

**Synod Council  
Reformed Church in America  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, New York 10115**

**Minutes**

**Time and Place** The spring meeting of the General Synod Council (GSC) of the Reformed Church in America was held at Calvin College Prince Conference Center, 1800 East Beltline SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan, beginning at 1:09 p.m. on Tuesday, March 20, 2007. Moderator, Steven Vander Molen presided at the meeting.

**Devotions** The moderator opened the meeting with scripture and prayer.

**Members Present** The following members of the General Synod Council were present:

Greg Alderman	Bradley G. Lewis
Mary Bechler	Richard Morano
Glen Blumer	Lizbeth Moss
Mary Bryant	P.J. Mouquin
Thomas Daubenspeck	Sebastian Ong
Thomas De Vries	John Ornee
Norman Donkersloot	Donald Poest
Anna Gonzales	Karyn Ratcliffe
Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, <i>ex-officio</i>	Ronald Vande Bunte
Carolyn Holloway	Steven Vander Molen
Elisabeth Kersten	William Vermilyea
Marilyn Koops	

**Members Absent** The following members of the General Synod Council were unable to attend the meeting:

Ted Dykstra	Pacia Vamvas
Irving Rivera	Ruth Webb

**Cluster Facilitators, Recorder, Communication Observers and Regional Synod Staff Observer** The following persons were present for all or part of the meeting:

Paul Boice, <i>RCA Communications</i>	Bruce Menning, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>
Kenneth Bradsell, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>	Luis Perez, <i>PACT Observer</i>
Susan Converse, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>	Mornier Rich, <i>Recorder</i>
Jeffrey Japinga, <i>Executive Coordinator</i>	Richard Welscott, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>

<b>Guests</b>	Tammy Schollaart, <i>Homosexuality Dialogue Steering Committee</i>	John Stapert, <i>Homosexuality Dialogue Steering Committee</i>
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## Opening

**Call to Order** The moderator called to order the GSC meeting on Tuesday, March 20th at 1:09 pm.

**Review of the Agenda and Schedule** Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-1** VOTED: To approve the agenda and schedule

**Approval of the Minutes** Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-2** VOTED: To approve the October 14-16, 2007 General Synod Council minutes as distributed.

## Executive Limitations Monitoring Reports

**Executive Limitations Monitoring Reports** The following Executive Limitations Monitoring Reports from the General Secretary were received and reviewed by the GSC:

- EL-1 Global Executive Constraint
- EL-3 Financial Planning/Budgeting
- EL-4 Financial Condition and Activities
- EL-5 Emergency CEO Succession
- EL-6 Asset Protection
- EL-9 Ends Focus of Grants or Contracts
- EL-10 Maintenance of Confidentiality

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-3** VOTED: To approve the General Secretary's interpretation and actions as recorded in the reports.

## Strategic Planning

**Ends Policy Monitoring Reports** The GSC reviewed the Ends Policy Monitoring Reports from the General Secretary and discussed the following Ends Policies in detail:

E-2 Church Multiplication Policy. The GSC made the following requests of the General Secretary for future reporting: (a) show original numbers and then show forecasted numbers; (b) include number of people in congregations; (c) show how many church plans become organized congregations; (d) after forecasted numbers, show what the per member assessments would look like; and (e) show the number of RCA churches that are planting churches.

E-5 Leadership Policy. The GSC requested for future reporting that the pastors not under Lilly coached revitalizing networks be included in the Data section of this monitoring report.

E-6 Mission Policy. The GSC made the following requests of the General Secretary: (a) include stories of short mission trips and how people are transformed and (b) explore a methodology to demonstrate progress and state how it will be measured (e.g. growth in PIM shares).

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-4** VOTED: To approve the General Secretary's interpretation and data as recorded in the Ends Policy Monitoring Reports.

**Missional Structures Task Force** The report was reviewed and GSC members made several suggestions to improve it. A revised and edited report will be circulated for approval by the task force prior to being forwarded to General Synod.

### **GSC Governance Process**

**Investment Advisory Committee Minutes**

The GSC reviewed the report of the Investment Advisory Committee.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-5** VOTED: To continue to use Legg Mason as the investment manager for the RCA Investment Program and that it cease looking for a replacement.

**Audit Subcommittee Minutes**

The GSC reviewed the report of the Audit Subcommittee.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-6** VOTED: To receive the final financial statements for the Building and Extension Fund.

The committee reported its concern about staff's ability to process and report upon the financial activities of the Reformed Church in America and its affiliates in a timely and accurate manner, maintain adequate information systems, and process necessary administrative functions in an efficient manner. It noted that this is a critical support function and a key component of the effective management of RCA programs and their ability to function and meet the goals of its 10-year plan. The committee is concerned that the limitations on resources, both financial and human, as evidenced by recurring management letter comments and the observations of informed individuals, creates a condition of risk that the RCA may not be able to adequately maintain and/or grow orderly and effective finance, information technology and administrative functions in the near future.

The GSC instructed the moderator to draft an executive limitations policy (policies) and report back to the GSC at its June 2007 meeting.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-7** VOTED: That a sufficient review of available and additional resources be carried out at the direction of the General Secretary, and be completed in a timely manner to adequately address this risk.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-8** VOTED: To receive the final financial statements for the General Synod Council, RCA Fund, RCA Investment Program and Board of Benefits Services.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-9** VOTED: To not approve the committee's proposal to require the preparation of financial statements that reflects the consolidated/combined net assets and related activities of the parent, controlling/legal RCA entity.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-10** VOTED: To receive the final version of the management letters.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-11** VOTED: To instruct the General Secretary to initiate the process of selecting new auditors and report to the GSC at its October 2007 meeting.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-12** VOTED: To instruct the General Secretary to direct the treasurer and controller to invite the audit subcommittee members, auditors and appropriate staff to a conference to review the next year's audit planning process prior to the start of the audit.

**Transfer the  
RCA Historical  
Series Revolving  
Fund to Reformed  
Church Press**

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-13** VOTED: To transfer the full balance in the RCA Historical Series Revolving Fund as of March 31, 2007, from the General Synod Council to Reformed Church Press.

**General Synod  
2007 Planning Team** The GSC reviewed the report, plans, and schedule for the 2007 meeting of the General Synod.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-14** VOTED: To approve the plan of meeting and the proposed schedule for the 2007 meeting of the General Synod.

**Racial Ethnic Council Reports** The reports were reviewed and will be incorporated into the report of the General Synod Council to General Synod.

**Executive Session** The GSC went into Executive Session.

**Election of Moderator** The GSC received a report from its nominations committee. Bradley Lewis and Thomas De Vries names were placed in nomination by the committee. Carolyn Holloway was nominated from the floor. By confidential written ballot, the GSC:

**GSC 07-15** VOTED: To elect Dr. Bradley Lewis to serve as GSC moderator for the term July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008.

### **GSC Management Delegation**

The GSC reviewed the following Management Delegation Policies:

- MD-1 Global Governance-Management Delegation
- MD-2 Unity of Control
- MD-3 Accountability of the General Secretary
- MD-4 Delegation to the General Secretary
- MD-5 Monitoring General Secretary Performance

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC

**GSC 07-16** VOTED: To appoint the General Synod officers (President, Past President, Vice President and Moderator of the GSC) to the Performance Review Committee to evaluate the performance of the General Secretary.

**Review of Policies and Adherence** Following extensive discussion of the wording of Executive Limitation Policy EL-5 Emergency CEO Succession, and upon recommendation of a writing team (Richard Morano, Karyn Ratcliffe and Ronald Vande Bunte) the GSC:

**GSC 07-17** VOTED: To make the following revisions to EL-5 Emergency CEO Succession as follows (deletions are stricken; additions are underlined):

In order to protect the board from sudden loss of General Secretary services, the General Secretary will ~~have no fewer than two other executives sufficiently~~ not fail to maintain a confidential plan of succession whereby an individual familiar with GSC and General Secretary issues and processes ~~to enable either~~ would be able to take over the reasonable proficiency in the interim until a successor is named.

**GSC Bylaws** The GSC reviewed its proposed new bylaws to be forwarded to General Synod as part of the report of the General Synod Council.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC

GSC 07-18

VOTED: To amend the proposed bylaws as follows and forward the bylaws to General Synod for review and adoption (additions are underlined):

ARTICLE VIII DUTIES OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

8.1 The general secretary shall be a member of this corporation *ex officio* without vote and shall serve as the secretary of this corporation.

8.2 The general secretary may propose to this corporation policies for its adoption that will enable this corporation to carry out its responsibilities as identified in the *BCO* and as directed from time-to-time by the General Synod.

8.3 The general secretary shall serve as the chief executive officer of this corporation and shall be responsible for oversight of staff implementation of “ends” as defined and adopted by this corporation, and the general administration of the responsibilities and affairs of this corporation as stated in the *BCO* and in this corporation’s policies.

**Responsibilities as the Executive Committee of the General Synod  
(Response for Referrals from the General Synod)**

**Homosexuality  
Dialogue  
Update Report**

The introductory Dialogue Process was presented to the GSC by John Stapert and Tammy Schollaart.

**Biennial “Our  
Call” Event**

*(MGS 2005 R-86  
R-87 pp.299-300)  
(MGS 2006 R-9 p.53)*

The GSC moderator reported that it has been seven years since the RCA has had a church-wide gathering. A team of staff and leaders from across the church are well along in planning an event for early 2008. RCA constituent groups, commissions, task forces, and teams will meet in San Antonio, Texas, January 24-26, 2008 for a conference titled *One Thing: A Gathering of RCA Leaders Seeking First the Kingdom of God*. Each group will meet individually and then all groups will come together for meals, worship, and evening events. Promotional materials are in development.

**Classis of Orange  
Re: Dr. Kansfield**

*(MGS 2006 R-11 p.59)*

Dr. Kansfield was transferred to the Classis of Orange by the General Synod in 2006. The classis has formed a care team to provide ongoing care to Dr. and Mrs. Kansfield. The GSC provides financial support to the classis for the team. The Classis of Orange has filed an appeal of a complaint filed against the classis by the Rev. Dr. Kansfield and adjudicated by the Regional Synod of New York. The appeal is being adjudicated through the General Synod’s Commission on Judicial Business. A report will be presented to the 2007 General Synod.

**Assembly  
Relationships**

*(MGS 2006 R-14 p.68)*

The 2006 General Synod directed the officers of the GSC to appoint up to three members from the GSC and elected officers from regional synods to appoint up to two representatives to explore the nature and extent of the relation among the classes, regional synods, and GS. Six regional synods appointed representatives and two regional synods declined.

The Missional Structure Task Force will present a report to the 2007 General Synod regarding restructuring possibilities. General Synod Vice President, John Ornee

reported that he and several regional representatives believed having the members of the GSC and representatives from the Regional Synod meet prior to the synod receiving the Missional Structure Task Force report, appears to be an overlap in work. The Assembly Relationships Group will plan its next steps after the 2007 General Synod meeting.

**Disabilities  
Task Force**  
(MGS 2006 R-33 p.135)

The GSC reviewed the report from the GSC Task Force on Disabilities. The task force is scheduled to complete its work in 2008. The GSC appreciates the level of committed work and invested time that this task force demonstrated. The GSC directed the moderator to develop a draft Ends Policy regarding disabilities.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-19**

VOTED: To direct the General Secretary to investigate possible partnerships with one or more other denominations to support program initiatives for, by, and with persons with disabilities.

**Multiracial Future**  
(MGS 2006 R-39-R-44  
pp. 143-145)

The GSC reviewed this report. In its discussion it asked that progress reported in the Ends Monitoring Reports also indicates progress with the RCA's work regarding the church's multiracial future.

**Taiwan/China  
Policy**  
(MGS 2006 R-48 p.176)

The report was reviewed and will be forwarded to General Synod as part of the report of the General Synod Council.

**Gracious Welcome**  
(MGS 2006 R-68 p.255)

This recommendation does not require a response until 2008. The General Secretary reported that the Missional Structures Task Force recommendations, if adopted by synod, could address many of the concerns identified in R-68.

**General Synod in  
Southern Location**  
(MGS 2006 R-9 p.53)

The synod's recommendation is addressed in the Missional Structure Task Force report.

**GSC Report to  
2007 General Synod**

The GSC reviewed the draft reports prepared by staff and submitted by the General Secretary. The GSC offered comments and suggestions for improvement.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-20**

VOTED: To forward the completed report to General Synod.

**Request to GS for  
2008 Assessment**

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-21**

VOTED: To approve the \$1.50 per member assessment for the Board of Benefits Services to provide sufficient assistance funding for retired pastors who have a demonstrated need in 2008.

**Assessment for  
Theological  
Education**

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-22**

VOTED: To approve the \$4.49 per member assessment for theological education in 2008.

**Allocation of  
2008 Assessment  
Report to GS  
and Process Plan**

The GSC reviewed its fall 2006 action regarding the *Church Herald*. It strongly reaffirmed the decision made at its October 2006 meeting to propose to the General Synod that the *Church Herald* return to a subscription based magazine. Further, the GSC reviewed the proposed budget for FY 2008 developed at its instruction. It approved the budget and the use of assessment funds to further support the work of church multiplication and revitalization, global mission, communication, and new initiatives in response to the General Synod's prior mandates regarding ministries with the disabled.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-23**

VOTED: To propose to General Synod a 2008 assessment that reallocates the assessment of \$917,525, currently assigned to *The Church Herald* as follows:

- A \$200,000 reduction in the amount assessed on total confessing membership.
- The remainder will be allocated within the GSC to support (a) "Our Call", (b) Global Missions, (c) communications, and (d) disability initiatives.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-24**

VOTED: To recommend for approval by General Synod the 2008 GSC Assessment of \$5,397,594.

**Responsibilities  
of the 2007  
Committee of  
Reference**

The GSC discussed its role at synod when it serves as the Committee of Reference.

**Assessment Relief  
Request – Classis  
of Illinois**

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

**GSC 07-25**

VOTED: To table until October 2007 the request for assessment relief in the amount of \$3,578.12 from the Classis of Illinois for the 2007 calendar year.

**Vacancies  
on GSC**

In response to correspondence received from the Commission on Nominations, the GSC discussed vacancies in its at-large membership category. The GSC expressed a concern that the commission continue to seek younger members (under 35) for these positions and asked the General Secretary to communicate this concern to the commission. Currently, there are two at-large vacancies.

**Dates/Locations  
for Future  
Meetings** June 7-12, 2007 – General Synod, Central College, Pella, Iowa  
October 12-14, 2007 – GSC/Commissions, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
January 24-26, 2008 – One Thing, San Antonio, Texas  
March 25-27, 2008 – GSC Meeting, location to be determined  
June 5-10, 2008 – General Synod, Hope College, Holland, Michigan

### **CONCLUDING BUSINESS**

**Next Meeting** June 12, 2007 (Tuesday 12:30-2:30 pm)  
Central College  
Pella, Iowa

(Note: GSC members should not book flights prior to 5:00 pm)

**Future Meetings** October 12-14, 2007 (Friday 8:30 am – Sunday 11:00 am), Minneapolis, Minnesota  
(Note: GSC members will need to travel to Minneapolis on Thursday, October 11th.)

**Adjournment** The spring meeting of the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America adjourned with prayer at 11:10 a.m. on Thursday, March 22, 2007.