

Report of the Committee of Reference

Resolutions

The Committee of Reference presented the following resolutions:

R-80

WHEREAS the worship planning team consisting of Jim Van Zetten, Tim Ten Clay, Adriene Thorne, Jamie Schmeling, Janelle Koolhaas, Marlin Vis, and Carol Bechtel effectively brought us into the presence of God through music, song, dance, and prayer and provided us a forum to respond to the Word of God;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for the inspired work of the planning team in leading us to glorify and honor our God during our meetings.

R-81

WHEREAS Janelle Koolhaas in the opening worship service did dramatically make us feel less swamped by reminding us that Jesus stills the turbulent waters of our pre-synod anxieties; and

WHEREAS Marlin Vis did challenge us to refrain from killing each other (“Justice, Justice”) and also did give us a new perspective on the advantages of getting lost when he shared the Word of God with us in morning worship;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for Janelle and Marlin.

R-82

WHEREAS the General Synod was graced with the presence of our ecumenical delegates and guests: John M. Best from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); Jim Cobb from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Ruperto Medina Beltré, Felix Caraballo, Juan Cruz, and Nelson Polanco from the Iglesia Reformada Dominicana; and Gerald L. Dykstra from the Christian Reformed Church in North America; and

WHEREAS they so eloquently shared their vision of the global Christian church both when addressing us and in discussion over meals;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for our ecumenical partners and resolves to pray for the witness of the church of Jesus Christ as it is expressed through many sisters and brothers in a variety of contexts and in a multitude of ways.

R-83

WHEREAS Godfrey Betha from the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, Setri Nyomi of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Peter Borgdorff from the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and Debra Braaksma, RCA missionary to Sudan, did so eloquently share the vision of the Belhar Confession, and challenged us to live out our unity in reconciliation and justice;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for our ecumenical partners and resolves to pray for the witness of the church of Jesus Christ as it is expressed through many sisters and brothers in a variety of contexts and in a multitude of ways.

R-84

WHEREAS the local churches of the Holland area opened their doors for Sunday worship to the delegates of the synod; and
WHEREAS volunteers from the Holland area carted delegates to and fro in vans, cars, and golf carts going at great speed; and
WHEREAS the community of Holland proved to be a wonderfully gracious host;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for the RCA members in the Holland area and their gracious hospitality.

R-85

WHEREAS in 1984, twenty-five years ago, Kenneth Bradsell served as minister of education with the RCA; and
WHEREAS over the past quarter-century Ken has faithfully and skillfully served in many staff capacities, and currently serves as the director of Operations and Support; and
WHEREAS Ken has brought to all of his roles a deep commitment to the Reformed Church in America, a passionate concern for all of the church's members and ministers, and a remarkable set of skills that bring order out of chaos, vision out of confusion, and hope out of problems that seem insurmountable; and
WHEREAS Ken has demonstrated the art of being an executive by delegating his responsibility for the storms of the last three synods;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, takes this opportunity to express its affection for Ken and its profound appreciation for his faithful service to the Reformed Church in America.

R-86

WHEREAS Susan Sgarlat has finished her first year as a parliamentarian of General Synod; and
WHEREAS Susan did have an extremely slow year with few procedural snags to rule on or advise us on in her work as parliamentarian; and
WHEREAS this General Synod did not properly christen Susan by trying to tie her up with complex motions and procedural gymnastics;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for Susan Sgarlat's service to the church as parliamentarian and politely requests that Susan return next year so that we can properly christen her.

R-87

WHEREAS the *Church Herald* staff of editor Christina Van Eyl, managing editor Terry DeYoung, news editor Terry De Boer, database manager Sue Stevens, bookkeeper Brenda Addie, and layout proofer Nancy Graham, along with freelance proofreader Linda VanderHyde, have served the Reformed Church in America faithfully and responsibly, reporting all of the voices of the Reformed Church and the church at large; and
WHEREAS they have done their work in keeping with the principles and values of the *Church Herald* Editorial Council;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, expresses its profound gratitude to God for all of the services that they have rendered. Be it known that we as a synod will continue to pray for them as they begin this new stage of their lives.

R-88

WHEREAS John Stapert has worked tirelessly in the Reformed Church in America in many capacities; and

WHEREAS John Stapert stepped forward to assume leadership of the homosexuality dialogue; and

WHEREAS John through his committee has provided us a means to discuss difficult issues;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God that John Stapert serves joyfully in this often thankless and controversial job.

R-89

WHEREAS Western Theological Seminary did graciously provide their facilities and generously shared Carol Bechtel with the General Synod over the past two years;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for the support of staff and administration and pledges to them its prayers for the important work that they do for our denomination.

R-90

WHEREAS delegate Albert Spaa in speaking twice to the General Synod did first identify himself as being from the classis of British Columbia and later from the classis of Cascades; and

WHEREAS corresponding delegate from New Brunswick Theological Seminary Tom Bos did at first identify himself as being on the board of Western Theological Seminary;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that General Synod Council make available GPS systems for all future General Synod delegates.

R-91

WHEREAS Glen Blumer demonstrated his athletic ability and quick creative thinking by standing on a chair to greet Tim Vink;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Glen be awarded the gold medal in the chair vault.

R-92

WHEREAS Barbara Williams-Skinner effectively framed our discussion about a multiracial future freed from racism by sharing her personal relationship with Rosemary Tibble; and

WHEREAS Barbara shared with us her vision of the maturity which is required of us, and challenged us to envision ourselves as belonging to the larger family of God; and

WHEREAS Barbara shared with us what one of her daughters could do when she no longer desired to be sisters with another one of her daughters, thereby challenging us to think of ourselves as brothers and sisters even when we no longer wish to be;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for Barbara Skinner for inspiring us to think anew about what it means to be brothers and sisters in Christ.

R-93

WHEREAS Beth Marcus served the RCA faithfully in the capacity of president of women's ministries beginning in the year 1992; and

WHEREAS her estate has given the communion set with which we celebrated communion;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for Beth's fruitful ministry among us.

R-94

WHEREAS Kathy Jo Blaske, Phyllis Palsma, and Nancy VanWyk Phillips did movingly share their pioneer stories of being ordained in the Reformed Church in America on this the thirtieth anniversary of women's ordination to the Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Reformed Church in America;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for their many sacrifices as they responded to the call of God; and furthermore, we as a synod promise to celebrate, in fourteen years, the fiftieth anniversary of the ordination of Joyce Stedje, the first woman ordained to the Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament in the RCA, which took place in 1973.

R-95

WHEREAS Carol Bechtel, the president of the 203rd General Synod, has represented the Reformed Church in America in a way that reflects the best ideals of our church and presided over our gathering with grace and dignity; and

WHEREAS Carol did call the synod to continue to reflect and examine our current practices of what it means to be reformed and missional; and

WHEREAS Carol did remind us that "Jesus is watching us"; and

WHEREAS Carol did gently remind us when time was up for our discussions by humming the Jeopardy theme song for us and did use her substantial musical talents to lead us into harmonious discussions; and

WHEREAS Carol did teach us how the simple was more complicated than it seemed ("Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star") and the complicated was more simple than it seemed (the recognition of Wes Granberg-Michaelson);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, expresses gratitude to God for Carol's leadership of the Reformed Church in America this past year.

R-96

WHEREAS the members of the General Synod staff are hardworking, conscientious, and dedicated servants of the kingdom of God and give themselves to their work in furthering the mission of Jesus Christ as it is expressed in the ministry of the Reformed Church in America; and

WHEREAS many members of the staff "joyfully" attend (are compelled against their will to attend) the synod meeting, sit through long hours of meetings, and work thanklessly behind the scenes in preparing the work of our meeting; and

WHEREAS the members of the General Synod staff deserve double honor as ones who labor in the work of the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ to a hurting and broken world so loved by God;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for the General Synod staff in their service to Jesus Christ through the work of the Reformed Church in America.

R-97

WHEREAS Juel Grevenstuk and all of the volunteers and staff did an amazing job in administering the logistics of the synod meeting and assisted delegates in securing everything they needed to effectively do the work of the synod; and

WHEREAS Juel Grevenstuk has loved and cared for each of us, helping delegates to attend to their business in the most comfortable means possible; going above and beyond her call by locating the owner of a lost dog who did thirst for the living water of the Reformed Church in America, and locating the bus of the Brighton Heights Reformed Church for those who were lost, but certainly not broken;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for Juel Grevenstuk and her masterful job of arranging the logistics of our meeting.

R-98

WHEREAS Hope College has provided shelter and sustenance for the delegates of General Synod; and

WHEREAS the Hope College staff did provide us with comfortable meeting space in the DeVos Fieldhouse and did diligently anticipate the need for possible emergency shelter from the storms by instructing us to hold our evening meeting under the bleachers in the event of a storm warnings (We were all looking forward to that!);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, gives thanks to God for the staff of Hope College in providing incredible hospitality to the delegates of this synod.

R-99

WHEREAS the members of the Seminarian Seminar have diligently tracked trips to the microphone and have paid close attention to and taken to heart all of the wisdom shared here; and

WHEREAS Juan Carmona, delegate from the Classis of Rochester, offered more comments, suggestions, amendments, and food for thought than any other delegate;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, awards Juan the Golden Microphone Award for prolific microphone attention.

R-100

WHEREAS James Seawood has served the Reformed Church faithfully as a pastor, teacher, and vice president; and

WHEREAS he has a deep booming voice which immediately commands respect and makes other pastors in his presence covetous; and

WHEREAS he shared with us one of his parishoners, Lauren Egan, who proceeded to teach the General Synod a new way to have pride in our pastors and did so effectively biblically train us in how to have better marriage relationships (“he brews” the coffee!); and

WHEREAS James is deeply committed to representing us to the Christian church both here and globally in the three principles of the Belhar Confession: unity, reconciliation, and justice;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, praises God for James and pledges our prayers for him, his family, and his church in the year ahead.

R-101

WHEREAS Don Poest was elected as the 2009-2010 General Synod vice president; and **WHEREAS** he stood on the podium with two really big guys who have his back, and therefore we don’t wish to cross them;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 203rd General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Holland, Michigan, on the ninth day of June 2009, offers its thanks to Don Poest for accepting God’s call as vice president of General Synod and promises to uphold him, his family, and his church in prayer in the days ahead.