather to teach the spiritual oneness of Christ's body. If one is in Christ, he has the Spirit. The Apostle's teaching at this

point refers to the confessing Christian community which is viewed as one body because of the one Spirit. The passage would be meaningless if there were two categories of Christians addressed by Paul—those merely converted to Christ and those having received a "second blessing." Paul does not teach that only some Christians have received "the baptism in the Spirit", for if this were the case the body would not be united through the Spirit's one baptism. A certain number of converts would not yet have received the fullness of the Spirit. Paul's argument for the oneness of Christ's body on the basis of Spirit-baptism holds only because every member of that body has received the baptism.

6. When other portions of the New Testament concerning the work of the Spirit are surveyed, they are found to be consistent with the passages examined above. A study of Romans 8, I Cor. 12-14, Gal. 5, or any other section dealing with the Holy Spirit and the Christian community reveals no evidence of a "two stage" operation of the Spirit in the life of the believer. Declarative statements as well as admonitions concerning the Holy Spirit are addressed to all members of the body without distinction. When Paul discusses speaking in tongues in I Cor. 14, for example, there is no suggestion that his words are to apply only to those who have experienced a second encounter with the Spirit. The implication is that any confessing Christian, any member of the body of Christ, is eligible for this or any other gift. Moreover, nowhere in the New Testament do we read of admonitions urging converts to seek "the baptism in the Spirit." The reason is simple. Any man who turns to Christ and accepts him as Lord has already received Spirit-baptism.

7. One of the passages which might seem most strongly to contest this judgment and which usually is cited in Neo-Pentecostal literature concerning Spirit-baptism is Acts 8:14-24. Indeed, the story of the Samaritans might be called one of the cornerstones of Neo-Pentecostalism. (10) Biblical interpreters are not agreed on an interpretation of this section; consequently it should not be offered as the final proof of the Neo-Pentecostal position. The Pentecostal interpretation holds that the Samaritans were objects of the initial working of the Holy Spirit when they responded to the preaching of Philip and were thus converted and baptized. When Peter and John heard of this, learning that although the Samaritans had become Christians they had not yet received "the baptism in the Holy Spirit," they traveled to Samaria to pray for and lay hands on these water baptized persons. The result was "they received the Holy Spirit," i.e., they were, according to Neo-Pentecostalism, only then 'baptized in the Spirit."

There are several objections to be made to the Neo-Pentecostal interpretation and employment of this narrative. In the first place it is unclear from the story whether the Samaritans had received the Spirit at the time of their water baptism. Were they really Christians when Peter laid hands on them? Simon the magician is depicted in the same passage as one who has been baptized with water but who hardly seems to be a true confessor of Christ. A theme running throughout Acts is that the ground of faith and repentance is the Holy Spirit and not external rites such as water baptism (this is not to say that Luke undervalues baptism with water). It is not evident in this passage that the Samaritans had been encountered by the Spirit prior to the ministry of Peter and John. (11) In the second place, however the passage is interpreted, it ought not be regarded as foundational for Christian theology and practice. There are three sound reasons for this: 1) since the meaning of the passage is not clear, these verses in themselves ought not be

given primary importance in the development of New Testament theology; 2) a historical narrative does not necessarily provide a precedent for the practice of the community of faith because the event described in the narrative may have an exceptional rather than normative character; 3) a historical narrative ought not become the basis for the theology and practice of the church unless it is consistent with and supported by portions of scripture which clearly intend to provide teaching for the church.

8. The other foundational passage for Neo-Pentecostalism is Acts 19:1-7—the story of Paul and the twelve Ephesians. The Neo-Pentecostals hold that the Ephesians, who are referred to as disciples, were Christian converts who had not received the Holy Spirit. Upon learning this, Paul baptized them in the name of Jesus, laid hands upon them, and the Ephesians received the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues and prophesied. Neo-Pentecostals discover evidence here for Spirit-baptism as a second encounter with the Spirit in that they find in the passage a separation of conversion (becoming disciples, believing), from the laying on of hands for the imparting of the Holy Spirit (as a second gift).

A closer reading of the verses in question, however, once again reveals serious weaknesses in the Neo-Pentecostal interpretation. When the Greek text is examined it will be noted, in the first place, that the word "disciples" appears here without the article. Every other time Luke uses this word he employs the article, speaking of "the disciples". Moreover, "the disciples" is a technical phrase used by Luke to refer to the whole Christian community or in some cases to a smaller group of Christians. There is no reason for Luke to drop the article in this single instance except that the Ephesians were not numbered among "the disciples" (Christians). They were disciples of John as verse three indicates, not of Jesus. Before their encounter with Paul, the Ephesians simply had not been converted to Christ. (12) This interpretation is substantiated, in the second place, by the negative answer given to the question Paul asks concerning their reception of the Holy Spirit. The Ephesians have not received the Holy Spirit (in fact they have never even heard of him) because they had only received John's baptism. Paul's teaching that no man can come to Christ apart from the Spirit has already been mentioned (Rm. 8:9); the admission by the Ephesians disciples that they had not received the Spirit is an admission that they had not become Christians. Indeed, upon hearing this Paul explains the differences between John and Jesus, and the Ephesians submit to baptism in the name of Jesus, i.e. they received the Christian initiation rite for the first time. The laying on of hands with the speaking in tongues and prophesying which follows is part of the rite of Christian initiation first enacted here and not a "second blessing". Luke seems to be re-affirming the theme which runs throughout the New Testament—that for all of John's greatness, he is no more than the herald of the one who will come and baptize with the Spirit.

This survey of New Testament data concerning the so-called baptism in the Spirit would indicate that there is virtually no biblical support for the Neo-Pentecostal position on this matter. When the scripture speaks of "the baptism in the Spirit" it refers to the over-all work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian community and the individual believer. The Spirit-baptism should not be seen as a second work of the Holy Spirit which brings with it certain of the gifts. Holy Spirit baptism not only makes possible the gifts of the Spirit, but also faith and repentance, union with Christ and incorporation into his body, guidance for the

work of the church and boldness in witness, the fruit of the spirit and the highest gifts—in short "the baptism in the Holy Spirit" is a metaphor describing the initial activity of the Holy Spirit among Christ's people, resulting in his continuing dynamic work in their midst. Every believer in Jesus Christ has been "baptized in the Holy Spirit." Every Christian is eligible for every work and gifts of the Spirit.

Implications for the Faith and Practice of the R.C.A.

In the light of the above, those members of the Reformed Church in America who have experienced a new, vital, and powerful working of the Holy Spirit in their lives are counseled to interpret their experience in the light of the best biblical theology and Reformed doctrine rather than Neo-Pentecostal teaching. "Charismatic" experience need not be hinged to a Neo-Pentecostal doctrine of a second encounter with the Spirit. The framework of biblical-Reformed theology is capable of accommodating the full operation of the Spirit.

At the same time, "non-charismatics" in the congregations of our church should not shut the door to the possibility that the Holy Spirit is manifesting gifts among us which have rarely been seen in the churches of the Reformation. The Spirit moves with sovereign freedom among his people and we dare not attempt to bind his activity. We may rejoice wherever there is evidence of the Spirit's working. But we may also demand that the Interpretation of that work and the practice which rises out of it be in accord with the Word of God.

According to the Word, dissension and division are not products of the Spirit's activity. When charismatic experience in a church triggers conflict which threatens to tear apart the body of Christ we can be sure that such difficulties are not a product of the Spirit's presence, but of a human and sinful misunderstanding of the meaning and implications of the Spirit's work. The Neo-Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit-baptism provides an instance of this sort of damaging misunderstanding. Its acceptance in certain quarters of the R.C.A. may well be the hidden source of many of the troubles which seem to appear almost inevitably when charismatic practice develops in one of our churches.

The Neo-Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit-baptism frequently leads to the division of the church into first and second class Christians. No matter how vigorously Pentecostal leaders deny that this is their intention it nevertheless occurs. "Non-charismatics" feel their Christian experience is judged and found wanting by their charismatic brothers; charismatics evangelize the congregation in hope that others may experience the blessing that has become so important to them. This division of Christians into two classes often seems to be the result of a teaching which holds that some Christians have only been touched by the Spirit while others have been abundantly filled.

Closely related to the development of a "bi-level" Christianity through a misunderstanding of the New Testament doctrine of the baptism in the Spirit is the tension surrounding the ecclesiastical offices which is often found in congregations which include charismatics. Those subscribing to Neo-Pentecostal teaching frequently hold that the gifts of the Spirit which are necessary for the exercise of an office in the church are given by the Spirit only after the "second blessing." Consequently ministers and consistory members who have never experienced the second work of the Holy Spirit can hardly be acknowledged as spiritual leaders.

In many instances charismatics reject their authority, criticize the program of the church, attack the minister's preaching, and at best tolerate the official leadership. It ought to be noted at the same time that often the unsympathetic and closed attitude of ministers, elders, and deacons has exacerbated the negative feelings of many charismatics toward church leadership.

The "two class" Christianity resulting from Neo-Pentecostal teaching on Spirit—baptism has also led to a type of *apartheid* within the Christian community. It is to the credit of many charismatics that they have not succumbed to the separatistic impulses often present in Pentecostal circles and have remained with the institutional church. At the same time, most charismatics state that their "real" fellowship and worship comes not through their own congregation, but is found as they participate with other "Spirit-filled" Christians in a charismatic group. Here they find freedom to exercise the gifts they believe they have been given and to speak freely of the work of the Spirit in their lives. And while one can speak critically of the idea of Spirit-baptism which encourages charismatics to seek fellowship with others who have been "baptized in the Spirit," one can regard with sympathy the frustration felt by charismatics in the Reformed Church when they find no place for the exercise of the gifts in their own congregations. Churches which provide no place for the exercise of the gifts their members have received are giving tacit encouragement to the *apartheid* suggested by the Neo-Pentecostal notion of Spirit-baptism. Ministers and consistories ought to give serious consideration to the question of the appropriate exercise of the various gifts of the Spirit in their congregations (I Cor. 12-14).

Although these and other problems occasioned by the charismatic movement will not disappear with a modification of the Neo-Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit-baptism, the biblical teaching on this matter offers a fruitful beginning point for a new understanding of the working of the Holy Spirit in the church—one which will find a place for the deepest concerns of charismatics and non-charismatics as well. The New Testament doctrine destroys the "first class—second class" division created by Neo-Pentecostal teaching.

As has been stated above, the biblical position on Spirit-baptism is that anyone who comes to Christ in faith and repentance and who is incorporated in his body where Jesus is named as Lord, is "baptized in the Spirit." If all members of the household of faith have received "the baptism" none should be regarded as having experienced a "second blessing" unknown to others. By definition a Christian is one who has received the gift of the Spirit. And while the Christian ought to seek and pray for an ever greater appropriation of this gift, and may rejoice in every experience of revitalizations, he need not seek a "second (spiritual) baptism."

This means every Christian has been given the Holy Spirit. Christians experience the fullness of God in varied ways, being equipped by the Spirit with special gifts for special tasks. But those who confess Christ may all share in the fullness of the Spirit's blessing. Therefore there is no basis for "two class" Christianity. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body . . . and all were made to drink of one Spirit." Moreover, there is no foundation for the rejection of the ordained officers of the church because they do not exercise certain of the *charismata* (gifts). The minister may not speak in tongues or work miracles (most would like to!) but he too is baptized in the Spirit and may demonstrate

such gifts as administration, prophecy, wisdom, etc. And finally, the scriptural notion of Spirit-baptism eliminates Christian apartheid. If all believers are baptized in the Spirit, then all are eligible for any operation and gift of the Spirit. Every congregation should be open to the working of the Spirit in their midst and not make an *a priori* decision that certain of the gifts such as tongues, interpretation, or healing are no longer given by the Spirit and thus have no place in the life of the church. There should be no need for extra-congregational charismatic groups. Every Reformed Church congregation is charismatic!

Neo-Pentecostalism has helped many in our churches recapture an awareness of the dynamic presence of God the Spirit in their midst. The gratitude owed Neo-Pentecostals for this contribution to the renewal of the church is in no way lessened by the rejection of their notion of Spirit-baptism. While sparing no effort to maintain fellowship with the several expressions of the modern charismatic movement, Reformed Christians should seek to understand not only Spirit-baptism but the full activity of the Spirit within the framework of Biblical and Reformed theology. The Reformed tradition is rich with theologians such as Calvin, Owen, Kuyper, Noordmans, Van Ruler and Berkhof who have given special attention to the Holy Spirit, and who can assist the church of today as she attempts to understand the full working of the Spirit in her life and in the world. Here, perhaps, the Reformed churches can make special contributions to the charismatic movement, calling the attention of Pentecostal Christians to dimensions of the Spirit's concern which have been all but ignored by "charismatic theology", e.g., the relation of the Spirit to societal problems and to the structural elements in church and world. Neo-Pentecostals have joyously sought to bring all Christians into an experience of renewal through the Spirit; Reformed Christians might, with a similar generosity, seek to share the treasures of their heritage so that the church will be able to understand fully and use responsibly the gifts our Lord and Spirit so graciously imparts.

ENDNOTES

(1) Much discussion has been occasioned by the question of the appropriate translation of the Greek preposition *en* when used to relate "baptized" to "the Holy Spirit." We shall translate *en* as "in" except when quoting or referring to passages where commonly accepted translations (K.J.V., R.S.V.) render it otherwise.

(2) By Neo-Pentecostalism we mean the charismatic movement within the mainline churches in contrast to the Pentecostal churches on the one hand and the catholic charismatics on the other.

(3) We are aware that a long line of theologians from Augustine to Warfied, and in our own day Anthony Hoekema, hold that certain of the spiritual gifts were intended only for the earliest period of the history of the church and consequently soon disappear in the post-New Testament church. We believe that neither scripture nor church history provide evidence to warrant such a view.

(4) Don Basham, *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism* (Reading: Gateway Outreach, no date), p. 10.

(5) *ibid.* pp. 11-12.

(6) See also Laurence Christenson, *Speaking in Tongues and its Significance for the Church* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1968). p. 37f.; Robert Frost, *Aglow with the Spirit* (Northridge, Calif.; Voice Christian Publications,

1965), p. 14f.; Harald Bredesen, *Yes, Lord,* (Plainfield, N.J.; Logos International, 1972), p. 49; John L. Sherrill, *They Speak with other Tongues,* (Westwood, N.J., Fleming H. Revell Co., 1965), pp. 115, 120.

(7) Anthony A. Hoekema, *Holy Spirit Baptism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 10.

(8) Basham, p. 17.

(9) *Report of the Special Committee on the Work of the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Office of the General Assembly, The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1970), p. 30.

(10) James D. G. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit (London: SCM Press LTD, 1970), pp. 55-63.

(11) *ibid.,* pp. 63-67.

(12) *ibid.,* pp. 83-85.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-6. That the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America encourage the development of a biblical and Reformed understanding of the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" and the gifts of the Spirit by: Approving and distributing the studies on Neo-Pentecostalism prepared by the Theological Commission to the churches of the R.C.A.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt recommendation 6. After some discussion regarding the section entitled "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit" recommentation 6. was referred to members of the Theological Commission present at General Synod for clarification and possible rewording, and report back to General Synod.

Paul Fries, Chairman-elect of the Theological Commission, presented a revision of R-6 as follows:

R-6. That the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America encourage the development of a biblical and Reformed understanding of the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" and the gifts of the Spirit by: approving the distribution of this report of the Theological Commission to the churches of the RCA and requesting response from concerned individuals and consistories to provide materials for possible revision and further studies. (ADOPTED)

4. BAPTIZED CHILDREN AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Synod of 1973 instructed the Theological Commission to prepare a study document on the subject of baptized children and the Lord's Supper. This report is now complete, but because of the importance of the above papers, the commission has decided not to make this report until 1976.

5. ROLES OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

The Synod of 1974 referred this matter to the Committee on Church Government. However, the Committee on Church Government feels that the issue raised by the Classis of Schenectady—the distinctions between the offices of elder and deacon—should be studied by the commission. The Theological Commission will have a report for the Synod of 1976.

6. PRESENT STUDIES

The Synod of 1974 asked the commission to study the questions of "conscience and authority" and "maleness and femaleness." Both studies are under way and should be ready for the Synod of 1976.

7. THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION PAPERS

The commission has made a study regarding various papers which have become a part of General Synod minutes. The commission feels that several of these papers should be made available to pastors. The commission will be presenting a plan to the Synod of 1976 regarding means to print these papers, and in that way, make available to pastors theological guidelines which have been approved by the church.

REPORT OF THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF THE LITURGY

The Worship Committee held two meetings during the past year. It was decided to enter into a contract with Eerdmans Publishing Company for a reprint of 3,000 copies of the *Liturgy and Psalms* of 1967. The execution of the contract is in the hands of the Office of Operations and Finance and copies should be available by October of 1975.

The Committee wishes to emphasize the fact that these copies will be an exact reprint of the present *Liturgy*. We are aware of the fact that some parts of it are in need of change, but we found that any alteration in the book would alter the cost in such a way as to make it prohibitive.

In authorizing this reprint the Committee believes that the question of new liturgics can be postponed for two years. We do not, however, intend to be idle for that period of time. Specifically, we propose to use it to conduct a series of conferences on worship throughout the denomination not only for the purpose of giving help in questions of worship but also for the purpose of learning something of the mind of the Reformed Church in liturgical matters. With the liturgical pluriformity which exists in our denomination, we feel it would be unwise for a small group such as ours to begin writing new liturgical materials without broader information about liturgical needs.

As a first step we have prepared a pilot questionnaire which has already been mailed to a select group of churches and which will be monitored by members of the committee. Using the results from this inventory, we shall be sending a similar questionnaire to all of the congregations in the Reformed Church in September. We hope that every congregation will cooperate with us in this venture since we consider it of great significance in helping set future directions for the committee; especially in planning for the conferences mentioned earlier.

Because of the scope of the work in view, the Committee finds it essential to meet three times during the coming year. We therefore request an appropriation of $2,500—$1,500 for the cost of meeting and $1,000 for the development of some of the program materials indicated above.

Overtures from the Classes of Queens and Schenectady regarding amending the *Book of Church Order* to require more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper were referred to this committee by last year's General Synod. Although we find ourselves in accord with the intent of these overtures, we do not believe that amending the *Book of Church Order* is the best way to achieve this purpose. We therefore recommend no action.

ARTICLE 14

CHRISTIAN ACTION

CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION REPORT

Fellow Christians:

The Christian Action Commission of the Reformed Church in America met in regularly scheduled sessions on October 21-22, 1974, and February 17-18, 1975, in Chicago, Illinois, to deal with the issues properly brought to its attention. The results of the Christian Action Commission's studies, discussions, and decisions are presented in this report for the delegates' information and/or action.

In the past, there has been considerable confusion as to what the General Synod actually does when it speaks, or takes some particular action, on social issues such as are presented here. The Christian Action Commission reaffirms the fact that the General Synod speaks *to* the church as its *highest* representative body. The church can lay aside the feeling that the Particular Synod or Classis has precedence when dealing with social issues.

The statements made by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America also speak to the world. However, these statements cannot and should not be considered as the position of the Reformed Church in America, much less the denomination as a whole, but, clearly, the statement of *that* General Synod met to deal with *that* issue.

The General Synod has the right, indeed, the obligation, to speak *to* the judicatories, churches, and individual members of the Reformed Church in America, not with the presumption of infallibility, but with the intention of giving guidance in matters of faith and practice.

Every General Synod should be willing to make the gospel relevant to the problems and tensions of the society and historical setting with which it is faced, seeking the guidance of God's Word and Spirit in these difficult decisions.

Offering guidance in this humble manner, does not and should not bind the hearts and minds *or speak for* individual members of the denomination. The individual is free to decide, after the benefit of a studied, Christian statement, as to how they will handle the issue in their own life and situation.

Whenever anyone in the church speaks to the world or the denomination, the same unique limits of that which is finite must be kept clearly in mind. We can see then that every General Synod, by its very nature, speaks uniquely for itself and not for all time. This is the only way the church can continue to have a living, vital witness in an ever changing reality.

ABORTION

The question of abortion is a matter of deep moral concern for many people, and there is a broad spectrum of opinion among Christians concerning issues of abortion.

We concur with the 1974 statement of the Theological Commission which said in part:

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

"4. Scriptural passages often cited as determining the status of a human fetus as fully human, upon careful exegetical examination prove to be indecisive and not clearly supportive of an absolutist position, either affirmative or negative (Exod. 21:22-25; Job 3:3, 10:8f; Psalm 51:5; 139:13-15; Isaiah 49:1; Luke 1:41ff; Gal. 1:15; Heb. 7:9, 10), and since the above passages are receiving differing interpretations from equally faithful interpreters within the Reformed Community, we believe it is not advisable to make the passages bear the weight of an absolute 'yes' or 'no' position. Although it may be disappointing to those seeking a specific biblical instruction for permission or prohibition of abortion, we do affirm that the above passages provide important biblical principles by which every Christian must measure all counsel and practice in this difficult matter. We further affirm that every Christian seeking to be obedient to the whole counsel of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit, will exercise great care to act both in freedom and responsibility in Jesus Christ (Gal. 5:1, 13-15), and will be slow to criticize or condemn those who act in good conscience before their Maker and Redeemer." (GSM, 1974, p. 207)

R-I. Therefore, the Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS the adoption of the following:

A. The ability to make a decision regarding abortion is every person's right and should not be abridged because of financial difficulties or the imposed moral opinions of other persons. (NOT ADOPTED)

A motion was made from the floor and seconded to adopt R-1. A motion was made to amend this recommendation by adding the following sentence to Section R-1-A: "However, we believe in principle that abortion should be practiced only in exceptional situations." This amendment was DEFEATED. After some discussion regarding R-1, it was

VOTED: **To consider the sections A-E seriatim.**

A motion was made and seconded to adopt R-1-A. The motion was defeated. A division of the house was called on the vote. The vote was: YES—107; No—135. Therefore, the recommendation was DEFEATED.

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

A motion was made and seconded to adopt R-1-B. A division of the house was called on the vote. The vote was: YES—120; No—113.

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

D. Churches are called upon to make known alternatives to those contemplating abortion. (ADOPTED)

E. Christians and the Christian community should play a supportive role for persons making a decision about or utilizing abortion. (ADOPTED)

(See also page 202 for 1973 General Synod statement reaffirmed by the 1975 General Synod.)

AMNESTY

R-II. Recognizing the inequities of the Presidential Clemency Program; and, not intending to deny the accountability of individuals, we as a Christian Action Commission RECOMMEND that:

A. General Synod urge the constituency of the church to support congressional legislation which may lead to the enactment of a broad, general amnesty for all the victims of the Vietnam **war.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

B. General Synod encourage the churches to make use of the resources of the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors in order to better continue the education and counsel of its membership in their decisions of conscience in reference to war. (ADOPTED)

A recommendation was made and seconded from the floor of General Synod to adopt the following prologue to R-II:

We RECOMMEND that it be the will of General Synod that every congregation participate in a public act of remembrance and reconciliation, recognizing the suffering of those who have lost their lives in the Vietnam war,

. . . the suffering of those who remain physically and psychologically broken in our hospitals,

. . . the suffering of those who out of conscience could not participate in the war,

. . . the suffering of the families of all these individuals,

. . . and the suffering of the Vietnamese people who have experienced the ravages of two decades of war.

It is suggested that the planting of memorial trees in recognition of the American and Vietnamese suffering may be an appropriate response. (ADOPTED)

FARM WORKERS

WHEREAS: The struggle for the rights of farm workers continues and appears to be a continuing reality for the upcoming years.

WHEREAS: The UFW has lost many contracts to the Teamsters in the absence of free elections.

WHEREAS: The farm workers continue their struggle to gain the right of free elections to choose their own union.

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*Amended portion in light face.

WHEREAS: Boycotts remain an effective way of pressing for conditions of justice for farm workers.

R-III. The Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS that:

A. General Synod urge the constituency of the churches to write letters to state and federal legislators in support of justice for farm workers and farm operators **and continue education in our churches around the farm workers issue.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

B. General Synod support legislation on the state and national level that gives all farm workers their right to free elections by secret ballot for a union of their own choice. (ADOPTED)

HUNGER

R-IV. The Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS that the following be adopted by General Synod and commended to the churches by the General Secretary and that this statement be printed in full in the *Church Herald* and be given further study by the churches. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

HOLY LIVING IN TIME OF FAMINE

The proliferation of shortages, present and projected, of food as well as fossil fuels and other non-renewable resources requires a re-examination of Christian life style as we have known it for the past quarter century in the American church. What is the Christian life we are called to, both in loving neighbor as self and in witnessing to Christ, in our personal lives and in our corporate life as a Christian community? Isaiah (58:7) proclaimed that the worship God desires is sharing our food with the hungry, taking the homeless poor into our houses and clothing the naked. The imperative of sharing and acts of mercy is close to the heart of the Judeo-Christian ethic as expounded in the Bible, but it is not only an ethical concern. It also bears directly on the credibility of our witness to the world and the integrity of our worship and prayer.

The present imbalance of consumption of food and goods between the affluent and the poor within communities and nations is not new, and the Bible is replete with injunctions upon the affluent making it quite clear that God views redress of this imbalance as being the responsibility of such of His worshippers who have more than enough of the world's goods. In the early examples, the practical rules were geared to the simple economy and distribution system then existing. Those with economic power were forbidden to use it unfairly against those who lacked bargaining power, by such means as short weighting, low wages, extorting interest from those who needed to borrow to survive lean times, etc. Of course, direct acts of sharing were also required by not stripping vineyards (Leviticus 19:10-11) and fields as well as by outright gifts.

This traditional demand is not only carried over, but, if anything, sharpened in the New Testament. People who were stirred to repentance by John the Baptist's message of judgment were told that those who had two coats are required to share with those who had none, and those who had food must share likewise (Luke 3:9-11). Jesus told the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17) that the one thing required was that he sell his possessions and give to the poor and

*Amended portion in light face.

Zacchaeus that, when he promised restitution to any he had cheated and the gift of half of his goods to the poor, salvation had entered his house (Luke 19:9).

Indeed, an argument can be made that in the teaching of Jesus *the* principle mark of discipleship was the renunciation of the affluent life style and the sharing of the risks of the poor, for whom there is no assurance of a secure future of shelter and a full stomach.

Christians sometimes excuse themselves from the duty of feeding the poor by quoting Jesus' defense of the woman who annointed Him with expensive perfume shortly before his passion (Matt. 26:6-13). What is thereby overlooked is the clear implication of this incident, among other references, that the *normative* practice of Jesus and his disciples was to share whatever surplus they had with the poor.

With the population of the earth vastly increased, economic structures more complicated, and distribution systems infinitely extended, the practical techniques of dealing with hunger and poverty are more complex. Not only are the ethical imperatives unchanged, but also the part of the basic outline for practical response exists in the New Testament. When acute need arose among Christians in Palestine, Paul was one of those who worked out an organized response for Christian communities elsewhere in the Mediterranean world. No doubt there were those in the churches who raised some of the same self-serving objections which are still commonly heard. "How can my self-indulgence or self-restraint in Corinth do anything to help the poor in Jerusalem" or "Even if I do eat only a part of my normal food for the day, that won't put any food in front of a hungry person hundreds of miles away". The system devised to counter that objection is now nearly two thousand years old. Christians were to put aside whatever they could spare from their own needs each week, in the form of money, to be collected periodically by trusted couriers so that ultimately, food could be purchased from grain ships in Palestine for distribution to the hungry. Inevitably, there must have been some waste and inefficiency in that rudimentary system, as there is in our system today, and it would have been remarkable if the beneficiaries did not include some who by reason of laziness or foolishness were partly to blame for their own plight. But the teachings of Jesus and the prophets never limited the imperative of giving to gifts guaranteed to be efficiently used by blameless poor.

While the developments which have made a worldwide economic system a reality have increased our ability, and therefore our responsibility to aid the poor and the hungry who are remote from our own homes, they have also increased our ability to exploit the poor all around the world. Isaiah condemned those who disobeyed the prohibition of Leviticus of stripping vineyards as being people who had the spoil of the poor in their houses (Isaiah 3:13). The market system which operates in most of the world means that, for example, American homeowners who buy fertilizer for their lawns are bidding against Indian farmers who need fertilizer to increase crop yields; that those of us who enjoy corn-fed beef are bidding against Mexican peasants for whom corn meal is a principal source of nutrients, etc. Not only does the buying power of those who consume more than they need bid up prices beyond reach of people whose income is a fiftieth or a hundredth of the average American, but it also induces producers to turn from crops which may be needed by the hungry, but have a relatively low profit, to crops which are essentially grown for a luxury market in that they are inessential. Those rich agricultural districts in South America, for instance, have come to depend on imported food because production of coffee is profitable, and it is profitable because the affluent people of the world are willing to pay high prices for it. Thus, our over-consumption of non-nutritive agricultural products, such as coffee, tea, chocolate, cotton, tobacco, etc. affects the ability of the desperately poor of the world to get enough food to survive.

Most of us like to describe ourselves with such neutral sounding terms as "middle class" rather

than "rich" or "affluent", but the standards of the Biblical world on which its ethical injunctions are based were elemental. When Jesus declared the true life does not consist in abundance (Luke 12:15), he was speaking of a standard in which abundance consisted of having several weeks supply of grain and oil on hand, or owning several garments. The rich man in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) was described as a man who wore colored robes, a luxury of the day, and whose table was spread abundantly every day. By that standard, there are few of us American church members who are not rich. For Jesus, a comfortable and adequate standard of living consisted of having clothes on one's back and enough food for the day. The use of any surplus beyond that He saw as an opportunity to bear witness to the power and love of God. When we think about evangelistic techniques, we would do well to remember that in His sermon on the mount Jesus told his disciples that our light must shine so that they will see the good things we do and give praise to the Father (Matt. 5:16). He envisioned that people would be moved to worship God by the acts of charity and mercy of those who profess to be disciples. Unfortunately, the converse is equally true. It is not unreasonable that the hungry people of the earth should find it impossible to believe our testimony when they see how much of the world's goods we gather to ourselves, and how little we give to the desperately poor. The witness of those of us who own adult toys such as pleasure boats, trail bikes, snowmobiles, stereo sets, golfing or skiing equipment which total in cost more than we have ever given in our lifetime to such direct relief agencies as Church World Service must inevitably be quite incredible to people who watch their babies bloat with malnutrition. By the same standard the credibility of our corporate witness as congregations and as a denomination is impaired by the priority we give to adhering to the commandment of feeding and clothing the hungry and poor. How many local church financial reports, for instance, disclose that more is spent in an average year for chancel flowers than is contributed to world relief? How do we justify our carpeted sanctuaries, our cushioned pews, our landscaped lawns, our panelled offices in a world where tens of millions are stunted and retarded due to childhood malnutrition in the years in which our congregations rejoiced in the success of fund drives to build or remodel or beautify our sumptious buildings? In 1973 publicly reported contributions to Church World Service from Reformed Church in America congregations totalled only about one-third of one percent of total reported receipts, about 83¢ for the year for each communicant member. Can we honestly expect that the world's poor would view that as compelling proof of the deep concern we profess? The kindest understatement we can make about our corporate record is that we have missed a vast opportunity to witness to people who might have praised God because of the good things we could have done.

The record of our giving to the poor stands in judgment not only upon the faithfulness of our stewardship, the credibility of our witness, but also upon the integrity of our prayer and our worship. We repeat in the prayer our Lord taught us a petition for bread for today while we skimp our giving to the hungry lest we should not be able to afford steak next week and a vacation trip next summer. What must God make of our ritual intercessions for the hungry and poor while in the pockets of our fashionable new suits our wallets are stuffed with tens and twenties we refuse to share? Our prayers cannot have integrity; that is they cannot be complete and whole unless they are accompanied, reinforced and at least partially fulfilled by our giving and our self-denial.

Scripture tells us unmistakably that when Jesus taught about the final judgment it was a judgment at which the criteria is response to the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the naked, the sick and the prisoners (Matt. 25:24-40). The mark of Christian life is the way in which the Christian uses what he has and in a world where hunger and shortage is increasingly commonplace there is no way we can justify not only our high consumption of meat, but also our consumption of excessive calories of any sort, tobacco, liquor, cosmetics—an endless list of non-essentials. A style of life in which we purchase new clothes because the ones which

stuff our closets are out of style, where we redecorate our homes and purchase new furniture because we are bored with the decor, where we patronize expensive restaurants because we are tired of cooking, taking vacation trips because we feel we need a change of scene, in short, the normal life style of a middle-class American church member, cannot be an acceptable life style for a Christian in the final quarter of the twentieth century.

Our responses to date, an occasional extra collection for world relief, a meatless meal a week, etc. are pitiably inadequate in the face of the magnitude of the need, but we must realistically realize that very few of us are capable of radically changing our life style overnight. For most of us it will be a process as slow as it is painful. As individuals we must come through a whole process of re-education, and we must do it within a society which almost certainly will continue to pressure us by social norms as well as the skills of professional persuaders to continue in the old ways. These forces should not be underestimated. The six largest food companies in the United States alone spent four times as much for advertising in the year 1972 as the total budget of the United Nations, most of it to persuade us to eat more convenience and "junk" food in place of simple staples. Over the last quarter century each of us has been bombarded with persuasion totalling in the aggregate into the thousands of dollars per each individual consumer and designed to convince us that we want and even need things which are not essential, and that, contrary to the teaching of our Lord, true life does consist in abundance. It will require conscious effort to refuse to look at and listen to the enticements of the persuaders, to develop the habit of lifting up to the Lord in prayer every purchase decision in every store we enter, to make part of our routine of daily prayer the setting aside of some money that can be contributed later toward making our prayers for the needy come true. Just as it has always been difficult for Christians to persevere in isolation, it will be a necessary part of the life of every Christian group and congregation to include educational efforts, mutual support groups, etc., through which we can help each other swim against the tide of our affluent society.

Ever since the time in the late Middle Ages when the western world began to develop the economic possibility of affluence for more than a tiny minority, Christians have tried to find ways to use the political structures to modify the growing affluence of some in the face of the poverty of many. Sumptuary laws to limit unnecessary consumption on the part of those who could afford it were pressed into enactment by Christians in Calvin's Geneva, in reformation in Puritan England, even in the early colonies in America. History has taught that this particular method has proven largely ineffective, but the responsibility still lies with Christians wherever they are lucky enough to live under a political structure in which there is some way for their opinion to be voiced, to throw their weight, however small, on the side of government policies which tend to redress rather than reinforce economic inequalities. If our government embargoes, which it has since October 1973, fertilizer shipments to underdeveloped countries, we must bear part of the responsibility for the fact that the political leaders who take such actions do so because they believe the action will be popular with the majority of their constituents.

Just as the life style of church members provides an accurate measure of the depth of their concern for the poor and their obedience to the Lord, so the corporate life style of our churches, denominations and structures, reflect our true priorities more accurately than the phrases of our prayers over the formulations of our stated goals. Decision makers at every level, from consistories to the General Program Council, cannot escape the reality that budgets and financial reports teach our members just as sermons do. In this age in which God has called us to live nothing will affect the faithfulness of our stewardship, the integrity of our worship, and the credibility of our witness more than the evidence of our decisions of what to use for ourselves and what to give to those whose need is great.

THE CHRISTIAN AND POPULAR RATIONALIZATIONS FOR IRRESPONSIBILITY

Coincident with reports and predictions of mass starvation in many parts of the world has been the popularization of several rationalizations which some of us find to be attractive excuses for limiting our obedience to God's demand for sacrificial giving. The most traditional reason arises from reports of waste, spoilage, inefficiency and profiteering in the distribution of food aid. There is, of course, inefficiency in every distribution system. Note the disparity between the price a farmer gets for a pound of green beans and the price charged in the supermarket. We affirm the Christian response to inefficient distribution is not to refuse to give, but rather to work for increased efficiency of distribution in whatever ways possible, and in the meantime to give more to insure that the net quantities reaching the starving are adequate.

Also popular and traditional is the argument that there are wealthy individuals in much closer proximity to areas of mass starvation and/or that the fault lies with the failure of the governments of affected nations to take adequate measures for population control and promote agricultural productivity. We affirm that as Christians the failure of others to be responsible never negates our responsibility. Each of us has to answer to God for our own actions and refusals to act.

Somewhat more sophisticated are the "life boat" and "triage" arguments. The "life boat" theory asserts that people are starving because the arable land of the earth is not producing enough nutrients to support its present population, thus creating a situation similar to that of a life boat in which there are too many people for the finite supply of food and water. Therefore, some must be pushed out so that the remainder can survive. We affirm that this argument does not provide an acceptable excuse for a Christian because its basic assertion is untrue. If everyone in the world were on the near-vegetarian diet which has proved adequate in many parts of the world for many centuries, there would be more than sufficient food to go around. Moreover, if the consumption of agricultural products which have little or no nutritional value, such as tobacco, cotton, liquor, sugar, cocoa, coffee, tea, etc., were drastically reduced, huge amounts of additional food could be produced.

The "triage" theory derived from principles evolved in military medicine for the treatment of battlefield casualties when sufficient medical assistance is not immediately available to handle all the wounded. In such a situation, according to this doctrine, casualties are treated not on the basis of who is most critically wounded, but on the basis of which individuals have the best chance of survival if they receive medical attention first. Thus, the decision is made to allow some of the most badly wounded to die so that larger numbers can be saved. Proponents of this theory argue that assistance should be given only to those nations which give adequate promise of developing with aid to a point of nutritional self-sufficiency.

There are a number of fallacies in this argument. In the first place, nations do not die, people die. If the triage principle is followed in regard to a nation experiencing mass famine, the result will not be that the entire population will starve to death. Some will starve, but much larger numbers will survive to become what Barbara Ward has described as a sub-race, permanently impaired physically and mentally as a result of nutritional deficiency at critical points in individual development. Thus, such a nation could not be neatly buried and forgotten, but would remain as a festering sore of human misery. Proponents of the triage theory further recommend that aid should be given or withheld as a means of forcing suffering nations to adopt measures which we in the western world see as necessary, such as population control programs. We affirm that this use of economic force is no more acceptable than it would be to withhold food from children of a starving family pending the mother's acceptance of sterilization, and is, in effect, no less violent than the use of military force to achieve the same

ends. It is the responsibility of Christians to multiply their efforts to aid the hungry of the world both by immediate short term aid and long range development assistance, and to reject as guides for our lives arguments which are morally unacceptable in the light of Scriptural teaching.

R-V. The Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS the following possibilities for individual Christians and local congregations to deal with the problem of world hunger:

A. Each family should observe several meatless days each week. Since in the immediate future our salaries aren't going to be cut because we chose not to eat meat, the money normally spent for meat should be donated to relief organizations. Church congregations could find this kind of commitment from a large group within their congregation to be an excellent way to build up community and raise their "hunger-consciousness".

B. Vegetarian life styles should be seen as important and viable options for our time.

C. Individuals could curtail their intake of certain alcoholic beverages which use a sizeable amount of this country's grain supply. By doing this it would free up grain to be used for more food calories.

D. Coffee and tea also are commodities which, if individuals would cut back on would free up thousands of acres for food production.

E. Since Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter are holidays which have normally called for big dinners, we should be aware of what is being obscured from the significance of those days by the way we celebrate them. These days could be key days in which the idea of fasting could be explored, experienced, and made meaningful to individuals and/or families.

F. There should be drastic cutbacks in our personal use of fertilizer for lawns, plants, etc. The "Green Revolution" which has upped grain production in developing countries demands much of the supply of fertilizer.

G. Families could be creative about the way they spend their times of recreation and vacation, considering modes of transportation, distance, eating out vs. cooking out, and other ways that their activities could be changed as they attempt to stay true to their sensitivity of the world resource situation.

H. Congregations should establish as part of their budget a specific amount of money designated solely for the needs of the hungry in the world.

I. Church dinners usually consisting of beef, ham and chicken should be the objects of different menu options.

J. The denomination, when disposing of church property, should consider contributing the funds to the developing countries and/or relief organizations.
(NOT ADOPTED)

A motion was made and seconded to adopt R-V. An amendment was made to the motion that the first sentence of Section A be changed to read as follows: "Each family should consider if meatless meals each week can be effective in alleviating world hunger." The amendment was DEFEATED. Recommendation V was DEFEATED.

MINORITY STUDENTS

R-VI. Consistent with the Reformed Church Credo on Race Relations and decisions of the Black Council, the Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS that the General Synod appoint a committee to study the situation of minority enrollment at Hope College, Northwestern College and Central College as well as New Brunswick Theological Seminary and Western Theological Seminary and report to the General Synod meeting in 1976 and that this be referred to the GSEC for implementation. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

REVENUE SHARING

WHEREAS: The Federal Revenue Sharing Program is one of the few ways communities have to deal with social and economic problems in their immediate areas.

WHEREAS: It is becoming increasingly evident that politicians in local communities misuse this resource and funding from the Federal Revenue Sharing Program.

R-VII. The Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS that General Synod call to the attention of the local consistories, particularly in their function as stewards of God's world and as servants of their communities, the need to evaluate and provide guidance for the use of funds from the Federal Revenue Sharing Program; that they be instrumental in developing a "citizens' lobby" on a local level to insure the continued funding of socially responsible programs. (ADOPTED)

RIGHTS OF THE HANDICAPPED

WHEREAS: General Synod has never spoken concerning its need to minister to its handicapped brothers and sisters,

R-VIII. Let it be proposed that the General Synod:

A. Initiate studies in specific areas of ministry to the handicapped.

B. Urge churches to explore ways in which they might provide a more effective ministry including special programs, community involvement and possible facility structural changes.

C. Urge churches and individuals to encourage legislators to pass favorable legislation for the growth of all handicapped persons.

D. Urge churches and individuals to be educated in the capabilities and needs of all handicapped persons. (ADOPTED)

COMMENDATION

R-IX. The Christian Action Commission COMMENDS to General Synod the Rev. Milton R. Ortquist for his work in his role as chairperson—for his

*Amended portion in light face.

patience, grasp of Christian Action Commission history and continuity, administrative acumen, and magnanimity, and also the work of the retiring members. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

A MINORITY REPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION ON ABORTION

As a minority representation of the membership of the Christian Action Commission we submit the following report which is substantially a re-endorsement of the 1974 General Synod's action on the issue of abortion.

We believe the Bible teaches the sanctity of human life. Men are given the precious gift of life and are created in the image of God. In support of this we refer to and quote GSM 1974 Theological Commission's Report on Abortion, section 1:

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

Therefore we believe, in principle, that abortion ought not to be practiced at all. However, in this sinful world there may be exceptional situations which require it. It is our Christian conviction that abortion performed for personal reasons to insure individual convenience ought not to be permitted.

We call on all who counsel those with problem pregnancies to uphold the alternatives to abortion.

We call on our churches to expand their efforts to support agencies providing a ministry of mercy to those seeking aid and counsel in dealing with problem pregnancies.

We believe that no person should be forced or encouraged to undergo or participate in an abortion when it is against the person's moral conviction.

We continue to urge GSEC to review ways in which RCA programs, personnel, and agencies can assist in publicizing, encouraging, and, if possible, assisting in providing alternatives to abortion.

Signed: Rev. Herman Gruis
Rev. Arthur L. Scheid
Rev. Dennis B. Wilcox
Mr. Robert R. Huibregtse

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*Amended portion in light face.

A motion was made from the floor and seconded to reaffirm the statement on abortion adopted at the 1973 General Synod as follows:

"We believe the Bible teaches the sanctity of human life. Men are given the precious gift of life from God and are created in the image of God. Therefore, we believe, in principle, That abortion ought not to be practiced at all. However, in this complex society, where many times one form of evil is pitted against another form of evil, there could be exceptions. It is our Christian conviction that abortion performed for personal reasons to insure individual convenience ought not to be permitted.

We call on all who counsel those with problem pregnancies, especially youth workers, campus pastors and staff members of our church colleges, to uphold the Christian alternatives to abortion.

We call on our churches to expand their efforts to support agencies providing a ministry of mercy to those seeking alternatives to abortion.

We call on our members to support efforts for constitutional changes to provide legal protection for the unborn." (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 15

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

REPORT OF THE INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Members of the General Synod:

During the last year the Interchurch Relations Committee has been examining with care the new moods and directions in ecumenical activities. It is clear that the mid-seventies represent a new day. In the fifties and sixties ecumenism was relatively new and exciting and the councils of churches and the denominational or confessional associations were significant in both action and membership. Many believed that this was the direction the churches should go. Much time and effort and money was given to these agencies and it was money that was well-spent for that day.

Today things have drastically changed. The ecumenical movement has lost much of its momentum, at least this is true in the United States. To a large extent it is "old hat". It has been "too much with us" and we take it for granted. There is a movement away from centralization and toward regionalization. There is a movement away from national bodies toward small geographical groupings. Finally, there has been the restructuring of denominations, the economic crisis, and new forms of ecumenical activity. In the past "ecumenics" had been a committee or agency in its own right. Today ecumenism is built into the very structures of the denominational organization. Virtually every agency or commission or committee or board of a denomination is ecumenical in its work and outlook. Ecumenism is here to stay and the clock cannot be turned back ever again on this issue.

The financial condition of our country and the world has made it very difficult for ecumenical agencies in the mid-seventies. The slashes first pared away the fat; then they cut into the muscle; now the cut is to the bone. All programs of councils have been examined and cut back. It is a difficult time for these ecumenical groups.

Similarly, and because of the conditions just mentioned, new forms of ecumenical activity have emerged on the scene. The consortia or task forces are designed in a most practical manner so that denominations work together, pooling resources whenever possible, avoiding duplication, and learning from one another. Groups such as JED (Joint Educational Development) and JSAC (Joint Strategy and Action Committee) represent a new trend in ecumenics in today's churches.

From Committee to Commission

In such a world it was only natural that the General Synod's Committee on Inter-church Relations should begin to question its own structure and work and worth. For the past year and a half your committee has written papers and reports dealing with new goals and directions, questioning old structures, searching for new ones, trying to determine the way in which God would like His church to move.

The report to last year's General Synod reflected both the task and the

difficulty of the self-evaluation. The review committee acted with vigor and enthusiasm and brought in seven recommendations which were passed by the General Synod of 1974. These recommendations have provided the foci of your committee's work during the past year.

In regard to recommendation #4 (that the American Bible Society, the World Home Bible League, the Lord's Day Alliance, and Religion in American Life be taken out from under the aegis of the Interchurch Relations Committee and be placed in the portfolio of the General Program Council—MGS 1974, p. 254) it should be reported that the transfer of the agencies mentioned has taken place so that the American Bible Society, the World Home Bible League, the Lord's Day Alliance, and the Religion in American Life are now the responsibility of the General Program Council. (For this year, even though the transfer has been made to the GPC, the annual reports of these agencies are included with this report, as Appendices IV, V, VI and VII).

Recommendation #1 (that the Permanent Committee on Interchurch Relations assume a more interpretive role in relaying to the church the importance of affiliation with the WCC and the NCC; (2) that they provide means for feedback into the church of the results and findings of conferences and assemblies to which we send delegates; and (3) that they include in their budget sufficient funds to do this.) is picked up later in this report as part of the new structuring of the activities of the committee.

Recommendation #2 (that the Interchurch Relations Committee be encouraged to make a self study, re-evaluating the function and purpose of the committee and its relationship to GSEC and GPC; that this be done immediately and reported to the General Synod of 1975) was not really necessary since the whole report indicated that such a study was in process.

The major recommendation of last year's review committee was embodied in their recommendation #5 (that the General Synod adopt the following as an amendment to the Bylaws of the General Synod for implementation at the 1975 General Synod):

> Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 4. (BCO, p. 58) The (Committee) *Commission* on Interchurch Relations
>
> A. Membership
>
> The commission shall have sixteen members. Twelve of these shall be appointed by the Particular Synods (two from each Particular Synod), two members shall be chosen at large, one member shall be appointed by the General Program Council. The General Secretary of the RCA, by virtue of his office, shall be a member of the commission.
>
> B. Officers
>
> There shall be a chairman, a vice-chairman, and a secretary
>
> C. Responsibilities
>
> 1. The commission shall supervise and initiate action with respect to the Reformed Church in America membership in or affiliation with interchurch bodies such as the World Council of Churches and the National Council of

Churches. It shall keep the church informed about these agencies and the Christian witness of the RCA through them.

2. It shall engage in interchurch conversations with other church bodies.

3. It shall recommend fraternal delegates to other church bodies.

The great new change which was recommended and passed was to make the former *committee* into a new *commission.* (See MGS, p. 201)

Our committee meets twice a year, in October and in February. In each of these meetings our primary task was the implementation of recommendation #5. The review committee had little time at a synod meeting to work out all the implications of their recommendation. The permanent committee studied the recommendations carefully. After considerable discussion it was felt that some slight alteration could be made in the recommendation which would improve it, provide continuity between the old and the new, and at the same time not do violence to the intent of the Synod of 1974.

First of all, in the light of some of the changes that we anticipate and in view of a more accurate description of the Commission's work, we would like to recommend that the name of the commission be changed to "Commission on Christian Unity". Since many agencies in the denomination deal with interchurch activities, it was felt that "Christian Unity" better delineated and described our goals and task.

Your committee also made some slight changes in the paragraph on "membership", so that four members at large would be chosen rather than two, and that the Executive Secretary of the Program Council would join the General Secretary of the RCA as an exofficio member of the commission.

In order to maintain some continuity in the change over from committee to commission, our committee is suggesting that some of the present members of the Interchurch Relations Committee be placed on the new commission. A schedule has been worked out and may be seen in the Report of the General Synod Executive Committee.

Paragraph C on "Responsibilities" was amended slightly to read:

1. The Commission shall supervise and initiate action with respect to the Reformed Church in America membership in or affiliation with ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches.

2. It shall engage in interchurch conversations, and recommend fraternal delegates to other church bodies.

3. It shall seek to manifest Christian Unity.

4. It shall keep the Church informed about RCA participation in ecumenical relations and witness.

5. It shall fulfill assignments given to the commission by the General Synod or its executive committee.

Your committee is reporting this for information, since these slight alterations require a different method of reporting to the General Synod than if no changes

had been made at all. The Interchurch Relations Committee has reported these matters to the GSEC and the final recommendation to the General Synod will be made by them in their report (See Report of GSEC).

Christian Reformed Church

The Interchurch Committee has had several cordial contacts with the Christian Reformed Church. Although this is more of a regional matter, the working relationships have been helpful wherever and whenever they have taken place. Liturgy, worship, youth work, *INPUT* magazine, conversations about missions, and particularly the work of the evangelism committee, are areas of cooperation.

Since the work tends to be regional, the chairman has appointed a committee in the midwest to work with a similar group from the CRC. The appointees are: Robert Visscher, James Schut, Ray Rewerts, with Gordon Timmerman as a consultant.

Your committee would also commend the work done by the joint committee on evangelism. The result of the work is the *"Evangelism Manifesto"* which is not part of this report since the joint committee will report directly to the synod at another time.

Your committee would also like to suggest to those congregations who are neighbors to Christian Reformed congregations to work and worship together on a "Unity Day" and

R-1. WE RECOMMEND TO THE GENERAL SYNOD THAT OCTOBER 26, 1975 BE DESIGNATED "UNITY DAY" BY THE GENERAL SYNOD OF 1975.

National Association of Evangelicals

Two years ago the General Synod requested that a study be done on the NAE and whether or not the RCA could consider joining that organization. A subcommittee was appointed and chaired by John Opmeer. At the meeting in February a preliminary report was given to the IRC which included three recommendations which were adopted. The recommendations are as follows:

1. That further study and involvement in the life of NAE are needed in order to evaluate more fully the implication of RCA denominational membership in the NAE.
2. That individual churches and members of the RCA be aware of the possibility of membership in the NAE.
3. That a member of the IRC be present as observer at the annual convention of the NAE.

Your committee is hopeful that Mr. Opmeer will be able to attend the annual conference of the NAE in April in California.

R-2. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE GENERAL SYNOD INSTRUCT THE COMMISSION TO CONTINUE THIS STUDY AND REPORT FULLY TO THE GENERAL SYNOD OF 1976.

Prayer for Christian Unity

One of the finest expressions of Christian unity has been the fellowship among

churches and denominations during the week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January of each year.

R-3. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE GENERAL SYNOD COMMEND THIS PROGRAM TO THE CHURCHES OF THE RCA AND URGE THEIR PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN SUCH PROGRAMS.

Local Ecumenism

Your committee has several times noted the trend away from denominational ecumenism in favor of local ecumenism. The General Synod of 1974 encouraged your committee to monitor those experiments or practices of local ecumenism. While our primary task is the radical change over from committee to commission, we still would like to bring to the attention of the General Synod one such example of ecumenical experimentation which has grown out of the Consultation on Church Union and which indicates a new direction or thrust of that agency. We are endebted to the Rev. Herman Harmelink III of Poughkeepsie, New York for bringing this concept to our awareness. It is impossible within the scope of this report to give details about this program. Its intent is to provide the ways and means for enabling churches locally to begin to live and work together in Christian unity. The title of the explanatory booklet is *Generating Communities: A Way Ahead in Church Union.*

R-4. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE GENERAL SYNOD OF 1975 RECOMMEND TO THE CHURCHES THIS PROGRAM FOR STUDY. (They may receive information by writing to Consultation on Church Union, 228 Alexander Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540)

Canadian Churches

In keeping with our idea of Christian unity, your committee would like to report briefly on a difficulty we have in our denomination. There is a tendency to think of ourselves as an American church and to forget that we have many congregations in Canada. These churches want and need ecumenical fellowship and such fellowship is not provided by the National Council in the United States. It should be of interest to this synod that the RCA is affiliated with the Canadian Council of Churches (the northern counterpart to the NCC). At the present time the Canadian congregations in the RCA are represented in the CCC through the Classis of Ontario. It is hoped that in the near future such representation may be handled by the recently formed Council of the Reformed Church in Canada.

New Directions for the Commission

During the past year and a half the IRC has not only looked at its past performance, but has also tried to envision the future. It was felt that too much time had been spent in the past in our committee meetings listening to reports that were never shared with our RCA constituency. In our plans for the future we shall try to divide our work into three parts or tasks: Innovative tasks; problem-solving tasks; and maintenance responsibilities. Priority will be given to the tasks in the order just listed; namely, innovative tasks will be given top priority. This represents a radical departure from the usual work of the former committee on Interchurch Relations. We mention this here because we would appreciate a word of encouragement or advice from the General Synod. In other words, does our think-

ing on restructuring represent the direction the General Synod intends for us to go? To explain more fully, in the Commission would be three committees each of which would have the kinds of tasks described. One committee would specialize in church-to-church activities. The second committee would have to do with ecumenical bodies such as the World and National Councils of Churches, the Reformed Alliance, and the National Association of Evangelicals. The third committee would try to deal with new developments such as the Lausanne Conference on Evangelism, the various groups of neo-evangelicals, movements such as JED (Joint Educational Development). To repeat, each of these committees would have innovative, problem-solving, and maintenance tasks and functions. Included in these responsibilities would be such functions as interpreting, participating, representing, the RCA to them and for them. It is hoped that the review committee would indicate their mind on the present direction of the new commission.

Finances and Budget

Everyone feels the economic crisis and the ecumenical agencies are often the hardest hit. There is no question that in spite of ecumenical enthusiasm, loyalties in terms of contributions are strongly weighted on the side of denominations. We do not agree with this principle, but we do wish to add our voice to the existing chorus which is pleading for funds and even increases. Probably there are few places in church life where your contributions do as much as in some areas of counciliar work and activity. The budget is here presented and will be referred to the GSEC for consideration and recommendation to General Synod.

IRC 1976 BUDGET ASKINGS

	Budget 1975	Budget Proposed 1976
IRC Committee		
a. Committee expense	3,000	4,000
b. CRC (Special Committee)	1,000	1,000
Representatives to Interchurch Bodies		
NCC		
Governing Board Members (6)	1,500	1,800
WCC		
a. U.S. Conference	500	500
b. General Assembly (Nairobi)		
delegates (2)	3,000	——
Travel pool	1,000	——
Travel Contingency	600	800
Participating Shares Interchurch Bodies		
Alliance Reformed Churches	4,600	5,000
*NCC	11,500	12,500
*WCC	6,600	7,200

*Not paid for from assessments

World Council of Churches

As is our custom, the reports of the various agencies will be attached to this report. Special attention, however, must be given this year to the World Council of Churches as it meets in the Fifth Assembly, from November 23 to December 10 in Nairobi, Kenya, Africa. Our delegates will be Dr. Marion de Velder, Mrs. Julia Van Wyk, and the Rev. Cornie Keunen. The general theme of the assembly is "Jesus Christ Frees and Unites". Let us remember this assembly and our delegates in prayer before the Lord God and ask His blessing to rest upon this historical meeting of the World Council.

This report, if things go according to plan, should be the last one from the Interchurch Relations Committee. In ten years it has had quite a history and many former and present members could be thanked for the countless contributions they made to the life of the Reformed Church through this committee. The statement *"The Unity We Seek to Manifest"*, adopted by the General Synod 1966, is still the official policy of the RCA regarding our ecumenical relations. We would thank all those who have ever served on the committee in the past. In faith we not only look to the past, but also to the future. If the old Interchurch Relations Committee dies, we hope that it is only for the purpose of giving birth in newness of life to the Commission on Christian Unity. Amen. So be it.

Interchurch Relations: Appendix I

REPORT OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

"The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Formed in 1948 in Amsterdam by 147 church bodies, many of whom had learned to work together during the previous generation in international movements for Faith and Order and for Life and Word, the membership of the Council has now grown to 271 churches in some 90 countries. Headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland, where a staff of more than 100 men and women from every part of the globe direct a multitude of studies, conferences, publications and service projects under the supervision of the General Secretariat and the Central and Executive Committees elected by the member churches. The General Secretary is the Reverend Doctor Philip Potter, Methodist, West Indies, and the two recently appointed Deputy General Secretaries are the Rev. Alan Brash, Presbyterian, New Zealand and the Rev. Konrad Raiser of the Evangelical Church in Germany.

Liaison with American churches is maintained through the *United States Conference* for the WCC, with offices at 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10027. The Executive Secretary of the New York office is The Rev. Charles H. Long of the Episcopal Church, assisted by Ms. Frances Maeda, Presbyterian, Program Secretary.

The fellowship of the World Council is expressed most visibly in its Assemblies, held now every seven years, where all member churches send their delegates to celebrate and consult together, to evaluate the work of the Council since the last Assembly and plan the broad outlines of its program for the decade ahead. The

last Assembly was held in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968; the Fifth Assembly will take place in Nairobi, Kenya at the end of 1975. Planning for this meeting has been the main focus of the Council's work during the past year and dominated the agenda and reports received at the Central Committee meeting in Berlin last August.

The *Central Committee* is composed of 150 persons elected from the members of the Assembly and carefully chosen to be something of a cross section or microcosm of the Council's diverse membership. It meets annually, usually in the summer. The Minutes, together with the reports of the Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer, represent an annual report of the Council as a whole to its constituency. Some highlights from the last Central Committee meeting are as follows:

The Fifth Assembly originally planned for Indonesia in 1975 was shifted to Nairobi, Kenya, from November 23 to December 10. The decision was taken only after thorough consultation with the churches and government of Indonesia and with their full approval—to avoid possible violent reactions from the Muslim majority in that nation.

Jesus Christ Frees and Unites will continue as the theme of the Assembly, stressing human concern for liberation, in both personal/spiritual and social/political dimensions, and for both churchly unity and human community. The chairman of Central Committee, M. M. Thomas, answering critics who feared the Council was too concerned with secular matters and current events, spoke of the importance of Christian and theological reflection on these issues. Ernest Payne spoke of their interdependence: "Freedom without unity soon becomes anarchy. Unity without freedom soon becomes tyranny."

The National Council of Community Churches, U.S.A. was among four new member churches received into WCC membership—others included two churches in Indonesia and one in Algeria.

An Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society was created by the Central Committee, as a channel for churches to invest some of their reserves in low interest loans for projects in developing countries. More than $1,000,000 has already been pledged and a separate corporation is in process of being established.

One World is the tentative name of a new WCC monthly magazine intended to communicate the programs and issues of the ecumenical movement to local pastors and others of a wider constituency than is now being reached. It will replace *This Month* and several occasional departmental bulletins now being published. Subscriptions are $9.00 a year.

Dr. Robert Marshall, President of the Lutheran Church in America, was named chairman of the Preparation of Nominations Committee, a key post for determining the future leadership—and indirectly the policy—of the World Council of Churches.

Finances: It was reported that the WCC may be able to balance its books through 1975, but only with the help of contributions from individuals, special gifts raised on an emergency basis and other non-recurring sources of income. Unless there are substantial increases in the regular support given by member churches there will have to be cuts in staff and program by 1976—when the

needs and opportunities facing the Council may be greater than ever. The budget approved for 1975 for the various units total Swiss Francs 25,942,000 ($8,650,000), of which approximately $3,500,000 is expected to come from the churches in the U.S.A. Broad categories of expenditure are:

Service and Development (CICARWS and CCPD)	28%
Faith and Witness (CWME, Faith and Order, etc.)	25%
Education and Renewal (including Youth, Laity and Bossey)	16%
Administration	11%
Communications (including publications)	9%
Commission of the Churches on International Affairs	5%
Program to Combat Racism	4%

Staff changes include the appointment of Ms. Muriel Webb, of the Episcopal Church U.S.A., as new Director of the Commission on Interchurch Aid, Refugee and World Service (CICARWS) and Mr. Bruno Kroker, of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A., as Senior Press Officer in Geneva. The Rev. John Mbiti, distinguished Anglican theologian from Uganda, was welcomed as the new Director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey.

The Program to Combat Racism was reaffirmed in principle, by a large majority; additional grants were authorized for 1975, to be made from special contributions designated for this purpose and, while the Fifth Assembly will decide new guidelines, the program itself is to become part of the ongoing program of the Council in the years ahead.

Conferences, consultations and Study Projects covering a wide range of concerns were reported and discussed at length, not only in terms of their 'results' but also in terms of their implications for the Fifth Assembly and the future work of the churches. These included the final report on the *Humanum Study*, led by Canon David Jenkins; the *Faith and Order* meeting in Ghana; the *Congress on World Evangelization* organized by evangelical church leaders and held in Lausanne; a consultation on *Sexism in the 70's* in Berlin; the conference in Bucharest, summarizing a five year study of *The Future of Man and Society in a World of Science-Based Technology;* a multilateral dialogue of representatives of five world religions organized by the WCC last April in Ceylon; a conference in Tanzania on the *renewal of family life* and a conference in Austria on the controversial subject of *Human Rights*. More detailed reports on any of these matters can be obtained through the New York Office of the World Council of Churches.

World Hunger and the mounting financial crisis have preoccupied the staff of the Council and its member churches since last summer. The WCC sent a delegation to the World Food Congress in Rome and an address by Dr. Philip Potter to the Congress made a substantial contribution to its work. Tens of millions of dollars worth of food and material aid are channeled each year through the Council's Commission on Interchurch Aid, Refugee and World Service (CICARWS) and with generous support from western churches that amount is likely to increase in 1975. At the same time, the Council's own budget has been put under unprecedented strain by rapid inflation in Switzerland and by a decline of more than 25% in the exchange value of dollar contributions. It is unfortunate that these twin financial problems occur in the same year that an Assembly is to be held involving an extraordinary additional expense of $1,500,000.

The Reformed Church in America was a charter member of the World Council of Churches in 1948, and has provided strong support since. Marion de Velder, General Secretary of the RCA, has served as Vice-chairman of the U.S. Conference of the WCC since 1968 and has regularly attended the annual meetings of the Central Committee of the WCC as the denominational representative. Clarence H. Linder has served as Chairman of the Friends of the World Council of Churches (USA) since 1971. The leadership of these RCA representatives is deeply appreciated.

Charles H. Long, Jr., Executive Secretary
New York Office, World Council of Churches

Interchurch Relations: Appendix II

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.

The preamble of the constitution of the National Council of Churches states that "the Council works to bring churches into a life-giving fellowship and into common witness, study and action to the glory of God and in service to all creation." It is a place of coming together of thirty-one Protestant and Orthodox communions: what the Council is or becomes is reflective of the life and desires of those communions.

In 1974, under the leadership of the new General Secretary, Dr. Claire Randall, a new style of operation began to take shape in the Council in response to the new plan of operation begun in the present triennium. That plan calls for moving ongoing structures toward a more open and flexible system. By moving in this direction, the Council is attempting to become a facilitative framework, a place where the insights, histories, experiences and concerns of a broad spectrum of churches and people can be gathered and shared; where all of the member communions can provide stimulus and encouragement for each other and be a force together for the oneness which is central to our Christian faith. This unity is crucial as the Church seeks to be a moral and healing force in the nation and a source of hope for the world.

A brief look at a few of the programs and actions of the Council in 1974 will give an idea of the way in which the communions seek to commonly express their Christian faith in relation to the major needs and issues of our world.

The Council has always been active in response to the concerns of hungry people. With respect to the rapidly accelerated crisis of world hunger which developed in 1974, an inventory of Council-wide work showed a wide spectrum of work already underway. In addition, new effort has been made to expend the impact of the churches on the growing problem of world hunger. The NCC called those working on the issue of hunger within the member communions to a two-day work session which planned joint efforts for the future and covenanted to work on both short-term and long-range problems of hunger on the national and worldwide level.

Human rights was another ongoing major concern this year. There has been a continual effort to help Christians in many parts of Asia who have been jailed or harassed for their opposition to repressive governments. Efforts also have been

made to sensitize and effect changes in our own government's economic and military policies toward repressive governments.

Within the United States, the Council has continued to be concerned for minority rights. One new endeavor during the year was the establishment of a task force which worked effectively to delay deportation of Haitian refugees who were seeking political asylum in the U.S. Efforts continue to minister to these and other immigrants and refugees.

Major attention has been given by the Council this year to the tension of the Middle East, particularly through the work made possible by the linkage of the newly-established Office of Christian-Jewish Relations and the Middle East Working Group of the Division of Overseas Ministries. The Office of Christian-Jewish Relations, which was made possible by a major foundation grant, became fully operational in midyear, with the arrival of a new director and the establishment of an advisory committee. The office will be responsible for relations to the Jewish community and develop dialogue among Christians and Jews across the country.

The Commission on Regional and Local Ecumenism entered into a new venture by jointly sponsoring a study tour of the Middle East with the American Jewish Committee. The trip provided an opportunity for persons from across the U.S. to probe the Middle East situation under the guidance of informed people from Israel and the Arab states.

In a new direction for its work, the Commission of Faith and Order became increasingly involved in providing theological perspectives and insights to all areas of the Council's life. At the same time it continued its major studies ranging from "Religious Signals in Modern Culture and Counterculture" to "Points at Issue between Black and White Theologies." A working group on evangelism has taken shape in the Division of Church and Society and will draw together those in the communions who are working with this responsibility.

The Council has continued its many forms of ministry to immediate needs and long-term development programs throughout the world. Church World Service has carried on its historically crucial ministry with vigor and compassion in the midst of major personnel adjustments. During the year it provided gross basic program funds amounting to $10,404,339; while 23,500,000 pounds of aid shipped to 65 countries was valued at $13,800,000.

The Division of Church and Society brought together those working on development education in the communions to explore ways of strengthening their common efforts. This group set up a process to bring together staff and resources for future work together. The Commission on Justice, Liberation, and Human Fulfillment held a consultation on development which was especially valuable in giving a framework for Third World persons to come together and to express concerns on major issues related to development.

A new direction in the work of Professional Church Leadership, a part of the Division of Education and Ministry, was undertaken during the year with the establishment of a Commission on Women in Ministry. In working to empower women in professional church leadership, the group brings together women representative of various strands of the Church's life, as well as the leadership of the vocation agencies of the communions. A working group in preparation for Women's International Year was established in the Division of Church and Society.

As part of its effort to lift up concern for the stewardship of all creation, the Stewardship Commission sponsored a conference on lifestyle during the summer. It dealt with the need to be better stewards of the earth's resources and the way this would affect our present life style of more and more consumption. The Broadcasting and Film Commission continued its expert work with the television networks and in radio broadcasting, with Ecumedia supplying taped religious news programs to over 800 radio stations across the country.

In the wake of the President's clemency offer, the Office for Special Ministries/Viet Nam Generation opened a series of counselling centers across the country to give advice, information, and assistance to those who are trying to determine if this program can serve their needs. At the same time, the office continued its effort to stress the urgency of full amnesty to heal the wounds of the nation.

These are but a few of the ways the communions have chosen to come together through the means of the National Council of Churches to corporately speak and act in relation to the corporate sins and needs of our time. As life becomes more complex and ever larger systems affect all of human life, it becomes more important that Christians draw together our insights, experiences and commitments in order that the Church may minister more effectively to human need and help make a just and peaceful society a reality.

Claire Randall, General Secretary
National Council of Churches
of Christ in the U.S.A.

REPORT OF THE WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL)

1. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) is the result of the merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian Order and the International Congregational Council, a merger that was effected in August, 1970, in a Uniting General Council held in Nairobi, Kenya. The membership of the Alliance totals 156 Churches in over 80 different countries, and the aggregate membership is in excess of 55 million. Nearly two-thirds of the Member Churches are in the Third World.

   The World Alliance of Reformed Churches was the first world family of non-Roman Churches to be organized, and this year marks its centennial. The first General Council was held in 1877 in Scotland, and the Centennial General Council is scheduled to be held in St. Andrews, Scotland, in the summer of 1977.

   Two other significant anniversaries are being observed this year, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, marking its 100th anniversary, and the United Church of Canada will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its formation.

2. The North American Area is one of the two organized Areas of the World Alliance, meets annually, and consists of delegates, ministers, and members, either men or women, appointed by the Member Churches of the Area. The North American Area was established in 1954 "to include the United States and Canada, and any other adjacent regions which might be agreed upon in the future," (continuing and revising the American [Western] Section formed originally in 1884). Six Member Churches are located in the Caribbean Area, including three in Guyana.

3. Constituent Members of the Alliance in the North American Area on February 1, 1975, are:

   Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
   Cumberland Presbyterian Church
   Second Cumberland Presbyterian Church
   Guyana Congregational Union
   Guyana Presbyterian Church
   Hungarian Reformed Church in America
   Presbyterian Church in Canada
   Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Grenada
   Presbyterian Church in the United States
   Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba
   Presbytery of Guyana
   Reformed Church in America
   United Church of Canada
   United Church of Christ
   United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman
   United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

4. Officers of the Area are:

   Chairman: The Reverend Authur R. McKay
   Past Chairman: The Reverend Ernest E. Long
   Vice Chairman: Mr. Vernon Baugh
   Secretary: The Reverend James I. McCord
   Treasurer: The Reverend James E. Andrews
   Recording Clerk: The Reverend W. J. Klempa
   Director of Information: The Reverend Frank H. Heinze

5. The North American Secretary is elected by the General Council of the World Alliance and reports annually to its Executive Committee, to the Area Council, and to the judicatories of the sixteen member communions of the Area. He is assisted by Ms. Emma A. Rowles, Administrative Assistant, Princeton Theological Seminary.

6. The North American Area Council met in Châteauguay (Montreal) Quebec, Canada, on January 7-9, 1975. Approximately 110 delegates and visitors were in attendance. The program included addresses by the Moderator of the United Church of Canada, the Right Reverend Wilbur Howard, and the Reverend Joseph C. McLelland from the Presbyterian Church in Canada, on the topic, "Significant Developments in the Church in Canada." There was an address on "Conservative-Liberal Tensions in the Church Today" given by Professor E. David Willis from the U.S.A., and another address by Professor Idris Hamid on "The Church in the Caribbean." Dean George Johnston led two Bible Study Hours. He used Philippians 1:12-26, with the Study entitled "The Strange Providence of God," and Philippians 1:3-11, 27-30, with the second Study, "To Be Worthy of the Gospel." The Report of the General Secretary of the Alliance, the Reverend Edmond Perret, was presented, as well as the reports of the North American Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Director of Information.

   This was the third meeting of the Area Council since the new formula for delegations was adopted and Member Churches had complied with the request to name representatives under the age of thirty, women, and laymen, in order to provide equitable and representative delegations. However, it is hoped that more younger representatives will be included in future meetings of the Area Council.

7. a. The Committee on Civil and Religious Liberty, under the chairmanship of Professor James A. Wharton, dealt with several issues of major importance. The Committee has undertaken consideration of the question of Multi-National Corporations with respect to their impact on matters of justice, equity, and well-being within the family of nations.

   The following action of the Council was transmitted to President Gerald R. Ford, with a copy to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger:

   "In the light of the alarm created among us and throughout the world by certain remarks recently made public by Secretary Kissinger and associated with your name, we call upon you in the name of God to disavow publicly any intention on the part of your administration

to use military action against any other sovereign state, under any circumstances, for the purpose of gaining access to any natural resources contained within its territory."

b. The Committee on Cooperation and Witness, under the chairmanship of the Reverend Raymond V. Kearns, Jr., noted the continuing practice of sending fraternal delegates from the North American Area to General Assemblies and General Synods of Member Churches, and it was recommended that, where feasible and desired, Member Churches use this practice, making their requests known to the Secretary of the North American Area.

Attention was called to the 10th Anniversary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba in 1976 and to the 350th Anniversary of the Reformed Church in America in 1978.

Women of Churches in the North American Area have been in contact with women of sister Churches and a *Women's Bulletin,* prepared by the Department of Cooperation and Witness in Geneva, includes information sent from women from around the world. Appreciation was expesssed to United Presbyterian Women for *The Advent Tryst.* They have agreed to be responsible for the continued publication of this resource and it is translated in several different languages.

Continuing priority of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches regarding relationship with sister Reformed Churches in Latin America was noted. There is also a desire to continue to explore ways by which contact can be maintained as an Area with the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico.

It was again recommended that women and youth be proportionately represented at the General Council of the World Alliance in 1977 at St. Andrews, Scotland. Gratitude was expressed for the presence of fraternal observers and guests at Châteauguay from the Christian Reformed Church and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Committee on Cooperation and Witness also brought to the Council the recommendation that Member Churches of the Area having study tours include visits and events related to the Reformed heritage in such tours.

c. The Theological Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Allen O. Miller, meets twice a year, once in November and again in conjunction with the annual Area Council. The responsibility of this Committee is twofold: To serve the Area Council and the Churches of this Area directly and to participate in the ongoing work of the Alliance Department of Theology in Geneva. In this regard, through the Office of the Department, it cooperates with and supplements the tasks undertaken by the European Theological Committee.

In November, this Committee brought to a focal point the work of four years of study on the theme, proposed by the General Council of the Alliance in Nairobi, 1970, "The Theological Basis of Human Rights and the Theology of Liberation." A final paper, dealing with "The Theological Basis of Human Rights," was prepared by Professor Hugh Koops.

The Theme of the January meeting of this Committee was "The Liberal-Conservative Split in the Churches." A paper was presented by Dr. J. Rodman Williams entitled "Reformed Theology and the Charismatic Movement." The respondents were Dr. Arthur Cochrane and Dean Charles Johnston. Another paper on "The Authority of the Word" was given by Dr. J. N. Thomas.

Over recent years, serious attention has been given to the Charismatic Movement. Papers on aspects of this subject have been presented to the Committee by Dr. William Klempa and Dr. Tannis, as well as Dr. Rodman Williams. A paper on the theme "Reformed Theology and the Charismatic Movement" has been discussed.

During the next two years the Theological Committee will be involved in intensive work on the theme of the Centennial General Council, "The Glory of God and the Future of Man."

8. The Administrative Committee, which is responsible for the program of the Alliance between meetings of the Area Council, met on May 17, 1974, at the Interchurch Center in New York, and met several times in connection with the meeting of the Area Council. Officers and members of the Executive Committee of the World Alliance serve also as members of the Administrative Committee.

9. The Area Council is extensively engaged in bilateral conversations through responsible committees, all of which having met at least once since the last meeting of the Area Council.

   a. The Roman Catholic-Presbyterian and Reformed Theological Consultation—This dialogue group met twice during the past year, with Bishop Ernest Unterkoeffler as Chairman and Dr. Andrew Harsanyi as Vice Chairman, and with Dr. Raymond V. Kearns, Jr., as the responsible staff Officer for the Alliance. The theme of the consultation is "The Shape of the Unity We Seek," and members report that the remit is nearing completion. A further meeting is scheduled to be held, which will have as its purpose the production of a final report and the isolation of any issues that require further exploration.

   b. The Lutheran-Reformed Conversations—Two separate committees, one in Canada and one in the United States have completed the final year of a three-year remit to discuss relations between these two evangelical branches of the Reformation. Both committees reported to the Area Council in Châteauguay. The American Committee has now been discharged, and no publication summarizing results is expected. It was found that in the present climate further discussion would not be promising, and Member Churches are urged to respond on a church-to-church basis. The situation in Western Europe that produced the Laurinburg Concordat is substantially different from the situation in the American Churches today.

   c. Orthodox-Lutheran-Reformed Consultation—The volume, *The New Man,* summarizing the results of the earlier Orthodox-Reformed Conversations continues to be warmly received by Orthodox and Reformed Churches

throughout the world. A second round of discussions is now under way and includes six Orthodox, six Lutherans, and six Reformed scholars. Among the six Reformed scholars are two members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). A second meeting has been held, and it is anticipated that the results of this dialogue will be published.

10. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) has traditionally had a twofold emphasis, theology and fellowship. It has deliberately refrained from developing programs in inter-church aid, etc., but cooperates closely with the World Council of Churches in these areas of stewardship and service. It has never sought to become an ecclesiastical power block or holding company. On the other hand, it does exist to assist the Churches in the proclamation of the Gospel in their life together. Perhaps its greatest service today will be in restoring the reality of confession and assisting member Churches in giving a reason for the hope that is in them. It has been said that there has been a collective theological amnesia in recent years, and that a result has been the loss of direction, identity, and confidence on the part of many in the churches. As the Alliance approaches its Centennial General Council, and as it turns its thought to "The Glory of God and the Future of Man" it will summon the Churches back to the living center of the Gospel, the crucified and Risen Christ, who is the source of their confession and proclamation and witness.

James I. McCord
North American Secretary

Interchurch Relations—Appendix IV

REPORT OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

The Challenge

The world's population reached an estimated total of four billion people in 1974—most of them without ready access to the Word of God. These people constitute the challenge confronting the churches, dedicated to the proclaiming of the Gospel, and the Bible Societies, dedicated to the translation, publication, and distribution of God's Word.

The publication of the Word of God requires technical skill, scholarly expertise and selfless devotion to the communication of the sacred text. The Bible Societies of the world have assumed this task as service agencies of the churches, providing Scriptures—the most basic tool for the communication of the Gospel—in whatever languages, formats, and varieties are required.

Outside the English-speaking countries and northern Europe, the Bible Societies are almost the only source of supply for Scriptures. The task is enormous. At least one book of the Bible has been translated into 1,549 languages. The number of Bibles, Testaments, Portions and Selections distributed throughout the world exceeds 250,000,000 annually. The cost of providing these runs to millions of dollars.

The population increase means that all the traditional audiences for the Word are increasing in numbers. But the challenge to the Bible Societies *is* multiplying even faster than the population increase, for new developments in Scripture translation and publication are opening up vast new audiences to God's

Word. One such audience consists of new readers—people who have just learned how to read, either in literacy programs or in schools; people hungry for something to read and ready for the Bible Societies' new Scripture Literacy Selections. Another new audience has been created by the many new "today's language" translations of the Scriptures, which have made Bible reading easy, enjoyable and rewarding for millions of people who have had difficulty understanding traditional versions.

How are the Bible Societies—the American Bible Society in particular—responding to this challenge? Here are some of the ways:

Good News for New Readers

The single most ambitious program the Bible Societies have ever undertaken, "Good News for New Readers," was launched in September 1973 to provide special Scripture Selections to be used as the first reading materials by people just learning how to read. The Selections are being prepared on graded reading levels and eventually will be available in 200 languages.

To date this program has already reached people in 70 countries. Scripture Literacy Selections on the two most elementary levels have been produced in more than 100 languages. Other Selections in 20 additional languages have been translated and are being printed. The demand for Scripture Literacy Selections has exceeded all expectations. New readers want understandable reading material to exercise their new skill, for without it many of them fall back into illiteracy. In most of the world's languages there is almost nothing in print that new readers can read. Now we are offering them the life-giving Word of God in such a form, and they are asking for more and more copies, more and more different Selections, and as they advance to higher levels of reading skill, they are asking for more advanced and challenging material. Millions of Selections have been used in Latin America alone. The worldwide demand far exceeds the ability of the Bible Societies to finance the distribution of what people need and want.

Here are a few highlights of what this program has accomplished in 1974:

Asia—Here is where the greatest challenge is, to provide Scriptures for the new readers in Asia. By the end of 1974, Good News Scripture Literacy Selections had been translated, produced and distributed in 63 Asian languages, and translation had been completed in 31 additional languages.

Latin America—The first field tests of Scripture Literacy Selection were conducted in Latin America from 1968-73. As a result, many church and government-sponsored educational programs have adopted them as part of their curriculum. In 1974 Scripture Literacy Selections were produced for the first time in Portuguese and distributed through MOBRAL, the literacy program of the Brazilian government. Literacy Selections in Haitian Creole will soon be ready for distribution in that country where 90 per cent of the 5,000,000 inhabitants are illiterate.

To meet the demand for additional Scripture Literacy Selections, particularly in Asia and Africa, more than $63,000,000 must be raised over the next ten years. To meet this need the American Bible Society launched an appeal in 1974 inviting people to join the *Fellowship of the Torchbearers for Our Lord,* an organization in which members pledge a monthly gift to help finance the worldwide Good News for New Readers program.

Translations and Publications

In 1974 the Bible Societies helped 617 translation and revision projects around the world.

One of these projects is the New Testament in Today's Chinese Version. Its purpose is not to replace the highly regarded Union Version, but to communicate God's Word more clearly and effectively to the millions who are not accustomed to formal church language. Through the combined efforts of translators and two teams of consultants, the four Gospels in Today's Chinese are now at the printers. The first draft of the complete New Testament has been completed and is under review. It is expected that publication will occur before the end of this year.

Scripture Distribution

During 1974, 252,956,174 Scriptures were distributed throughout the world by the United Bible Societies. Of these, 87,102,185 were distributed in the United States.

The great majority of these Bibles, Testaments, Portions and Selections were shared at prices far below actual cost. Millions of them were given away. The subsidy required to make this program possible came from the United Bible Societies World Service Budget of $11,000,000. Half of this amount is underwritten by the American Bible Society through contributions from dedicated individuals and churches. Because your church believes in and supports this work, millions of people around the world were able to buy Scriptures at prices they could afford.

In June 1974 the American Bible Society announced a special program for the United States Bicentennial called "Good News, America!" The program is designed to bring a part of God's Word to every man, woman and child in the U.S.A. during the decade ahead.

47,000,000 Copies of "Good News for Modern Man"

"Good News for Modern Man," the American Bible Society's New Testament in Today's English Version, has for years been the world's best-selling paperback book. By the end of 1974 its total circulation reached 47,000,000 copies. An illustrated edition of "Good News for Modern Man" was published in June 1974, larger in size than the familiar paperback and beautifully furnished with more than 200 full-color photographs of the Holy Land.

The complete Bible in Today's English Version is scheduled for publication in 1976. Individual books of the Old Testament are published as they are ready—in 1974 the prophets Hosea, Amos, and Micah were published with the title "Justice Now!" and the book of Ruth was published in leaflet format.

Other Projects

"New Light, New Hope"—a 13-minute color film was produced in 1974 telling the story of the Good News for New Readers program. Within eight months of its release, the film was seen by more than 3,200 church organizations, institutions and groups. It is available on a free-loan basis.

Bible-a-Month Club—The membership of this band of dedicated supporters of the Bible cause grew to nearly 200,000 in 1974. Each member pledges $3 or

more monthly to bring the Word of God to someone, somewhere in the world who truly wants a copy of God's Word.

Volunteer Activities—More than 10,000 persons in the U.S.A. have now enrolled as ABS volunteers, giving of their time and talents to promote the Bible cause in a variety of ways. Just two years ago, there were only 1,200! The most dynamic and rapidly growing part of the volunteer activities program are the Scripture Courtesy Centers or "Good Newsstands"—convenient neighborhood stands where ABS Scriptures can be obtained. By the end of 1974 there were 1,200 of these centers in all 50 states. Each month ABS volunteers focus on one special project: promotion and distribution of new Scriptures, Bible-a-Month Club memberships, Bible Sunday, and others. Volunteers represented the American Bible Society at nearly 50 county, state and local fairs throughout the country in 1974.

Bible Work Abroad

In addition to scores of other areas, the American Bible Society maintains a strong and effective program in countries where the Reformed Church in America has special interests.

Mexico—Total Scripture distribution by the Bible Society of Mexico in 1974 reached 6,375,000, an amazing accomplishment compared to the 1973 total of 2,901,684 and far in excess of the goal for the year, which was to distribute enough Scriptures to provide at least ten per cent of the total population of 50,000,000 with a part of God's Word.

Japan—In the highly literate island nation of Japan, further progress was made in the translation and publication of the Scriptures during 1974. Translation in Today's Japanese Version continued and it is expected that large portions will be published by mid-1975. This common language translation was just begun in July 1973. Illustrated booklets for children entitled Zacchaeus, Good Samaritan, Pentecost, and Bartimaeus were published with an explanatory note accompanying each illustration. In addition, the Bible Society of Japan printed Scripture Selections for special occasions, including an Easter Selection, "Jesus is Risen," a Selection called "Pentecost," and a postcard in Japanese printed for Mother's Day containing the text of Exodus 20:12.

Indonesia—Scripture distribution of the Bible Society of Indonesia reached 20 million in 1974, a 25.6 per cent increase over 1973. After more than two decades of translation work on the Bahasa Indonesian Bible, an important goal was reached when in July 1974, the first copies of the new Indonesian Bible rolled off the press. The first 10,000 copies were given to the government to distribute to government institutions around the country. With statistics showing that 50 per cent of all marriages in Indonesia fail, the Bible Society published a packet of five Selections covering different facets of family life. These included "The Love of Christ: Foundation of Married Life," "Children and Parents" and "Love."

Lebanon—Extensive translation and production of the Scriptures in native tongues highlighted Bible Society activities in Lebanon last year. Translation work continued on the New Testament in Today's Arabic Version, with I Corinthians and Romans, and several passages from the completed portions were published in the "Lissan El Hal," one of Beirut's leading newspapers. New Reader Scripture Selections Groups A and B were published, and illustrated by a local artist. Groups

C and D are being prepared in Egypt and Group E in Lebanon. In providing a total of 838,000 Scriptures to a large area of the Mid-East, as well as at home, the Bible Society of Lebanon recorded a 38.5 per cent increase in distribution over 1973.

Eastern Europe—The Bible cause in Eastern Europe embraces all aspects of Bible work: translation, production, and distribution. At the present time there are some twenty translations projects in progress. The printing of Scriptures has been carried out in a number of countries including Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany. The distribution program is very uneven from country to country. However, one of the bright spots during 1974 was East Germany where 281,000 Scriptures were distributed. In all of Eastern Europe, 810,000 Scriptures were distributed last year, an increase of 17 per cent over 1973.

The advance in Scripture distribution has developed slowly over the years and has been accomplished through legal channels. The progress varies from country to country and the present advances can only be considered a beginning. Much more work remains for the Bible Societies and the churches to make possible easy access to God's Word in the language of the people.

Financial Support

To meet the growing demand for Scriptures from a world whose people are more than ever in need of the saving power of the Gospel, the American Bible Society requires increased support from the churches. Inflation has resulted in higher costs. More significant still is the need for increased support to keep up with population growth and to supply Scriptures to more groups of people in more parts of the world.

The 1975 budget of the American Bible Society is $12,950,000, an increase of $650,000 over 1974. The ABS budget, and the scope of the Society's work, has grown from $8,840,000 in 1970. By 1980 it will reach an estimated $18,000,000.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's financial support for the American Bible Society from the Reformed Church in America showed a general decline. However, the rate of support over the last two years has risen again to the level it once held in the mid-1960's as the following figures indicate:

1960	$19,667	1967	$19,615
1961	25,817	1968	17,128
1962	21,316	1969	18,437
1963	18,563	1970	19,761
1964	17,398	1971	21,970
1965	20,390	1972	15,719
1966	20,764	1973	20,773
		1974	20,097

What Must the Reformed Church in America Do?

In view of the growing need for Scriptures outlined on the preceding pages, and the growth in the programs of the American Bible Society which serve the church's ministry, the Society asks the Reformed Church in America to set as a minimum goal a return to the level of per capita support reached in 1961 of $.10

per member per year. This would increase the annual support by the sum of $17,000 to a total of $37,000 according to present membership.

Recognizing as well the need for future expansion of the Good News for New Readers program, the Bible Society requests that serious consideration be given and action taken to make special, substantial, and additional funds available for this cause.

The challenge of hundreds of millions of people hungry for God's Word confronts the Reformed Church in America and the American Bible Society with unprecedented responsibilities and opportunities. Working together, we can be faithful to the high calling to which we are committed.

Arthur C. Borden
Secretary, Church Relations

Interchurch Relations: Appendix V

WORLD HOME BIBLE LEAGUE

This year Mr. William Ackerman, international director of the World Home Bible League, celebrates his 25th year in this position. It is with gratitude to the Lord that we note the passing of this anniversary mark.

While the league has maintained and even increased in many cases its domestic distribution of the Bible and Bible study materials, the largest developments have been in foreign distributions. Thus, this report will be centered mainly on the league's foreign ministries.

MEXICO—In Mexico during 1974, the World Home Bible League distributed close to two million Scriptures, New Testaments and Gospel portions. Over 165,000 New Testaments were distributed. Project Philip, a Bible study program conducted by the churches in Mexico, enrolled over sixty thousand students. Bible courses were furnished by the World Home Bible League. The purpose of Project Philip is to mobilize the members of the church for their task of evangelism. One of the most effective mission programs in reaching the masses on the streets in the downtown area of Mexico City is that of the Mass Communication Center.

HONDURAS—The World Home Bible League has established a large deposit of Scriptures and Bible study courses in Honduras in 1974. The Bible League greatly appreciates the vision of the missionaries and their desire to expose the unreached in Honduras with the written Word.

PUERTO RICO—Scripture and Bible study materials were made available to all missionaries in Puerto Rico who have been active in the distribution of the Word. Through them over eleven thousand complete Bible courses were distributed in a highly successful evangelistic campaign in major cities. In this way many thousands have been exposed to the claims of Christ. The courses were supplied by the league.

SOUTH AMERICA—The World Home Bible League has begun an ambitious distribution in every country in South America. Distribution points have been established in Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. Large deposits of Scriptures are being maintained in each of these countries.

The Bible League representative in Maracaibo, Venezuela, has contact with evangelical missionaries and churches throughout South America. He is sending Scriptures into all of the countries where we do not have representatives. Over a half million Scriptures were sent to Venezuela.

Station HCJB—World Radio Missionary Fellowship—in Quito, Ecuador, maintains a large deposit of Bible League Scriptures and is the Bible League's distributor in Ecuador. Five hundred fifty thousand Scriptures were sent to Quito, Ecuador, during the course of the year. HCJB is our official representative. Besides using league materials for their ministry they also supply materials for many other missionaries throughout Ecuador.

An evangelical missionary in Lima, Peru, in cooperation with a well-established Peruvian Christian literature agency, maintains the Bible League deposit and administers the distribution of Scriptures in Peru. Scriptures and Bible study courses have been used by many of the evangelical missionaries there. We praise God that in spite of the fact that it has become increasingly difficult to send Scriptures into Peru, all of the Scriptures sent thus far have passed through customs with no difficulty.

One of the greatest breakthroughs in Bible distribution has been in Bolivia. The Minister of Education and Culture declared the marked edition of the Spanish New Testament, Lo Mas Importante es el Amor, an official textbook in the schools of Bolivia. He made this resolution on the condition that the Bible League would furnish the copies. This is an event unparalleled in the history of the Church. It is something only God could do. The Bible League through its Latin-American Coordinator and the Bolivian Home Bible League representatives was to meet with the Minister of Education, at which time assurance was given that the New Testament would be promptly placed in the schools upon arrival and would be compulsory reading for the students of Bolivia. The first order of two hundred thousand has been sent. To complete the entire project close to one million copies will be needed. The New Testaments will become the property of the Department of Education and will be used from year to year. The Bible League has promised a free copy for each student graduating from the 12th grade.

Scriptures are also being supplied to missionaries and churches throughout the country and all high officials in the government and the military have received copies of the New Testaments. Pray that the Holy Spirit will bless the reading of the Word.

NIGERIA—Under the direction of Dave Dykgraaf, Project Philip has been introduced into 750 congregations of the NKST Church. In the first enrollment campaign over forty thousand Nigerians requested the Bible course.

WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS—In 1975 the World Home Bible League will be publishing the translations of Wycliffe Bible Translators working in Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroun, Central America, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, North America, New Guinea, Peru, and the Philippine Islands. According to estimated requests for publications for the year 1975 submitted by Wycliffe to the World Home Bible League, the entire cost of printing these Scriptures could well reach a half million dollars.

Many churches and individuals are underwriting the cost of publishing various Scriptures and are finding it to be a very meaningful form of mission endeavor.

Projects can vary from $100 to several thousand dollars for a New Testament. With more and more of our young people going into the ministry of Bible translation this promises to be a tremendous experience in this work for the years that are ahead.

BICENTENNIAL—Project Philip has produced a program called "The Bicentennial Prayer" for use by evangelical churches during the Bicentennial of the United States. Three Bible Study guides are offered to churches which may be used for inreach in family and private devotions and outreach in evangelistic Bible studies.

FINANCES—Total income for the league during 1974 from all categories amounted to $4,600,000. We feel that the World Home Bible League is unique among all other Bible distribution agencies in regard to the fact that we manufacture much of our own material at a considerable savings, roughly 27%. This is done through the utilization of volunteer help and represents the "free time" given to us by volunteers of more than 40 churches in the South Holland area and an equal amount of 40% or more in the Holland-Zeeland operation. This means that every dollar the Reformed Church in America invests in our ministry goes farther than it would through normal channels because of the contribution of volunteer help.

Last year the Lord gave us an unparalleled opportunity. Although we would not want to appear over-enthusiastic concerning it we feel that we can honestly say that it is one of the greatest challenges ever presented to the church of Jesus Christ in the history of missions.

We are deeply grateful to the Reformed denomination for its interest in and faithful support of our ministry of Bible distribution.

Rev. John L. Van Harn
World Home Bible League

Interchurch Relations—Appendix VI

REPORT OF THE LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE OF THE U.S.

The Lord's Day Alliance of the U.S. has completed eighty-six years of service to the Church and Society.

The past year was marked by several significant actions which should be brought to the attention of our constituent denominational bodies.

Among these is the preparation of thirty-one radio one-minute "spots". Entitled, "I Have A Word For You", they were written by our Director of Information Services, Archie Pipe and recorded by Board Member, Norman Vincent Peale. Plans for their distribution are well developed and they should be on the air over about one thousand radio stations by the late Spring of 1975.

Shortly before the end of the year, the Alliance was notified that we were the beneficiaries of a generous bequest in the amount of $100,000.00 by a long-time friend and supporter, Mrs. Pearl W. Burnam who died the last of November. While the Alliance may not actually receive these monies until sometime in 1977, the income they will generate promises the opportunity for an expanded program once they are in hand.

Meanwhile, we shall miss the substantial annual contribution which Mrs. Burnam sent to us, and must look to others of our friends to help to fill this gap during the next two years.

Representatives of the Alliance had the opportunity of presenting its work to the following organizations and denominational gatherings during 1974: The National Association of Evangelicals; the Presbyterian Church, U.S. Synod of the Southeast; the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod; the Southern Baptist Convention; the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America; the Reformed Church in America, General Synod; the General Executive Board Conferences (P.C.U.S.) at Montreat, NC; the Evangelical Congregational Quadrennial Conference; Kiwanis International Convention, Denver, CO; the Georgia Baptist Convention; and the Free Methodist Church, General Conference.

Much of this past year was spent in planning for our second "Consultation on The Lord's Day in Contemporary Culture". "CONSULTATION '75" will be held in Nashville, TN on October 13-14 at the Southern Baptist Convention Building. The purpose of this consultation between leaders of the Church, Business, Sports, and Government will be to endeavor to produce guidelines for a Christian observance of The Lord's Day in the current scene.

Three new Board Members were recently elected. The Reverend David H. Bradley, Editor-Manager, A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review of the A.M.E. Zion Church, Bedford, PA; The Reverend W. Frank Harrington, Pastor, Peachtree Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, GA; The Reverend Charles L. Holland, Jr., Pastor, Gaston Avenue Baptist Church, Dallas, TX.

The resignation of L.D.A.'s Executive Director, The Reverend Marion G. Bradwell, will take effect on August 1, upon his retirement. He has agreed to stay on in a part-time capacity through 1975, if necessary, while the Executive Committee seeks his successor.

We call the following items to your special attention:

1. We want to express to you our sincere appreciation for the support you have given us over this past year, and are grateful for the $2,465.49, which came to us in identifiable gifts from you.
2. We also thank you for the contribution made to the on going work of the Alliance, by your Representative The Reverend Thomas Boslooper and Mr. Chester L. Evers, Sr.
3. We hope—if you have not already done so—that you will elect official Representatives to "CONSULTATION '75", and that you will encourage widespread attendance by your ministers, Sunday School leaders, church officers and others.
4. We again, request the opportunity of sharing the work of the Alliance with your people at the next most appropriate time. We know that such occasions are busy ones but a few minutes before your leaders will be appreciated.
5. We covet your prayers as we endeavor to carry on this witness as your representatives and your servants.

Charles A. Platt, President
Marion G. Bradwell, Executive Director

REPORT ON RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE PROGRAM

The Reformed Church in America was one of the recipients of advertising space and time contributed to Religion In American Life through the mass media estimated at over $25 million in equivalent commercial value during the past year. As a participant in the Religion In America program, the Reformed Church benefits from RIAL's relationship with The Advertising Council which also provides the RIAL media program with contributed services of a volunteer agency in addition to its extensive media exposure.

The campaign used by the media during the first ten months of 1974 was prepared for it by Lieberman-Harrison, Inc. to illustrate RIAL's message of the religious alternatives to violence. The theme "Violence Divides. God Unites." appeared on transit platform posters with an illustration of four hands representing the races of our world encircling the globe. Beneath the illustration was the line, "The community of God . . . make it your way." This theme line appearing in all the media, and print ads included an invitation to write for a study-discussion guide on the religious alternatives to violence.

During 1974 a new volunteer agency was appointed for the following RIAL campaign, Compton Advertising, Inc. The program committees and Board of Directors of Religion In American Life instructed Compton to develop a campaign which would illustrate how people of religious faith working through their churches and synagogues could help solve some of the problems of social injustice. Beginning in November, television spots used examples of a halfway house for women returning to society from prison and a food cooperative run by Chicanos, both established with the help of local religious groups. These and similar case histories were used in radio and print ads, and all media concluded with a variation of the car card poster theme which stated "God knows, you should practice what you pray. Start treating your brothers and sisters like brothers and sisters."

The media response to the RIAL message continues at a remarkably high level, with over 5,000 radio stations last year each carrying an average of nearly 120 RIAL spot announcements. Nielsen TV figures showed the number of total home impressions to reach almost 1.8 billion. Prominent national consumer magazines such as *Reader's Digest, Newsweek,* and *Sports Illustrated* continue to donate full and double-page spreads to reach the American people with the message of God's love on behalf of RIAL's 43 cooperating religious groups (Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox, and Protestant).

The Reformed Church in America is represented by its general secretary, Dr. Marion de Velder, on RIAL's Board of Directors and Religious Advisory Council. He recently completed a two-year term on The Advertising Council Public Policy Committee helping to establish which national concerns were to be treated as Council priorities to receive such media exposure as shared by RIAL with other major Council campaigns. RCA clergymen serve on RIAL's program committees: Dr. Blaise Levai (editor of literature for the United Methodist Board of Global

Ministries) is a member of RIAL's Media Objectives Committee; Dr. James Z. Nettinga (executive director of advance programs of the American Bible Society) is a member of RIAL's Program Promotion Committee; Dr. Robert H. Schuller (senior pastor of Garden Grove Community Church, Garden Grove, California) serves as national co-chairman of the National Religious Sponsors.

Jerald Harfield
Director of Program

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

In the concluding part of Article XXVII of the *Belgic Confession,* we confess:

"Furthermore, this Holy Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same spirit."

It is in this spirit that we call upon the church in its local and governmental bodies to demonstrate the oneness that we have in Christ. To assist us in this goal of unity we have a Committee on Interchurch Relations. In reviewing their report we bring the following to your attention.

Your Committee endorses Recommendation 4 of the General Synod Executive Committee report. (See page 101.) However, we do RECOMMEND:

R-1. That the word "Commission" be changed to "Committee" in the above mentioned recommendation. (ADOPTED)

Reason: We as a Committee deem it important that the work of the Committee (Commission) be reviewed yearly by a Review Committee of General Synod and the word "Committee" brings this recommendation in line with the *Book of Church Order,* Article 6, Section 1a and 2d.

Your Committee gives enthusiastic approval to the directions for the proposed Committee (Commission) on Christian Unity which envisions a) church to church activities; b) relations with ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) and the National Association of Evangelicals; c) new developments such as the Lausanne Conference on Evangelism, the various groups of neo-evangelicals, and movements such as the Joint Educational Development Program.

Local Ecumenism

Your Committee agrees with the notation by the Committee on Interchurch Relations of "the trend away from denominational ecumenism in favor of local ecumenism" (page 207). In most localities such ecumenism finds expression functionally rather than structurally; cooperation usually leads to some necessary structure, whereas the opposite seems to be unfruitful. For those interested in resource material on local ecumenism, the Committee on Interchurch Relations recommends *Generating Communities*: *A Way Ahead in Church Union* (COCU, 228 Alexander Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540).

It appears that the above remarks to a large extent also hold true with regard to the Christian Reformed Church. The denominational contact has indeed resulted in a joint *Evangelism Manifesto,* a commendable statement (see page 114) which will come before this Synod. But most of the meaningful contacts are on the local or possibly regional level. Such dialogue is to be encouraged from a theological and historical point of view. Therefore, we present anew the recommendation adopted by the General Synod of 1973:

R-2. That every congregation and all our members be encouraged to look for the opportunities for united Christian witness in their community; to join with other Christians in the fulfillment of common tasks through whatever agencies and forms seem appropriate for them; and to participate in fellowship with other believers for the mutual support in Christian growth so that we may help others in Christian living and be helped by them. (ADOPTED)

Those in dialogue with the Christian Reformed Church may wish to give expression to their oneness in Christ by designating and observing October 26 as Unity Day; while they may also join others in observing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 1976.

Regarding the National Association of Evangelicals, your Committee recommends:

R-3. That the Committee continue to study the implications of Reformed Church in America denominational membership in the National Association of Evangelicals and report fully to the General Synod 1976. (ADOPTED)

R-4. That a member of the Committee on Christian Unity be present as observer at the annual convention of the National Association of Evangelicals. (ADOPTED)

Please note that individual churches and members of the RCA can hold individual membership in the NAE.

We take note of the fact that the World Council of Churches meets every seven years and will meet this year in Nairobi, Kenya. Our three delegates are Dr. Marion de Velder, Rev. Cornie Keunen, and Mrs. Julia Van Wyk. The theme of the WCC will be "Jesus Christ frees and unites."

We affirm the good work of the National Council of Churches and celebrate the fact that Church World Service has distributed 23,500,000 pounds of food to the hungry in 1974.

We reaffirm that World Council of Churches and National Council of Churches support remain as presently established, based on the action of General Synod of 1973, reported on page 117, General Synod Minutes 1974, which states "that, as a responsible member denomination, the Reformed Church in America must find ways and means to contribute our RCA proportionate shares of the administrative expenses of the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches."

We so reaffirm because we feel this is an acceptable resolution of the problem.

R-5. We recommend that the budget as presented on page 208 be adopted. (ADOPTED) NOTE: See also action on Overture 17, page 92.

Carefully examining the various items of the budget, we see the need and the challenges. In one instance additional staff is needed, and others reflect the increasing cost of carrying on communications with other Christian groups. In the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches relationships, the modest increase will preserve and perpetuate our church as a responsible *member* of these associations, and we know that these monies do not come from Assessments but from provisions made by previous Synods.

R-6. We recommend that the following reports be received for the information of General Synod:

a. The report of the American Bible Society, pp. 209-212.
b. The report of the World Home Bible League, pp. 212-214.
c. The report of the Lord's Day alliance of the U.S., pp. 226-227.
d. The report of Religion in American Life Program, pp. 228-229.
(ADOPTED)

The Chairman of the Review Committee introduced Charles Wissink, Chairman of the Permanent Committee on Christian Unity, who introduced Nelson Vanderzee, Fraternal Delegate from the Christian Reformed Church, who addressed the Synod.

ARTICLE 16

SYNODICAL ARCHIVES

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON NECROLOGY

During the Synod Year nine Ministers of the Gospel of the Reformed Church in America have died. They attained the average age of 65.

Name		
Chester Meengs	July 6, 1974	64
Howard E. Friebly	July 11, 1974	66
Clarence J. Denekas	September 16, 1974	71
Henry T. Rozendaal	October 7, 1974	80
Eugene H. Durkee, Jr.	November 20, 1974	43
Cornelius Lepeltak, Jr.	December 6, 1974	77
Spurgeon S. Smith	December 13, 1974	52
Jacob Prins	January 6, 1975	76
B. Moses James	January 16, 1975	52

CHESTER MEENGS

Chester Meengs was born October 15, 1909 in Vriesland, Michigan. He was graduated with an A.B. degree from Hope College in 1931 and received his B.D. degree from Western Theological Seminary in 1937. He was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1937 and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon in 1937.

Mr. Meengs served the following churches: Atwood, Ellsworth, Michigan, 1937-1942: Fifth, Muskegon, 1942-1947; Bethany, Kalamazoo, 1947-1956; Trinity Reformed Church, Waupun, Wisconsin, 1956-1961; Emmanuel, Chicago, Illinois, 1961-1967; and Extension work, Brewton, Alabama, 1967-1974, First Reformed Church of Brewton, organized November 10, 1968. Mr. Meengs died at Little Traverse Hospital, Petoskey, Michigan, July 6, 1974.

Mr. Meengs had served as President of the Particular Synod of Chicago, Illinois, and had been on the Board at Hope College and Camp Geneva. He had also served on the PCUS-RCA Committee of Twenty-four working on the Plan of Union with the Presbyterian Church USA.

Mr. Meengs was 64 years old, and is survived by his wife, Gertrude, and his children, Mrs. Marcia Baker, Mrs. Alice Kendall, and Mr. John Meengs.

HOWARD E. FRIEBELY

Howard E. Friebely, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1908. Lafayette College conferred an A.B. degree in 1931, and he graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1943.

He was licensed by the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1943 and ordained by the Presbytery of Jersey City in 1944. From 1944-1950 he was minister of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Lyndhurst, New Jersey.

Mr. Friebely served within the R.C.A. at the Ramapo Reformed Church,

Mahwah, New Jersey, from 1950 until his retirement on December 31, 1973. His passing took place on July 11, 1974.

CLARENCE J. DENEKAS

Clarence J. Denekas was born in German Valley, Illinois, on March 26, 1903. He attended Central College for two years, but earned his A.B. degree from Mt. Morris College on June 2, 1927. Western Theological Seminary conferred a Th.B. degree on May 14, 1930.

Mr. Denekas was then licensed by the Classis of Pleasant Prairie on May 16, 1930, and ordained by the same Classis on July 9, 1930.

He served the Reformed Church at Dumont, Iowa, 1930-1933; Kings, Illinois, 1933-1943; Oregon, Illinois, 1943-1953; and Bentheim, Michigan, 1952-1967. He retired March 31, 1967, and died after an extended illness in the Holland, Michigan, Hospital on September 16, 1974.

He is survived by his wife Bertha, a son Myron, and four grandchildren.

HENRY TERLOUW ROZENDAAL

Henry T. Rozendaal was born in Sully, Iowa on April 13, 1894. He retired to Pella, Iowa, in 1961, where he died at the age of 80 on October 7, 1974.

Mr. Rozendaal graduated from Central College in 1923 and from Western Theological Seminary in 1926.

He served pastorates in Valley Springs, South Dakota, 1926-1935; Melvin, Iowa, 1935-1942; Harrison, South Dakota, 1942-1957; and Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, 1957-1961. He retired in 1961 and served as Stated Clerk of the Classis of Pella. He had previously served on the Boards of Western Theological Seminary, Central College, and Temple Time. He was the author of *"Heralds of Truth"*, *"Shadow and Light"*, and *"An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism"* as well as numerous articles in religious journals.

He is survived by his wife Cornelia and their five children, Mrs. Jan Ten Clay, Mrs. Ruth Janssen, Mrs. Lois Koyama, and Esther and John.

EUGENE H. DURKEE, Jr.

Eugene H. Durkee, Jr., was born in Newark, New Jersey, January 23, 1931. His B. A. degree was granted by Rutgers University in 1957, and he graduated from New Brunswick Theological Seminary with a degree of B.D. in 1959.

The Classis of New Brunswick licensed him in 1959 and the Classis of Raritan ordained him in 1959. He served the First Reformed Church of Somerville, New Jersey from 1959-1968.

He was called to be Secretary for Lay Ministries of the General Program Council and served from 1968-1970. He then entered upon graduate studies from 1971-1973 and was without charge 1973-1974. He died November 20, 1974.

CORNELIUS LEPELTAK, Jr.

Cornelius Lepeltak, Jr., was born in Eureka, South Dakota, April 16, 1897.

His father was a Reformed Church minister. He was graduated from Central College with an A.B. degree in 1919. His graduation from Western Theological Seminary took place in 1924. In that same year he was licensed by the Classis of Wisconsin and ordained by the Classis of Illinois.

Mr. Lepeltak served the church at Raritan, Illinois, 1924-1926; First Spring Lake, Michigan, 1926-1936; and Second Marion, New York, 1936-1944. He was a chaplain in the U.S. Army 1944-1946; served as Field Secretary for the State of Iowa for the Christian Endeavor Movement, 1946-1947; Grace Reformed Church, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, 1947-1950; and Talmage Memorial, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1950-1952. He was Director of Kirkside, Roxbury, New York, 1952-1964; and Stated Supply of St. Andrews, Cobbleskill, New York, 1964.

He died at Roxbury, New York, December 6, 1974.

SPURGEON S. SMITH

Spurgeon Spencer Smith was born in Jamaica and was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1948. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Hardin Park Community Center, in Detroit, Michigan, a ministry for young people with drug abuse problems.

He started to serve the Hardin Park Reformed Church in March 1974 and died December 13, 1974, at the age of fifty-two.

He is survived by his wife and three children.

JACOB PRINS

Jacob Prins was born November 21, 1898, in Fulton, Illinois. He was graduated by Hope College in 1924 with an A.B. degree. In 1927, after graduation from Western Theological Seminary, he was granted a Th.M. degree. Hope College conferred a D.D. degree upon him in 1943.

He was licensed by the Classis of Chicago in 1927 and ordained by the Classis of Holland the same year. He served the 1st Reformed Church in Jamestown, Michigan, 1927-1929; Calvary, Grand Rapids, 1929-1934; Pella, Iowa, 2nd 1934-1938; Immanuel, Grand Rapids, 1938-1945; and Forest Grove Church, Hudsonville, Michigan, 1958-1966.

Mr. Prins was Minister of Evangelism for the R.C.A. from 1945-1958. He was elected President of the General Synod in 1943-1944, and Vice-President of the Board of Trustees of Hope College 1940-1946.

He died at Holland Hospital on January 6, 1975. He is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Paul Alderink of Annville, Kentucky, his son, Robert Prins, of Emporia, Kansas, and eleven grandchildren.

B. MOSES JAMES

B. Moses James was born February 12, 1922, in Memphis, Tennessee. Howard University conferred an A.B. degree upon him in 1953 and Howard University School of Religion graduated him with a B.D. degree in 1959.

After his ordination in 1957, he served at Canaan Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., and worked with migrants in New York State, 1956-1957. He was pastor

of Bethel Presbyterian Church of Alexander, Arkansas, 1958-1961. North Community Reformed Church of Kalamazoo called him in 1961.

Mr. Moses served as County Commissioner in Kalamazoo County from 1968-1975. He was Chairman of the Black Council R.C.A., a member of the Board of Southern Normal School, Brewton, Alabama; and served on the governing Board of the National Council of Churches.

He passed away in Kalamazoo, Michigan, January 16, 1975. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, and daughter, Lois.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON HISTORY

Delegates and Friends:

The Purpose of the Commission

The General Synod established the Commission on History in 1966 with the following responsibilities:

1. To collect and preserve the official records and documents of the Reformed Church, its churches, judicatories, boards, and institutions;
2. to maintain a permanent archive where such data will be available for historical research;
3. to promote an interest in the history and tradition of the Reformed Church;
4. to furnish information about and to further research the history of the Reformed Church in America.

The Archival Depository

The archives of the Reformed Church are in Sage Library, on the campus of New Brunswick Theological Seminary. The seminary provides the denomination with space, shelving, duplicating equipment, and free rent and utilities. The commission is grateful for this kindness, without which its work could not proceed.

The Operation of the Commission

The general operation of the Commission on History is supervised by Dr. John W. Beardslee, III, who serves as the official archivist of the denomination. Mrs. Cecil Roberts, Mrs. Lynn Vanderbeek, and Miss Elsie Stryker carry on the daily task of cataloging large quantities of MS documents, answering requests for information, facilitating the work of scholars, and maintaining the archives collection. Each of these persons is faithful and expert in his/her work, and provides invaluable service to the denomination at minimal wage.

Publication Work of the Commission

1. *Historical Series.* The commission has scheduled the following publications in its historical series: Volume 4, written by Dr. Gerrit Ten Zythoff, studying the events leading to the secession of 1834 in the Netherlands (1975); Volume 5, edited by Dr. James Van Hoeven, *The Reformed Church in America, 1776-1976*; Volume 6, written by Dr. Howard Hageman, on Reformed Liturgy; Volume 7, written by Dr. Gerald De Jong, on the Reformed Church in the colonial era. The commission is committed to the continuance of the Historical Series, and considers it an important vehicle to make known the history and heritage of the Reformed Church.
2. *Historical Directory.* The commission continued to work toward a new edition of the *Historical Directory,* first published in 1966. Dr. Peter Vanden Berge, the editor of the 1966 volume, has generously agreed to use his sabbatical leave to work on this revised edition. The book is scheduled for publication in 1978.
3. *Index of Synodical Legislation.* The commission continues to work with the General Secretary, Dr. Marion de Velder, Miss Barbara Mahannah, and Miss

Mildred Schuppert in the publication of a new index of synodical legislation. The commission points to a 1978 publication date for this important volume.

Register of Reformed Church Buildings

The commission initiated a new program two years ago to register and preserve information, including dates of organization, important events, historical and anniversary monographs, and photographs, of every church in our denomination. The response of the church to this new program has been very good, and this valuable material is being cataloged and filed. The commission is grateful for this response, and encourages every church in the denomination to send this material to the archival depository as soon as possible.

Other Archive Efforts

The commission encourages and supports archival work related to the denomination at other places. Each of our institutions is presently carrying on an archival program: Western Seminary under the direction of the Reverend Norman Kansfield; Hope College under Mr. Andrew Vander Zee; Central College under Miss Alice Lammers; and Northwestern College under Mr. Nelson Nieuwenhuis.

Much of the day-to-day work of the denomination's archives office is spent in cataloging and microfilming MS documents of our churches and judicatories. The commission continues to urge each church, Synod, and agency to send its documents to the archives office so that these may be processed and filed. Clerks of consistories and Synods are especially encouraged to send their closed minutes to the archives for photocopying. There is no charge for this service and, when requested, the documents will be returned after the photo process has been completed.

ARTICLE 17

PROGRAM AND DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON PROGRAM AND DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES AT GENERAL SYNOD

Monday Afternoon

Opening Worship Service—Rev. Harold De Roo, Worship Leader
Business Session—President Presiding
Closing Prayer—Rev. Sherwin Broersma

Tuesday Morning

Opening Worship Service—Rev. Harold De Roo, Worship Leader
Rev. Calvin Malefyt, Speaker
Business Session—Vice President Presiding
Closing Prayer—Rev. Reuben Ongna

Tuesday Afternoon

Opening Prayer—Rev. David Bach
Business Session—President Presiding
Closing Prayer—Rev. Thomas Hall

Wednesday Morning

Opening Worship Service—Rev. Harold De Roo, Worship Leader
Rev. Harvey Hoekstra, Speaker
Business Session—President Presiding
Closing Prayer—Betty Boerman, Corresponding Delegate

Wednesday Afternoon

Opening Prayer—Rev. Raymond Rewerts, President
Business Session—President Presiding
Closing Prayer—Rev. Arnold Punt

Thursday Morning

Opening Prayer—Rev. Harold De Roo, Worship Leader
Rev. Sid Mauldin, Speaker
"New Life Singers", Chicago, Illinois, Participants
Business Session—President Presiding
Closing Prayer—Cornelius Klein

Thursday Afternoon

Opening Prayer—Rev. Robert Nykamp
Business Session—President Presiding
Closing Prayer—Elder Joyce Tassell

Friday Morning

Opening Worship Service—Rev. Harold De Roo, Worship Leader
Rev. Ron Beyer, Speaker
"Bright Beginnings", Singing Group from Oostburg, Wisconsin, Participants
Business Session—President Presiding
Closing Prayer—Rev. Lloyd Menning

Friday Afternoon

Opening Prayer—Elder John Rouwenhorst
Business Session—Vice President Presiding
Closing Prayer—Rev. Jack Cooper

Friday Evening

Opening Prayer—Rev. Nicholas Tsianiklides
Business Session—President Presiding
Closing Communion Service—Rev. Harold De Roo, Worship Leader

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Tuesday, June 10

Mission Program Presentation—by General Program Council
"A Salute to Chiapas"

Thursday, June 12

Reformed Church Women Pageant—"Reveal Christ Anew"

Friday, June 13

Closing Communion Service

OFFERING

A sum of $1,025.35 was collected at the Communion Service. The offering was designated for "Church World Service—Food, Water, and Economic Development in India."

ARTICLE 18

STATE OF RELIGION

PRESIDENT'S REPORT—1975

"I thank my God whenever I think of you; and when I pray for you all, my prayers are always joyful, because of the part you have taken in the work of the Gospel." St. Paul's words written in the first century have become my own in 1975. To be the president of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America gives the privilege of seeing with one's own eyes God's work by the Holy Spirit in his world today. Therefore I would like to begin my report by sharing a number of affirming observations. I know that by doing so I will be selecting only a few of the many things God is doing. But I trust that those whose blessings have been omitted will understand the limitations of time and space.

Nineteen seventy-five is significant because our Department of Women's Work is celebrating its 100th anniversary. To think that on January 21, 1875, twenty-eight charter "managers" united themselves to become the first Women's Board of Foreign Missions is indeed an exciting recognition. In 1925 on their fiftieth anniversary, the Board of Women's Work declared four obvious lessons to be taught during the next decade: (1) that believing prayer works; (2) that the church's resources in life and money have never been fully released; (3) that God still honors the prayer for laborers for the harvest; (4) that he, by the action of his power within us, is able to do exceedingly abundant, of all that we ask or think. I thrill that at this General Synod we will be recognizing the Department of Women's Work and the role of women in the Reformed Church and celebrate the glory of God in what he has done through the vision and prayers of women in the Reformed Church in America.

Nineteen seventy-five marks fifty years of service and commitment displayed by our denomination in Chiapas, Mexico. Nineteen seventy-five is the first year of existence of the formation of a Council of Reformed Churches in Canada. This year is also significant because at this Synod as well as the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church a joint committee responsible for a theology of evangelism will be presenting their report for our consideration and I believe it's a first time in the history of the Reformed churches that we have attempted to articulate our Reformed theology of evangelism. I'm grateful for other areas of cooperation which exist between the Christian Reformed and Reformed Church in America. Significant cooperation takes place in the areas of education, youth work and coordination of new church projects. Again this year a joint venture in a Sunday of fellowship recognizing our common heritage is proposed.

My heart rejoices when I think of the staff that we have employed by the Reformed Church in America. They labor faithfully and cooperatively and have been a great encouragement to me as a person, as a pastor, and particularly as your president of General Synod. I am thrilled when I see the leadership that we have in our seminaries and colleges. This leadership is strong in the Lord and I can think of no time in our history when we've been blessed with a greater amount of leadership that manifests intellectual and spiritual maturity as we have it today. I'm particularly excited when I see our seminaries providing teams that go into the churches, serving the church through lay leadership programs and Bible study, plus

making definite efforts to recruit and train minority groups. The committee for long-range planning for continuing clergy education is moving ahead with haste and our seminaries are cooperating in giving the necessary programs for such education. And our record enrollment projected for the future need not present a problem, but a real opportunity for our church to grow.

We can praise God that 1975 became the year in which we increased support for the mission of the General Program Council making possible fourteen additional missionaries from the Reformed Church in America. After years of decreases in giving, and a decrease in the number of missionaries from 160 to 110 (excluding Annville and Brewton), we are now reversing the trend and are moving out boldly with additional staff for missionary endeavor. At the same time the General Program Council has been able to give a higher proportion of its finances to evangelism and church growth. An increased portion of the GPC's expenditures for those areas will reflect the social implications of the Gospel. This is also the year in which the General Program Council is challenging us to give an additional $100,000 for church growth, particularly for personnel to be used in new potential fields. And I must say that as I've traveled across the denomination and overseas to the Middle East that I thrill that we are still a missionary denomination. We are seeing a revitalization of the missionary spirit coming to the forefront both at home and abroad in the life of the Reformed Church.

The regional centers are beginning to provide effective places for General Synod and particular synod personnel to be in contact with the home base of the local congregations and offer them the relevant programs and ministries desired on the local level.

I am grateful for the contribution that the minority groups are putting into the bloodstream of the Reformed Church in America, grateful that the Black Caucus continues to call for justice in human relationships, that the Hispanics are bold in their assertion of the Gospel in both its evangelistic and social implications; that the Indian Council stands and continues to be a reminder to us of our heritage and obligation in the Gospel to the first Americans.

There is no question in my mind that there's a great spirit of love and sacrifice flowing across the Reformed Church. I think our praise and gratitude to God ought to be greater today than it's ever been because we're a church that dares challenge itself to think theologically and to discuss intelligently our commitment in the world in which we live. I'm grateful for those who have stood and assisted me as your president this past year. I'm grateful because they have urged me to lift up certain needs. I'm particularly grateful for my own congregation and friends who have continued so faithfully in prayer for me.

The World in Which We Witness

There is no question that we are called to preach the good news in the midst of a very difficult day as far as the world is concerned. We have come to the end of our human resources. Many people today lack a sense of purpose, worth, and direction. Many feel like a cog in a big machine. Donald Heiges in *The Christian Calling* tells a story of a gang of laborers drilling holes five feet deep in a street. Their boss did not tell them the purpose. In fact, as he looked in each hole he said, "Okay, fill 'er up." At noon the men announced: "We quit. Pay us off." When the boss asked why, they replied, "Digging holes and filling them only makes

fools of us." Then he told them why the drilling was done—to find a location of a "lost" watermain. Deep down a human being wants to see some point to what he is doing, even if what he is doing makes no great demands upon the mind or body. There is no question that the "organizational man" or the "machine man" has become depersonalized in our highly mechanized society.

At the same time we are living in a terrible individualistic age, when family bonds are very weak. The industrial revolution of the last century, the mobility of the American family, the American business world, and our own political philosophy—all these have contributed to individual isolation. Dr. Donald Mc Gavran has said: "Both the loneliness and the depersonalization that are symptomized by our modern man has resulted in a terrible disorientation and sense of lostness that is very evident in modern man's behavior."

Beside this we are beginning to become aware through the oil crisis and other crises that Western cultural values of progress and growth are no longer having the influence in our global family that they once had. We are discovering that there are other members of the family who are demanding recognition because they too have lost their identities and many of them are hungry, and want a bit of this world's food as well as this world's recognition. It's in times like this that we stand.

The real crisis, however, is not in the world; it is in the Church. Dr. David Poling has written a book entitled *The Last Years of the Church*. In this book he says "God is not dead but the church as we know it is dying." Many major denominations have experienced a steady decline in membership, in giving, and in the commitment of its membership. In many places we see a church which is more concerned about its building, its self as an institution rather than its individual members. It is no wonder that many voices are crying out and saying the Church has lost its dynamic and no longer has a reason for being. Many individual members of the institutional church would say "Amen" to that. How can we reconcile this with Luke 12:32 where Jesus assures his disciples: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The comfort of this assurance does not depend upon the strength and the number of the flock, for it is a "little flock," a company of "sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt. 10:16). The certainty that the Kingdom belongs to us is founded on God's will, "the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will" (Eph. 1:11).

At this point we as a denomination also face a real crisis. Although we are about to celebrate our 350th anniversary, we remain not only small, but a denomination that has a negative growth rate! We have a membership that is growing older. And the particular synods are reporting from east to west that the gains within their constituency as far as church growth is concerned are insignificant or negative. The president of the Synod of the West reported: "I detect no definite trend in terms of increases or decreases in any of the categories reported." Any reported increase or decrease in one classis was effectively canceled out by an opposite trend in another classis. The one exception to that is a continued gradual decline in Sunday school attendance reported by most of our classes. Since 1965 Sunday school enrollments in the Synod have declined by about seventeen percent. Projections by an evaluation of the Synod of Michigan made by Dr. Tom Manetsch of Michigan State University suggest that the membership will level off and even decline in the near future unless we begin to become more effective as a particular synod in evangelism.

Other particular synods report even more startling negative growth rates to the extent that some have recognized that their survival time is exceedingly brief unless by some miracle of the Holy Spirit there is a new trend in our denomination. I am aware that we have areas of growth in churches that are significant from the East through the Middle West and in the far West, but I am also aware that some of the statistics of our largest churches are so inflated and unrealistic that the statistics are superficial. In contrast the Synod of New York has made this a significant year by making it a year with a growth goal of ten percent with a ten percent increase in their membership growth as well as in their giving growth. But one cannot help being bothered in a denomination with a rich theological heritage, a biblical commitment to a great "God and world view," yet so limited in its effective outreach.

One is amazed when one sees groups that often have heretical doctrines which are able to make significant gains by simply equipping its laity and keeping them involved in constant community witnessing. Why have the Mormons doubled their membership in a thirteen-year period and now number about 3.5 million worldwide? One wonders if our faith is only a mental treadmill instead of a moral imperative. Is it due to the fact that we train our pastors in all of the theological and social disciplines but not in the fine discipline of living by the power of the Holy Spirit so that they become person-to-person communicators of the Gospel? Or is it simply that the rank and file of our church membership is not involved with humanity, with its aches and pains, its diseases, its tragedy, hunger and alienation?

Our Goal As a Denomination

Our Lord said: "Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). Here God is saying to us that our goal ought to be to bring people into the Kingdom of God. What does that really mean? For Jesus it meant "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." As his followers it is our task to bring men into the Kingdom of God in order that they might become a healed people. It is our task to offer to men the opportunity of living in a consciousness of their preciousness, their personhood, and their potential as human beings under the Lordship of Jersus Christ.

Jesus wants us to be serious about it because he talked about making us fishers of men; he talked about the tragedy of an empty banquet table. He warned about sowing without reaping; a fig tree bearing no figs; lost sheep not brought into the fold; a lost coin sought but not found; ripe harvests that are not reaped; and a summons without response. Certainly this is what Kingdom growth is all about. It is rescuing man from his own self-will and bringing him under the sovereignty of Jesus Christ into a wholeness that only God can give. If there is anything that makes the Reformed contribution unique among the denominations of the Christian Church it is this emphasis that this is *God's doing* and *God has invited* and *compelled men* by the power of his spirit to be available to be used to be witnesses to that Gospel and to rescue men from the human tragedy.

When we examine our national program expenditures, we do not see the high priority on evangelism, missions and church growth that our Reformed commitment demands. It seems to be that at this point we are caught in an agony as to how

to express this high priority in program dollars. We need to review if the percentage of our giving really reflects this priority.

Experiencing salvation by repentance from sin and a personal faith in Jesus Christ results in a changed life-style that exults and celebrates Jesus Christ as the Lord and liberator of all of life. This message is to be announced and the results or success are simply by-products, but not essential to the mandate. We are called to proclaim a message and confront lost people with the reality of that message. And while we may enact that love, and we may even decide on a life-style that reveals it, ultimately the human intelligence demands that it must be verbalized and proclaimed.

It may also mean that we are engaged in what the Apostle Paul called the "apologia" that is in the defense of this truth before the pagan mind. For we are appealing to their reason, to their minds, because historically Christianity happened! And while we cannot prove to the doubting skeptic that which he refuses to believe, nevertheless, we do not sidestep the historical verifications nor the propositional truths that God's Word offers, and point out that there is a historical accuracy to the message of salvation that we have in the person of Jesus Christ. Dr. David Poling said "organized religion will depend more and more on the brain power of the laymen." For if we are going to have communicators of the faith and present this Gospel and let this become the goal of our whole ministry then we had better be sure that our lay people be thoroughly cognizant of the basis, the content and the confrontation necessary to be an effective evangelist for God. The existential happening that we long for in life of all people cannot come about in a vacuum but will come about only when Christians are equipped to confront our world with the Gospel.

Our Goal Demands a Strategy

The strategy is clearly outlined in Matthew 28:19 and 20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age." Now there are serious deterrents that exist in our fulfilling that strategy. Our first priority is to communicate effectively with our world today. We have a definite communication problem. In some ways we don't take the world seriously enough. Our theological heritage has come out of a clarification of church doctrine but not necessarily of evangelistic concern for the world. But even more critical is a consciousness that we must have that often in our presentation of the Gospel to the world we do not hear what our world is saying to us. We do not understand the questions they are asking. We do not comprehend the depths of their pain and agony. As a result we think in terms of our theology and our churchanity rather than of their spiritual loneliness and frustration. We communicate effectively in the language of the theologian but we fail to communicate effectively in the language of human hurt.

We need to turn back to Jesus the Master Evangelist of all time and learn of him because he was able to go to each person and in one way or another ask the question: "What would you have me to do for you?" That kind of a question we might well ask, because our world has needs and expectations that they want fulfilled in Jesus Christ. That didn't mean Christ bypassed repentance or faith. It did mean that first of all he wanted them to look to him. He made himself the

issue so that on the basis of looking to him they might discover who they were, or where they were lacking. He allowed them to bring their physical, their moral, their social or whatever need they might have to him, and as he helped them in these areas they became aware of his power, and recognizing his power became followers and eventually came under his salvation and Lordship.

Our second priority is that we see people as individuals rather than as statistics. One of the great dangers of recognizing our crisis of survival as a denomination may well be that now we ought to do evangelism in order to survive. However, our problem is much deeper than simply survival. The failure to communicate our faith reveals the fact that we have not been effectual servants. Had we been the kind of servants we ought to have been we would have communicated a salvation that we possessed in Jesus Christ. There is a necessity that we become a servant people. Once having lost our lives for Christ we will find that we will become a surviving people. Let us be more concerned with service.

Thirdly, we are locked into a middle-class cultural pattern. Jesus came "to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." The Scripture says: "God chose what is low and despised in the world" (1 Cor. 1:28). I think we will have to say that the Church has too long identified itself with a status quo and has sought too long to be an institution to be respected and to influence society by its numbers, its intelligence, not daring to challenge the luxurious human consumption: the well-tailored suits, the winter vacations in the Carribean, or the consistently long vacation weekend. The whole world is looking to see whether or not the cross is still the priority of the Church, whether it is willing to be the body of Christ broken and willing to pour out its blood in concern for the needs of people. The heart of the problem is the lack of awareness that humiliation ultimately gives way to exultation and that there is very little credibility when those in the Church are well-fed in a world that is hungry, well-housed amongst a world of refugees and well-clothed when others are naked. Is it any wonder that the Church has lost its force in our world?

Fourthly, there is a need for a lower profile of the institution by giving a greater role to the laity. A Norwegian clergyman was asked after visiting America: "What did you find?" And he responded by saying: "I found a pastor's church!" The formalism that characterizes our worship, the endless preparation of large committees, commissions and numerous study committees is not only a wearying of the flesh and an infringement upon priorities, but also a confusing mass of more complex institutionalism of which the laity are weary. The lonely traveler in the twentieth century finds the church soul-destroying rather than a place in which he can find hope of becoming the individual he or she can be. I would call for smaller commissions, more ad hoc short-term committees and less expenditure of time and money for the maintenance of the machinery of the church. It might even be wise for us to elect the president of our consistory from one of our ruling elders rather than automatically giving this role to the pastor.

Finally, we face an acute pastor-congregation relational problem. With slightly more than forty vacant churches (about five percent), and about 160-plus enrolled in our classes for theological training, with fewer opportunities for that kind of dynamic movement which allows pastors to move and give of their expertise to more churches, and with a resulting stagnation where the relationship between congregation and pastor ceases to be stimulating, damage occurs which is demeaning

to both the pastors and churches. However, this situation ought not to be a problem but a challenge. It can be remedied for the good of everyone concerned and the growth of the Kingdom of God if we adopt the following procedures:

a. In order to facilitate the movement of clergy, I would call for formation of a Pastoral Placement Committee composed of the six Particular Synod Church Planning and Development secretaries and the Coordinator of Human Resources. Pastors and churches who concurred that the time had come for a change in their pastor's place of service would by February 1 of a given year indicate their desire by a form provided by the committee. The committee would provide the means for and expect both the participating church and pastors to fill out the kind of forms that would set forth the church's goal expectations and involvement in co-operative affirming support for pastoral services; and the pastor should complete a performance record, a record of professional development; and a commitment on the part of both to enter into this program.

Both pastors and churches entering such an arrangement would do so in joint concurrence and voluntarily, but both would be expected to make a decision on not more than two recommended changes; failure of either to do so, would exempt them from the program that year. Other conditionals of minimal salary requirements, pastoral development programs and even recommendations for increased church operational facilities would have to be complied with. All contracts or calls would be completed by July 1, and August 1 would be the expected moving dates for all concerned. While in its preliminary stages such a program might not have many participants, gradually there would be an evolutionary confidence in the efficiency and the respectability of such a program and more would use it. If only twenty-five churches a year used this system, it would still mean increased movement that over a ten-year period would have profound results.

b. Also, I would recommend a compulsory program of pastoral professional training across the entire denomination, increasing our time for such a program to two weeks and the dollar amount to $250 per year. In addition, after six years of service in any given congregation there would be a three-month sabbatical with pay for additional studies and professional development for all clergy. This program would be supervised by classis and should require a question on our constitutional requirement blanks indicating that both churches and pastors are complying with the same.

c. In addition there should be an annual review of the job description in every congregation, of the pastor's role and fulfillment of it. Again, this should become a standardized tool of the Office of Human Resources and should be filed with the Classical Pastoral Relations Committee.

d. Further, we need across the board in our denomination a commitment to discipleship. We need a program of training our clergy, our laity, our missionaries, and overseas laity discipleship techniques. "What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Jesus said: "Go make disciples." The word is used over 260 times in the gospels and the Book of Acts. Discipleship means that by personal example (we cannot teach evangelism if we are not doing it ourselves) and teaching we pour our lives into the lives of our constituents so that they will move in and through the areas of biblical *studies,* evangelistic *sharing,* and involved *service.* None of the three areas ought to become lodging places, but launching places. It

means equipping our laity, the only ones through whom and by whom the Church will reach the world. This is the implication of the priesthood of all believers.

If a congregation does this on the basis of pastoral example and training, and combined with goals that are consistent with New Testament principles and prayer, we will experience an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will turn our church out into the world with a concern that wins. James Smart in his book *The Rebirth of the Ministry* states: "Jesus was not satisfied in having a succession of audiences to which he might proclaim his Gospel; he was interested primarily in having disciples in whom and through whom his ministry would be multiplied many times over." "We must recognize," he says, "that rarely does the Church meet the world with a trained minister or theologian present to speak for the Church." In our brief overseas visit to the Middle-East it was my conviction that every mission field ought to have either group or local mission station seminars semi-annually in which there would be times set aside for goal-setting, biblical teaching for edification and the communication for methodologies for discipling.

Discipling is a commitment to communicate to persons either one to one or in small groups and allowing these to become the leaven in the congregation and the world. Too many of our congregations are hollow when it comes to learning, loving, discovering personal Holy Spirit gifts, and individual worth and uniqueness for the Kingdom of heaven.

The challenge of this position is that we become involved with persons rather than audiences. The result will be the kind of liberation and healing that will become a chain-reaction of caring persons who pray for and teach each other. The old secret-service type of Christianity which can only talk up when it finds something wrong with the church is out of date. We need people who know the joy of walking in the Holy Spirit and sustaining one another in prayer to do God's will. More than anything else this gives the kind of meaning to individual lives that will excite and change the Church and the world. I would recommend that every particular synod would have expertise available to train church leadership in goal-setting and evangelistic training.

It would be extremely helpful for the seminaries to focus on the "why" of our beliefs as well as the "what" or content. Jeffrey Hadden states: "There is a crisis of doubt and ambiguity of belief that penetrates into the rank and file of both clergy and laity." Our laity need clear concise rationale for a defense of their faith. This is no day to send forth teachers and pastors with only methods, doctrines, and/or an exciting "existential happening" in Christ. Our faith is grounded in historical veracity and logical truth. If we are to meet our world at the point it is asking hard questions we will be forced "to give a reason for the faith that is within us," and that particularly applies to the veracity of the written Word of God.

e. Out of the above discipleship will come a life-style of the congregation that will determine new structures—structures that conform to needs. Far more important than physical structures is that kind of community that is a real community. Form ought to be determined by function. The house church, local school auditorium or gym, the drive-in theater, the marketplace, the storefront, the apartment house recreation room, the Holiday Inn, and other places may be far more suitable to certain forms of church life than that which we are accustomed to.

f. I would call for a renewal of investing monies and effort in the church

expansion program by stimulating people to invest in the RCA Revolving Fund and by giving to the Church Building Fund on both General Synod and particular synod levels. I would urge that monies be put into the placement of personnel rather than in facilities at the early stages of development of new fields and that larger sums be placed only into such programs as warranted investment of monies for additional staff and increased facilities. *This should be a priority program for the entire RCA* for without the strengthening of the base church we will continue to have a negative growth rate and small conversion ratio.

Areas of Concern

There is the area of mutual acceptance. We need a maturity that dares to disagree and challenge each other in the Word. It will take a desire on the part of the church to be one in love and cooperation. It may well be that if we become active enough, we won't have energy enough to spend so much in being critical without being constructive. However, diversity of opinion is healthy; but to divert our full energies to a negativism that never gets involved in a posititive support of an existing program, or the originating of new programs is not helpful.

Women's ordination is another such area. This issue has been with us for over twenty years. The least one can say about the Reformed Church is we are not "hasty plungers." We now find our polity twisted into a unique pretzel! It is our conviction according to the *Book of Church Order* that the offices of the church have a parity reflective of Christ's ministry. However, we have taken these offices divided them, and opened the offices of the church to women only as deacons and elders, but not as ministers of the Word. We have also authorized elders, including women, to serve the sacraments, but not to preach the Word. We have a number of classes who have enrolled women candidates for the ministry, who at the same time have repeatedly turned down the office of the teaching elder or minister of the Word for women.

The result has caused deep frustration and pain on the part of both those who favor this action and those who oppose it. In fact, three times more than a majority of classes have voted to open the office of minister of the Word to women, but each time it has failed by narrow margins to gain the two-thirds majority necessary. The result has left us with a tired, frustrated church which asks itself: "Where do we go from here?" It would be easy for some to say let us force the issue by establishing a practice of ordination contrary to the *Book of Church Order*. Such an action would be disastrous and divisive, for it would then be used by others on other issues where there was a disagreement of conscience. I would plead for constitutional loyalty, continued study of the issues, and patience that will allow the due procedures to have priority in our dealing one with another in the church. Already, we see and hear of too much superficial loyalty to the *Book of Church Order* at the point of the classical supervision of the churches, the commitment to the Liturgy in our worship practices, superficial examinations of seminary students and lack of compassionate involvement of the classis in ministering to pastors and congregations.

I would urge that all of us make a deep commitment to each other under the Word of God. We need to stand together in unity, love and in the dynamic challenge of interpreting God's Word for our desperate world. There is no other way in which we can impress others, than through a commitment to God, his Word and each other. Compromise will not communicate discipleship. Only clear-cut goals

and a strategy consistent with Scripture will move us out with the blessings of Jesus Christ. We need to develop better goals and strategy, and we had better be about it now!

Daniel Burnham was correct when he said: "Make no little plans, they have no power to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans, aim high and hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram, once recorded, will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing asserting itself with growing intensity." Would that we would have the vision for such a task and a commitment to carry it out to the Glory of God.

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Rewert's report to General Synod is a timely and prophetic message for which we are indeed grateful to God. It commends itself to the thoughtful study of each church member and consistory. He declares honestly and openly the urgent concerns facing our denomination; and at the same time he urges us to accept this challenge in faith, trusting that, as we respond in commitment and discipleship, God will honor our efforts. Desiring that the President's concerns be implemented for action, we make the following recommendations:

A. *Evangelism and Church Growth*

R-1. We RECOMMEND that the President's mandate on evangelism and church growth be directed to the Classes as an urgent priority to be communicated individually and personally to their various congregations. We want them to know of the crisis in growth facing our denomination, of their individual responsibility for evangelism and growth, and of the plans and resources both presently available and forthcoming from denominational task forces through their regional centers. In presenting this challenge we further RECOMMEND that the Synods and Classes be asked to specifically urge their congregations

—to adopt evangelism and church growth as a goal of the highest priority,

—to set clear objectives for evangelism and growth; for example a 5-10% increase in membership,

—to develop specific strategies for equipping both pastor and laity to carry out the task of evangelism in their area,

—to review the priority on evangelism reflected in their budget,

and to seek God's counsel and support in prayer as the foundation on which their efforts must be based. (ADOPTED)

R-2. We RECOMMEND that the appropriate staff persons be urged to consult with the Synods and Classes on their progress in church growth and evangelism, and to report to GSEC and to the 1976 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

R-3. We RECOMMEND that the Board of Theological Education be requested to consult with the seminaries and to give consideration to the priority now being given to the training of seminarians in leading people to faith in Jesus Christ. (ADOPTED)

R-4. We RECOMMEND that GPC be requested to make a report to General Synod 1976 reflecting our financial priorities in Evangelism. (ADOPTED)

B. *Continuing Education for the Clergy*

R-5. We RECOMMEND that a Clergy Support System be organized through every Classis to deal with the issue of Continuing Education for the Clergy —C.E.C.—and in places where calls support this we instruct each classis how to implement the continuing education mandate; **and further,**

We RECOMMEND that each church be instructed to report to Classis in its Consistorial Question as to whether clergy and church are fulfilling the terms of the continuing education mandate. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

R-6. We RECOMMEND that each church consider as a desirable goal the granting of a two weeks' study leave, in addition to vacation, **financed by a $250.00 grant.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

It was moved and seconded to adopt R-6. An amendment was made to change the word "consider" to the word "provide" and add the words "per year" after the words "two weeks' study leave". The amendment was DEFEATED. A division of the house was called. The vote was YES: 104; NO: 113. The amendment was DEFEATED.

An amendment was made to add the words "in addition to vacation" after the words "two weeks' study leave". This amendment was ADOPTED.

R-7. We RECOMMEND that the issue of continuing education for the clergy be referred to the Coordinator for Human Resources and the Joint Committee for C.E. and that a progress report be made to the 1976 General Synod through the GSEC. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

R-8. We RECOMMEND that the issue of performance review be enlarged to include both Pastor and Consistory, and that this matter be referred to the Coordinator for Human Resources and the Joint Committee for C.E. for further recommendations to Classes and Consistories, and

Furthermore, we request that a progress report be made to the 1976 General Synod by the Coordinator and the Joint Committee on this subject, through the GSEC. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

C. *Pastoral Placement Committee*

R-9. Recognizing the acute pastor-congregation relational problem we RECOMMEND that a plan for a Pastoral Placement Committee be formed by the Coordinator for Human Resources, the Field Secretaries, one representative from each of our two seminaries, **(and representatives from our two seminaries,) to devise a system of pastoral placement; and further,**

that this be established for a three year trial period, with progress reports made to General Synod through the GSEC over the next two years, and that final recommendations be made in the third year. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

*Amended portion in light face, deleted portion in parenthesis.

ARTICLE 19

ACCOUNTS (TRAVEL)

The 1972 General Synod took action to disband the Review Committee on Travel and Leave of Absence (See *MGS*, 1972, p. 281).

ARTICLE 20

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEES (REVIEW AND PERMANENT) ON NOMINATIONS

R-1. Your committees submit for your consideration and approval the following names to serve on the listed organizations and delegations. (ADOPTED)

NOTE: The entire list appears in the 1975 Directory of the General Synod of the RCA, Appendix 2 to these Minutes, under the Sections: "Permanent Committees and Commissions," "Delegations," and "Boards and Agencies."

George W. Crumley, Jr., has completed two full terms as a member of the General Program Council and has one more year to serve, the Classis of Nassau-Suffolk and the General Program Council are making a special request that he continue for one more year as a representative on GPC from his Classis.

R-2. Your Committees RECOMMEND that this special request be granted. (ADOPTED).

The By-Laws call for 18 members on the Christian Action Commission. Because of a change in the structure of the Commission, requiring representatives nominated by the Particular Synods, compliance with the *Book of Church Order* would result in the termination of members already on the Commission who are in the midst of Commission projects. In order to allow for the continuing membership of those persons, the Nominations Committee RECOMMENDS:

R-3. To permit an exception to the By-Laws contained in the Book of Church Order **until 1978 to allow for three members of the Commission to continue to serve on the Commission.** (ADOPTED)

R-4. That the following three persons continue their membership on the Christian Action Commission as follows:

William Struck (Class of 1976)
Carl Cutsinger (Class of 1977)
Sibella Boerigter (Class of 1978)
(ADOPTED)

In addition, the following recommendation is presented by the Committee:

R-5. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod elect Rev. David A. Laman as Chairman of the Permanent Committee on Nominations for the coming year. (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 21

REFORMED CHURCH WOMEN

REPORT OF REFORMED CHURCH WOMEN

1974 was a year of achievement and anticipation for Reformed Church Women. Three years of planning and programming resulted in a giving, growing, glowing experience for over 2000 women of the church as they gathered daily in April at Long Beach, California for the Triennial Assembly. Joined by another 2,000 in evening sessions, all participants gave testimony to a deepening commitment to Christ; to growing concern for Christian involvement in ministries to individuals who are hurting; to personal and corporate action toward alleviation of the world-wide problems of hunger, war, and racism. Convinced that this kind of assembly helps to strengthen and give focus to the denominational goals and programs, plans are in process for Triennial '77, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

A major accomplishment of the year was the establishment of goals for Reformed Church Women for 1974-77 relating to the theme "Reveal Christ Anew." Adopted by the National Board at its April meeting, the following goals are being implemented in appropriate programs by each of the Synodical Boards:

I. *Concern*: The impact of churches in the world.

Goal: Women in the Reformed Church serving Christ effectively in today's world.

Challenges:

1. Sponsor groups for better understanding within age groups and between age groups (i.e. aged, parents, teenagers).
2. Sponsor groups to heighten sensitivity with those in trying situations and with special problems. (i.e. Handicapped, single parents, jobless, addicts, etc.) and sponsor groups to cope with concerns such as: fears of dying, excessive leisure time, loneliness, etc.
3. Work for public education to include courses on the Bible as literature and history.
4. Arrange international exchanges of families between the United States and other countries where the Reformed Church is in mission.
5. Cultivate more effective citizenship through political channels.

II. *Concern*: The vitality of Reformed Church Women

Goal: Reformed Church Women an indispensible unit for mission in the R.C.A.

Challenges:

1. Increase and sustain R.C.W. benevolence giving to one-half million dollars by 1977.
2. Present a unique spiritual program annually which cannot be found outside the church.

3. Provide four mission emphasis programs for the women of every Reformed Church each year.
4. Saturate every congregation with information of activities and accomplishments of women in the Reformed Church.
5. Strengthen units of R.C.W. with emphasis on mission (its functions) rather than structure (its form).
6. Increase quality and number of women leaders in the denomination.

The major focus for Reformed Church Women has always been mission. In its traditional interpretation this has meant missions and missionaries. This will continue to be a primary emphasis in all programming and giving. There are those who are asking for a broader interpretation of mission—to include the concern for emerging roles of men and women in church and society and the need of changes to assure full personhood. Many in Reformed Church Women believe that there is a reservoir of skill and energy untapped in our denomination and that the failure to use this represents a disservice to Christ and His church. In order to give consideration to this concern and emphasis, the National Executive Committee requested that the General Synod appoint a "Task Force on Women". It is believed that a study of the current resources and involvement of women in the church would provide information which would be helpful in denominational planning and programming.

Such responsibilities as monitoring appointments to Boards and agencies; developing a library of materials on women's concerns and issues; designing and implementing consciousness-raising groups would be assigned to the Task Force.

1974 was a year of anticipation for Reformed Church Women—anticipation of the 100th Anniversary of the organization of the Women's Board of Foreign Missions and a Centennial Celebration in 1975. A pageant depicting the major role women of the church have played in the mission program, and other resources were developed to make this a year of commemoration and commitment.

R. C. W. National Officers:

President	Julia Van Wyk—New Jersey Synod
Vice President	Betty Boerman—Michigan Synod
Secretary—Spiritual Life/Education	Doris Mold—New Jersey Synod
Secretary—Organization/Service	Gladys Kuipers—Michigan Synod
Secretary—Finance	Hilda Davis—New York Synod
Executive Director	Beth Marcus
Administrative Assistant	Remi Flikkema
Literature Secretary	Gloria Doyle

Synodical Presidents (National Executive Committee Members):

Thelma Daniels	Albany Synod
Helen Vanderbilt	Chicago Synod
Isabelle Bruggers	Michigan Synod
Mary Diekman	New Jersey Synod
Norma Hiemstra	New York Synod
Cornelia Poppen	West/East Synod
Anna Holbrook	West/West Synod

Consultants:

Eloise Van Heest	Albany Synod
Doris De Young	Chicago Synod
Elaine Walchenbach	Michigan Synod
Kitty Crandall	New Jersey Synod
Dorothy Kraemer	New York Synod
Jane Ten Clay	West/East Synod
Bette Leestma	West/West Synod

SUPPLEMENT TO REFORMED CHURCH WOMEN REPORT

Many birthday celebrations (honoring the Women's Board of Foreign Missions and the National Department of Women's Work) have been held in the early months of 1975 both by congregations and Reformed Church Women at Local, Classical and Synodical levels. Women's Sunday was observed throughout the denomination with such enthusiasm, interest and appreciation that the Executive Committee of the National Board of Reformed Church Women voted at its regular meeting April 20—May 1, 1975 to recommend:

R-1. That General Synod designate April 26, 1976 as Women's Sunday in the Reformed Church to enable continued appropriate recognition of the commitment, abilities and responsibilities of women of the church. (ADOPTED)

Jean Cook, Chairperson of the RCW Committee on Planning and Review, addressed the Synod briefly, and presented to the 1975 General Synod of the RCA a copy of the RCW Handbook.

ARTICLE 22

CHAPLAINS

THE COMMISSION ON CHAPLAINS REPORT

The Commission on Chaplains is appointed by the General Synod according to its bylaws in the *Book of Church Order*. It is composed of nine members, three of whom must be laymen. At present four laymen are serving ably giving a real strength to the Commission. In recent years the Commission has also had a part-time Executive Secretary—the Rev. Johan Mulder. All correspondence for the Commission should be addressed to him at

535 12th Ave. N.E.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

The 1975 Annual Meeting of the Commission was held on March 12 and 13 at the Great Lakes, Illinois Naval Base with our own Chaplain George Murray as host. All the members of the Commission were present and received a warm welcome not only from Chaplain Murray but also from Capt. R. W. Wilson C.O. NAVADCOM, U.S. Naval Station, Great Lakes, Illinois. In addition all felt that the Murrays went "beyond the call of duty" when they were invited to the Murray home for a delicious dinner on the evening of March 12th.

The Commission continues to serve as the representative of the denomination in a program which for many years has demonstrated a unique example of the extension of the Church's ministry in providing spiritual nurture and care for its members who are absent from their home churches in hospitals or other institutions or in the military service. Dedicated institutional and military chaplains are carrying the love and concern of Christ to untold thousands of men and women and the Commission seeks to uphold and undergird these chaplains in their important ministry.

The reports which come to us from these servants of God provide a continuing and consistent witness to the value and necessity of these services and the spiritual importance of their ministry to others. We share with the Synod reports which two of our chaplains have made to the Commission. The first is that of the Rev. Earl Jabay who serves as Chaplain at the New Jersey Neuro-Psychiatric Institute, Princeton, N.J. Chaplain Jabay writes:

The Institutional chaplain has a unique opportunity to serve the Lord through a ministry to those who are institutionalized in hospitals and prisons. As these places increase and grow, so also does the opportunity to provide a spiritual ministry to people who are so deeply in need.

Consider, for a moment, how much the institutionalized person needs spiritual help. First of all, he is uprooted from his home life and, out of necessity, enrolls himself in a community of strangers called a hospital or a prison. There is normally a sizeable amount of protest against this arrangement, not to mention inconvenience and disappointment. There is an immediate need to adjust to his fellow patients or inmates, some of whom may be in a highly disturbed state. The newly institutionalized person deeply misses his family, friends and home-life.

In addition to his peers, however, the newly institutionalized person must adjust to the staff of people who are in authority over him. The authority structure cannot help but create various

rules and customs which have a restrictive and sometimes demeaning effect upon the patient or inmate. They rightly complain that they are not treated as the unique people God created them to be. If a person is institutionalized for a long period of time, there is no question but that he will suffer from this subtle process of de-humanization.

A third kind of problem is the massive employment of secular treatment programs. No amount of professional respectability can hide the fact that, at least in governmental institutions, God is purposely left out as a necessary factor in treatment. The consequence for the institutionalized person is that he is exposed to the constantly changing whims of counseling theory—non-directive therapy, encounter therapy, behavior modification, transactional analysis, etc. The patient or inmate is in no position to be selective. He is expected to cooperate fully with the professional helper, no matter what his methods or his relationship to God.

Finally, the institutionalized person is a problem in and to himself. As with us all, *he* is his greatest problem. I am convinced, after working in a mental hospital for 15 years, that the problem is basically *spiritual* rather than psychological, social, genetic or bio-chemical in nature. We now know, for example, that the phenomenal success of Alcoholics Anonymous with alcoholics, is due to the surrender of the will to God and living a disciplined life. I have used this same spiritual approach with neurosis, psychosis, behavior problems and addiction problems. I can report that nothing brings healing like the surrender of the will to Jesus Christ. We must begin with that and judiciously and selectively use whatever other help is necessary, noting however, that some kinds of "help" are contra-Christian.

The institutional chaplain is called to a ministry to broken people. The need for the Christian pastor in institutional settings grows as our culture grows more and more secular and the days become more difficult and dark. So much the better for the Light of the World who shines in that darkness!

The second report is that of one of our military chaplains, Chaplain David White who serves in the Procurement Office of the Chief of Navy Chaplains. He writes:

It is 9 A.M. on the east coast of the United States and at a naval base a chaplain prepares for his first counseling session of the day. Simultaneously, around the world chaplains are involved in a ministry of sacraments and presence among Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel and their dependents. It is only 6 A.M. on the west coast as a chaplain prepares to move out with a battalion of marines on a training exercise, while at 2 A.M. in Alaska a young coastguardsman learns from the chaplain of a family tragedy and prepares for an emergency trip home. On board an aircraft carrier, in the Pacific, where a 12-hour work day is not uncommon for the crew, and the work is laborious, exhausting, hot and often dangerous, the chaplain ministers to the 5,000 men who represent a microcosm of a pluralistic society. In the Indian Ocean at 10 P.M. a chaplain on board a destroyer establishes rapport, over a cup of coffee, with the men of the engineering department, while in a D.L.G. the chaplain concludes a mid-week Bible Study on the mess decks.

To sustain the multitude of ministries performed by chaplains ashore and afloat, however, requires logistical and personnel support. This support is provided in part, by members of the staff of the Chief of Chaplains. As a member of this staff, it has been my responsibility to provide a portion of the support for the chaplains in the field. Total on board strength plans, promotion plans, liaison with denominational representatives, procurement of new chaplains, retirements, resignations and administrative house keeping occupy the greater part of a day. Indeed, it is often difficult to see the extension of God's Kingdom through the reams of paper

work that drift across one's desk. There is, however, that ray of encouragement that filters through the paper work; a letter of appreciation, a commendation, a thank you for the ministry of a chaplain from a commanding officer, a serviceman, a wife, a mother. And reading between the lines of those letters one hopes that the supportive role of the Headquarters Staff, 50 . . . . 500 . . . . 5,000 miles away may have been of some assistance to the chaplain in his ministry of presence.

Space does not permit us to publish the reports which have come to us from other chaplains—both institutional and military. The reports vary greatly in content because our chaplains are charged with a variety of responsibilities. All are seeking, however, to present the claims of Christ and to bear witness to the glory of the Christian faith. Reports which have come to us from their commanders or supervisors show that we have every reason to be proud of the work our chaplains are doing.

Special honors and awards have been granted to some of our chaplains during the past year. Chaplain George Fitchett, Director of Protestant Chaplains at Oak Forest (Ill.) Hospital, has been awarded the Doctor of Ministry degree by the University of Chicago's Divinity School. Chaplain Robert Bedingfield who is now serving on our newest battleship, NIMITZ, has been given the Legion of Merit. In part his citation reads as follows:

> "For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service from June 1971 to June 1974 as Co-Director of the Navy Race Relations Education Program within the Human Resource Development Project Office of the Bureau of Naval Personnel. Responsible for the development, implementation, and formalization of the Navy's Race Relations Education Program efforts Service-wide, Commander Bedingfield was eminently successful in carrying out his responsibilities during this period, resulting in a program which has been a model for the Navy, the Department of Defense, and the Nation."

Chaplain Douglas Groen has received certification as Full Supervisor in Clinical Pastoral Education from the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education. Chaplain E. Don Teusink has been promoted to the rank of Major.

Fifteen Reformed Church ministers are on active duty in the military services; fourteen are serving as institutional chaplains either on a full time or part-time basis.

In the military and institutional chaplaincies opportunities are limited just now. Even so the Commission would urge young ministers to give serious consideration to the varied opportunities of ministry in both civil and military institutions. Should one desire military service it is recommended that he seek a Reserve assignment. He would then be offering a valued service to the personnel of the Reserve unit while increasing the possibility of obtaining full time active duty. Much larger emphasis is being placed within the Department of Defense or the National Guard as our first line of defense. These are fields offering growing opportunities in the years to come. Men who are interested are asked to write to the secretary of the Commission.

For a number of years the Commission has joined with the Christian Reformed Church to sponsor a retreat for servicemen and their wives in Berchtesgaden,

Germany. Because of increased costs and the decreased number of service personnel in the ETO this retreat has been discontinued. However, other denominations which are larger are continuing to hold retreats and our people are invited to participate in them.

The General Synod of 1974 asked that the Chaplains' Commission discuss and make suggestions in regard to two matters. The first had to do with those men who have received a "less than honorable discharge." The Commission voted to submit this statement:

> "This issue is probably most appropriately handled by the Christian Action Commission due to the fact that our Commission has little exposure to the serviceman once he has been discharged.
>
> Dishonorable discharge involves a rather severe breach of conduct usually criminal in nature. The problems of adjustment at discharge are usually less critical than those of a parolled prisoner since they usually have not been incarcerated for any long period of time. On release from the service all the problems of readjustment and relocation will surface. In addition all federal and some civilian jobs will be closed.
>
> The general discharge usually applies to someone who has been unable to adjust to military life. The stigma is not so great as with a dishonorable discharge. Such men do not get the benefits accrued from an honorable discharge.
>
> In most instances individuals with general discharges desire release from the service so there are no major psychological problems. Such men may have trouble accepting adult responsibility and may encounter the same difficulties in civilian life as those encountered in the military.
>
> As spiritual advisor the pastor will have to work with such a parishioner as he does with any other distressed person. This requires assessing the problems and assisting in their resolution.
>
> The discharge status may exclude these individuals from some job opportunities, especially government jobs. Private enterprise is usually less stringent. As in any job selection past work may be important and in all probability will affect the decision. These are facts of life regardless of whether the job history is accumulated in military or non-military circumstances."

A second matter which was referred to the Commission was that of the rehabilitation of veterans. The Commission submits this statement:

> "To authoritatively answer this question more data than the Commission has is needed. It can, however, render opinions based on the experiences of its members.
>
> From a personal standpoint the Vietnam veteran probably faces no more difficulties than any other G.I. in adjusting to civilian life. Some do this with greater ease than others. Some are more adequately prepared to make the shift. Some are more ready to face a different type of responsibility. There is little to lead us to believe that the Vietnam veteran faces any more or any fewer problems than those encountered by any of today's young adults.

There is, however, one difference. The Vietnam war has been unpopular with some U.S. citizens and the veteran's peers. For those who are troubled this is an added burden.

Counselling by the pastor requires the same approach and technique used in counselling any distressed young person. He should be guided to rehabilitative and educational resources. If he is severely disturbed he may need to be referred to a veterans' hospital for psychiatric care.

Since the war has been unpopular the Counsellor will have to assess his own opinions and attitudes regarding the issue. To operate in a helping role the Counsellor might be of negative benefit if his attitudes are merely negative. By recognizing this the Counsellor can, however, make adjustments in himself so he can have a constructive influence. To commiserate and reinforce the issue will probably not be helpful."

The Chaplains' Commission continues to hold membership in the General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel. The chairman of the Commission and secretary are members and the secretary serves in addition as a member of the Executive Committee of the General Commission. During the past year the General Commission moved to a new location. Its address now is

Suite N - 200
3900 Wisconsin Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

The Commission would like to express appreciation to the editors of the *Church Herald* and of *Hotline* for giving publicity to the work of our chaplains and that of the Commission.

It would be helpful to the Commission if the stated clerks of classes would inform the secretary of any member of classis serving either as full or part-time chaplain in a civilian institution. In addition it is urged that all make use of the provision within the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter I, Part IV, article 3, Sec. 10 permitting active duty military chaplains to be appointed to General Synod once in each five year period without being counted as one of the regular delegates of his classis. We urge clerks to inform the Rev. Johan Mulder of any chaplains, military or civilian, attending General Synod, so that the Commission may make proper use of them there.

Ministers of The Reformed Church serving in our various chaplaincies are as follows:

Military Chaplains On Active Duty

Air Force

B. G. Thomas M. Groome, Jr.—Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Hdqs US Air Force, Washington, D.C. 20330
Maj. Derrick W. Bluschke—2932 B Bomarc St., Tyndall AFB, Fla. 37401
Maj. Michael Romano—416th CMBT SPT GP (HC), Griffiss AFB, NY 13441

Army

LTC Jack Van Dyken—Sharpe Army Depot, Lathrop, Ca 95330

LTC John Zwiers—Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Denver, Colorado 80240
Maj. Douglas J. Groen—Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Denver, Colorado 80240
Maj. E. Don Teusink—USAS/TC, Fort McClellan, Alabama 36201
Capt. Don Jansen—Office of the Post Chaplain, Bldg. 41 Hqs. USAG, Fort MacPherson, Ga. 30330

Navy

CDR Robert W. Bedingfield—Dep. of the Navy, NIMITZ (CVAN-68), Newport News, Virginia 23607
CDR Gordon S. Cook—Submarine Medical Center, Box 600, Code A-70, Groton, Conn. 06340
CDR George Murray—1895 Enterprise Ave., Halsey Village, Great Lakes, Ill. 60088
LCDR David White—2406 N. Vermont St., Arlington, Va. 22207
CDR Alan Plishker—Naval Support Activity, Box 14, FPO NY 09521
LT Thomas Marsden—Office of Religious Activities, NATNAVMEDCEN, Bethesda, Md. 20014

Veterans Administration

Robert A. Jones—Franklin D. Roosevelt Hospital, Montrose, NY 10548

Institutional Chaplains

Robert G. Anderson, Jr.—Yale-New Haven Hospital, 789 Howard Ave., New Haven, Conn. 06504
John H. Austin, Jr.—2820 Brant St., Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
Carl Benes—4850 Fleetwood, Jackson, Michigan 49201
Richard J. Bennink—Bethesda Hospital, Denver, Colorado 80222
Fred R. Doidge—Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508
George Fitchett—Oak Forest Hospital, 15900 South Cicero Ave., Oak Forest, Ill. 60452
William L. Hiemstra—Pine Rest Hospital, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49508
Earl Jabay—New Jersey Neuro-Psychiatric Institute, Princeton, N.J. 08540
Donald D. Jiskoot—Kennedy Youth Center, Morgantown, W. Va. 26505
Rudolph Katerberg—6-230 16th St. East, Brandon Manitoba, Canada R 7A-204
John H. Kotun—Willard State Hospital, Willard, New York 14588
Warren G. Martins—State Hospital, Rockland, New York, (West Nyack, N.Y. 10994)
Reuben Ten Haken—County Hospital, Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53081
Paul W. Zoschke—St. Mary's Hospital & Rochester Methodist Hospital, Rochester, Minnesota 55901

Non-active Military Reserves

Capt. Richard Bates, USAR
CDR Charles T. Botkin, USNR
Capt. Henry Haga, USNG
Scd. Lt. George Fiencke
Maj. Roger P. Hendricks, USAF-NG
CDR Herman T. J. Hilbrands, USNR

LCDR Richard Huls, USNR
LCDR Stanley A. Rock, USNR
LCDR Donald R. Lenderink, USNR
Lt. Dean D. Wolbrink USNR
Lt. Ronald Zartman, USAR
Lt. David John Bach, USNR
Lt. William J. Bischoff III, USNR

Civil Air Patrol

Lt. Victor William Ebert
Lt. Thomas A. Kendall

Recommendations

Because the Church has been able to extend its ministry and express its love and concern for people in varied situations through the ministry of institutional and military chaplains, we recommend:

R-1. That chaplains to be named be permitted to address Synod as representatives of the Chaplains' Commission. (ADOPTED)

Earl Jabay, representing the Institutional Chaplains, and John Zwiers, representing the Military Chaplains, addressed Synod.

R-2. That all active duty and full-time institutional chaplains attending Synod be recognized. (ADOPTED)

R-3. That Reformed Church people and pastors continue to remember our members in the services, in hospitals and other institutions. The Commission further urges that congregations remember those away from home through personal letters, the forwarding of church bulletins and other congregational church media, and in other ways open to them and particularly recommending that all churches send its members the Church Herald. (ADOPTED)

R-4. That congregations and members of the RCA initiate and support efforts of concerned individuals to humanize and improve conditions found in their local institutions of confinement. We further encourage the RCA congregations, and particularly those persons in positions of responsibility in government, to do everything possible to affect the power structures in the direction of meeting the needs of institutional people. (ADOPTED)

R-5. That classes be reminded of their responsibility for their clergy who are serving in special ministries. This includes those who require ecclesiastical endorsement from the Chaplains' Commission as well as those who do not require such endorsement. (ADOPTED)

The chairman of the Commission on Chaplains presented Bert Van Soest, Vice President, with the Chaplain's Cross.

A communication had been received by the General Secretary from Johan Mulder, Secretary of the Chaplain's Commission, suggesting that the membership of the Commission be reduced from 9 members to 6 members. The reason for this suggestion was given as being in the interests of economy. Upon motion from the floor it was

VOTED: **To adopt the recommendation that the membership of the Chaplain's Commission be reduced from 9 to 6 members; and further,**

that this recommendation be referred to the Editorial Committee for its consideration in preparing an appropriate amendment to the Book of Church Order.

ARTICLE 23

RESOLUTIONS

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

The 169th regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting on the campus of Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, Illinois, June 9-13, 1975, acknowledges with sincere and genuine thanksgiving the gracious guidance of Almighty God and offers the following resolutions:

R-1. THAT the General Synod convey its appreciation to Dr. Ivan E. Frick, President of Elmhurst College, for a warm and hearty welcome; to members of the College staff for friendly, helpful and efficient services; and especially to Mr. Steve Nestler, Director of Housing, through whose good offices arrangements were made for Synod sessions to be held in the gymnasium of the Immaculate Conception parish. We commend the Rev. Marvin Hoff through whose careful efforts the site for this year's General Synod was chosen.

R-2. THAT the General Synod note with gratitude the dedicated leadership and services of all its appointed and elected officers, committees and commissions, and staff assistants. We are indebted to many persons for their fine spirit of cooperation in the preparation of written reports, for wise attention to Synod's business during the weeks and months prior to these meetings, for diligence in keeping the delegates informed and disseminating publicity about these sessions, and for coordination of the various parts to make the whole a satisfying and worthwhile experience.

R-3. THAT the General Synod recognize all those through whose efforts the experience of these meetings provided not only a time for business, but also an occasion when we could meet and become acquainted with fellow Christians from east and west, north and south, and our lives enriched by these contacts, and our horizons expanded and our vision enlarged.

R-4. THAT the General Synod give thanks to the countless ministers and lay persons who with fervent prayer and earnest concern have undergirded and sustained the work of the delegates. Especially we would express our thanks to the people of Sheboygan county, Wisconsin, for whom the gifts of intercession has been a continuing and growing ministry.

R-5. THAT the General Synod rejoice in the gracious ministry of our co-hosts, the Rev. and Mrs. Stuart Blauw of the First Reformed Church, South Holland, Illinois, and express its indebtedness to the Rev. Harold De Roo, who coordinated the worship experiences and inspired us through a variety of music, story, witness and action, to grow and become strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

R-6. THAT the General Synod acknowledge with appreciation services rendered without remuneration—the second mile of resourcefulness—as demonstrated by members of the First Reformed Church, South Holland, Illinois, at *the General* Program Council presentation; such persons as Harry Ter Maat, a student from Central College, who made sure that travellers were met at the airport and

escorted them to and from the campus; and Kenneth Van Proyen, who volunteered his time to assist in the communications studio.

R-7. THAT the General Synod note the resignation of Dr. Lars Granberg as President of Northwestern College and honor him for his nine years of leadership at that school. We rejoice that under his guidance the institution made a steady advance, and wish him every blessing as he returns to a teaching position at Hope College.

R-8. THAT the General Synod commend the Reformed Church people of the Chicago area, who under the able direction of the Rev. Bruce Laverman, of the Palos Heights Reformed Church, opened their doors to the stranger and welcomed Synod's members into their communities, sharing with them the life and work of their congregations.

R-9. THAT the General Synod strongly affirm the place and work of women within the denomination. Our hearts were uplifted by the pageantry depicting one hundred years of women's work in foreign missions. We thank the author of the dramatization, Marilyn Hoffs of Phoenix, Arizona, the directors of the performance, Jean Cook and Leola Ralph, and the women of the classical union of Holland who staged the production. The story thrilled us and we ask General Synod to move forward into the future in close and equal partnership with the women of the church.

R-10. THAT General Synod rejoice in fifty years of fruitful labor in Chiapas, Mexico, and thank the General Program Council staff, and especially Lois Joice, for a humorous, colorful and timely presentation of these exciting years.

These resolutions are presented because our hearts are filled with the goodness of God manifested to us in so many ways, and because we recognize what a privilege it is to give thanks. It is our expectation that these words may be translated into deeds and that thankfulness may become the habit of our lives.

Upon a motion from the floor it was

VOTED: **To include in the resolutions appreciation to the Immaculate Conception parish in whose gymnasium the Synod sessions have been held this week.**

ARTICLE 24

OTHER MATTERS

Statement Relating to Counselling Process

Rev. Henry Kik stated that he felt the report of the Chaplain's Commission (see pages 257-258) alludes to statements made but not interpreted and therefore presented the following resolution by motion:

That General Synod affirm the contributions made by accredited psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers to the counselling process; and further,

That pastors in their role of counselling use said disciplines, when advisable, for consultation or referral, knowing that personality malfunction may have causal factors that are psychological as well as spiritual. (ADOPTED)

Statement From An Exchange Group

The following communication was shared with the General Synod delegates by Cecil Martens, representing Exchange Group No. 18:

"As a representative of an exchange group I have been requested to share some of our observations and concerns with the Synod.

We are deeply appreciative for what we sense to be God's presence among us. It is our unanimous conviction that the President's address and the morning worship services have contributed greatly to the spirit of this Synod. The many interpersonal relationships and opportunities of sharing with one another have enriched our lives and, has broadened our understanding of one another and the challenge that comes to each of us as servants of Christ.

As a fellowship group there are some things on our hearts which we feel constrained to share. We respond very positively with deep sensitivity to the concerns which have been expressed such as the crisis of world hunger and other pressing social issues of our day.

We have missed a corresponding concern that the Gospel be preached to the unsaved in the world. If this is indeed the primary task of the Church it should occupy a major part of our deliberations and planning and reflect itself in the programs we devise and commend to God's People in our churches for support.

The fact that up to this date GPC giving is off considerably is of grave concern to us. The delegates of this Synod should have some message to carry back to the churches so that our people will become aware of the urgency of this situation and its implications concerning our ability to carry out the Great Commission of Christ.

We have failed to hear adequate reference to the Lusaunne Conference and the implications for the direction of the RCA in terms of world wide evangelization.

As a denomination we sense a deep need to dream, to set goals, and to plan, resulting in additional thousands coming to know Christ, the establishing of new churches, reaching out to many places where the Gospel now is not

heard. Let us give more attention to and become more enthusiastic about that which is the major priority of the church.

May we respectfully urge that the major emphasis at next year's Synod center around this and that there be specified opportunities to give attention to this major issue.

Further, our concern is that we as delegates return to our churches to instigate and motivate serious consideration of this and personally to become involved in God's Mission as people whose hearts are broken with the things which break the heart of God."

Reuben Ongna	Calvin Tysen
William W. Sacher, Jr.	George Kelly
Barbara Vander Naald	Erwin J. Wix
Robert Minnick	Richard Oudersluys
Forest L. Decker	Harvey Hoekstra
Harold Glerum	Raymond Thomas

A motion from the floor was made to share this communication with the President and Vice President of General Synod for consideration for next years' General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Relating to Ordination of Women as Ministers of the Word

Because of a concern that the actions on the ordination of women taken by General Synod this year left the matter somewhat unresolved for the coming year and therefore might cause further division in the church, a motion was made from the floor and seconded:

That classes shall have no authority to ordain women to the Ministry of the Word until or unless the General Synod permits same by ratifying a change in the Book of Church Order **in response to a two-thirds vote of approval from the classes.**

Following a discussion on the legality of such an action and in light of the action on this matter taken by the General Synod of 1974 (*General Synod Minutes* of 1974, page 108), the above motion was withdrawn and the following motion was made and seconded:

That the General Synod reaffirm the action of the 1974 General Synod as follows: We RECOMMEND voluntary suspension of the attestation of licensure and of ordination of women to the office of Minister of the Word until action is taken by the General Synod of 1976.

Because the granting of a dispensation for a professorial certificate, a prerequisite for ordination, cannot occur until the next meeting of General Synod, at which time the response of the classes concerning the ordination of women will be at hand, it was felt that further action was unnecessary. Therefore the above motion was withdrawn, and General Synod took NO ACTION.

Greetings From the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

The General Secretary read to the Synod a letter from the General Secretary and Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, sending greetings to the Synod and expressing appreciation for RCA concern for Taiwan and its church.

It was moved and seconded that the General Secretary acknowledge receipt of the letter from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, sending warm greetings and encouraging them in their current situation. (ADOPTED)

Action on World Hunger

Reflecting on the morning's meditation on Robert Raines' poem, *"Lord, Could You Make It a Little Better?,"* and because of its concern for world hunger, a motion from the floor was made and seconded:

That General Synod put its faith into action and sometime during the General Synod meeting take an offering to be given to Church World Service designated to help feed the hungry. (ADOPTED)

In view of the previous action, the following motion was made from the floor and seconded:

That the General Synod of 1975 observe a fast during the noon meal on Friday, June 13, during which time the Synod would assemble in the cafeteria and be lead in appropriate devotions, including a two-minutes period of silence during which each member would pray for God's guidance in dealing with the problem of world hunger and for the world's starving population, and further,

That the General Synod meet its financial obligations with the college for the meal and that an offering be received from the body, each giving no less than the appropriate cost of his/her meal and that the total offering be given to Church World Service for the relief of world hunger, and that the appropriate committee of Synod inform the college of our intent and purpose.

Following an oral vote, the Chair ruled the motion had carried. A division of the house was called. The vote was 96 in favor of the motion and 122 against. The motion was ruled DEFEATED.

ARTICLE 25

Close and Adjournment

The 169th General Synod concluded its business and adjourned at 8:30 p.m. CDT, on Friday, June 13, 1975, to meet in Madison, New Jersey, with Fairleigh Dickinson University as host, between Monday, June 14, and Friday, June 18, 1976.

The minutes of the 169th Session of General Synod were read by title by the General Secretary.

Donald H. De Young, in behalf of the Reformed Church Men, presented Bert E. Van Soest, President-Elect, with a bell and gavel.

Bert E. Van Soest, President-Elect, addressed Synod briefly, and announced that the 169th session of General Synod was adjourned. General Synod adjourned at 8:30 p.m. C.D.T.

A closing communion service was held.

Raymond H. Rewerts, President
Bert E. Van Soest, Vice President
Marion de Velder, General Secretary

Temporary Clerks:

Harmen Heeg
Rodney J. Koopmans
Reinhold Krone
Simon Nagel
D. Kim Nielsen
Jon N. Norton
Robert G. Schwander
Daryl A. Vetter