

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

Minutes

Place and Date The General Synod Council met at Hope College at the Haworth Inn and Conference Center on Wednesday June 10, 2009, following the adjournment of the annual meeting of the General Synod. The meeting began at 8:21 am, and the Moderator, John Ornee presided at the meeting.

Devotions The moderator asked Ronald Vande Bunte to open the meeting with prayer.

**Members Present
(Current and newly elected)** The following current and newly elected members of the General Synod Council were present:

Ned Beadel	Larryl Humme
Mary Bechler	Rhonda Johnson
Carol Bechtel	Elisabeth Kersten
Glen Blumer	Aaron Klein
Randall Bohl	Marianne Lin
Jonathon Brown	Toni Macon
Mary Bryant	Richard Morano
John Busman	John Ornee, Moderator
Michelle Chahine	Christopher Poest
James Cobb	Donald Poest
Thomas De Vries	Kathryn Romero
Thomas Dibble	James Seawood
Stephanie Doeschot	Arnold Van Ankum
Anna Gonzales	Ronald Vande Bunte
Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, <i>ex-officio</i>	Evan Vermeer

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

Fred Algera	David Patterson
Lizbeth Moss	James Steward
	Ai-Lan Wang

Staff Present

The following staff members were present for the meeting:

Jhonny Alicea-Báez, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>	Jessica Bratt, <i>Executive Coordinator</i>
Barbara Boers, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>	Laura De Vries, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>
Paul Boice, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>	Ken Eriks, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>
Kenneth Bradsell, <i>Cluster Facilitator</i>	Mornier Rich, <i>Recorder</i>

Introductions

The moderator asked GSC members (current and newly elected) and staff to give a brief self introduction.

**Review of
the Agenda**

EL-9 Communication and Support to the Board Monitoring Report regarding the reporting of incidental information was added to the agenda.

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

GSC 09-21

CONSENTED: To approve the revised agenda and schedule.

**Approval of
the Minutes**

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

GSC 09-22

CONSENTED: To approve the March 24-26, 2009 General Synod Council minutes as distributed.

**Oral Review/
Evaluation of the
2009 Meeting of
the General Synod**

The moderator asked the GSC for comments regarding the 2009 Meeting of the General Synod. They are as follows:

- Continue training of moderators for advisory groups.
- Reinstate the daily hotline; this communication piece was missed.
- Advisory titles were confusing; need clear instructions.
- Introduction and video to Belhar were too overwhelming. Delegates felt like they were being inundated with this information.
- The celebration of women needed to be placed in the center of synod.
- More time was needed for BOBS' presentation.
- The mechanics of planning synod went well; emailing information, posting information and the workbook on the website was a great decision.
- More time needs to be given to the schedule and the planning of synod; there wasn't enough time to cover all items in the workbook. One-third of delegates left during worship because they had flights to catch.
- Staff needs to investigate how issue advisory committees best serve the body.

- Make time for advisory committees to debrief and reconnect during synod.
- Table assignments based on advisory committees were extremely helpful.
- Consider making names tags for corresponding delegate and the Committee of Reference a different color than voting delegates.
- Spend more table time in conversation addressing the issues.
- Some delegates stated that the GSC appears to be more trustworthy.
- Consider finding a way to limit moderators at the microphone if necessary.
- The elevated stage is too intimidating; consider lowering it.
- Map in agenda book is unclear; consider highlighting or making arrows pointing to buildings of significance to delegates.
- Clicker devices worked and then they did not.
- Consider using clickers to vote for president and vice president of General Synod.
- Did not see a vision for Communication; only saw the process. The GSC did not do its job.
- GSC needs to do full audit of Communications; website is confusing.
- GSC needs to come along side of the *Church Herald* and how the *Church Herald* is going to organize its cessation.
- The evening before synod ends should be used for unfinished business; presentations or events should not be scheduled at that time.

**Assignment of
Recommendations
From General Synod
to the GSC**

The GSC reviewed the following recommendations from General Synod (Appendix A):

R-14 – Articles 1 and 3 have to go to all classes. GSC staff will send out the packet regarding changes in the *BCO*. GSC members will receive a copy of the packet, and it will be posted online.

R-15 – Changes in the Bylaws of Synod will go into effective following an affirmative vote by the 2010 General Synod and will be printed in the revised *BCO* next summer.

R-16 – GSC asked that this be placed on its fall meeting agenda.

R-18 – No action necessary.

R-21 – Major question around BOBS and what BOBS proposed. GSC needs to consider the process for next year's synod. Covenant of Care needs to be better communicated to the classes and congregations and how non-payments affect the dollar amount and causes increases. Ken Bradsell was asked to speak to BOBS staff and board about what they intend to present to General Synod 2010.

R-22 – Assigned to Earl James; and he will consult with Paul Boice about ways this can get to congregations.

R-23 – The Homosexuality Dialogue report will be posted online. GSC needs to start thinking about how to move this issue forward and will have to give a status report to General Synod 2011.

R-24 – Referred to the Belhar Implementation Team to discuss on how to best equip the classes with information that will help them make the best decision.

R-25 – No action necessary.

R-26 – GCS staff (Paul Boice and Ken Eriks) will discuss how to best communicate the availability of this occasional communion liturgy. It needs to be sent to the classes and congregations.

R-27; R-28; R-29; R-30; R-31; R-32 and R-33 – *BCO* changes from the Commission on Church Order were approved by synod. These changes will be forwarded to classes for approval.

R-34 – Barbara Fillette, retired RCA pastor, Keith Derrick, director of WTS Journey Group and Scot Sherman, pastor of City Church of San Francisco will be invited to form the core planning team for the classis boundaries conversation(s).

R-36 – Earl James will give direction to this action.

R-37 – GSC will review at its fall 2009 meeting a process for looking at the relationships between Native American Indian/First Nations congregations and classes and the RCA. Roger DeYoung, a Regional Synod staff person, a Church Multiplication staff person, a NAI person, a First Nations (Canadian) person and James Seawood will be invited to look at the evaluation process. It was suggested that this group review the CRC and ELCA relationships with NA/First Nations people.

R-38 – GSC needs to consider how it will proceed with this recommendation. Ken Eriks is staffing a team that works in this area of Our Call.

R-39 – GSC asked that this be placed on its fall meeting agenda.

R-40 – A planning committee meeting has been scheduled for September 2009. Helen Monsees will facilitate the group. The committee needs to look at strategies and priorities in moving forward with the Office for Women. Once Carol Bechtel and Wes Granberg-Michaelson have a list of names for the committee, they will send letters of invitation.

R-45 – Ken Eriks, Gregg Mast, Wes Granberg-Michaelson and Tim Brown will meet in June to discuss how to proceed and give a report to the GS officers about how this task force might function.

R-57 – The GSC will do preliminary work on this. Carol Bechtel, Jonathon Brown and Michelle Chahine will begin the work. Carol Bechtel will organize the team.

R-58 – Will be addressed at the Officers Meeting August 2009.

R-59 – The GSC discussed options for getting the right tool to do a survey. One possibility is “Survey Monkey.” Churches must participate in order for the survey to be of value. Possible persons to explore ways of doing this survey are: John Stapert; Daniel Beyer; or Timothy Vink.

R-60 – Communication staff will handle placing studies on baptism on the RCA website and in the Faith Alive Christian resources. The GSC and Commission on Theology will meet during the joint fall meeting of the GSC and GS commissions in October 2009.

R-61 – Will be addressed at the Officers Meeting in August 2009.

R-64 – Not approved.

R-65 – GSC will explore ways in which the GSC and the Church Herald Editorial Council can proceed as the recommendation instructs.

R-66 – GSC to explore options for promoting more online offerings.

R-67 – Communication staff will do an analysis on how the *RCA Today* is being received and utilized.

R-68 – GSC will come along side of the *Church Herald*. GSC members, Tom De Vries, Ned Beadel and John Ornee, will help to facilitate the process.

**Audit Committee
Report**

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

GSC 09-23

CONSENTED: To approve Capin Crouse, LLP be contracted as the audit firm for the General Synod Council, Church Growth Fund and Board of Benefits Services .

**Proposed Transfer
of Kirkside Property**

Upon recommendation of its moderator, the GSC:

GSC 09-24

CONSENTED: To the transfer of title to the Kirkside facility by the General Synod to Kirkside by adopting the resolution (Appendix B).

**EL-9 Communication
and Support to the
Board Monitoring
Report**

The GSC discussed receiving information about the General Synod's agenda and the Office of Women after they met. The General Secretary will provide to the GSC a quarterly monitoring report on this and other significant matters similar to the one that the GSC received before synod. This will fulfill items 3 and 4 (incidental information) under EL-9.

**Revised GSC
Policy Document**

The GSC reviewed this document as information.

Other Business

The GSC had further discussion about the following:

- Carol Bechtel will speak to Leanne Van Dyke, Professor of Theology, about a pastoral care need.
- Status on the Office of Prayer.
- Wes Granberg-Michaelson was asked to provide at the GSC October 2009 meeting a report about the current salary freeze and staff benefits and its impact on staff morale and budget.
- Pastoral care for Norm and Mary Kansfield need to be reestablished. Visiting them as friends and as representatives of the GSC need to be identified. The care team (Barbara Fillette, Toni Macon and Tom De Vries) will contact the Kansfields regarding a visit; and a report will be given to the GSC at its fall meeting in October 2009.
- Grid for GSC members to visit classes and talking points document will be reviewed at the Officers Meeting in August 2009.

**Thanks to Retiring
Members**

John Ornee, Carol Bechtel and Wes Granberg-Michaelson thanked the retiring GSC members for their time on the council and presented them with gifts. Retiring members were given an opportunity to say a few words. Carol Bechtel and Wes Granberg-Michaelson extended special thanks to John Ornee for his years of leadership as vice-president and president of the General Synod, his service to the GSC and his service this past year as moderator of the GSC.

**Adjournment,
Prayers**

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 12:20 pm

Mornier Rich, recorder
Kenneth Bradsell, asst. secretary