REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENT

The RCA development team’s purpose statement says: “Our purpose is to develop relationships that make the mission of the RCA known, inspiring financial partnerships that make the ministry of the RCA possible.”

The development team encourages churches and individuals to generously give of the financial resources God has entrusted to them to support the ministry and witness of the Reformed Church in America. Development coordinates all GSC fundraising efforts, including but not limited to: support for RCA Global Mission, Transformed & Transforming, and the Church Growth Fund.

Development team members raise financial support through outright gifts, bequests, life income plans, and grants. Gifts may be designated for a specific ministry area or left undesignated so that they can be used to fill the greatest need. Undesignated gifts are typically assigned to the RCA Ministry Fund, a fund that supports the specific areas of Transformed & Transforming. The development team also assists with raising resources through Church Growth Fund savings certificates, Partner-in-Mission (PIM) shares, estate planning, and special project funding. Gifts to the RCA enable and empower ministry throughout the church, transforming lives both at home and around the world.

The mission and ministry of the RCA is largely possible because of the generosity of God’s people. In fiscal year 2016, 51 percent of the RCA’s total income came from voluntary support. Only 34 percent was from assessments. Other income, such as investment earnings and fees paid for services rendered, accounted for the remaining 15 percent of the RCA’s income in 2016.

The funding structure of the RCA relies heavily on gifts received from individual donors and from churches that give above and beyond assessments. We are truly grateful for those who have chosen to invest in the ministry of the RCA. A copy of the 2016 Annual Report to Donors is available on the RCA website (www.rca.org/give); hard copies were available at General Synod.

The development team represents the GSC throughout the RCA, but individual staff members work primarily in these regions:

- Amanda Bruehl (abruehl@rca.org): Colorado, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Amanda also works to build the RCA Ministry Fund.
- Larryl Humme (lhumme@rca.org): Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.
- Dann Stouten (dstouten@rca.org): Canada, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio.
- Troy Van Beek (tvanbeek@rca.org): Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota.

Scott Engelsman identifies, communicates, and guides fundraising for the needs of RCA missionaries and mission projects. Michele Quick oversees development operations and donor research.
Called: The RCA’s Campaign for Transformed & Transforming was launched in the summer of 2015 with a goal of raising $6.5 million. As of February 1, 2017, $6.1 million had been raised or committed toward the goal. We are grateful for the many people throughout the RCA who have responded to the vision of Transformed & Transforming through financial commitment to the Called campaign. We anticipate celebrating a successful conclusion to the campaign in mid-2017.

The RCA continues to partner with the Barnabas Foundation for resources about estate planning, planned giving, and planned gift resource management. To learn about how you can include the RCA in your estate plans, or how you can both receive annual income for life and benefit the RCA through a planned gift, please contact Michele Quick at mquick@rca.org.

To make an outright gift in support of the RCA’s ministry and mission, please visit www.rca.org/give or contact the development staff member for your region.

REPORT OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN BLACK COUNCIL

Introduction

The bylaws of the General Synod state that “the General Synod Council shall have racial/ethnic councils which express the collective vision and voice of racial and ethnic congregants and congregations as they develop ministries and advocate for policies of racial and ethnic inclusion, economic, social, and racial justice, both within the Reformed Church in America and ecumenically (Book of Church Order, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 2b; 2016 edition, p. 105).

This is a task and assignment that we as a council take very seriously. Being an advocate for policies of racial and ethnic inclusion is indeed a difficult task but one that the African American Black Council (AABC) has been committed to historically within the church. In the past several years, the AABC has received many disheartening and egregious stories from RCA ministers of color, seminarians, students under care, and several white colleagues about racial injustices within the RCA and its structures. These acts of injustice have come from our white colleagues, some overt and others less so.

After hearing countless stories, some of which have even been published throughout the denomination, the AABC developed a subcommittee to look at ways to combat the perpetual instances of racism that are still pervasive within our denomination. During Our Call, we pledged as a denomination to live into a “future freed from racism.” While there were some efforts toward this goal, it was not nearly enough. After Our Call ended for us as a denomination, the AABC took the opportunity to reflect on what was and was not effective in Our Call regarding being a denomination with a future freed from racism. Consequently, the AABC concluded that in order to really be a denomination freed from racism, it was necessary to propose to the General Synod a constitutional RCA antiracism policy to be implemented in our polity in the Book of Church Order and, most importantly, lived out in the church so that the RCA would truly move toward being a denomination with a future freed from racism.

After a long and intense study, the AABC began its work on a proposed RCA antiracism policy. While there are many issues within our denomination that we must address, the AABC realizes that we need to be audacious on this issue of antiracism at this time. The