REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF FINANCE

The Office of Finance provides centralized finance and accounting services to the denominational corporations, including the General Synod, the General Synod Council, the Board of Benefits Services, and the Church Growth Fund. The Office of Finance strives to ensure financial systems, procedures, and controls are in place to support the mission and ministry of these entities and to assist the officers and directors of the corporations in fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities. The finance staff is available to respond to financial questions from local congregations, classes, and regional synods as together we strive to manage the financial resources with which we have been blessed.

2017 Annual Audits

The 2017 financial statements of the General Synod Council, Board of Benefits Services Retirement Program and General Fund, and Church Growth Fund were audited by CapinCrouse LLP, certified public accountants. All corporations received unmodified (or “clean”) audit opinions. The audited statements are available at www.rca.org/finance. The General Synod Council’s Audit and Risk Management Committee reviewed the audited financial statements of each entity and the management comment letters from the auditors and reported the audit results to the boards of the respective corporations. Financial highlights of each organization are presented below.

Financial Summaries—Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2017

General Synod Council (GSC)

The GSC ended the year with an overall net surplus of $2.6 million. The GSC netted over $3.1 million of unrestricted reserves. This was due primarily to the building addition at the Michigan Regional Center, which was paid for by temporarily restricted contributions. Restricted funds decreased by $860,000 due to the use of restricted campaign dollars. Permanently restricted funds grew by $380,000 from new endowment contributions and investment growth. Funding for the work of the General Synod, including the operating budget and all other designated and restricted funds, is presented in the following chart:

The generosity of donors—churches, individuals, and foundations—provided more than 50 percent of the costs of carrying out the work of General Synod. Assessments provided 33 percent of income and continue to be consistently paid to GSC by classes.

The funds provided to GSC are spent in three areas: Transformed & Transforming priorities, work of the General Synod, and ministry support services, as represented in the following chart:
Transformed & Transforming includes the following ministry priorities and initiatives:

- Discipleship and Next Generation Engagement
- Leadership
  - Emerging Leaders
  - Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches
  - Women’s Transformation and Leadership
- Mission
  - Global Missional Engagement (expenses relating to Global Mission made up 58 percent of Transformed & Transforming expenses and 41 percent of total expenses in 2017)
  - Church Multiplication
  - Local Missional Engagement
  - Cultural Agility and Advocacy
  - Volunteer Engagement
  - Disability Concerns

Work of the General Synod includes costs related to the annual General Synod meeting, commissions, task forces, the Office of the General Secretary, the General Synod Council, and Communication and Production Services, including RCA Today magazine.

Ministry support services includes costs relating to the general and administrative support needed to carry out Transformed & Transforming and the work of the General Synod. This includes human resources, data management, information technology, financial services, legal counsel, and fundraising.

Board of Benefits Services—Retirement Programs

As of September 30, 2017, the date of our most recent audit, $446 million was set aside for participants in the 403(b) and retirement plans. Participant and employer contributions to the plan in fiscal year 2017 were $10 million. BOBS staff continues to work with pastors, congregations, and classes to obtain necessary information to monitor compliance with Book of Church Order Formulary No. 5 requirements, specifically the requirement to contribute 11 percent of eligible salary to the pastor’s retirement fund. As of September 30, 2017, it is estimated that $1.6 million was owed to the retirement accounts of RCA pastors by their local congregations. In fiscal year 2017, distributions to participants totaled $20 million. For additional information about the retirement plan, see the report of the Board of Benefits Services and the audited financial statements available at www.rca.org/finance.
Board of Benefits Services—General Fund to Administer Retirement Programs

The Board of Benefits Services General Fund administers the retirement programs, life and long-term disability insurances, and assistance and retiree chaplains programs for active and retired RCA ordained ministers, their dependents, and surviving spouses. The General Fund is financially strong, with $17.3 million in net assets as of September 30, 2017. The General Fund ended fiscal year 2017 with a net surplus of $11 million. In 2017, the BOBS insurance reserve was transferred to the BOBS General Fund in order to establish an endowment fund. This transfer accounts for $10 million of the surplus.

Administration costs for the retirement plans are covered primarily by a fee on employer contributions to the 403(b) and retirement plan accounts and totaled $1 million in 2017. Effective January 1, 2018, the fee is 22 basis points (0.22 percent), a reduction of six basis points over the previous year. This is the fifth consecutive year of administrative fee reduction.

Support for the assistance programs came from a General Synod assessment, designated contributions, a portion of the administrative fees charged to retirement plan participants’ accounts, and annual investment income from endowment funds. Assistance program expenses, including assistance grants and the retiree chaplains program, were $533,000 in 2017.

Church Growth Fund

The Church Growth Fund makes affordable-rate loans to RCA churches and related agencies for building projects used in ministry. Loans are funded by RCA churches, agencies, and individuals that purchase CGF savings certificates, which are interest-bearing investments offering a favorable rate of return. In fiscal year 2017, the CGF continued its plan to grow and service more RCA congregations, reaching $80 million in total assets.

As of September 30, 2017, the CGF had $25 million in cash and short-term investments and $56 million in loans to churches. The loans were funded by $35 million in savings certificates and $45 million in net assets (capital). Net income was strong due to gains on investments; it totaled $1.2 million after contributing $471,000 to the GSC to be used for grants to church plants, scholarships to fund youth mission experiences, and the capital campaign.

The CGF has very strong liquidity, capital, and cash flow when compared to standards established by the North American Securities Administrators Association.

Investments

The investments of the General Synod Council, Board of Benefits Services, and Church Growth Fund are managed by professional investment managers. Performance and compliance with defined investment policy statements are reviewed twice a year by the Investment Advisory Committee, which is made up of representatives from the boards of each corporation and at-large members with investment expertise.

Excess Operating Cash

Until December 2017, the operating cash of the General Synod Council, Board of Benefits Services, and Church Growth Fund was invested with Standish in an actively managed portfolio of fixed-income securities. As of December 2017, the funds are being managed...
by Telemus Capital, LLC, an investment firm based out of Ann Arbor, Michigan. The new investment manager allows for the segregation of funds for each RCA corporation. The investments are further segregated and managed under two separate fixed income investment policies. The first policy is the secondary liquidity source after cash and savings for all three RCA corporations and uses the benchmark for investment returns of the Barclays 1-5 Year Government/Credit A+ Index. The second policy is the third source of liquidity for the three RCA corporations and uses the benchmark for investment returns of the Barclays Intermediate Government Corporate Bond Index. The total amount invested in fixed income at Telemus Capital, LLC is $35 million.

**Endowment Funds**

The General Synod Council manages $17.3 million in funds provided by donors or set aside by management to be invested long term. Some of the endowed gifts entrusted to the General Synod Council date back to the mid-1800s. The investment proceeds from endowed gifts are used for donor-designated purposes while preserving and growing the dollar value of the original gift. These investments are managed by LVM Capital Management, Ltd. The benchmark for investment returns is 70 percent S&P 500 and 30 percent Bank of America Merrill Lynch 110 Year Government/Corporate Bond Index. These investments were in compliance with the investment policy as of December 31, 2017.

In addition to the General Synod Council and Church Growth Fund, the endowment pool includes amounts designated for local congregations and RCA seminaries and colleges. In fiscal year 2017, the RCA Endowment Fund distributed $539,000 to the General Synod Council, $21,000 to the Church Growth Fund, and $140,000 to RCA-affiliated organizations. If you are interested in setting up an endowment, please contact the development office.

In December 2016, endowments designated for BOBS that were previously administered by the GSC were transferred to BOBS along with reserves from the BOBS Insurance Fund. These endowments designated for BOBS total $11 million. The BOBS endowment funds are also managed by LVM Capital Management, Ltd. and follow the same investment policy and use the same benchmark as the GSC endowment fund.

The endowment fund policies and investment manager performance are reviewed semi-annually by the RCA Investment Advisory Committee.

**RCA Retirement Plans**

Fidelity Investments provides recordkeeping and investment management services for the Board of Benefits Services retirement programs. Mutual fund options available to retirement plan participants include target-date retirement funds based on a participant’s retirement age as well as 20 diversified mutual funds, with socially responsible options. As of December 31, 2017, 80 percent of RCA participant funds are invested in target-date retirement funds.

Fidelity has made changes in the active investment strategy of its target-date retirement funds. These changes have had positive results, with Fidelity outperforming peer funds in the overall market. The Investment Advisory Committee meets twice a year and continues to monitor the performance and overall investment offering from Fidelity, thus meeting its fiduciary responsibility for the benefits of RCA ministers and lay staff invested in the RCA retirement program.
As a result of the Request for Proposal conducted in 2015, Fidelity Investments has partnered more closely with the Board of Benefits Services to offer additional services and guidance to better prepare our ministers for retirement. Personalized investment advisory services, referred to as Portfolio Advisory Services at Work (PASW), are now available to participants in the RCA retirement program.

For the third year in a row, the Board of Benefits Services completed a reallocation project that allows eligible participants in the retirement program to reallocate funds from the RCA retirement plan to the 403(b) plan, resulting in greater flexibility at retirement.

Together as a denomination we, through decisions of General Synod, have agreed to contribute 11 percent of the eligible salaries of ministers of Word and sacrament to their retirement accounts each year. Currently, an estimated $1.6 million has not been paid into participant accounts from local congregations for benefits owed between January 1, 2009, and September 30, 2017. RCA ministers of Word and sacrament should review their quarterly statements to verify that 11 percent of their eligible salary is being contributed. Elder delegates to synod should ask questions in their local congregation to ensure that their congregation is providing this important benefit for their pastor(s).

Planned Giving Programs

The General Synod Council manages various planned giving programs, including charitable gift annuities, totaling $1.4 million. The Barnabas Foundation provides investment management and recordkeeping services for these programs. The investments include equities and fixed income to provide cash flow to cover the required payouts. The RCA Investment Advisory Committee reviews the investment policy and investment performance semi-annually.

Church Growth Fund Investments

The Church Growth Fund invests a portion of excess operating cash in two fixed-income accounts and one equity account. LaFleur & Godfrey Investment Management and LVM Capital Management, Ltd. manage these funds. The RCA Investment Advisory Committee reviews the investment policy and investment performance semi-annually.

Socially Responsible Investments

All investment policy statements for each pool of investments require the investment manager to avoid investments in the securities of companies whose principal business involves gambling, for-profit prisons, or the production or distribution of tobacco or alcohol.

Retirement funds may be invested, at the discretion of the participant, in socially responsible funds screened for the above restrictions.

The Board of Benefits Services participates with and pays dues to the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). In its forty-sixth year, ICCR is the pioneer coalition of shareholder advocates who view the management of their investments as a catalyst for social change. Its 300 member organizations are faith communities, socially responsible asset managers, unions, pensions, NGOs, and other socially responsible investors with combined assets of over $200 billion. ICCR members engage hundreds of corporations annually in an effort to foster greater corporate accountability on questions such as climate change.
change, corporate water stewardship, sustainable food production, human trafficking and slavery in global supply chains, and increased access to financial and healthcare services for communities in need.

The General Synod Council also invests a portion of excess operating cash with Oikocredit, one of the world’s largest sources of private funding to the microfinance sector.

2017 Budget Process and Assessment Proposal for GSC, BOBS Assistance Grants, and Theological Education

Alignment of Resources with Transformed & Transforming

Delegates to the 2013 General Synod addressed the direction of the RCA as the final step in a three-year discernment process that had broad and significant input from across the denomination. A 15-year goal called Transformed & Transforming was adopted by those delegates. Synod delegates again read and heard about progress that has been made this year and ways that individuals and congregations can connect with this communal goal.

In August 2013, the General Synod officers, regional synod leaders, and General Synod Council staff, as well as several non-staff, gathered to define how to carry out Transformed & Transforming’s three priorities: Cultivating Transformation in Christ (discipleship), Equipping Emerging Leaders of Today and Tomorrow (leadership), and Engaging in Christ’s Kingdom Mission (mission). Ten projects were identified, along with specific goals, timelines, and potential staff and budget resources.

GSC staff focuses on equipping churches and church leaders in the three Transformed & Transforming priority areas—discipleship, leadership, and mission—so they are better able to follow the unique call that God has given their church. Initiative plans for each priority and initiative leader were originally determined in 2013 and 2014 with the launch of Transformed & Transforming. These plans defined a purpose statement; what will be accomplished over the course of the 15-year goal, including how much will be accomplished by certain points in time; five-, ten-, and fifteen-year check-in points, along with one-year and ninety-day markers of progress; and definitions of the metrics to be used along the way.

Portions of each initiative were included in the capital campaign that began in calendar year 2015. Priority leaders developed 2018 budgets based on goals for measurable outcomes. These goals are primarily achieved by equipping churches and leaders through opportunities like connection events, learning communities, leadership communities, and leadership collaboratives. The 2018 budget includes funding for the initiatives from both current-year operating income and from campaign funds as they are available. For 2018, enough funds were raised by the beginning of the fiscal year to spend almost $500,000 from campaign funds.

General Synod Council Operating Budget Process

The General Synod Council operating budget is primarily funded by assessment income and contributions. Assessment income includes only the General Synod assessment and is 48 percent of all operating income. Contributions provided from donors and congregations for supporting missionaries and for the RCA Ministry Fund make up 36 percent of available financial resources. Other income includes services provided to the Board of Benefits Services and the Church Growth Fund, registration fees for Transformed & Transforming events, and investment and endowment earnings.
The 2018 budget was finalized by determining revenue available from assessments, contributions, investments, and other income. Assessment revenue for 2018 is budgeted to be approximately the same as 2017 due to an increase of $1.54 per member offset by a decrease in confessing membership.

In 2018, each dollar of the General Synod Council assessment is projected to be used in the following ways:

Contributions to the RCA Ministry Fund are general, unrestricted contributions to the RCA. The 2018 contributions to the RCA Ministry Fund were budgeted at $75,000 more than in 2017 due to the conclusion of fundraising for the capital campaign. Global Mission expects to see a decrease in contributions of about $200,000 due primarily to retiring missionaries. With no significant change in budgeted revenue for 2018, total budgeted expenses remain relatively similar to the previous year.

The 2018 budget was prepared assuming a draw on reserves of about $160,000 for costs related to moving forward with the initiatives of Transformed & Transforming. However, it is unlikely that reserves will be used due to unfilled staff positions. Several positions are open and are expected to remain open until a new general secretary is appointed.

Budgeted income by type for fiscal year 2018 is displayed in the chart below:
Budgeted operating expenses are shown by ministry and support areas below. Personnel costs, including salaries and benefits, make up 70 percent of the total budget. The remaining 30 percent of the budget is used for meeting and travel costs for the GSC, commissions, and General Synod; office costs, including rent and utilities; and other costs necessary to carry out the work of the GSC.

More than 500 congregations are engaged in Transformed & Transforming so far—that’s more than 50 percent of RCA congregations. The assessment amount provided this year enabled the General Synod Council and staff to come alongside those congregations in many ways, including:

**Transformational Processes (Discipleship)**

- Thirteen RCA congregations are participating in a 3DM learning community.
- Discipleship connection events were held in Iowa, Michigan, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois.

**Next Generation Engagement**

- Connection events were held in Indiana and Iowa.
- One next generation discipleship learning community began.

**Emerging Leaders**

- Six leadership development connection events were held in different regions.
- Two leadership development leadership collaboratives began.

**Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches**

- One Congregational Vitality Pathways learning community began.
- One leadership collaborative for specialized transitional ministers began.
Women’s Transformation and Leadership

- Six women’s leadership collaboratives began, involving three languages, five facilitators, and forty-two participants.
- One women’s global experience continued in the form of a pilot leadership development process in which the travelers continue to meet and develop ways to bring what they’ve learned back to their faith communities.

Local Missional Engagement

- Online connection events were created around the We Are Speaking movement in partnership with Women’s Transformation and Leadership.
- Two learning communities began in partnership with Church Multiplication and Disability Concerns.

Global Mission Engagement

- We saw increased RCA church engagement in the strategic impact areas of Nicaragua and Botshabelo, South Africa.
- New consulting tools and systems are in development for churches interested in expanding and deepening global mission involvement.

Church Multiplication

- Ten new congregations were activated for parenting and are in the process of developing New Congregation Plans (NCP).
- Four NCPs were approved and others are in the process of being approved.

Volunteer Engagement

- 1,455 volunteers engaged in service with RCA missionaries and mission partners.
- The Cultivate program developed; 12 young adult volunteers were recruited and trained to participate in Cultivate during 2018–2019.

Cultural Agility and Advocacy

- One hybrid learning/engagement community experience took place.
- Three cultural agility learning communities began.

Disability Concerns

- One mental health learning community began.
- Six connection events were held.

In addition to the operating budget, generous gifts from donors and foundations will provide funding for specific, designated projects, including disaster relief, Global Mission projects, an initiative to address the financial health of pastors, and a joint leadership initiative with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Funds raised through the Called campaign are available in addition to the operating budget and are being used to fulfill the three priorities of Transformed & Transforming.

Formulating the 2019 budget will begin in midsummer and will include direction from 2018 General Synod delegates. The focus will continue to be on aligning staff, support
services, and programs to fulfill the priorities of Transformed & Transforming in impactful and measurable ways.

2019 General Synod Assessment Amount

The proposed GSC 2019 assessment includes an increase of $0.46, or 1 percent, over the previous year’s amount of $53.75. In a year without significant budgetary changes, a reasonable increase would be based on the current rate of inflation or the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This would help cover increases for the costs of doing business, including wage increases and health insurance increases. For 2017, CPI increased 2.1 percent. Due to surpluses in recent years, we are not recommending a full 2.1 percent increase. In 2017, the GSC had surplus income and added to the reserves. The GSC budgeted to spend into reserves in 2018, however, due to several vacant positions, we expect to again add to our reserves.

Another consideration in setting the assessment rate is declining membership. The Consistorial Report Forms as of December 31, 2017, are not available at the date of this report. Reported membership has declined at an average of 1.8 percent per year over the past ten years. Therefore, we are assuming another year of declining membership and expect that even with a 1 percent increase in the per-member assessment, assessment revenue will be less than the amount received in the previous year. We plan to use the unspent reserves from recent years to balance the budget in 2019.

The 2018 proposal removes the additional amounts added during the 2017 General Synod since they were one-year funding commitments.

The interim general secretary and executive leadership team prepared a budget for the current fiscal year using the $45.64 per-member amount approved by the delegates of the 2017 General Synod. These funds were directed toward continuing the work of the three strategic priorities of Transformed & Transforming and providing support for 11 specifically defined initiatives. The interim general secretary and executive leadership team are committed to using the resources provided from the General Synod Council assessment along with capital campaign funds, contributions, and endowment earnings to balance the 2018 budget and continue to move forward the priorities of Transformed & Transforming.

We understand General Synod’s concerns about the impact of increasing the per-member assessment amount on local congregations. The interim general secretary and executive leadership team realize the tremendous blessing and responsibility we have been given to manage the past and present funds entrusted to us by donors and congregations.

Alternate Funding Plan Update

Over the years, several reports have come to General Synod relating to the current assessment structure. Most recently, a recommendation was passed in 2008 to start the exploration of alternative funding strategies. From 2008 to 2014, the General Synod studied this issue through all-synod advisory committees, through a task force for future funding, and by observing the Regional Synod of the Far West’s percentage of income model. The most recent report related to this topic was made in 2014. At that time, no recommendation was made due to the transition to the new goals of Transformed & Transforming and the beginning of the capital campaign.

Since October 2017, an eight-member committee, including the GSC’s CFO, has been
meeting to discuss and develop an alternate funding plan; specifically, a funding plan based on a percentage of income. The two simplest methods for calculating assessments are either a method based on membership or one based on dollars of income. We are currently using the per-member system and have been asked by the denomination to bring forward a proposal for a per-income method.

The committee has reviewed data based on the December 31, 2016, CRF and will review data for the previous five years and the December 2017 CRF data once it is available. The committee is reviewing the impact that this change would have on each church, classis, and region. Some of the key topics discussed by the committee include the following:

- **Values:** The committee has determined three primary values that must exist in any funding method. The three top values are that the method be biblically-based, be equitable, and have a simple calculation method.
- **Defining income:** The committee has discussed what types of income to use as the basis.
- **Implementation:** With a change to a new percentage of income method, nearly every church would see a change in amounts owed; some will increase and some will decrease. The implementation could be gradual and be spread over a period of years.
- **Limitations on change in assessments from year to year:** After implementation, limits could be set to prevent a significant fluctuation in amounts owed.
- **Fairness to churches with low membership but high income due to higher operating costs.**
- **Name change:** If a percentage of income method is adopted, these payments to the denomination could be called “covenant shares” rather than “assessments.”

The committee met with classis clerks at their annual meeting in June and received their input into a new funding plan. Next fall, the committee will send representatives to as many classis and regional synod meetings as possible. Materials sharing the committee’s data analysis and ideas will be sent to every classis whether or not committee members are able to attend the meeting. The committee will use the input provided by the classis clerks and classis and regional meetings in order to develop a proposal to offer to the GSC by March 2019.

If you have ideas, thoughts, or concerns regarding a potential change in funding plan, please contact finance@rca.org.

**2019 Board of Benefits Services Assistance Grant Assessment**

In 2017, the Board of Benefits Services’ assistance program for retired participants, spouses, and dependents provided $368,000 to retirees and active participants experiencing financial distress. Assistance may be granted for housing and utilities, ongoing medical insurance premiums, higher education for children of deceased ministers, funeral grants to surviving spouses, and retirement contributions for ministers who are disabled. Matching grants are available for emergency needs of active RCA ministers and for the medical insurance premiums of full-time RCA ministers involved in a new church plant.

The BOBS assistance program also provides for 30 retiree chaplains who connect with more than 1,000 retired RCA ministers of Word and sacrament to tend to the spiritual, financial, and relational needs of those who have served the church. This ministry strives to keep retired pastors and their spouses connected to the RCA after a life of service and provides a resource for those experiencing significant medical, financial, or emotional needs.
The assessment to support the assistance program was approved at $2.00 per member at General Synod 2017. The remainder of the funds required to sustain this program are provided through annual contributions, a portion of the administrative fees charged to retirement plan participants’ accounts, and annual investment income from the Ed and Luella Mulder Pastor Assistance Fund, as well as other endowment funds. The Board of Benefits Services is requesting no increase for 2019, leaving the assessment at $2.00.

2019 Theological Education Assessment

The Pastoral Formation Coordinating Committee originally proposed an overall theological education assessment of $875,000 to the GSC.

An overall amount of $875,000 calculates to a per-member assessment of $6.43, which is a $0.46 increase over last year, or 7.7 percent.

GSC discussed the recommendation of the PFCC at length and ultimately decided that it could not recommend such a large increase.

Instead, the GSC recommends a 2019 per-member assessment for theological education at $6.12, an increase of $0.15 per member. This represents a 2.5 percent increase over the previous year. The PFCC has adjusted the formula in its recommendation to match the GSC’s.

Change in Assessment from 2018 to 2019

The chart below summarizes the General Synod assessment amounts for 2018 and the General Synod Council proposed amount for 2019.

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<th>Name of Assessment</th>
<th>MGS reference</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>Proposed 2019</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<td>Amounts added during Synod 2017:</td>
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Per General Synod vote (F 18-4), reserves will be used to fund the half-time position and joint committee with the Christian Reformed Church in North America that were established by the adoption of RF 18-4 (see page 97).

F 18-1
To approve the General Synod Council 2019 assessment of $46.10 per confessing member.

A motion was made and supported to cease debate.
VOTED: To cease debate.

VOTED: To adopt F 18-1.

F 18-1
To approve the General Synod Council 2019 assessment of $46.10 per confessing member. (ADOPTED)

F 18-2
To approve the assessment of $2.00 per confessing member for the Board of Benefits Services to provide assistance funding for retired pastors who have a demonstrated need. (ADOPTED)

F 18-3
To approve the assessment of $6.12 per confessing member for theological education. (ADOPTED)

To fulfill the requirement of RF 18-4 to fund the half time position of coordinator for interreligious relations:

F 18-4
To approve the $2.78 per confessing member assessment to fulfill RF 18-4 to fund a half-time position, designated as the coordinator for interreligious relations, and a joint interreligious committee with the CRCNA.

A motion was made and supported to amend F 18-4 as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

To approve the $2.78 per confessing member from the unspent reserves from the year 2017 assessment to fulfill RF 18-4 to fund a half-time position, designated as the coordinator for interreligious relations, and a joint interreligious committee with the CRCNA.

A motion was made and supported to cease debate. The president directed that debate continue.

After further debate a motion again was made to cease debate.

VOTED: To cease debate.

VOTED: To amend F 18-4.

A motion was made and supported to cease debate.

VOTED: To cease debate.

VOTED: To adopt F 18-4 as amended.

The final version of F 18-4 as amended and adopted reads as follows:
To approve from the unspent reserves from the year 2017 to fund a half-time position, designated as the coordinator for interreligious relations, and a joint interreligious committee with the CRCNA. (ADOPTED)

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENT

The development team’s purpose and vision statement reads:

- 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.

- Imagine … Strong relationships with prospects, donors, and churches; where we know the answer is “yes” before we ask.

- Imagine … Finances are no longer an obstacle for ministry.

- Imagine … Every RCA staff member inspiring financial partnerships.

This statement defines our goals on behalf of the RCA.

The development team’s responsibility is to encourage 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. We coordinate all GSC fundraising efforts, including but not limited to support for RCA Global Mission, Transformed & Transforming, and the Church Growth Fund. We strive to develop and strengthen relationships with donors, potential donors, church leaders, and others to inspire financial partnerships but also to promote the mission and vision of the RCA overall.

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 for the greatest need. Undesignated gifts are typically assigned to the RCA Ministry Fund, a fund that supports the operational budget and work 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, such as the Called Campaign. 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 2017, 52 percent of the RCA’s total income came from voluntary support. Only 33 percent was derived from assessments. Other income such as investment earnings and fees paid for services rendered account for the remaining 15 percent of the RCA’s income in 2017.

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 2017 Annual Report to Donors is available on the RCA website and was available in hard copy form at General Synod.