

the table ten bonds amounting to \$13,800 and \$800 in cash and asked synod to accept the gift for the education of pious youth for ministry.

On January 10, 1815, in his seventy-seventh year, Dominie Van Bunschooten went home to his reward and was buried in the church yard of First Reformed Church in New Brunswick, New Jersey. In his last will and testament he added more than \$3,000 to his former donation, making a total of more than \$17,000—a princely sum for those days.

Dominie Van Bunschooten thus had the honor of making the first substantial contribution for assisting young students of theology. His example has been followed from time to time by others, thus realizing his desire as expressed in the bequest “that he might be a humble pattern for others to copy after.”

It would be impossible to catalogue all the results that have flowed from these donations. For more than a century they have made possible the education of candidates for the ministry, for the work both at home and abroad. All honor to him and the other liberal donors who have followed his example (*MGS 2004*, pp. 187-188).

In honor of Dominie Elias Van Bunschooten, the Van Bunschooten Society was formed in the Reformed Church in America to honor those who have included the Reformed Church in America in their wills.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON THE RCA ARCHIVES

The RCA Archives exists to serve as the memory of the church. The corporate memory of what we have done and who we have been constitutes our heritage as we seek to serve our Lord faithfully in mission throughout the world. The RCA Archives preserves records from congregations, classes, regional synods, the General Synod, and staff offices in order to document how we have followed the call to mission since a strong future is built upon a solid understanding of the past. The primary goal of the Archives in this process is to offer stability and relevance to the long term mission of the church.

The archivist has to make decisions about what should be kept and what may be disposed without serious consequence so a faithful record exists of who we are and what we have been about. In order to see where we can go, we must first understand where we have been. Researchers, synod committees and agencies, denominational staff offices, and others who seek to understand the rich heritage of the RCA as it grows into the future actively make use of this record. This past year, the archivist answered more than 175 queries for information about the RCA, research questions, and assistance with records management issues, including more than thirty individuals who visited the archives to undertake research.

Report of the African American Council

The African American Council (AAC) will celebrate forty years of ministry and work within the Reformed Church in America this year. Since its beginning in 1969 the council has been a voice for people of the African Diaspora within and without the denomination. It has challenged the RCA to reach out and be inclusive of blacks; and the council has pro-

vided leadership in the birth of other racial/ethnic councils, commissions, and task forces that continue to remind the denomination of its obligation to “make disciples of all nations.”

Due to the biblical and cultural significance of the time period of forty years, the AAC will have a “Forty Years” celebration at its Annual Caucus gathering, which will be held October 9-11, 2009, at the New York LaGuardia Airport Marriott Hotel. The theme for this event will be “Forty Years and Forward: Remembering, Reflecting, and Resourcing.” The council invites the rest of the denomination to join them in this celebration of a significant and unique ministry in the life of the RCA.

2008 Meetings and Events

The executive committee met continually throughout 2008 to do and assess the work and ministry of the council.

During the summer, council members gathered for a productive and successful retreat to discuss the future ministry and function of the council.

The Annual Caucus gathering took place in New York, with a record turnout. The theme was “Racism: What’s the Christian Solution?” The B. Moses James Colloquium, named for one of the founders of the RCA’s African-American Council, was addressed by Baptist minister, politician, author, and public advocate DeForest “Buster” Soaries. He brought a stirring and challenging message commending the council for its ministry and urging the members to “still press on in the struggle for civil rights and justice.”

On Friday night of the caucus, participants viewed and reviewed the highly acclaimed MSNBC film *Meeting David Wilson*, a documentary about a young black man, David Wilson, who meets a white descendant of the same name whose forbears once owned his forbears. Members of the audience and the producer of the film engaged in a provocative discussion following the film. (Excerpts from this discussion are posted on the AAC webpage at www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=2176.)

In addition to other speakers, the caucus gathering featured workshops that focused on Our Call. First vice chairperson Jo Anna Lougin conducted a workshop entitled “Our Call/Our Scorecard,” and Daryl Griffin, senior pastor of Oakdale Covenant Church in Chicago, led a related session called “Transitioning Churches.” During the Saturday afternoon business session the four regions of the council reported on their work and ministries. In the evening, members of the caucus came together for the installation of new officers. The newly elected officers are Wilbur Jones, chairperson; Jo Anna Lougin, first vice chairperson; Jimmie Stevenson, second vice chairperson; Morine Thomas, secretary; C. J. Grier, treasurer; and Annie Lee Philips, immediate past chairperson. Caucus members also recognized outstanding leaders such as General Synod vice president James Seawood. This was followed by a Spirit-filled musical celebration. The caucus ended on Sunday with delegates from out of town visiting local AAC churches.

A Call for Vigilance and Action

While the AAC joins in jubilant celebration of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the historic election and installation of Barack Obama as the first black president of the United States of America, it remains cognizant of the fact that this is not an indication that the end of racism is at hand. In fact, the council remains even more vigilant as it begins to hear of the resurgent acts of covert and overt racism that continue to plague this nation. It calls on the RCA to also be all the more proactive in its stance against these forms of evil

as it addresses the issues of institutional and internalized racism, especially as they affect people of the African Diaspora. It urges the General Synod to be more proactive in seeing that all commissions, committees, General Synod delegates, and task forces include members of the AAC and its related churches, which have a track record in addressing these sins. Further, it calls on the General Synod Council to be inclusive of the AAC and its members as it seeks to carry out the new “sixth dimension” of Our Call voted on at General Synod 2008.

The AAC is deeply appreciative of the work of Glen C. Missick, director of African American/Black Ministries and staff to the council. Missick has been working tirelessly in helping to find and build up leadership in council-member churches. While he remains focused on Our Call, he also understands the importance of the black church and its ministry from a holistic context. Consequently, his commitment to the work of the council is extremely important as he seeks to help council-member churches grow spiritually and numerically and as prophetic voices, addressing issues of racism, injustice, and other ills that affect the black community.

The council feels a renewed sense of call to the missional and prophetic ministry of its founders and most importantly to Jesus, the Christ, who proclaimed, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor...to proclaim release to the captives” (Luke 4:18). With this prophetic stance in mind the council voted, at its Caucus 2008 business meeting, to urge the General Synod to approve the Belhar Confession at General Synod 2009 as an added confession of the RCA.

Finally, in the spirit of the newly elected attorney general of the United States of America, Eric Holder, who recently stated that our country has become a “nation of cowards” because it refuses to seriously engage in real conversations about race, the AAC, in light of its forty years of trying to do this, invites the General Synod Council to engage in a frank dialogue with them on this issue, so that the whole church can move toward radical surgery, instead of just putting Band-Aids on a cancer sore. The council requests a response from the General Synod Council, so that an exploratory committee can be set up by both entities to set a date and time for this timely dialogue.

Report of the Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries

This year the Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries (CPAAM) will celebrate its thirtieth annual consultation at New Brunswick Theological Seminary on May 8 and 9, 2009. In looking back over thirty years of work in the Reformed Church in America, council members can see that much has been accomplished since the first official meeting on March 14, 1980. CPAAM began with six RCA Asian churches, seven Asian congregations affiliated with the RCA, and two RCA Asian ministers not affiliated with RCA congregations. CPAAM has grown to forty-one organized RCA churches, twenty-one developing ministries, and thirty-eight additional Pacific Asian American RCA ministers not affiliated with congregations. CPAAM continues its work of advocating for the needs, gifts, and concerns of Pacific and Asian Americans within the RCA as well as advising the various governing bodies of the RCA as to how Pacific and Asian Americans can be fully integrated and included in the life of the church, its mission, and its ministry.

After a lengthy search and interview process, we welcomed En Young Kim as the new CPAAM coordinator effective October 1, 2008. She has stepped into the rather large shoes

left by her predecessor, Ella Campbell, who retired in January 2008 after holding that position for twenty-one years. Kim is committed to leading CPAAM to fulfill the six areas of Our Call: revitalization, multiplication, discipleship, leadership, mission, and a multiracial future freed from racism. She will be CPAAM's voice and advocate as a General Synod Council staff member and she will assist the CPAAM Executive Committee in implementing the goals and activities of the council.

Discipleship

Chun Fa Mo, CPAAM's new youth representative, reports that discipleship of young people is occurring among four Taiwanese churches in Chicago that are joining together for praise and worship with teenagers who translate for immigrant parents. "2008 Jesus Youth Retreat" was held August 18 through 21, 2008, at Rosendale Retreat Center in New York. About 250 Korean students worshiped, prayed, and praised God together. Chinese and Taiwanese churches in Queens held a prayer seminar in October and have started Bible study groups in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Shin Kwang Church started a new discipleship program called "Two Wings Nurturing System," which grew out of the church's involvement in the Natural Church Development church health process. Most church core members participated in the training session called "To Be a Disciple First and Then Go and Make Disciples."

Leadership

Salome Ryew, CPAAM's women's representative, has started an Asian woman pastors support network called "Living Epistles" to encourage Asian female leadership in the RCA. The Korean pastors met last summer in Las Vegas for a retreat. The New York and New Jersey Korean pastors also met for their sixth annual New Year's gathering to worship, pray, and fellowship.

There is a real concern for raising up new leaders for the next generation of Asian Americans. More young people and women need to be encouraged to enter seminary training and to be mentored by seasoned pastors. There needs to be more training and support for elders and deacons in Pacific and Asian American churches so that the lay leaders can truly understand and embrace the Reformed tradition.

Church Multiplication

Many Korean churches on the West Coast and in the Midwest would like to join the RCA. Ministry to a new generation is increasing with church plants like Lamb of God Ministry in Tappan, New York, which holds healing and prayer services in Korean and English for the second generation. Grace Christian Church, which started in Staten Island, now has an active ministry in Flushing, New York, and that is now starting outreaches in Brooklyn and the Bronx. Andy Nakajima, a Japanese professor at Hope College, reports good progress in reaching Japanese-speaking people in the Grand Rapids and Holland, Michigan, areas. Chris Theodore, with the help of a grant from the Synod of New York, produced a music and praise CD in Tamil to reach the many Asian Indians living in metropolitan New York City.

The new CPAAM coordinator will be meeting with pastors, churches, and classes to enable more Asian churches to join the RCA. Often requirements for membership need to be explained to pastors and congregations in their native tongue, so it is hoped that the RCA will continue its valuable work of translation. It is hoped that in the future translating services will make denomination-wide events, RCA publications, and the RCA website more accessible to different ethnic groups. Also, requirements for newly organized churches

need to be contextualized for immigrant churches. For example, pastor salaries may need to be adjusted to fit the economic realities of first generation communities.

Church Revitalization

Ed Yee reported that the Chinese Community Church of Sacramento, California, completed a three-year building project of a new fellowship hall and education center as part of their church revitalization. Other churches, such as the Chinese Congregational church in San Francisco, are going through strategic planning and evaluation. The Japanese American United Church in New York City continues to be stabilized through the efforts of Yugo Suzuki, who is teaching Japanese and bilingual classes as well as encouraging the growth of small groups.

Mission

Korean churches continue to be active in sending short-term missionaries to Kazakhstan, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Many church members also went to Illinois to deliver God's message to Native Americans. Hong-Jen Lin, CPAAM's Chinese representative, made presentations about Protestant business ethics at Xiamen University and Huaxia Vocational College in China in January 2009.

Multiracial Future Freed from Racism

Earl James, the RCA's coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice, attended CPAAM's 2008 Consultation and introduced himself and his work to the CPAAM community. Two members of the executive committee along with the coordinator attended the Multiracial Strategy Coalition Leadership Retreat in Grand Rapids in February 2009 to learn more about how racism can be eliminated in our churches. General secretary Wesley Granberg-Michaelson was invited to speak at the 2009 Consultation in May and address how CPAAM will be impacted by the new emphasis on a multiracial future freed from racism for the RCA and how CPAAM can help with the growth of ethnic churches and greater evangelism in rapidly growing Asian American communities.

Pastors like Young Ai Na in New York and Peter Bai in California are already pastoring multicultural churches that reach into the community to serve unchurched people from many different backgrounds.

Many of CPAAM's first generation immigrant churches are now dealing with the transitional issues of the younger generation that is Americanized and no longer speaking the native language. Some 1.5-* and second-generation pastors are starting new church plants in order to better serve young people.

CPAAM is a uniquely diverse group of people who come from many countries in Asia (China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, India, Thailand, Vietnam, et. al.) and who speak many different languages and dialects. Although many Americans tend to think that all Asians look alike, think alike, and sound alike, in fact they are quite different and their past histories have often involved conflict, war, and rivalry. CPAAM churches have much to share and much to learn in terms of dealing with multiracial issues and breaking down the stereotypical barriers that divide them. In Jesus' name and by the power of the Holy Spirit, they too must forgive what has gone on in the past and press ever onward to the goal of racial equality, unity, and oneness that is called for in the body of Christ.

*"1.5 generation" refers to people who immigrated before or during their early teens. Their lives combine elements of their birth country's and their adopted country's culture and traditions.

Report of the Council for Hispanic Ministries

The Hispanic Council, as Christ's ambassador, is following the RCA in its mission to be the very presence of Jesus Christ in the world. We believe God has called us as part of this great denomination to focus our efforts in the next ten years on starting new congregations. The Hispanic Council has accepted the challenge of starting fifty churches by the year 2013. We have the confidence that we will achieve this goal with the help and support of God and the denomination's Church Multiplication Team. We believe that with a strong emphasis on evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development we can work together to impact the denomination and the world. As we focus our efforts and resources on starting new congregations and revitalizing existing ones, we can empower faithful ministries for the glory of God.

Evangelism, Church Growth, and Discipleship

The Council for Hispanic Ministries is experiencing a huge influx of Hispanics into its churches. Several ministries are experiencing rapid growth. La Senda Del Amor in Corona, California, continues to experience steady growth. Other ministries in Florida, Arizona, and New Jersey are also experiencing growth. Hispanics currently comprise 12 percent of the nation's population, and the Hispanic population is growing at a faster rate than other ethnic groups. Today Hispanics are the largest ethnic group in the United States. This poses a tremendous challenge for the Reformed Church. The church must realize that close to 89 percent of Hispanics learn to speak Spanish first. Congregations that worship in Spanish are essential if the RCA is to make an impact in evangelism. That is why training and discipling is a priority.

The Hispanic Council is convinced that mission starts with our neighbors, which is why the council emphasizes the preaching of the gospel. That is also why the Hispanic Council has undertaken a mission which is unprecedented—the establishment of the Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic. The Hispanic Council—in cooperation with Global Mission, the Synods of New York and the Mid-Atlantics, the general secretary, the Office of the General Synod, and church leaders in the Dominican Republic—is working hard for this to become a reality. Trained coaches and leaders are helping to train pastors and lay leaders to establish a church that will be theologically and structurally sound. Our fellow pastors in the Dominican Republic are developing a vision that will unite our hearts for the purpose of reaching a world engulfed in sin.

The council hopes that this new model can be replicated in other areas where ministries can be started and be a dynamic force in the future.

With growth comes great responsibility and challenges. That is why the Hispanic Council has made it a priority to train and disciple potential leaders by partnering with Miami International Seminary to give seminary-level courses in Spanish. Courses in Reformed theology, church polity, and history will help guide, train, and develop a greater understanding of the RCA's vision of establishing new churches in the next ten years.

The council hopes leaders who have a clear vision of this goal will be trained and developed. As was stated in last year's report, Western Theological Seminary, the Hispanic Council, and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency have put together a program to train Hispanic leaders in RCA standards in their own language. This is just the beginning of a long-term program for the benefit of Hispanic leaders. The establishment of courses taught in Spanish is one great step toward having future Hispanic faculty in RCA seminaries who teach using Spanish curricula. To God be the glory!

The council can say that new leaders are emerging from within. Council members are also establishing relationships with other denominations to discuss the possibility of future joint ventures, enhancing council efforts to develop new relationships that will effectively help train potential leaders. Discussions have also included an exchange of theological points of views for study and dialogue.

The training currently taking place will help bring to fruition the Hispanic Council's goal of establishing fifty congregations in the next ten years. Many challenges lie ahead. But there is confidence that with the strides made this past year the council's efforts will not go unrewarded.

PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE FOR THE REV. DR. NORMAN KANSFIELD

The GSC continues to have a pastoral care team for the Rev. Dr. Norman Kansfield, who continues to be under discipline by action of the 2005 General Synod. The committee has been charged with responsibility to:

- Provide ongoing pastoral care and oversight for the Rev. Dr. Norman Kansfield.
- Ascertain what steps might be taken, and by whom, to resolve the conflicted relationship that exists between the Classis of Orange and the Rev. Dr. Kansfield that has resulted in the Rev. Dr. Kansfield not signing the Declaration for Ministers and therefore not being properly received into the membership of the classis.
- Advise the GSC of what action it should take, or what action(s) the GSC should recommend the General Synod take, to move beyond the present impasse in establishing the ecclesiastical "home" for the Rev. Dr. Kansfield.

The committee members are George Brown, Barbara Fillette, and Tom DeVries. An oral report is provided to the GSC at each meeting. The team invites the General Synod members to keep Dr. Kansfield and his wife, Mary, in its prayers. In 2008 Dr. Kansfield and Mary were involved in a very serious automobile accident. Dr. Kansfield was hospitalized and in rehabilitation for several weeks.

REPORT ON A DISABILITIES MINISTRY INITIATIVE

General Synod 2008 adopted a recommendation to approve a special assessment in the amount of \$0.23 per confessing member for disability ministry. The General Synod adopted the recommendation in response to the GSC's Task Force on Disabilities which had recommended "[t]he establishment of an RCA ministry to, with, and for persons with disabilities and their families led by a new, part-time staff person and the concurrent establishment of a working partnership with the Office of Disability Concerns of the CRC" (*MGS 2008*, p. 100).

Following General Synod 2008 staff took steps to begin implementing the partnership with the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC) Office of Disability Concerns including the preparation and initial circulation of a position description. During this implementation phase it became clear to staff, and was reported to the GSC, that there were significant concerns about the financial constraints in the initial proposal and the uncertainty about the RCA's long-term ability to continue funding beyond one year. Staff raised concerns about the feasibility of the implementation plan as drafted, the wisdom of employing an individual without a secure long-range plan, and the effectiveness of an office without sufficient program funds. Staff proposed and GSC supported a delay in implementation until these matters could be resolved.