

CENTRAL COLLEGE

Class of 2013

Peter Cartwright
 Barbara Kniff-McCulla
 Vacancy

HOPE COLLEGE

Class of 2013

The Rev. William Boersma

R-68

To elect the above-named nominees to the General Synod commissions and agencies and the boards of directors or trustees of RCA-related educational institutions as indicated. (ADOPTED)

R-69

To elect Carol Mutch moderator of the Commission on Nominations for the 2009-2010 term. (ADOPTED)

Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnicity

The Commission on Race and Ethnicity met October 16-19, 2008, in Rosemont, Illinois, and again March 6-9, 2009, at Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel Church, Sacramento, California.

Our Call and Racism

The Reformed Church in America has adopted a sixth dimension of Our Call. This adoption is built on a profound spiritual belief in God as well as a profound socio-historical dynamic that racial and ethnic groups must treat each other in light of God's biblical mandates for unity, reconciliation, and justice (Matt. 5:23-24; Eph. 2:11-22; Eph. 4:1-16; John 17:20-23; Luke 4:16-19; Gal. 3:26-29; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; Rom. 8:14; Rev. 7:9-11).

The fundamental underpinning for Our Call lacks a clear declarative statement that because racism is an offense to God, racism is a sin. The RCA has never formally declared racism a sin, and the sixth dimension of Our Call should be rooted in such a declaration. In order for us to fully worship as a denomination and be the body of Christ in a lost and broken world so loved by God, we need to collectively declare racism a sin.

Part of the reason we engage in the sixth dimension of Our Call is to overcome and defeat the sin of racism. Therefore, the Commission on Race and Ethnicity (CORE) recommends that the General Synod adopt the action:

R-70

To declare that racism is a sin because it is an offense to God. (ADOPTED)

Native American Congregations and Ministries

There is a growing disconnect between the Reformed Church in America and Native American congregations and ministries. This disconnect is apparent because there are stories from Native American communities that have not been heard. For instance, the Native American Indian Ministries Council (NAIMC) disbanded for purposes of better stewardship and transferred NAIMC funds toward Native American leadership training. Over the years this amount has been decreased by 80 percent without the knowledge of Native American leadership, pastors, or congregations. Also, representation and consideration of the Native American congregations or communities in the RCA is almost nonexistent.

In March 2008, CORE met at Jicarilla Apache Reformed Church in Dulce, New Mexico. CORE met with consistory and community members and sat in on a Native American Historical Trauma lecture given by an Arizona State University professor of Native American studies who is originally from Dulce. During this visit, CORE learned that the RCA has played a part in the destruction of indigenous culture, values, family systems, and sense of communities.

Reconnecting and strengthening our relationships with our Native American ministries is at the heart and soul of the sixth dimension of Our Call. Not only do we as a denomination have a responsibility to Native American congregations but we will be enriched and blessed by strengthening this relationship. By doing this, we demonstrate our commitment to all racial and ethnic councils, congregations, and ministries.

The commission offers a recommendation that will help reclaim and strengthen the voices of Native American communities and congregations within the General Synod and General Synod Council, and help empower or reestablish indigenous leadership in Native American ministries and in the RCA. In adopting this recommendation, the church will show it is intentional about living out Our Call.

The RCA will more fully be the body of Christ and reflect the image of God as we work to improve our inclusion of our Native American brothers and sisters in our leadership and denomination. The commission recognizes that this is true as we embrace all ethnicities, but there are particular ministries this recommendation is designed to address. Therefore, the commission recommends:

R-71

To urgently direct the General Synod Council 1) to explore the current status of the relationship between the Reformed Church in America and Native American congregations and communities, 2) to create a plan to restore the voices of Native American congregations in the life, work, and ministry of the RCA, 3) to fund these efforts with 5 percent of the Lilly Endowment grant, and 4) to report back to the Commission on Race and Ethnicity by October 2009 with its conclusions and intentions; and further,

to ensure the success of this project, one of the project leaders will be a Native American person who is familiar with the goals and objectives of the Commission on Race and Ethnicity on this matter; and further,

to encourage the Synods of the Heartland, the Far West, and Canada to implement plans to enrich and strengthen their relationships with existing Native American congregations and ministries in their regions.

The advice of the Our Call Advisory Forum on our Multiracial Future Freed from Racism was to amend the recommendation:

R-71

To urgently direct the General Synod Council 1) to explore the current status of the relationship between the Reformed Church in America and Native American/First Nations congregations and communities, 2) to create a plan to restore the voices of Native American/First Nations congregations in the life, work, and ministry of the RCA, ~~and 3) to fund these efforts with 5 percent of the Lilly Endowment grant, and 4) to report back to consult with the Commission on Race and Ethnicity by February 2010 October 2009~~ with its conclusions, intentions, and involved costs; and further,

to ensure the success of this project, one of the project leaders will be a Native American/First Nations person who is familiar with the goals and objectives of the Commission on Race and Ethnicity on this matter; and further,

to encourage all the regional synods ~~of the Heartland, the Far West and Canada~~ to implement plans to enrich and strengthen their relationships with existing Native American/First Nations congregations and ministries in their regions, and encourage new church development among Native American/First Nations peoples.

Reasons:

1. To include Canadian reference of “First Nations people.”
2. To suggest a more reasonable time frame for reporting.
3. General Synod lacks authority to redirect the use of Lilly Endowment funds.
4. To encourage both the restoration of current RCA Native American/First Nations relationships and the development of new church and ministry opportunities among and wherever Native Americans/First Nations people live in the United States and Canada.

A motion was made and adopted to amend the proposed amendment as follows:

to ensure the success of this project, ~~one of~~ the project leaders will ~~be~~ include a Native American/and a First Nations person who ~~is~~ are familiar...

R-71

To urgently direct the General Synod Council 1) to explore the current status of the relationship between the Reformed Church in America and Native American/First Nations congregations and communities, 2) to create a plan to restore the voices of Native American/First Nations congregations in the life, work, and ministry of the RCA, and 3) to consult with the Commission on Race and Ethnicity by February 2010 with its conclusions, intentions, and involved costs; and further,

to ensure the success of this project, the project leaders will include a Native American and a First Nations person who are familiar with the goals and objectives of the Commission on Race and Ethnicity on this matter; and further,

to encourage all the regional synods to implement plans to enrich and strengthen their relationships with existing Native American/First Nations congregations and ministries in their regions, and encourage new church development among Native American/First Nations peoples. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)