

A Timeline of RCA History

(with related American and world history events)

Compiled by
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- 1563 *Church History*
Heidelberg Catechism published.
- 1566 *Church History*
Belgic Confession (Guido de Bres) and Heidelberg Catechism approved at Synod of Antwerp.
- 1568 *Church History*
Synod of Wezel - Dutch Reformed church begins to organize itself.
- 1571 *Church History*
Synod of Embden - classes and consistories defined and procedures for calling a minister.
- 1584 *RCA Event*
Johannes Michaelius born in Grootebroek, North Holland.
- 1609 *American History*
Henry Hudson explores New York area and Hudson River.
- 1614 *American History*
New Netherland Company organized.
- 1618 *Church History*
Great Synod of Dort begins.
- 1620 *American History*
Mayflower Compact and settlement of Massachusetts by Pilgrims.
- 1621 *American History*
Dutch West India Company established.
- 1624 *American History*
The colony New Netherland established as Cornelis Mey arrives with 30 families and extends from Albany, New York, to Dover, Delaware.
- 1625 *RCA Event*
First child born in New Amsterdam to Jan Joris Rapalje and his wife.
- 1626 *American History*
First slaves brought to New York City from West Indies.
- 1628 *RCA Event*
Michaelius arrives in New Amsterdam.
- 1629 *American History*
Dutch West India company starts Patroon system in New Netherland. Land given to those who could settle 50 persons in four years. Settled areas included Pavonia in New Jersey (included Staten Island), Swaanendael on the Delaware Bay, and Rensselaer on the upper Hudson River (this was successful).

- 1630 *RCA Event*
Rensselaerswyck established by Killaeen Van Rensselaer extends 24 miles on both sides of the Hudson River.
- 1633 *RCA Event*
Adam Roelantsen arrives as schoolmaster and voorzanger in New Amsterdam.
- RCA Event*
Frame church built in New Amsterdam.
- 1636 *Church History*
Rhode Island settled by Roger Williams in Providence. First colony to grant complete religious tolerance.
- 1637 *RCA Event*
First Dutch school established. Continues as Collegiate School.
- 1638 *American History*
American log cabin introduced by Swedish settlers in Delaware.
- 1643 *RCA Event*
Johannes Megapolensis of the Dutch Reformed Church begins missionary work among Native Americans in Albany, New York. The seed for the Reformed Church in America's missionary awareness was sown.
- 1644 *American History*
First Thanksgiving Day celebrated in New Netherland commemorated the safe return of Dutch soldiers from battle with Connecticut Indians near Stamford. First Thanksgiving was celebrated by Pilgrims in 1621; first national celebration was 1789 by George Washington and it became a national holiday in 1863.
- 1646 *Church History*
First heresy law enacted in Massachusetts. Death penalty for any person denying that Scriptures were the word of God.
- 1648 *World History*
Charles I is executed in Great Britain. Oliver Cromwell becomes Chairman of the Council of State and then (1653) Lord Protector.
- 1648 *Church History*
First person, Margaret Jones, executed for witchcraft in Charlestown, Massachusetts.
- 1649 *Church History*
First Toleration Act passed in Maryland assembly. Increasing Protestant immigration led to more religious disturbances. Act sought to avoid serious test of authority.
- 1652 *World History*
West Indies Company grants permission for private slave trade with Africa.
- 1664 *American History*
Dutch surrender New Netherlands to the English.

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| 1679 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| First ordination in the New World - Peter Tessenmacher at New York by Dutch clergy. | |
| 1685 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Sleepy Hollow church erected. Olded RCA church building still in use. | |
| 1706 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| DuBois' <i>Compendium on True Christian Doctrine</i> published. | |
| 1709 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Palatines begin settling along Mohawk River. | |
| 1720 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Frelinghuysen controversy with Boel begins. | |
| 1727 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Organs begin to be used in Dutch Reformed churches, but not when the Lord's Supper is being administered. | |
| 1733 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Frelinghuysen's sermons published. | |
| 1737 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| First meeting to discuss the establishment of a classis in America. | |
| 1738 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Fundamental Articles approved. | |
| 1739 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Amsterdam approves an organization but not permission to ordain ministers. | |
| 1746 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| John Henry Livingston born on May 30. | |
| 1747 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Coetus established. | |
| 1755 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Coetus organized into an independent classis. | |
| | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Conferentie organized in opposition to coetus. | |
| 1758 | <i>RCA Event</i> |
| Livingston enters Yale, age 12. | |
| 1762 | <i>World History</i> |
| Rousseau publishes his social contract. | |

- 1764 *RCA Event*
Archibald Laidlie begins English preaching in the New York church. First sermon, April 15, 1764.
- 1765 *World History*
Seven Years War in Europe ends - Britain emerges as undisputed leading colonial power.
- 1766 *RCA Event*
Queens College (now Rutgers University) chartered.
- 1771 *RCA Event*
Articles of Union for the peace of the church adopted, ending the Coetus-Conferentie dispute. First meeting of the general body (later general synod) is held.
- 1772 *RCA Event*
Adoption of Livingston's 'Plan of Union' reunited the opposing factions.
- RCA Event*
Albany classis established.
- RCA Event*
Hackensack classis established.
- RCA Event*
Kingston classis established.
- RCA Event*
New Brunswick classis established.
- RCA Event*
New York classis established.
- 1776 *American History*
Declaration of Independence.
- American History*
American revolution begins.
- 1778 *RCA Event*
Denominational program collections begin with collections for church extension approved by synod.
- 1780 *American History*
Pennsylvania becomes the first state to abolish slavery.
- Church History*
Robert Raikes opens first Sunday School in Gloucester, England.
- 1782 *RCA Event*
Martin Van Buren born. Lifelong member of Kinderhook Reformed Church.

- 1783 *American History*
Treaty of Paris signed ending the American Revolution.
- Church History*
First Protestant Episcopal bishop, Dr. Samuel Seabury, was elected at Woodbury, Connecticut.
- 1784
Methodist Church in America was organized at a conference in Baltimore, Maryland.
- RCA Event*
New Brunswick Theological Seminary established as Livingston is elected Professor of Theology.
- 1786 *RCA Event*
General body adds article on 'Extension of the Church' to regular agenda.
- 1788 *RCA Event*
Belgic Confession translated into English by RCA.
- 1789 *World History*
The French Revolution.
- American History*
Federalist Party formed, considered pro-English, they ceased to exist about 1820.
- 1790 *American History*
First U. S. Census. Population: 3, 929, 625 with 697,624 slaves and 59,557 free blacks. Most populous state was Virginia (747,610) and the largest city was Philadelphia (42, 444).
- American History*
First U.S. Copyright act was passed. Protected works for 14 years with renewal for an additional 14.
- Church History*
First Roman Catholic bishop in America was consecrated on August 15; selected by Pope Pius VI with Baltimore forming the first episcopal see.
- American History*
Dutch population in US ca. 106,750 (97,500 in NY, NJ, & PA).
- 1791 *Church History*
William Carey publishes his *Enquiry*. This is the start of the modern missionary movement.
- 1792 *American History*
Republican Party (Democratic-Republican, or Anti-federalist) formed in opposition to perceived pro-English Federalist Party. In 1832, it formally became the Democratic Party at the convention nominating Andrew Jackson to a second term and Martin Van Buren as vice-president.
- RCA Event*
RCA formally organized with Articles of Dort reaffirmed with certain "Explanatory Articles".

- 1793 *Church History*
 First Roman Catholic priest ordained in America, Father Stephen Theodore, Badin, in Baltimore.
- 1794 *Church History*
 London Missionary Society (LMS) founded in London.
- 1794 *Church History*
 First independent Methodist Church for blacks was organized in Philadelphia by Richard Allen, a former slave. He became the first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church when it was established in 1816.
- American History*
 Powdering of men's hair went out of fashion after more than 100 years. Still tied in a a queue with a black ribbon.
- RCA Event*
 First general synod held.
- 1796 *RCA Event*
 New York Missionary Society organized by Reformed, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches in NYC.
- 1797 *American History*
 Delaware becomes first state to ratify the U. S. constitution.
- 1799 *RCA Event*
 Sarah Van Doren starts first RCA sunday school at First, New Brunswick.
- RCA Event*
 Livingston preaches sermon, "The Glory of the Redeemer".
- American History*
 New York abolishes slavery.
- 1800 *American History*
 Washington becomes the capital of the United States, succeeding Philadelphia.
- Church History*
 Church of the United Brethren in Christ was organized with Philip William Otterbein and Martin Boehm as bishops.
- The career of Johnny Appleseed (John Chapman, ca. 1775-1847) began about this time. His work bore fruit over an area of nearly 100,000 square miles. He was an itinerant preacher of the Church of the New Jersualem, which grew out of the religious teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg.
- RCA Event*
 Bergen classis established.

RCA Event

Hackensack classis disbanded.

1800

RCA Event

Kingston classis disbanded.

RCA Event

Montgomery classis established.

RCA Event

Paramus classis established.

RCA Event

Particular Synod of Albany established.

RCA Event

Particular Synod of New York established.

RCA Event

Poughkeepsie classis established.

RCA Event

Rensselaer classis established.

RCA Event

Ulster classis established.

RCA Event

Church extension work begins under authority of Albany Classis.

1804

RCA Event

Livingston's missionary sermon preached.

RCA Event

Sarah de Peyster's leaves a legacy to the church. This is the first for any benevolent operation of the Reformed Church in America.

RCA Event

Livingston preaches sermon, "The Everlasting Gospel".

1806

RCA Event

The General Synod of the Reformed Church forms "The Standing Committee of Missions" which is located in Albany, New York.

1810

Church History

June 27 - American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) is founded; on Sept. 5 the Board is formed.

- 1810 *RCA Event*
J. H. Livingston moves to New Brunswick.
- 1812 *American History*
War of 1812.
- RCA Event*
Collections “enjoined” on all congregations for support of the theological school.
- 1813 *RCA Event*
Long Island classis established.
- 1814 *RCA Event*
Elias Van Bunschooten’s bequest.
- RCA Event*
Philadelphia classis established.
- 1815 *World History*
Battle of Waterloo - Napoleon is defeated. Britain becomes the uncontested European superpower.
- RCA Event*
Miss Rebecca Knox is the first woman to bequeath funds to New Brunswick Seminary, and these funds are specifically earmarked for the support of indigent students.
- 1816 *RCA Event*
The United Foreign Missionary Society formed by Presbyterian and Dutch and German Reformed churches for work among Native Americans. (Dissolved in 1826)
- 1817 *RCA Event*
United Foreign Missionary Society for work among American Indian tribes.
- 1819 *RCA Event*
Dr. John Scudder and his wife, Harriet, the first foreign missionaries of the Reformed Church, start mission in Ceylon, under the supervision of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Mrs. Scudder is the first RCA woman to go to the mission field.
- RCA Event*
General Synod incorporated.
- RCA Event*
Standing Committee on Missions transferred to New York City.
- 1820 *RCA Event*
Synod established certain Sundays for mandatory collections.
- 1822 *RCA Event*
The Missionary Society of the Reformed Dutch Church formed as an autonomous society whose Board of

Managers served as 'The Standing Committee of Missions of General Synod,' a mirror image of the model later employed to adopt the Arabian Mission.

RCA Event

True Reformed Dutch Church established as congregations succeed from the Reformed Church.

1824

Church History

American Sunday School Union established.

1825

RCA Event

Queens College name changed to Rutgers College.

1826

RCA Event

The United Foreign Missionary Society disbands, its assets are turned over to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions . The ties of the Reformed Church to the ABCFM are strengthened.

RCA Event

Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church begins publication.

RCA Event

Cayuga classis established.

RCA Event

Schenectady classis established.

RCA Event

Schoharie classis established.

RCA Event

United Foreign Missionary Society merges with American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

1828

RCA Event

John Schermerhorn appointed General Agent for Mission, the first full-time RCA staff person for mission work.

1828 *RCA Event*

Northern Board of the New York Missionary Society established.

RCA Event

Sabbath School Union of the Reformed Dutch Church formed.

RCA Event

South classis of New York established.

1829

RCA Event

David Abeel sails for China under the ABCFM.

1830

RCA Event

John F. Schermerhorn appointed Synod's General Agent.

- 1830 *RCA Event*
Christian Intelligencer begins publication as a weekly from the *Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church*.
- 1831 *RCA Event*
 General Synod of the Reformed Church appoints a 34-member “Board of Missions” to take direct control of domestic mission activities.
- RCA Event*
 Board of Domestic Missions formed from the New York Missionary Society and the Northern Board.
- 1832 *RCA Event*
 The Reformed Church forms its own 15-member Board of Foreign Missions to oversee, under overall American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions oversight, those foreign fields primarily staffed by Reformed Church missionaries - primarily the Arcot Mission in India and the Amoy Mission in China.
- 1832 *RCA Event*
 Schermerhorn resigns as Agent and A. Henry Dumont is appointed General Agent.
- RCA Event*
 A. Henry Dumont appointed Synod’s General Agent.
- RCA Event*
 Orange classis established.
- 1833 *RCA Event*
 The position of General Agent for mission is abolished by the RCA General Synod. Dumont, evidently in disgust, joins the Congregational Church.
- 1834 *RCA Event*
 Hendrick DeCock and H. B. Scholte secede from the church in the Netherlands during the “Reveil” or “Awakening”.
- RCA Event*
 Edward Tanjore Corwin born in New York City on July 12.
- RCA Event*
 Greene Classis established.
- RCA Event*
 With other New York area women, Sarah Doremus organizes the “Society for Promoting Female Education in China and the Far East,” the first Protestant woman’s foreign missionary society to support independent missionary work in foreign lands.
- 1836 *RCA Event*
 Elihu Doty travels to Borneo to establish mission.
- RCA Event*
 Scudders move to Madras, India from Ceylon.

RCA Event

Albertus Van Raalte ordained at first synod of seceding church in Netherlands.

RCA Event

Miss Azubah C. Condict becomes the first single woman to serve as an RCA missionary. She served in Borneo for three years under the ABCFM.

1839

RCA Event

Passaic classis established.

1841

RCA Event

Illinois classis established.

RCA Event

Michigan classis established.

1842

RCA Event

The RCA Synod appoints Ransford Wells Secretary of the Boards of Missions, both Foreign and Domestic. His functions are mainly those of a fund raiser.

RCA Event

David Abeel arrives in Amoy, China, and begins the Amoy Mission.

1843 *RCA Event*

Long Island classis disbanded.

RCA Event

North classis of Long Island established.

RCA Event

South classis of Long Island established.

1844

RCA Event

Ransford Wells resigns as Secretary for Mission.

1845

RCA Event

Hudson classis established.

1847

RCA Event

The Arcot Mission was formed under American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions direction but staffed entirely by Reformed Church personnel.

RCA Event

Van Raalte migrates to Michigan.

RCA Event

Mrs. Elihu Doty, wife of Rev. Elihu Doty, begins Amoy Girls' School in China.

1849

American History

Elizabeth Blackwell is first woman to receive a medical degree. She and her sister founded the New York Infirmary and College for women in 1853. That was the first hospital run entirely by women.

1850

RCA Event

Holland classis joins the Reformed Church in America as immigrants in Holland, Michigan, unite with the Synod of Albany.

RCA Event

Order of Deaconesses. A communication was received by Synod from a member of the Provincial Synod of Westphalia with papers and a formal recommendation relating to the order of Deaconesses. Synod responded, "Resolved, That while this Synod rejoices to hear of the prosperity of any of its sister Synods, at home or abroad, and of the successful prosecution by them of new forms of Christian benevolence, it does not appear to us that in the territory occupied by our denomination, there is anything to call for the revival of such an institution as is proposed by our respective brother." MGS, 1850, p. 21.

1851

RCA Event

Holland classis established.

1852

RCA Event

Geneva classis established.

1853

RCA Event

Arcot Mission in India established.

Church History

Antoinette Brown Blackwell, a graduate of Oberlin College and sister-in-law of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, becomes the first woman to be ordained a Protestant minister. She was ordained in the Congregational Church.

1854

RCA Event

The Classis of Arcot is formed in India under the Particular Synod of New York, the first and only such RCA classis outside the United States.

RCA Event

Board of Publication established.

RCA Event

Church Building Fund started to provide low interest loans to new congregations.

RCA Event

Monmouth classis established.

1855

RCA Event

Particular Synod of Chicago established.

RCA Event

Sustentation Fund for Disabled Ministers established.

RCA Event

Wisconsin classis organized.

American History

Mrs. Sara Josepha Hale launched a campaign against the use of “female” in a column in Godey’s magazine.

RCA Event

Mrs. Ann Hertzog gives \$30,000 to New Brunswick Seminary to construct Hertzog Hall. The hall serves the seminary for over 100 years.

1856

World History

The Crimean War began on Oct. 4, 1852, and ends in March 1856 with the Treaty of Paris.

1856

RCA Event

Hertzog Hall completed at New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

RCA Event

Kingston classis organized.

RCA Event

Immigrants in Pella, Iowa, unite with the RCA.

1857

RCA Event

Reformed Church re-forms its Board of Foreign Missions with 24 members and amicably separates from the ABCFM, taking full responsibility for Arcot and Amoy.

1857

RCA Event

The RCA General Synod instructs the Amoy Mission to form a Reformed Classis which conforms to the Reformed Church’s polity.

RCA Event

Christian Reformed Church begins with secession of Graafschap and Polkton.

RCA Event

Fulton Street Prayer Meeting established as Jeremiah Calvin Lanphier begins program of visitation.

RCA Event

Saratoga classis organized.

RCA Event

Washington classis disbanded.

1858

RCA Event

Michaelius letter discovered in Netherlands and he is recognized as the first Dutch domine in America.

1859

RCA Event

Brown and Verbeck sail to Japan under ABCFM.

RCA Event

Raritan classis established.

RCA Event

Mrs. Samuel R. Brown introduces manufacturing of western clothing to Japan.

1861

RCA Event

U.S. Civil War begins.

1861

RCA Event

Women's Union Missionary Society organized with Sara Doremus as a primary organizer.

1862

RCA Event

Amoy classis established.

RCA Event

Sabbath School Board dissolved and its work is undertaken by the Board of Domestic Missions and Board of Publications.

1864

RCA Event

The missionaries of the Amoy Mission defy Synod and refuse to form a Classis of Amoy, insisting that the Church in China be permitted to evolve its own polity independent of foreign structures. While General Synod did not agree, the missionaries won their case by default. The Classis of Amoy was never formed.

1865

American History

End of the American Civil War. "The period of the Civil War marked a major point of change for women in America, particularly for women in mission. It had made it inevitable that some kind of "woman movement" should ensue. The ideals and ideas of women had changed since the beginning of the nineteenth century...the abolition movement, woman's suffrage, woman's rights, woman's sphere, were burning questions of the hour, in the discussion of which the voices of women rose high above the din of masculine strife. Men and women everywhere were revising their ideas of the relation of women to the universe. The ministry of women to soldiers in the war had proved that they possessed great executive ability and an amount of energy which, once set free, could not be and ought not be suppressed. The vision of national need which they had so clearly seen in the struggle of the war, developed at its close into a wider comprehension of world demands and they were ready at the end of that decade to begin the most strategic and far-reaching enterprise in which they had ever yet engaged--the work of carrying their vision to the women and children of far Eastern lands." (Fifty Years in Foreign Fields, Mrs. W. I. Chamberlain. Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, RCA: New York, 1925. p. 8)

1866

RCA Event

Hope College chartered.

1867

RCA Event

Synod approves name change from Reformed Protestant Dutch Church to Reformed Church in America. It is legally completed in 1869.

1868

RCA Event

Synod establishes Committee on a Plan of Systematic Beneficence.

- 1869 *RCA Event*
James A. H. Cornell appointed Synod's General Agent.
- RCA Event*
Particular Synod of New Brunswick established.
- American History*
The National Women's Suffrage Association was formed with Elizabeth Cady Stanton as first president.
- American History*
Wyoming territory gives the vote to women.
- Church History*
Dr. Clara A. Swain, a Methodist medical doctor, sails for the mission field in India. She becomes the first woman medical missionary appointed to any field by any society or board.
- 1870 *RCA Event*
Grand River classis established.
- RCA Event*
Mary Kidder starts Ferris Seminary for girls at Yokohama, Japan.
- 1871 *World History*
Germany united under Kaiser Wilhelm I. Germany becomes an imperial power.
- RCA Event*
Margaret Sangster, known to readers as "Aunt Marjorie," begins a literary career as an author primarily of children's literature, poet, and journalist. She publishes for RCA publications such as the *Christian Intelligencer*, the *Sunday-School Times*, and the *Mission Gleaner* as well as secular publications including *Harper's Bazaar* and *Hearth and Home*. As an active member of the WBFM, she edits a *Manual of Missions*, published in 1877.
- 1872 *RCA Event*
Newark classis established.
- 1873 *RCA Event*
South classis of Bergen established.
- 1874 *RCA Event*
Women's Status in RCA Constitution. In article 30, sec. 3, it indicates that Elders and Deacons shall be chosen from the male members of the church. This specifically identifies male over against the Articles of Dort, 1619:22 & 24 and the 1792 Explanatory Articles, 1792:26. Article 31 indicates that the elders and deacons shall be chosen by the male communicants. This was consistent with the Constitution of 1833. The Explanatory Articles did not specify sex in regard to voting. Demarest notes that "only men are eligible for office and that the question has sometimes been raised whether women also might not be made eligible for these offices, a proposal never commanding much discussion or eliciting much support. In one or more of our foreign mission fields a woman has become an elder; but it has been in the church organization of

that land, in a church other than our own, such elder continuing, however, a missionary of our own home church.” (Notes on the Constitution, 1950, p. 73) It wasn’t until the extensive revision of the constitution started in 1957 that women were permitted to elect consistories. This led to the replacement of male members with communicant members for selection of consistory members.

1875

RCA Event

Woman’s Board of Foreign Missions established. Developed to aid the Synod’s board by promoting its work among women and children of non-Christian nations. Promotion was primarily through women’s groups. Auxiliary societies were organized in congregations among women and Mission bands among children. Their support was primarily for female missionaries, girls schools, and seminaries.

1876

RCA Event

South classis of New York disbanded.

1878

American History

Women’s suffrage amendment introduced to Congress. It was defeated, but was introduced every year thereafter.

1881

RCA Event

The Sower and Mission Monthly published.

1882

World History

First Jewish ‘Aliyah’ from Europe to Palestine. This is made up primarily of eastern European Jews from provinces that were now breaking away from the Ottoman Empire. Legally, therefore, they were citizens moving to a new location.

RCA Event

Northwestern Classical Academy established.

RCA Event

Women’s executive committee of the Board of Domestic Missions established. Classical committees were formed to establish local missionary societies. The main goal was to assist congregations in repairing churches and building parsonages. Gradually, they began to support field workers, particularly student missionaries during summer vacations, and the work of the mission in Oklahoma. The women’s board also began work among the people in Kentucky.

RCA Event

Secession of western churches over controversy with Freemasonry.

RCA Event

Frances Phelps (Otte) and Gertrude Alcott (Whitnack) become the first women to graduate from Hope College.

1883

RCA Event

Henry Nitchie Cobb appointed Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America.

RCA Event

First RCA Young People’s Society for Christian Endeavor organized in Belleville, NJ, by Rev. Brokaw.

RCA Event

The Mission Gleaner, a periodical of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions is established to "keep the women of the Church at home informed of the progress of the work on the field." It not only educates its readers, but inspires them to increased involvement and greater financial support of the mission movement.

1884

RCA Event

Prof. J. G. Lansing appointed professor of Old Testament at New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

RCA Event

Western Theological Seminary established.

American History

Mrs. Belva A. Lockwood is the first woman to run for president for the National Equal Rights Party. She was the first woman admitted to practice before the Supreme Court and was renominated in 1888.

1885

RCA Event

Iowa classis established.

1886

Church History

John R. Mott organizes the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions.

1887

RCA Event

Geneva classis disbanded.

1887 *RCA Event*

Rochester classis established.

1888

RCA Event

John Lansing, Philip Phelps, James Cantine and Samuel Zwemer organize the fellowship of 'The Wheel' to develop a mission plan for Arabia.

RCA Event

Committee on Systematic Beneficence appointed by synod.

RCA Event

Dakota classis established.

1889

RCA Event

May 23: Arabian Mission plan presented to RCA - declined.

Aug 28: Arabian Mission undenominational 'Syndicate Plan' launched and a 'Committee of Advice' chosen.

Oct. 1: Cantine sails for Beirut.

RCA Event

Cantine travels to the Arabian Gulf.

RCA Event

Cayuga classis disbanded.

- 1890 *RCA Event*
Zwemer travels to the Arabian Gulf.
- American History*
Wyoming admitted as a state. First state to allow women to vote.
- 1891 *RCA Event*
Jan. 31: Formal incorporation of the Arabian Mission in Newark, New Jersey. Mr. Thomas Russell elected president.
- 1892 *RCA Event*
Pleasant Prairie classis established.
- 1893 *RCA Event*
Mrs. John Bussing, president of the Women's Executive Committee of the Board of Domestic Missions, secures the services of Frank Hall Wright, who in 1895 begins missionary service to Native Americans.
- 1894 *World History*
The 'Dreyfus Affair' in France stimulates Theodore Herzl to write *Der Judenstaat*.
- RCA Event*
The Arabian Mission brought under the oversight of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church. Frank Scudder steps down. Henry N. Cobb, Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church, takes over as corresponding secretary but the Arabian Mission Syndicate structure continues parallel to that of the Board of Foreign Missions.
- 1895 *RCA Event*
Frank hall Wright begins mission to Native Americans.
- 1896 *RCA Event*
Mission Gleaner established. Day Star established. The Mission Gleaner was a periodical focusing on foreign missions, especially the work of the Woman's Board. The Day Star was a missionary paper designed for Sunday Schools.
- 1897 *World History*
Aug. 27 - Herzl convenes the first Zionist Congress - the inauguration of Political Zionism
- RCA Event*
Women's Board of Domestic Missions established.
- 1898 *American History*
Spanish-American War.
- 1900 *RCA Event*
RCA begins work in Jackson County, Kentucky.
- RCA Event*
Ida Scudder begins medical work in India.

RCA Event

National Women's Suffrage. The association requested Synod to petition Congress to amend the Constitution in favor of female suffrage. Synod recommended no action since it would likely open the way to similar requests and Synod has no right to bind the churches in such matters. (MGS, 1900, p. 777)

1902

RCA Event

Arcot classis disbanded.

1903

RCA Event

Geronimo baptized in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He was later expelled for gambling.

1904

World History

The second Jewish 'Aliyah' begins. This movement is driven by the evolving ideology of Political Zionism. Apprehensions begin to rise in the Palesitnian community.

RCA Event

Pella classis established.

1905

American History

Henry Ford fosters the publication of the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' which stimulates political Zionism to greater efforts.

World History

Kurds, in alliance with the Turks, carry out the Armenian massacres. International indignation runs high.

RCA Event

Publication of *The Leader* begins in Holland, Michigan.

1906

RCA Event

Corwin's *Digest of Synodical Legislation* published.

1907

RCA Event

Work among the Mescalero Apaches begun by the Women's Board.

1908

World History

May 26: George Reynolds makes the first strike of oil in the Middle East at Masjid-i-Sulaiman in Ahwaz, Iran.

RCA Event

RCA begins Italian domestic mission work.

1909

RCA Event

RCA begins work in Annville, Kentucky.

1910

Church History

World Missionary Conference under the leadership of John R. Mott in Edinburgh organizes the International Missionary Council.

1910

RCA Event

Henry N. Cobb retires as Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church, and is succeeded by William I. Chamberlain, a child of the Arcot Mission who had served in India himself from 1887 to 1905. He too was a man of considerable experience and profound learning.

1910 *Church History*

Edinburgh World Missionary Conference.

1911

RCA Event

Dooley begins work in Brewton, Alabama.

1912

Church History

Samuel Zwemer founds the journal, *The Moslem World*, published under the auspices of the Nile Mission Press and advertised as 'the one magazine that will tell you all you want to know about Islam and the progress of Christianity's war upon it.'

World History

Oct: Balkan states declare war on the Ottoman Empire.

1914

World History

World War I begins

RCA Event

First missionary sent to work among Jicarillo Apaches at Dulce, NM.

1915

RCA Event

Ladies Day began at General Synod meetings. This lasted through 1925 when it was changed to Women's Day. In 1931, Ladies Day was again used and in 1939, it was voted that all women attending synod should be the Women's Assembly of the RCA.

1916

RCA Event

Central College received into RCA from Baptists.

RCA Event

Rev. Anne Allebach, an ordained Mennonite minister, begins a two year ministry serving as pastor of the Sunnyside Reformed Church in Queens, New York City. She is the first woman to serve as pastor of an RCA congregation.

1917

World History

Nov. 2 - British government issues the 'Balfour Declaration' in which it 'views with favor' the establishment in Palestine of a 'Homeland for the Jewish People.'

World History

Communist revolution in Russia.

American History

First woman in the House of Representatives, Rep. Jeannette Rankin, was seated.

1918

World History

Nov. 11: Germany signs the Armistice ending World War I.

RCA Event

Denominational Program established, later becomes Progress Campaign.

RCA Event

Ida Scudder opens Vellore Medical School for Women in India.

The Particular Synod of Albany and the Classis of Montgomery submit the first overture to General Synod requesting deletion of the word “male” from Article IV, Section 42 of the constitution. The review committee of synod recommends that “the overture not be entertained, believing that the submission of the proposed amendment to the Classes will work injury through friction and division out of all proportion to any possible good that might accrue to any portion of our church.” (MGS, 1918, p. 478)

1919

World History

Jan. 18: The Paris Peace Conference convenes. The settlement of the ‘Eastern Question’ - the partition of the Ottoman Empire’s Arab provinces - to be investigated by an inter-allied Commission to Syria. Zionist memorandum to the Versailles Peace Conference defines territorial desires which continue to represent the aspirations of the Israeli political institution.

RCA Event

Progress Campaign challenges church with \$5,500,000 goal.

RCA Event

Relationships begin with Southern Normal School in Brewton, Alabama.

1920

World History

Dec.: James & Elizabeth Cantine move to Baghdad preparatory to the formation of the United Mission in Mesopotamia (later the United Mission in Iraq). This followed hard upon the withdrawal of the CMS from Baghdad. Baghdad, for a while, functions as another station of the Arabian Mission before the establishment of the UMM.

RCA Event

Particular Synod of Iowa established.

World History

League of Nations established.

1922

RCA Event

Christian Intelligencer merges with The Mission Field.

1922

American History

First woman is appointed to the United States Senate. Mrs. W. H. Felton was appointed by Gov. Thomas W. Hardwick of Georgia.

American History

Nineteenth amendment providing for women’s suffrage is pronounced constitutional by the Supreme Court..

1923

RCA Event

William I. Chamberlain appointed President of the Alliance of Reformed Churches. During the year of his service there he was replaced as Secretary of the Board of World Missions by A. Livingstone Warnshuis, a man with extensive experience in China and strong ecumenical commitments.

RCA Event

Minister's Fund established.

1924

RCA Event

Spring: The United Mission in Mesopotamia (UMM) is established by the Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church in the U.S., and the Reformed Church in America. Its field organization is also completed.

RCA Event

Committee on the Revision of the Constitution reports that there is nothing to prevent the use of "deaconess" for such an office, however, no ordination should be attached to the office.

1925

RCA Event

Chiapas Mission started by John and Mabel Kempers.

American History

First woman governor in the U. S., Mrs. William B. Ross, was inaugurated..

1929

World History

Oct. 29: New York stock market crash sends the United States and the world into an economic depression - the Great Depression.

RCA Event

Jan. 21: Henry A. Bilkert, traveling to Kuwait with Mr. Charles R. Crane, is shot in the head by Wahhb raiders in the open desert. In later years it was understood that the incident was not entirely accidental.

1930

RCA Event

Synod approves "A Suggested Service for the Recognition of Deaconesses and Religious Workers and Their Induction into Service."

1932

Church History

Near East Christian Council (NECC), coordinating the activities of mission organizations in the Middle East is formed. The Arabian Mission participates.

RCA Event

Sue Wedell, secretary for missionary education, is first woman to address Synod on the issue of missionary education for young people.

1933

American History

Franklin D. Roosevelt appoints first woman, Frances Perkins, to a cabinet post as the Secretary of Labor.

1934

RCA Event

Robert P. Chaat ordained as first Native American RCA minister.

- 1935** *RCA Event*
 William I. Chamberlain retires as Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions. He is succeeded by a layman, F. M. "Duke" Potter, who had already been serving as Associate Secretary since 1918.
- RCA Event*
 Board of Education consolidates work of other Boards.
- RCA Event*
Christian Intelligencer merges with *The Leader* to become the Intelligencer Leader.
- 1936** *World History*
 April - Arab Rebellion breaks out in Palestine against the British Mandate.
- 1938** *RCA Event*
 Frances Beardslee is elected the first woman member of the Hope College Board of Trustees. She is elected to a six year term representing one of nine General Synod representatives serving as at-large members.
- 1939** *World History*
 Sept. 1 - Nazi Germany invades Poland. World War II begins.
- World History*
 World War II begins.
- 1941** *American History*
 Dec. 7: Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. United States enters World War II.
- 1942** *Church History*
 The Orthodox Youth Movement (Syndesmos) is founded. It emerges from the War years as a haven for renewal and Christian unity within the Greek Orthodox Church in the Middle East.
- 1943** *RCA Event*
 Rev. Clark Poling perishes on troopship S. S. Dorchester with other clergy.
- RCA Event*
 Ruth Ransom becomes the first woman to serve as an executive of an official Reformed Church board. She serves as program secretary to the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, 1943-1946, and to the Board of Foreign Missions, 1946-1960.
- 1944** *RCA Event*
 Department of Evangelism established by the Board of Domestic Missions.
- 1945** *World History*
 Oct. 31 - Zionist violence on large scale begins in Palestine.
- RCA Event*
 United Synod Advance established.
- World History*
 United Nations established.

1946

World History

April - The League of Nations is formally dissolved and the United Nations is inaugurated.

RCA Event

The Women's Board of Foreign Missions is dissolved. Ruth Ranson, its executive secretary, becomes personnel secretary under 'Duke' Potter for the Board of Foreign Missions.

RCA Event

Woman's Board of Foreign Missions merges into Board of Foreign Missions.

RCA Event

Synod begins United Advance with goal of \$2,500,000.

1947

World History

Nov. 29 - United Nations General Assembly recommends the partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish states with Jerusalem as a corpus separatum to be administered by the Trusteeship Council on behalf of the United Nations. The Security Council was charged with implementing the recommendation. Large scale civil disturbances erupt in Palestine.

1947

Church History

The Church of South India is formed.

Church History

The Dead Sea Scrolls are discovered at Wadi Qumran.

1948

Church History

The first General Assembly of the World Council of Churches is held in Amsterdam.

World History

March - Czechoslovakia ships arms to Zionists. Zionists take the offensive in Palestine.

April 9 - Massacre at Deir Yasn by the Irgun leads to Arab panic.

May 14 - British Mandate for Palestine ends; Ben Gurion announces the establishment of the State of Israel; United States recognizes the new State of Israel.

May 15 - Arab League armies enter Palestine. The civil war in Palestine becomes an international conflict.

May 17 - Soviet Union recognizes Israel.

Sept. 17 - Count Folke Bernadotte, the UN Mediator in Palestine, was assassinated by the Stern Gang under Menachim Begin. Dr. Ralph Bunche appointed acting mediator.

RCA Event

Swart's begin work in Africa and the Upper Nile mission begins.

RCA Event

World Council of Churches established.

1949

World History

Jan. 13 - Arab-Israeli Armistice talks begin with the convening of Israeli and Egyptian delegations.

RCA Event

RCA begins ministry to Dutch immigrants in Canada.

RCA Event

Stewardship Council established.

1950

World History

United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) begins relief and resettlement efforts among Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Gaza.

1951

RCA Event

Women's Executive Committee merges with Board of Domestic Missions.

1952

RCA Event

H. M. "Duke" Potter dies in office. He is succeeded by two people. (1) Henry G. "Heine" Bovenkerk was appointed Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Foreign Missions. His experience had been as a missionary in Japan from 1930 to 1952. During the years of World War II he was much involved in relief work for Japanese Americans in the United States, and was instrumental in re-establishing mission involvement in Japan on an ecumenical footing after the War. (2) Bernard M. "Barny" Luben, who had already been serving since 1941 as a Field Secretary for the Board. He was now appointed Executive Secretary of the Board. His background was service as a missionary in Japan from 1929 to 1941, a field for which he continued to carry responsibility as Field Secretary from 1941 to 1952.

RCA Event

Norman Vincent Peale publishes *The Power of Positive Thinking*.

RCA Event

The Department of Women's Work is created.

Church History

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible is published.

RCA Event

The New Brunswick Seminary Women's Auxilliary is founded.

1954

Church History

Second General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, Illinois.

RCA Event

Board of Pensions established from the Minister's Fund.

1955

RCA Event

Florida churches established.

RCA Event

Robert A. Schuller preaches first sermon at Orange Drive-in Theater, March 27, 1955.

1955

Church History

Ordination of women ministers is approved by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church.

RCA Event

In 1955 the Synod voted that “the President appoint a committee to study the whole matter of ordaining women as elders and pastors and report back to the 1956 General Synod.” (MGS, 1955, p.314)

1956

RCA Event

July: R. Park Johnson, a Presbyterian, appointed Field Representative in the Near East for the Reformed Church in America. A period of strong field leadership ensues.

World History

Oct. 30 - Israel, Britain and France attack Egypt along the Suez Canal.

Nov. 2 - The UN led by the United States under President Eisenhower demands ceasefire and withdrawal. There's a brief warming in Arab-American relations.

RCA Event

Southeast Asia mission work begins.

RCA Event

President of synod suggests a national assembly of women of the church so that all congregations can have well organized women's programs.

1957

RCA Event

Extension Foundation established by synod for making loans to congregations.

RCA Event

Synod adopts “Credo on Race Relations.”

World History

Sputnik I is launched by Soviet Union launching American initiatives in technology and science education. Eisenhower Doctrine aims to resist communist aggression in the Middle East.

RCA Event

First national gathering of RCA women is held.

RCA Event

Anita Welwood becomes the first director of the National Department of Women's Work, which is formally established in 1960.

1957

RCA Event

Four essays on women's ordination were presented to the 1957 General Synod that were then sent to churches and classes for study, review, and criticism.

1959

RCA Event

Don MacNeil teaches Yassir Arafat and other Palestinians English at the American Mission.

RCA Event

Miss Caroline Adriance is the first single woman to serve directly under the RCA's Board of Foreign Missions. She served in China, 1859-1864.

1960

RCA Event

Ruth Ransom retires from the Board of World Mission. She is succeeded by Ruth E. Joldersma.

Dec.: "Heine" Bovenkerk resigns from the Board of Foreign Missions. Robert Harrison becomes Treasurer.

RCA Event

National Department of Women's Work is formally established as a means to promote the mission program of the General Synod and to unite all RCA women in Christian fellowship. Guilds for Christian Service become the inheritors of women's auxiliaries, ladies aid societies, and ladies missionary societies. 1958 was a year of education and 1959 was a year of preparation and promotion with formal organization on January 1, 1960.

RCA Event

Board of Domestic Missions becomes Board of North American Missions.

American History

Payola scandal in radio broadcasting and TV quiz show scandal with Charles Van Doren.

Church History

Marital sex relations without procreative intentions were declared not sinful by leaders of the 100th General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church.

1961

RCA Event

March: "Barney" Luben resigns from the Board of World Mission. John Buteyn, with previous experience within the U.S. on the Board and as Field Secretary (1956-1961), becomes staff coordinator and secretary for the Middle East.

1961

Church History

Dec.: Third General Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in New Delhi, India; the International Missionary Council joins the WCC; the Orthodox churches join the WCC.

RCA Event

General Synod Executive Committee established.

RCA Event

Synod adopts "Covenant on Open Occupancy."

1962

World History

Yassir Arafat secretly organizes 'Fatah' in Kuwait while working as an electrician for Kuwait's Ministry of Public Works.

Church History

The Near East Christian Council gives way to the formation of the Near East Council of Churches in which the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch participates. The Ecumenical Office for Youth and Students in

the Middle East is organized by Gabriel Habib in association with the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the heir to the Student Volunteer Movement of the late 1800s.

Church History

Oct.: The Second Vatican Council begins, opening the door for wider Catholic participation in the Ecumenical Movement.

RCA Event

First Women's Triennial is held in Holland, Michigan and is attended by 1500 women.

RCA Event

Elaine Lubbers becomes the first full-time woman professor at Western Seminary.

1964

RCA Event

April: Edwin M. Luidens accepts the position of the Executive Secretary for the Board of World Mission until the dissolution of the Board in 1968.

World History

Jan.: Palestine Liberation Organization organized by the Arab League. The PLO's first meeting, chaired by Ahmad Shuqayri, was held in Jerusalem under King Hussein's patronage.

1965

RCA Event

The second Women's Triennial is held at Chicago, Illinois.

1966

RCA Event

Commission on History and Research becomes Commission on History.

1967

World History

June 5-10 - Arab-Israeli war. Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and Gaza are conquered by Israel. 1,026,000 Palestinians fall under Israeli control along with 39,000 other Arabs. Of the 150,000 Palestinians who fled to the East Bank, only 20,000 were allowed to return.

Nov. - The UN General Assembly passes Resolution 242 for the purpose of establishing 'a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.'

Church History

Heads of the Oriental Orthodox churches in Addis Ababa prepares the way for the emergence of the Middle East Council of Churches in 1974.

RCA Event

Sept. 13: Maurice Heusinkveld assassinated in Matrah, Oman.

RCA Event

General Program Council established with the merger of the Boards of Domestic Missions, Foreign Missions, and Education. John Buteyn continues as Secretary for World Ministries.

RCA Event

La Catedral Evangelica Reformada in Newark becomes RCA's first Hispanic congregation.

1968

World History

Yassir Arafat becomes chairman of the PLO.

Church History

Fourth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Upsala, Sweden.

RCA Event

Book of Church Order approved with separate set of bylaws for General Synod. Structured into Government, Disciplinary Procedures, and Formularies.

RCA Event

The third Women's Triennial is held at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

1969

RCA Event

Black Council established.

1969

RCA Event

A groundswell of frustration erupts when women who are carrying signs advocating women's ordination unexpectedly march down the center aisle of General Synod meetings at Douglass College in New Brunswick, giving visibility to the issue and a new sense of seriousness about women's ordination.

1970

RCA Event

Festival on Evangelism, Detroit, Michigan.

1970

Three RCA congregations elect women as elders and deacons. General Synod finds no Biblical cause for not doing so, but it stands in violation of the Book of Church Order.

1971

RCA Event

The fourth Women's Triennial is held in Cleveland, Ohio.

1972

RCA Event

American Indian Council established.

RCA Event

Festival of Mission, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

RCA Event

Women ordained as elders and deacons.

1973

World History

Oct. 6 - Egypt and Syria launch surprise attack on Israeli forces. The Yom Kippur War lasted three weeks.

RCA Event

Family Festival, Estes Park, Colorado.

RCA Event

Reformed Church Women renamed from National Department of Women's Work. The purpose of RCW states, "To glorify God, we as Reformed Church Women united in devoting ourselves to Jesus Christ,

discipling one another in love, developing a responsibility for mission through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.”

RCA Event

Joyce Stedje is ordained by the Classis of Mid-Hudson and becomes the first RCA woman ordained to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament. She is installed as pastor of the Rochester Reformed Church in Accord, New York

1974

Church History

May: The Middle East Council of Churches is formed in Nicosia, Cyprus. Beyond the Protestant members of the old NECC, it includes all Orthodox branches plus non-Arab communions - the Armenian Orthodox, the Church of Cyprus, and the Anglican and Evangelical churches of Iran. The member churches are organized by confessional families.

RCA Event

Hispanic Council established.

RCA Event

The fifth Women's Triennial is held at Long Branch, California.

RCA Event

Christian Action Commission presents paper on "Feminism and the Church."

1975

RCA Event

Synod received special report on "The Committee on Sexist Bias in the RCA Liturgy."

1976

RCA Event

Jubilee, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania.

Church History

The Episcopal Church approves the ordination of women.

RCA Event

Theological Commission presents paper on "Maleness and Femaleness."

1977

RCA Event

Marion DeVelder retires as General Secretary of the Reformed Church and is succeeded by Arie Brouwer. John 'Jack' Walchenback takes over from Brouwer as Executive Secretary for Program of the GPC.

RCA Event

The fifth Women's Triennial is held at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

1978

World History

Camp David Peace accord signed by Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin.

RCA Event

A scholarship fund for women studying for ministry at an RCA seminary is established and named the Beth E. Marcus Scholarship Fund.

1978

RCA Event

General Synod established a permanent committee on women with the purpose of ministering to the needs of women in Christian ministry.

RCA Event

“All God’s Children: Women and Men Discovering Christian Community” was a program designed for congregations to develop awareness of female/male roles.

RCA Event

Synod of Albany overtures to declare that the BCO does not prohibit the ordination of women and to recognize these ministries. Since a similar overture was received in 1977, it was repeated that this is a judicial matter which can only be resolved through the judicial process. No action.

RCA Event

Christian Action Commission presents report “Sexism and Pornography.”

RCA Event

Synod instructed the GSEC to hold a meeting of women who have received their theological education to affirm them in their ministry and offer support, encouragement and counsel. The meeting was held on Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1978.

1979

World History

Saddam Hussein establishes himself as sole authority in Iraq and is declared President.

World History

Feb.1 - The Ayatolla Khomeni lands in Tehran. Iran becomes an ‘Islamic Republic’. The Pahlavi dynasty is ended.

Nov.: American Embassy personnel in Iran held hostage.

RCA Event

The General Synod votes and approves the ordination of women to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.

RCA Event

Joyce Borgman de Velder becomes the first woman to receive the degree of Master of Divinity from Western Seminary.

RCA Event

The 1975 Synod mandated the work of the Task Force on Women, which presented its final report to the 1979 synod. The task force explored the extent in which women are involved in program and policymaking decisions. A chart indicating percentages by Particular Synod of women on consistories is included in the report. The task force also helped establish a talent file in the Office of Human Resources and requested the establishment of a permanent Commission on Women.

1980

RCA Event

Warren Henseler appointed as Middle East secretary for GPC/DWM. John Buteyn continues as overall secretary for World Ministries.

RCA Event

General Program Council restructured.

RCA Event

Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries established.

RCA Event

Peace in Diversity proposed amendments to the BCO relating to matters of conscience in regard to the ordination of women. Individuals are free to not participate, but not to obstruct the ordination process. The advisory committee prepared a letter to be circulated to all congregations relating to our desire to maintain peace in diversity concerning women as church officers.

1982

World History

June 6 - Israel launches its invasion of Lebanon. The 'Intifada' (uprising) begins among Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

RCA Event

John Buteyn retires from the staff of the General Program Council. He is succeeded by Eugene Heideman as secretary for World Ministries.

RCA Event

Women in Ministry Conference, "Roads Less Traveled II", held in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

1984

RCA Event

Women in Ministry Conference held in Warwick, New York.

1985

RCA Event

Women in Ministry Gathering held at Camp Geneva in Holland, Michigan.

RCA Event

Designate April 28, 1985, as Women's Sunday in order to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the organization of RCW.

1988

RCA Event

Bernita Babb is ordained by the Classis of Rockland-Westchester. She is the first African-American woman ordained in the RCA.

1988

RCA Event

Wilbur Washington is elected the first African-American president of the General Synod.

RCA Event

Synod president recommends to instruct the Commission on Women to disseminate the stories of women in ministry throughout the church so that the history of women in the denomination may be known, understood, and appreciated fully.

1989

RCA Event

Resolution to support and endorse the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women.

1990

Church History

The Catholic churches of the Middle East join the Middle East Council of Churches as full members.

RCA Event

Gleanings, a publication of the Commission on Women, begins publication.

1991

RCA Event

For the first time, women are invited to participate in leading worship, devotions, and prayers at General Synod. Request synod incorporate in worship a celebration at the 1992 meeting of the 20th anniversary of the opening of the offices of elder and deacon to women; designate the first Sunday of November as "Celebration of Women in Ministry Sunday" and urge congregations to observe it; and commend the president of the 185th synod for celebrating the position of women in ministry by inviting women to lead in worship, devotions, and prayers at the 1991 meeting.

World History

United Nations document "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" printed in abbreviated form. Also known as "Women's Convention." Document endorsed and general secretary to communicate this to UN and Senate Foreign Affairs Committee.

RCA Event

Theological Commission presents paper on "The Role and Authority of Women in Ministry."

1992

RCA Event

July - Warren Henseler retires as Middle East/Africa secretary. Eugene Heideman assumes responsibilities for the Middle East.

RCA Event

Beth Marcus is elected the first woman president of General Synod.

1992

RCA Event

Churches urged to encourage and enable women to participate in "Celebration of Women in Ministry Sunday" on Nov. 1, 1992, or another appropriate Sunday.

1993

RCA Event

July - RCA reorganizes the structure of its denominational agencies. World Mission Services, under Richard Vande Voet financially cut loose from other agencies. 'Faith Mission' model adopted.

World History

Sept. 13: In Washington D.C. Ysir 'Arafat and Yitsak Rabin sign mutual agreement leading toward Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho.

1998

Carol Bechtel is the first woman General Synod Professor of Theology.

2002

RCA Event

John Chang is elected the first Asian president of General Synod.