

2009 OPENING DAY HANDOUT

Welcome to General Synod!

Throughout the week you will receive handouts of print material numbered to fit in proper sequence in the General Synod Workbook. *Replacement* pages are so indicated; please discard the original pages and replace them with the handout pages.

If you have an electronic workbook, please download replacement pages and annotate the original pages in your PDF so you know to look at the updates. Visit rca.org/delegates to download updates or for annotation instructions.

Materials included in this opening day handout are:

Our Call—replacement sheet

RCA Relationships Chart—replacement sheet

203rd General Synod Schedule. Insert behind TIMES/PLACES tab.

Facilities and Arrangements

Forums and Advisory Committee Room Assignments. Insert behind TIMES/PLACES tab.

Daily Schedule. Insert behind TIMES/PLACES tab.

8a-8b Additions and Deletions to the Roll Call of General Synod

9-12 Corresponding Delegates—replacement pages

12a-12d Issue Advisory Committees

98a Preliminary Summary of the Statistical Report of the RCA

110a Regional Synod Overtures

177-178b Appendix to the *Church Herald* Editorial Council Report

238a-238d Report of the Commission on Nominations

Request for Reimbursement Form

203rd GENERAL SYNOD SCHEDULE JUNE 4-9, 2009 HOPE COLLEGE AND WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

Wednesday June 3	Thursday June 4	Friday June 5	Saturday June 6	Sunday June 7	Monday June 8	Tuesday June 9
<p>Morning Breakfast</p> <p>Pre-Synod Meetings</p> <p>10:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. Synod Registration with DVD Orientation</p>	<p>Pre-Synod Meetings (Continued)</p> <p>9:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m. Synod Registration with DVD Orientation</p> <p>9:00–4:00 Issue Advisory Committee Moderator Training</p> <p>10:00–12:00 Understanding Racism: Joining the Journey Seminar</p> <p>12:00 Officers' Meeting</p>	<p>8:00 Morning Prayer – Dimnent Chapel</p> <p>Overview of the Day and Formation of Synod</p> <p>8:30 Advisory Groups Session 1</p> <p>10:30 GS Session: New Business #1</p> <p>President's Report</p>	<p>8:00–8:30 Morning Prayer – Fieldhouse</p> <p>8:35 GS Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Day • GS Executive Committee #2 • New Business #2 <p>9:30 Advisory Groups Session 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belhar Confession 	<p>Worship in Area Churches</p> <p>2:00–5:00 GS Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Call – Discipleship • Comm. on Christian Ed and Discipleship <p>Commissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Worship • Theology • Seminars and MFCA Reports <p>Election of President</p>	<p>8:00–8:30 Morning Prayer – Fieldhouse</p> <p>8:35 GS Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Groups Report on Belhar Confession • Our Call – Multi-Racial Future Freed from Racism • Comm. Race and Ethnicity • Commission on Christian Action • Our Call – Revitalization • Nom. for Vice President 	<p>8:00–8:30 Morning Prayer – Fieldhouse</p> <p>8:35 GS Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Call– Multiplication • Commission on Judicial Business • Advisory Groups Report on RCA Communication • Church Herald Ed. Council • Advisory Cmt. on Finance and Benefits • BOBS • Election of Vice President
<p>Afternoon Lunch</p> <p>4:00 Issue Moderator's Training</p>	<p>1:30 Officers' Platform Meeting</p> <p>2:00–4:00 Belhar Confession Seminar</p> <p>3:00 Leaders' Briefing – DeVos 2A07/2A08</p>	<p>1:30–5:00 GS Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GS Executive Committee #1 • Reformed and Missional <p>3:30 Advisory Groups Session 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCA Communication 	<p>1:30–5:00 Special Advisory Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order/Governance • Overtures/New Business • Women's Ministries • Finance/Benefits <p>Our Call Forums (appointed at tables)</p>	<p>2:00–5:00 GS Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Call – Discipleship • Comm. on Christian Ed and Discipleship <p>Commissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Worship • Theology • Seminars and MFCA Reports <p>Election of President</p>	<p>1:30–5:00 GS Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Call – Leadership • GS Executive Committee #3 • Advisory Cmt. on Overtures and New Business • Advisory Cmt. on Order and Gov. • Commission on Church Order • Colleges 	<p>1:30–4:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission on Nominations • Unfinished Business • Church Order Editorial Report <p>2:30 Adjourn to Worship – Dimnent Chapel</p> <p>4:00 Departure</p>
<p>Evening Dinner</p>	<p>7:30 Opening Worship – Dimnent Chapel</p> <p>Opening Reception at WTS with Michael Blanchard</p>	<p>7:00 GS Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Secretary's Report • Our Call Introductions <p>Our Call Reception</p>	<p>7:00 30th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Barbara Williams Skinner</p> <p>Hope College Reception</p>	<p>7:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Call – Global Mission • Commission on Christian Unity <p>Ecumenical Evening</p> <p>Ecumenical Reception</p>	<p>7:00 Intro V-P Candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Cmt. on Women's Ministries • Commission for Women • Comm. on History <p>John Calvin 500th Anniversary</p> <p>Historical Series Reception</p>	

FACILITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS
General Synod 2009
Hope College and Western Theological Seminary – Holland, Michigan

Registration

Registration for General Synod will be in Maas Auditorium, located just south of Phelps Hall. Registration is open Wednesday, June 3, from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Thursday, June 4, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.. Beginning at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, June 5, registration will continue in DeVos Fieldhouse at the west end on the main level.

Information Desk

The General Synod Information Desk will be in DeVos Fieldhouse at the west end of the main level beginning at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, June 5.

Place of Meeting

General Synod business sessions will be on the main floor of the DeVos Fieldhouse. The fieldhouse is equipped with air conditioning, so layer your clothing accordingly.

Meals

Meals will be served cafeteria style in the Phelps Hall dining room. Please use the scatter system rather than waiting in a long line. After picking up your tray and cutlery proceed to any of the food or beverage stations. Hope College serves Fair Trade coffee to the delegates of General Synod.

Linen Service

On-campus guests will receive linens, including four towels, upon arrival. There is no towel exchange.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found Department will be located at the General Synod Information Desk in the DeVos Fieldhouse.

Telephone

Telephone calls will be received at the General Synod Information Desk. The telephone number is (616) 395-7007. Messages received at the General Synod number will be placed at the delegate's table on the fieldhouse floor.

Mail

Mail should be addressed Hope College Conference Services, RCA General Synod, P.O. Box 9000, Holland, MI 49422-9000. Because of the time needed for delivery, it is recommended that mail not be sent to General Synod delegates.

Expenses

The General Synod will be billed directly for lodging and meals of all delegates at General Synod. Since General Synod cannot bear the cost for visitors or delegates' spouses, expenses must be paid prior to arrival.

Absence from General Synod Sessions

If you must be absent from any of the sessions of the General Synod please notify Ken Bradsell on the operations platform at the back of the Plenary meeting space. Please also drop off your electronic voting keypad. The Committee of Reference is charged with responsibility to excuse delegates from sessions (BCO 3.1.2). Absences will be reported to the committee for its approval. You may pick up your voting keypad when you return to the meeting.

Recreation

The Dow Physical Education Center offers 1/10 mile indoor track, three racquetball courts, three wallyball courts, one Olympic size swimming pool, three basketball/volleyball courts, and two dry saunas. The Dow Center will be open on a limited basis during synod.

Computer Access

Computer labs and kiosks will be available to everyone. Labs are located in Cook Hall, Phelps Hall, and on the main level of the DeVos Fieldhouse. Ethernet cables are required for using laptops in the residence halls. Wireless Internet is available in the DeVos Fieldhouse.

Parking

Parking is available in designated areas. Overnight parking on Holland city streets is not permitted and will result in a ticket and fine.

Regional Synod Gatherings

The Synods of Mid-America, New York, Great Lakes, and Canada will each meet over lunch on Friday, June 5. Go through the line, get your tray of food, and proceed to the following rooms in Phelps: New York in Maas Auditorium, Canada in the Barber Room, Mid-America in the Maas Conference Room, and Great Lakes in the Otte Room.

The Synods of the Heartland and Albany will meet over breakfast on Saturday morning. Heartland meets in the Maas Conference Room and Albany in the Otte Room. Go through the line, get your tray of food and proceed to the room.

The Synod of the Mid-Atlantics will meet over lunch on Saturday in the Maas Conference Room. Go through the line, get your tray of food, and proceed to the room.

Checkout

Please look for specific check-out information in the projected announcements. Room keys **must** be returned before leaving campus. Failure to do so will result in a \$25 personal expense. Lost meal cards will result in a \$25 personal expense. Lost voting keypads will result in a \$50 personal expense.

For those requiring ground transportation on Tuesday, June 9, please see your special instructions for checking your luggage in Cook Hall Lounge from 6:45 – 8:00 a.m. and during the lunch break. **Your luggage must be checked for loading to busses no later than 1:00 p.m.**

The HOPE Prayer Team invites delegates and staff to meet with them for prayer on the main level of DeVos Fieldhouse (Friday, Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday).

Forum and Advisory Committee Room Assignments

Our Call Review Forums (Saturday)

Revitalization—Sally De Vowe and Tim Meendering—Nykerk/Wickers Auditorium
Multiplication—Seth Sundstrom and Mary Ann Wierks—Martha Miller Freid Heminway Auditorium
Discipleship—Thomas Elenbaas and Marcia Gibbons—Schaap Science Center 1000
Leadership—Janice Melichar-Utter and Aaron Vis—DeWitt/Herrick Room
Mission—Donald Baker and Victor Folkert—DePree Cook Art Building
Multiracial Future Freed from Racism—Roger Peterson and Cora Taitt—Schaap Science Center 1019

Advisory Committees (Saturday)

Order and Governance—Martha Miller 159
Overtures and New Business—Martha Miller 158
Women’s Ministries—Martha Miller 238
Finance and Benefits—Martha Miller 239

Major Issue Advisory Committees (Friday and Saturday)

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Room Assignment</u>
1	Schaap Science Center 1008
2	Schaap Science Center 1116 (Friday), 3130 (Saturday)
3	Schaap Science Center 1118
4	Schaap Science Center 2128
5	Schaap Science Center 2130
6	Dow 201
7	Dow 202
8	Dow 204
9	Martha Miller 158
10	Martha Miller 159
11	Martha Miller 237
12	Martha Miller 238
13	Martha Miller 239
14	Martha Miller 241
15	Martha Miller 242
16	Martha Miller 249
17	Maas Conference (Friday), Martha Miller 243 (Saturday)
18	Otte Room Phelps (Friday), Dow 203 (Saturday)
19	DeWitt Center–Herrick Room
20	Schaap Science Center 3128

Coffee Break Locations for Advisory Committees and Forums on Friday Afternoon and Saturday

Schaap Science Center Lobby
Dow–Second Floor Lobby
Martha Miller–First Floor Rotunda
Maas Conference, Otte, Wickers, DePree, and Herrick–outside rooms

General Synod 2009 Daily Schedule

Thursday, June 4

9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. General Synod Registration—Maas Auditorium
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Issue Advisory Committee Moderator Training—DeWitt/Herrick
10:00 a.m. – Noon Understanding Racism: Joining the Journey Seminar—Wickers
Noon Officer's Meeting—Barber
1:30 p.m. Officer's Platform Meeting—DeVos
2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Belhar Confession Seminar—Wickers
3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Leadership Briefing—DeVos 2A07/2A08
5:30 – 7:00 p.m. Dinner—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
7:30 p.m. General Synod Opening Worship—Dimnent Chapel
Reception following at Western Theological Seminary Commons and
an evening with singer/songwriter/storyteller Michael Kelly
Blanchard in Semelink Hall

Friday, June 5

6:45 – 8:00 a.m. Breakfast—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
Committee of Reference—Otte Room in Phelps Hall
8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer—Dimnent Chapel
• Overview of the Day and Formation of Synod
8:30 – 10:00 a.m. Advisory Groups—Session 1
10:15 a.m. Coffee Break—DeVos Fieldhouse Display Area
10:30 a.m. – Noon General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
Noon – 1:15 p.m. Lunch—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
3:00 p.m. Coffee Break at Advisory Group Venues
3:30 – 5:00 p.m. Advisory Committees—Session 2
• RCA Communication
5:15 – 6:30 p.m. Dinner—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
Issue Advisory Committee Moderators—go through line and eat in Otte
7:00 p.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
9:30 p.m. Our Call Reception—DeVos Fieldhouse Patio West*

Saturday, June 6

6:45 – 8:00 a.m. Breakfast—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer—DeVos Fieldhouse
8:35 – 9:15 a.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
9:20 a.m. Coffee Break at Advisory Group Venues
9:30 a.m. – Noon Advisory Committees—Session 3
• Belhar Confession
Noon – 1:15 p.m. Lunch—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
Issue Advisory Committee Moderators—go through line and eat in Otte
1:30 – 5:00 p.m. Our Call Forums—appointed at tables
Advisory Committees—Order/Governance, Overtures/New Business,
Women's Ministries, Finance/Benefits
3:00 p.m. Coffee Break at Forum and Advisory Committee Venues
5:15 – 6:45 p.m. Dinner—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
5:15 p.m. Women's Dinner—Maas Auditorium (by reservation only)
Issue Advisory Committee Moderators—Otte
7:00 – 9:00 p.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
9:00 p.m. Hope College Reception—DeVos Fieldhouse Patio West*

Sunday, June 7

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
8:30 a.m. – Noon Worship in Local Churches—Roundtrip Transportation Provided
Noon – 1:30 p.m. Lunch—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
1:45 p.m. Coffee Break—DeVos Fieldhouse
2:00 – 5:00 p.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse

5:15 – 6:45 p.m. Dinner—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
Ecumenical Guest Dinner (by invitation)—Otte Room
7:00 – 9:00 p.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
9:00 p.m. Ecumenical Reception—DeVos Fieldhouse Patio West*

Monday, June 8

6:45 – 8:00 a.m. Breakfast—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer—DeVos Fieldhouse
8:35 a.m. – Noon General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
10:00 a.m. Coffee Break—sponsored by Children and Worship and the RCA
Helpline—DeVos Fieldhouse Display Area
Noon – 1:15 p.m. Lunch—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
1:30 – 5:00 p.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
3:00 p.m. Coffee Break—sponsored by Northwestern College—DeVos
Fieldhouse
Display Area
5:15 – 6:45 p.m. Seminary Dinners for WTS (Western Seminary), NBTS (Haworth Inn),
and MFCA (Mass Conference—go through the line for MFCA) (by
reservation only)
5:15 – 6:45 p.m. Dinner—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
7:00 p.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
9:00 p.m. Historical Series Reception and Book Signing—DeVos Fieldhouse
Concourse

Tuesday, June 09

6:45 – 8:00 a.m. Breakfast—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
6:30 a.m. Committee of Reference—Otte
8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer—DeVos Fieldhouse
8:35 a.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
10:00 a.m. Coffee Break sponsored by Fidelity Investments—DeVos Fieldhouse
Display Area
Noon – 1:15 p.m. Lunch—Phelps Hall Cafeteria
1:30 – 2:30 p.m. General Synod Plenary—DeVos Fieldhouse
2:30 p.m. Adjourn to Closing Worship Service with Communion and Installation
of Officers—Dimnent Chapel
4:00 p.m. Departure

*In the event of inclement weather, the reception will be hosted on the concourse level of the DeVos Fieldhouse.

**ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO
THE ROLL CALL OF GENERAL SYNOD
2009**

Regional Synod of Albany

Classis of Albany

Delete: Elder Doug LaGrange
Add: Elder Richard Vanderbilt

Regional Synod of Canada

Classis of Ontario

Delete: Rev. John DeGiovanni
Add: Rev. James Vellenga

Regional Synod of the Far West

Regional Synod of the Far West

Add: Elder Ben Sweet

Classis of California

Delete: Elder Richard Bambrick
Delete: Elder John Elzinga
Add: Elder Lawrence Shewfelt
Add: Elder Gus Wybenga
Add: Elder James Nakakihara

Classis of Central California

Delete: Rev. Donald Rowe

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes

Classis of Southwest Michigan

Delete: Elder William Helphingstine

Regional Synod of the Heartland

Classis of Minnesota

Delete: Elder John Ruiter

Classis of Pleasant Prairie

Delete: Elder Robert Nichols
Add: Elder David Dannen

Regional Synod of Mid-America

Classis of Chicago

Delete: Rev. Pedro Windsor-Garcia
Add: Rev. David Parrish
Add: Rev. Maryteresa Orshonsky
Add: Elder David Ridderhoff Jr.

Classis of Florida

Delete: Rev. Edward Hernandez
Add: Rev. Gerald P. Hekhuis

Classis of Wisconsin

Delete: Elder Clifford Otte
Add: Elder Joe Clow

Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

Classis of Greater Palisades

Delete: Elder Dawn Hoffman
Add: Elder Pat Malone

Classis of Passaic Valley

Delete: Rev. Scott Nichols
Add: Rev. Charles Bigelow
Delete: Elder Robert Rohner
Add: Maryellen Hess

Regional Synod of New York

Classis of Brooklyn

Delete: Rev. Felix Busby
Add: Rev. Sharon Atkins

Advisory Committee on Finance and Benefits

Delete: Clifford Otte
Add: Joe Clow
Delete: Dawn Hoffman
Add: Kathryn Romero

CORRESPONDING DELEGATES

GENERAL SECRETARY EMERITUS

Edwin G. Mulder

COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE

Ned L. Beadel
Mary Bechler
Carol M. Bechtel
Glen Blumer
Randall Bohl
Mary Bryant
John Busman
Michelle Chahine
James Cobb
Thomas De Vries
Stephanie Doeschot
Anna Gonzales
Wesley Granberg-Michaelson
Rhonda Johnson
Elisabeth Kersten
Aaron M. Klein
Marianne Lin
Toni Macon
Richard Morano
Lizbeth Moss
John Ornee
Christopher Poest
James Seawood
James Steward
Arnold Van Ankum
Ronald Vande Bunte
Evan Vermeer

9

(replacement)

BOARD OF BENEFITS SERVICES

Philip Doeschot

NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Board of Trustees

Thomas G. Bos

President

Gregg Mast

Students

Debbie E. Rundecker

Kendra L. Van Houten

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Board of Trustees

Mark Eriks

President

Timothy Brown

Students

Kenita Harris

Jessica Kast-Keat

MINISTERIAL FORMATION CERTIFICATION AGENCY

Board of Trustees

Barton Strong

Students

Jay Carroll

Sally Coppersmith-Hovenga

CENTRAL COLLEGE

President David Roe

HOPE COLLEGE

President James Bultman

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

President Gregory Christy

THE CHURCH HERALD

Christina Van Eyl

Douglas Van Bronkhorst

GENERAL SYNOD COMMISSIONS

Commission on Christian Action

Thomas C. Goodhart

Commission on Christian Education and Discipleship

Deborah Swanson

Commission on Christian Unity

Harold Delhagen

Commission on Christian Worship

Adriene Thorne

Commission on Church Order

Randy Kooy

Commission on History

J. Jeffery Tyler

Commission on Judicial Business

Richard Baukema

Commission on Nominations

John Kapteyn

Commission on Race and Ethnicity

Mark Kellar

Commission on Theology

James Brownson

Commission for Women

Stacey Midge

REGIONAL SYNOD WOMEN

Regional Synod of Canada

Margaret Kapteyn

Christina Labbé

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes

Pat Williams

Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics

Nancy Ruitter

Regional Synod of New York

Annie Lee Phillips

Gloria McCanna

YOUTH

Regional Synod of Albany

Nicholas Dorland

Regional Synod of Canada

Olga Noordam

Regional Synod of the Great Lakes

Sarah Maxwell

Regional Synod of New York

Joel Kim

Central College

Julie Balmer

Cory Nikkel

Hope College

Daniel Claus

Grace Olson

10
(replacement)

ECUMENICAL DELEGATES

Christian Reformed Church in North America

The Reverend Dr. Peter Borgdorff

Iglesia Reformada Dominicana

The Reverend Ruperto Medina Beltré

Elder Felix Caraballo

Elder Juan Cruz

The Reverend Nelson Polanco

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The Reverend John M. Best

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Reverend Jim Cobb

United Church of Christ

The Reverend Lydia Veliko

ECUMENICAL GUESTS

Christian Reformed Church in North America

The Reverend Gerald L. Dykstra

Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

The Reverend Godfrey Betha

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

The Reverend Dr. Setri Nyomi

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE PEOPLE

General Synod Council Missionaries

Debra and Delvin Braaksma

James Harrison

Marlin P. and Sally Vis

Parliamentarian

Susan Sgarlat-Fels

Opening Worship Leader

Janelle Koolhaas

Closing Communion Worship Leader

Rev. Marlin Vis

Homosexuality Dialogue Consultant

John Stapert

SEMINARIAN SEMINAR

New Brunswick Theological Seminary

Dawn Alpaugh

John Chen

Donna Field

Debbie E. Rundecker

Joanne Sidoti

Kendra L. Van Houten

Western Theological Seminary

Nancy Claus

Lorene Duin

Kenita Harris

Jessica Kast-Keat

Terika Raak

Marcus Roskamp

Marla Rotman

Matt Schmidt

Jill Vande Zante

Brett Vander Berg

11

(replacement)

Ministerial Formation Certification Agency

Brandon Beebe
Jay Carroll
Josh Lunde Whitler
Matthew Miller
Marijke Strong
Julia Turner
Andrew Yamamoto

12

(replacement)

ISSUE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Advisory Committee 1

Moderator

Kent Fry, hol

Ministers

Douglas Dwyer, d-r
Madeline Fuentes, wis
Murray Moerman, bc
Leighton Seys, dak
James Vellenga, ont

Elders

Rachel Hill, c-g
Martin Keller, hol
Janice Melichar-Utter, m-h
Lawrence Shewfelt, cal
Glenn Spyksma, cc
Peter Van Kley, es

Corresponding

Randy Kooy, Commission on Church
Order
Daniel Claus, Hope College
Stephanie Doeschot, GSC

Advisory Committee 2

Moderator

Nancy Van Wyk Phillips, rm

Ministers

Juan Carmona, roch
Robert Luidens, scny
Benjamin Byoung Park, rm
Steven Smallegan, zee
Joe Veltman, wis

Elders

Steve Abma, ws
Thedis De Witt, sgr
Gerda Huisman, canp
Cora Taitt, ny
Case Van Mastrigt, nmi
Edward Vander Wal, dak

Corresponding

Ned Beadel, GSC
Timothy Brown, president, Western
Theological Semianry
Gregg Mast, president, New Brunswick
Theological Seminary
Carol Bechtel, PROF

Advisory Committee 3

Moderator

Cheryl Molhoek, ngr

Ministers

Thomas Bartha, pasv
David Parrish, chi
Roger Peterson, cc
Ceny Tavares, ont
Calvin Tysen, gpal

Elders

Boyd deWaard, ont
JoAnn Dykstra, hol
Yen-Tse Lin, n-s
Patrick Malone, gpal
George Meppelink, zee
Mary Catharine O'Neill, n-s
Joe Paglia, ilia

Corresponding

Aaron Klein, GSC
Sarah Malone, Regional Synod of the
Great Lakes
James Seawood, GSC

Advisory Committee 4

Moderator

Daniel Meeter, bkl

Ministers

Jonathon Brown, cas
Donald De Glopper, ci
Michael De Ruyter, nmi
Raphael Johnson, ny
Kevin Schutt, musk

Elders

Michael Ehrenfried, ccn
Lee Howell, ccn
Bradley Lewis, scny
Mary Linge, m-h
Kenneth Palmer, mont
Emma Stackhouse, r-w

Corresponding

James Brownson, Commission on
Theology
John Kapteyn, Commission on
Nominations
Christina Labbe, Regional Synod of
Canada

Advisory Committee 5

Moderator

Donald Poest, le

Ministers

Daniel Beyer, sw
Kevin Kleinheksel, zee
Justin Meyers, que
Michael Pitsenberger, hol
Drew Poppleton, ilia
John Coakley, Professor, NBTS
Robert Rook, ws

Elders

Henry Bruines, Regional Synod of
New York
Robert Foreman, cp
Carolyn Hart, scho
Ed Hawkins, m-h
James Nakakihara, cal
Peter Newman, orgn
Lloyd Sandbulte, ci
Pauline Williman, alb

Corresponding

Gregory Christy, president,
Northwestern College
Stacey Midge, Commission for Women
Deborah Swanson, Commission on
Christian Education and Discipleship
John Busman, GSC

12a

Advisory Committee 6**Moderator**

Marianne Lin, que

Ministers

Sharon Atkins, bkl
Troy Nanninga, sgr
Jason Olson, es
Paul Quevedo, n-s
Aaron Vis, zee

Elders

Kenneth Bliss, scho
Steve Couzens, sgr
Larry Dokter, ws
Walter Howard, pasv
Tom Van Dusen, nmi
Lester Williams, bkl

Corresponding

Thomas Goodhart, Commission on
Christian Action
Nancy Ruiters, Regional Synod of the
Mid-Atlantic
James Cobb, GSC

Advisory Committee 7**Moderator**

Tanner Smith, ws

Ministers

Stuart Clark, n-s
Marcia Gibbons, mont
Kent Landhuis, pp
Richard Ruch, nb
Brian Taylor, wis

Elders

Leonard De Braber, ngr
Alice Hammond, mont
Gene Koopman, hol
Paul Peterson, dak
Elliott Ten Clay, ilia
Lou Ann Wilkens, ill

Corresponding

Douglas Van Bronkhorst, *Church
Herald*
Jay Carroll, Seminarian Seminar,
MFCA
Anna Gonzales, GSC

Advisory Committee 8**Moderator**

Jean Lemmenes, swm

Ministers

Douglas Baker, ws
Victor Folkert, cp
Douglas Leonard, r-w
Maryteresa Orshonsky, chi
Edward Van Kampen, c-g

Elders

Kristin Burgess, musk
Lee DeYoung, sgr
Thomas Dibble, d-r
Clara Lasselle, scny
Willem Spaans, canp
Richard Vanderbilt, alb

Corresponding

Philip Doeschot, president, Board of
Benefit Services
Elisabeth Kersten, GSC
Evan Vermeer, GSC

Advisory Committee 9**Moderator**

Steven Sayer, orng

Ministers

Donald Baker, ws
Carl Czirr, le
David Hill, d-r
Thomas Johnston, r-w
Rodney Koopmans, ny

Elders

Lawrence Alsum, wis
Dale Bosch, dak
David Dannen, pp
Wanda Hendrickson, sgr
David Ridderhoff, chi
Jack Schrotenboer, zee

Corresponding

Margaret Kapteyn, Regional Synod of
Canada
Kenita Harris, Seminarian Seminar,
WTS
Debbie Rundecker, Seminarian
Seminar, NBTS

Advisory Committee 10**Moderator**

Dennis Voskuil, Professor, WTS

Ministers

Mark Kamper, swm
Scott Kooiman, sw
Dann Stouten, zee

Elders

John Hooper, bc
Gary Smith, c-g
Ben Sweet, Regional Synod of Canada
Lisa Urivez, hol
Lyle Vander Meiden, ci
John Vos, ont

Corresponding

Richard Baukema, Commission on
Judicial Business
Edwin Mulder, General Secretary
Emeritus
Gloria McCanna, Regional Synod of
New York
Annie Lee Phillips, Regional Synod of
New York
Lizbeth Moss, GSC

Advisory Committee 11

Moderator

Phyllis Palsma, mont

Ministers

Steven Brouwer, ws
Scott DeBlock, scny
Thomas Elenbaas, sgr
Timothy Schaaf, cas

Elders

David Fergesen, d-r
Joseph Hernandez, ny
Wayne Ribbens, sw
Susan Smith, Regional Synod of Albany
Albert Spaa, bc
Robert Wierenga, Regional Synod of
Mid-America

Corresponding

Julie Balmer, Central College
Adriene Thorne, Commission on
Christian Worship
Nicholas Dorland, Regional Synod of
Albany
Juan Cruz, ecumenical, IRD

Advisory Committee 12

Moderator

Verlyn Hemmen, minn

Ministers

Brian Dykema, scho
Barton Keefer, canp
Jessica Scholten, hol
Philip Somsen, pp
Julie VanDerVeen VanTil, ngr
Arlene Wilhelm, m-h
George Brown, Professor, WTS

Elders

William Galloway, Regional Synod of
the Mid-Atlantics
Mun Kyu Im, gpal
Ronald Lugten, zee
Hattie Mitchell, ny
Eric Moreno, cal
Tim Poel, zee
Gary Van Genderen, ci

Corresponding

Thomas Bos, Board of Benefits Services
James Bultman, president, Hope
College
Jes Kast-Keat, Seminarian Seminar,
WTS
Nelson Polanco, ecumenical, IRD

Advisory Committee 13

Moderator

Jill Ver Steeg, ci

Ministers

D. Marc de Waard, zee
Rick Oppenhuizen, sgr
Patricia Singletary, ny
Edward Hernandez, flor

Elders

Phil Carroll, le
William Damhoff, ill
Christopher Dorland, roch
Darl Evers, swm
Jacob Thomas, que
Darlene Wissink, cp

Corresponding

Grace Olson, Hope College
Mary Bryant, GSC
Christopher Poest, GSC
Ronald Vande Bunte, GSC

Advisory Committee 14

Moderator

Andrea DeWard, nmi

Ministers

J. Jeremiah Coe, bc
Wayne DeVrou, wis
Carol Faas, ngr
Thomas Hendricks, orng
Donald Rowe, cc
Thomas Stewart, cp
Anthony Vis, ci
Kerri Weldon, alb

Elders

Lillie Brown, bkln
Lee De Master, wis
Roger Keller, sw
Muriel Maat, nb
Walter Rozeboom, sgr
Daniel Smith, chi
Marvin Weidkamp, cas

Corresponding

Cory Nikkel, Central College
Barton Strong, MFCA Moderator
Glen Blumer, GSC
Richard Morano, GSC

Advisory Committee 15

Moderator

Scot Sherman, ccn

Ministers

Charles Bigelow, pasv
Jamie Dykstra, dak
Walter Jones, roch
Keith Lohman, swm
Seth Sundstrom, dak
Timothy Meendering, ngr

Elders

Sally De Vowe, musk
Norman Haight, r-w
Arlene Meerdink, rm
Kathryn Romero, nb
Bernard Vermeer, minn

Corresponding

J. Jeffery Tyler, Commission on History
Felix Carabello, ecumenical, IRD
Arnold Van Ankum, GSC

12c

Advisory Committee 16**Moderator**

Jonathan Sherrill, sgr

Ministers

Leon Fikse, cal
 David Jones, alb
 Thomas Merchant, ill
 Sherri Meyer-Veen, scho
 Kenneth Petty, d-r

Elders

Dave Bolt, ngr
 Howard Dalton, orng
 Gary Hall, ilia
 Kenneth Koel, rm
 Frank Terpstra, ci

Corresponding

Mark Eriks, WTS Board of Trustees
 Olga Noordam, Regional Synod of
 Canada
 Sally Coppersmith-Hovenga,
 Seminarian Seminar, MFCA
 Rhonda Johnson, GSC

Advisory Committee 17**Moderator**

W. Peter Te Winkle, sgr

Ministers

David Groeneveld, nb
 Mark Kleinheksel, zee
 Randall Knoll, ill
 Kenley Korver, ccn
 Gerald Norman, ilia
 David Tipple, c-g
 Mary Ann Wierks, hol

Elders

Daryl Haack, es
 Gary LiBert, que
 Ronald Matthews, musk
 Jan Nienhuis, zee
 Gracia Stob, swm

Corresponding

Harold Delhagen, Commission on
 Christian Unity
 Kendra Van Houten, Seminarian
 Seminar, NBTS

Advisory Committee 18**Moderator**

Paul Janssen, gpal

Ministers

Mark Ellens, minn
 Richard Heusinkveld, sgr
 German Moreno, flor
 Andrew Nearpass, ilia
 Joel Plantinga, cal
 David Sikkema, minn

Elders

Leona Broers, cas
 Sylvia Correa, flor
 Genevia Gano, flor
 Maryellen Hess, pasv
 Muryl Korver, es
 Judy Parr, hol

Corresponding

Mark Kellar, Commission on Race and
 Ethnicity
 Randall Bohl, GSC

Advisory Committee 19**Moderator**

J. Erik Buteyn, ci

Ministers

Robert Derrick, canp
 Craig Gilbert, cal
 Gerald Hekhuis, flor
 Alan Hofland, swm
 Richard Veenstra, musk

Elders

Linda Andersen, d-r
 Gary Bushman, cc
 Mark DeKock, ws
 Russell Dobos, le
 Robert Heinen, wis
 Vernon Hoffs, cal
 Herman Luhring, pp
 Paul Schipper, pp
 Gus Wybenga, cal

Corresponding

David Roe, president, Central College
 Pat Williams, Regional Synod of the
 Great Lakes
 Michelle Chahine, GSC
 Toni Macon, GSC
 John Ornee, GSC

Advisory Committee 20**Moderator**

Leigh Van Kempen, hol

Ministers

Dennis Hietbrink, es
 John Koedyker, musk
 Milton Sikkema, es
 Scott Summers, pp
 Kenneth Walsh, m-h

Elders

Janice Drolen, swm
 Robert Engelsman, ngr
 Kenneth Hoesch, zee
 Eugene Kosters, sgr
 Leon Schuiteman, ws
 Barbara Stoops, roch

Corresponding

Joel Kim, Regional Synod of New York
 Mary Bechler, GSC
 Ruperto Medina Beltre, ecumenical,
 IRD

**PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF THE STATISTICAL REPORT
OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 12/31/2008**

	2006	2007	2008	2007-2008 Increase or (Decrease)
1 Churches	931	931	933	2
2 Church Households	105,166	105,445	104,774	(593)
3 Confessing Members	166,921	165,953	161,272	(4,771)
4 Inactive Members	39,061	39,387	39,545	158
5 Baptized Members	64,876	65,238	59,303	(5,935)
6 Total Membership	270,858	270,518	260,120	(10,548)
7 Adherents	51,068	50,498	51,448	950
8 Average Worship Attendance	172	171	176	5
9 Received on Confession	6,863	7,040	6,536	(504)
10 Received on Certificate	3,409	2,989	2,977	(12)
11 Transferred	3,068	3,060	2,930	(130)
12 Deceased	2,545	2,580	2,711	131
13 Other Removals from Roll	5,656	5,034	6,503	1,469
14 Infants Baptized	3,468	3,351	3,141	(210)
15 Adults Baptized	1,488	1,404	1,476	72
16 Sunday Church School	0	0	0	0
17 New Membership Classes	0	0	0	0
18 Other Educational Programs	0	0	0	0
19a RCA Assessments	12,517,429	12,682,289	12,535,989	(146,300)
19b RCA Contributions	13,660,425	14,178,366	15,005,604	827,238
19c Other Contributions	18,042,115	19,036,289	20,132,770	1,096,481
20 Congregation Purposes	293,101,846	326,472,199	289,315,922	(37,156,277)
TOTAL	337,321,815	372,369,143	336,990,285	(35,378,858)

98a

Church Plants with a Denominational Plan

Ninety-seven church plants have an average worship attendance of 93.

Organized/Received/Adopted

Wayfarer Community Church, Caledonia, Michigan (1/08) Classis of South Grand Rapids
 North Ridge Community Church, Eldridge, Iowa (2/08) Classis of Illinois
 CenterPoint Church, Lewis Center, Ohio (4/08) Classis of Lake Erie
 Within Reach Ministries, Parchment, Michigan (4/08) Classis of Southwest Michigan
 Grace and Peace Reformed Church, Englewood, New Jersey (5/08) Classis of Greater Palisades
 City Church Denver, Denver, Colorado (6/08) Classis of Center City Network
 North Point Community Church, Plainwell, Michigan (6/08) Classis of Southwest Michigan
 Iglesia El Calvario, Hemet, California (10/08) Classis of California
 St. Paul Reformed Church, Van Wert, Ohio (10/08) Classis of Illiana
 Lighthouse Korean Reformed Church, Kent, Washington (11/08) Classis of Cascades

Disbanded/Released

Church of the Good News, Chicago, Illinois (5/08) Classis of Chicago
 Open Door Fellowship, Corsica, South Dakota (8/08) Classis of Dakota
 Heritage Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan (11/08) Classis of Zeeland
 Church of the Savior, Livonia, Michigan (12/08) Classis of Lake Erie
 Hope Community Reformed Church, Sacramento, California (12/08) Classis of Central California
 Open Door Reformed Church, Dorr, Michigan (12/08) Classis of Zeeland

Merged

Oaks Community Church, Chino, California and The Bridge, Chino, California, became The Bridge, Chino, California (6/07—reported late) Classis of California

Second Reformed Church, Wyckoff, New Jersey, and Union Reformed Church, Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, became Abundant Life Reformed Church, Wyckoff, New Jersey (10/08) Classis of Passaic Valley

REGIONAL SYNOD OVERTURES

19. The Regional Synod of New York respectfully overtures the General Synod to instruct the General Synod Council, its officers, and/or employees to maintain the position of full time coordinator of the Office of Women's Ministries, through an assessment, with appropriate staff and budget beginning October 1, 2009.

And further, the coordinator for the Office of Women's Ministries will operate from an assessment for October 1, 2009, through September 30, 2010. The office shall solicit, raise, and/or collect funds for the position of coordinator of the Office of Women's Ministries. The office shall have the authority to solicit said funds for its maintenance and mission for the year. The RCA will provide and pay for office space and a part time assistant to support the continuation of the ministry. Continuity will be provided by maintaining this office.

Reasons:

1. Full inclusion of women in the life of the RCA continues to be an issue of justice.
2. Women comprise 64 percent of the population of the RCA while 75 percent of all elders and deacons are men.
3. The denomination determined a need for women at the decision-making tables. The women closed their organization to come into the structure of the RCA, raising \$750,000 to pay for their place at these tables.
4. Under the justice heading, the Office of Women's Ministries needs to exist at parity with the other RCA councils and staff which also advocate for their constituencies and are funded by assessments.
5. To discontinue this office may send a message to women that they don't count and are not a part of the missional church.
6. At the closing of Reformed Church Women's Ministries in 2000, Global Mission realized a \$250,000 loss per year, which has cost our denominational missions approximately two million dollars.
7. At a time when a new initiative, Sister Share, is beginning to encourage women to reengage with and support RCA Global Mission, it makes no sense to close down Women's Ministries.
8. No matter the rationale given for closing this office, the women of the RCA will perceive this move as once again marginalizing their gifts, gender, leadership, and service to the Kingdom of God.

110a

20. The Regional Synod of New York overtures the 2009 General Synod to refrain from making any legislative or policy decisions at this General Synod related to the theological matter of homosexuality or to the standing of gay and lesbian persons in the Reformed Church in America; and further, to urge congregations, classes, and regional synods to continue the faithful and fruitful conversations begun during the past three years of the formal dialogue process mandated by the 2005 General Synod (*MGS 2005*, R-94 [substitute], p. 372).

Reasons:

1. The dialogue process has modeled a healthy means by which the Reformed Church in America, in its congregations, classes, regional synods, and at the General Synod, can continue to engage this important issue in ways that are both theologically and pastorally faithful to our calling as Reformed Christians.
2. The dialogue process revealed a wide range of biblical and theological understandings within the Reformed Church in America. Continuing study and dialogue will deepen both our understanding of the Scripture and of each other, and in that way strengthen both our fellowship with each other and our witness to the world. Conversely, new legislative action at this time would favor one "side" over the other, sowing seeds of distrust where there is now emerging relationship and a deepening participation in mission.
3. An ongoing commitment to dialogue and theological study in no way changes or diminishes RCA policy or the actions of previous General Synods on this subject. In fact, it reinforces those actions by keeping them as an integral part of any conversation.
4. The dialogue process has shown that the RCA's historic commitments to purity and to unity can indeed be complementary, each more visible and more influential when held together with the other in active theological conversation. In doing so with integrity, the RCA can also be a model to the church worldwide.

The *Church Herald* published eleven issues in 2008, at an average cost of \$50,000 per issue. Given anticipated income for 2009 and its reserves, the *Church Herald* would be able to publish eleven issues (assuming same size and quality) in 2009 before its resources are exhausted. A joint Editorial Council–General Synod Council plan has been formed with these projections in mind, along with corresponding publication costs for *RCA Today*.

Even given added fiscal stress and marketing responsibilities, as well as the elimination of a full-time staff position, the magazine continued to offer strong content in 2008. The January issue included an in-depth look at the RCA, with articles on history, polity, theology, and mission. Churches are encouraged to use this issue as a resource in new member classes. In February, the *Herald* launched a five-part series on Our Call, the denomination's ten-year goal, offering a mid-term update on each of the goal's major foci. The magazine also offered some of its perennial favorites, including General Synod coverage and Advent devotions, as well as covering topics of interest to the denomination as a whole, including evangelism (September 2008), the missional church (February 2009), and the Belhar Confession (May 2009).

The *Church Herald* also began digital subscriptions in 2008: print subscribers can access the digital version at no additional charge, and digital-only subscriptions are also available. About two hundred people subscribe to the digital version. Later in 2008 the *Herald* added blogs to its website, providing another opportunity for members of the RCA to converse about the issues important to them. Traffic on the blogs continues to increase steadily.

The Future

At synod 2008, an overture from the Synod of New York requested a subsidy for the *Church Herald*. Synod's response to that overture was to ask the *Church Herald* to provide a report to this year's synod offering a rationale for such a subsidy. The *Church Herald* Editorial Council began crafting a report; a draft of this initial report is found in Appendix A. A representative of the Editorial Council brought this report to the fall meeting of the General Synod Council (GSC) as a step toward coordinating a recommendation to the 2009 General Synod. GSC heard the report and then recommended the convening of a task force to discuss the matter further.

In January, three members of the Editorial Council met with three members of GSC and RCA general secretary Wesley Granberg-Michaelson to consider next steps for coordinating the denomination's communication needs. The group developed an outline for the marriage of the *Church Herald* and *RCA Today* to produce a publication that would reach a wider audience. It would contain both the promotional material featured in *RCA Today* and the reader-driven content of the *Herald*. The resulting plan, discussed and affirmed by the Editorial Council (and GSC), is the report found on pages 172-176. Implementation work has already begun on the plan. Delegates are being asked at this meeting to consider implementation options found on pages 175-176, or to determine another option to ensure continuing publication of a magazine for the RCA.

Why It Matters

Today's culture is hungry for communication, for dialogue, and for collaboration, and the *Herald* is uniquely positioned to foster these gifts within the Reformed Church. Without expanding communication channels, the Reformed Church faces an uncertain future. If we cannot learn to talk to each other, we limit our global effectiveness as a body, becoming instead community-based institutions. As much as our polity and our theology, we are bound together by our common ministry.

Beyond promoting the work accomplished through Our Call, the *Herald* provides the church with a place to discuss other issues important to local ministry and personal spirituality. Its pages are open to voices that may not be heard elsewhere.

As we as a denomination consider a print vehicle that combines the *Church Herald* with *RCA Today*, it will be critically important that the *Herald* maintain its independent voice. Being accountable to the General Synod and the church as a whole allows the magazine to host open, two-way communication from across the denomination. Communication of this type will continue to serve the overall health of the denomination as the RCA continues to expand its mission and ministry.

Appendix A

The 2008 meeting of the General Synod requested the Editorial Council of the *Church Herald* to submit a proposal and rationale for ongoing assessment subsidies, to be considered by the 2009 General Synod (*MGS 2008*, R-33, p.129). The Editorial Council fulfilled that request and brought the following report to the fall meeting of the General Synod Council (GSC) as a step toward coordinating a recommendation to the 2009 General Synod.

GSC heard the report and then recommended the convening of a task force to discuss the matter. The report of the joint Editorial Council/GSC task force including options for implementation and funding is found on pages 172-176 of the Workbook.

From the Editorial Council of the *Church Herald*:

RECOMMENDATION TO GENERAL SYNOD 2009 REGARDING SUSTAINED GENERAL SYNOD SUPPORT FOR THE *CHURCH HERALD*

(Reviewed and discussed with the General Synod Council in October 2008)

The *Church Herald* Editorial Council recommends that the General Synod support the *Church Herald* annually from an assessment subsidy, beginning with \$200,000 in the next fiscal year.

Background:

A brief history of the funding of the *Church Herald* for the last fifty years indicates that the *Church Herald* had been continuously supported financially by the General Synod before the ending of all support in 2007.

Until 1992, the General Synod directly supported the *Church Herald*. For example, in 1950 it appropriated \$7,000, and in 1965, \$10,000. This represented a significant portion of the *Church Herald's* budget. In 1992, the *Church Herald* received \$86,700 from the General Synod. If the equivalent in buying power were provided today, that amount would be \$136,000.

Between 1993 and 2007, the General Synod supported by assessment almost the entire budget of the *Church Herald*, and the magazine was sent to every household in the RCA at no cost.

The General Synod of 2007 ended all funding for the *Church Herald*. Not only did the every-member-plan funding arrangement end, but no subsidy of the *Church Herald* from the General Synod was provided. Most of the subsidy was transferred to other communication projects in the RCA. Since 2007, the *Church Herald* has supported itself almost completely by subscriptions. For the first time in five decades, the *Church Herald* has tried to exist without the financial support of the General Synod. This has led to a perilous financial situation.

Upon reflection of history, and witnessing the current reality, it is not reasonable to expect a denominational magazine to exist solely on subscriptions.

The Proposal:

We are seeking a restoration of this time-honored method of supporting the *Church Herald* as an important part of RCA life. An assessment that generates around \$200,000 annually for the *Church Herald*, adjusted annually for inflation, would put the *Church Herald* on sustainable financial footing.

Reasons:

- A. The *Church Herald* has a valued, important place in the overall communication efforts of the RCA.
 - In reader satisfaction surveys, one most recently done in 2007 by the Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research at Hope College, the *Church Herald* is widely valued by its readers. (This 2007 survey is particularly important in that it surveys the readership while its readership was the entire membership of the RCA.)

In national journalistic award competitions, the magazine has consistently been recognized with prizes.

- The *Church Herald* is a common, trusted voice for the RCA. Not all readers agree with everything—which cannot be expected in any church communication—but in the past and today, it is one of its key connectional pieces.
- Other RCA publications have a role in promoting the RCA, in particular “Our Call,” but they cannot replace the role or function of the *Church Herald* in the RCA. The *Church Herald* is unique, and uniquely valuable.
- The *Church Herald* has been supported by the whole denomination even though it is sometimes controversial. As the minutes of the General Synod show, overtures and objections to various policies and articles of the *Church Herald* have been made regularly throughout the twentieth century.
- The *Church Herald* connects us to our past, providing an ongoing historical record of the ministry of the denomination and the conversations regarding that ministry.
- The *Church Herald* is read by ecumenical brothers and sisters in the wider Christian world, spreading our impact and connecting us to the global church. It goes to readers in homes, churches, and libraries throughout North America.
- The level of assessment would not be burdensome, and would be a good investment in maintaining dialogue within the Reformed Church.

B. Need for RCA funding through the General Synod

- The *Church Herald* is seeking to make a major transition during a time of declining denominational connection and difficult economic times. Our goal is to persist in offering excellent communication with, to, and for all those in the RCA, and we recognize that we must continue to evolve in order to accomplish this. Without financial assistance, such growth will be difficult.
- The Editorial Council has made the decision to maintain the publication’s quality with the current bare-bones operation. Some cuts to the magazine and its budget could perhaps be made (a staff position has already been eliminated, for example), but we would soon be cutting into the bone.
- When the *Herald* was first eliminated from the assessment budget, the staff and council anticipated a level of response that has not been realized. Although we continue to work to increase our subscription base, we are a long way from the 40,000 subscribers we anticipated when budgeting for a subscription-based magazine.
- As church multiplication efforts increase the number of RCA members, this new audience may increase subscriptions to the magazine. In the interim, a subsidy will ensure viability so the magazine will be available to serve and include these newer members of the RCA.
- Projections for 2008 indicate a \$200,000 deficit for the year (more accurate numbers will be provided at year’s end). This represents more than half of our available reserves. The RCA deserves a strong *Church Herald*, but without fiscal support it likely will have no *Church Herald* at all by the end of 2009.

Special to GSC: Regarding the request for subsidy, the council identified three potential means of including this in the General Synod budget. We agree with others who have said raising assessments is a bad practice, and would like not to be the culprit in doing this. To accomplish this, the GSC would need to reduce its assessment budget, and we understand the ramifications of this on the overall budget of General Synod Council. We also ask the GSC to recognize that for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, the *Herald* has received no subsidy, which has allowed the GSC two years of additional revenue.

The *Church Herald* assessment subsidy request could become a separate line item in the budget, as are the subsidy requests for theological education and pensions. This would be a good way to reflect the *Church Herald*’s accountability to General Synod. It would set

the number apart in the budget, which has both advantages and disadvantages for all parties.

A *Church Herald* assessment subsidy could also be lodged as part of the GSC's communication budget, as it has been in the past. This would be more reflective of a cooperative communication effort between Communication and Production Services and the *Church Herald*. In our conversations, the council was in favor of this method of accounting. It is, of course, GSC's prerogative, but this suggestion represents the council's best thinking at this moment.

The Editorial Council of the *Church Herald* considers the magazine to be an important component of denominational communication, and welcomes the opportunity to work with the GSC and its staff to develop a plan for RCA communication as requested by General Synod.

178b

Report of the Commission on Nominations

The Commission on Nominations met in person on January 27, 2009, and again by conference call on February 19, 2009, and March 17, 2009. Throughout the year members of the commission actively sought out qualified candidates, solicited Talent Bank Forms (a brief two-page application), and checked references on those who were interested in serving on a commission or agency of the General Synod, or on the board of directors or trustees of an RCA-related educational institution. In these ways the commission sought to fulfill its responsibilities as stated in the Bylaws of the General Synod—namely, “in consultation with the general secretary, [to] search the denomination for suitable nominees. In making nominations it shall consider the geographic location, occupation, and record of previous service to the denomination of persons suggested by classes, regional synods, and other sources. It shall consider this and other pertinent data in light of each commission’s or agency’s responsibilities, membership needs, suggested nominees, and place and schedule of meetings” (*Book of Church Order [BCO]* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 8.c.2).

The commission seeks to nominate individuals for service on agencies, commissions, and boards of directors on the basis of their Spiritual gifts, Heart (or passion), Abilities, Personality, Experience and special Leadership abilities, and when possible seeks to involve young adult members of the RCA (so they can be nurtured and encouraged to serve the RCA in a variety of ways in the future). The commission remains mindful of these criteria through the use of the acronym “SHAPELY.”

Through its efforts, the Commission on Nominations has proactively fulfilled its responsibility to “search the denomination” (*BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 8.c.2) and believes those nominated have the “SHAPELY” traits that make them particularly well suited for the work of the positions to which they are being nominated. In addition to finding people who are exceptionally well suited to serve on a General Synod commission or agency or on the board of directors or trustees of an RCA educational institution, the commission is pleased to report once again that it has fulfilled its responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the BCO are upheld.

When the number of qualified candidates from which to choose increases, the commission’s work is made easier and the work of the RCA’s agencies and commissions is carried out more effectively. Consequently, the commission encourages anyone interested in serving on a General Synod commission or agency or on the board of directors or trustees of an RCA-related educational institution to complete a Talent Bank Form and submit it to the Commission on Nominations as indicated on the form. Forms are available from staff to the Commission on Nominations (Paul M. Karssen [1-712-737-4958 or pkarsen@rca.org]) or Laura Kiel Tarbous [1-212-870-3279 or ltarbous@rca.org]), or through the “Talent Bank Form” link on the General Synod page of the RCA website (by either clicking on the “General Synod” button on the home page or inserting www.rca.org/synod in the address bar of your web browser).

Nominees identified by the Commission on Nominations are as follows (Note: * indicates a final term, and # indicates an official nomination from the assembly, institution, or agency listed.):

GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL

Class of 2013

- *The Rev. Jonathon Brown
- *The Rev. James Cobb (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)#
- *Larryl Humme
- *The Rev. Christopher Poest (Regional Synod of Mid-America)#
- *Kathryn Romero
- *Ai-Lan Wang
- *Thomas Dibble (Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantic)#

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN ACTION

Class of 2011

The Rev. Mark Rich (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)#

Class of 2012

*The Rev. Samuel Kwon

Loretta Rolle

*The Rev. Steve Young

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND DISCIPLESHIP

Class of 2012

Brooke Boersma

The Rev. Scott Nyp

The Rev. Dennis TeBeest

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

Class of 2012

The Rev. Jeffrey Japinga

*G. Oliver Patterson

The Rev. Susan Sgarlat-Fels

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Class of 2012

The Rev. Scot Sherman

Andy Vivanco

COMMISSION ON CHURCH ORDER

Class of 2012

The Rev. Joshua Bode

*Jason Schnelker

COMMISSION ON HISTORY

Class of 2012

*The Rev. Hartmut Kramer-Mills

*Lori Witt

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL BUSINESS

Class of 2012

*James Ramsey (Regional Synod of Canada)#

Edward Thornton (Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantic)#

*The Rev. Cary Winn (Regional Synod of Mid-America)#

COMMISSION ON NOMINATIONS

Class of 2011

Vacancy (Native American Indian Ministries Council)#

Class of 2012

*Donald Broek (Regional Synod of the Heartland)#

*The Rev. John Chang (Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries)#

The Rev. Kenneth Labbé (Regional Synod of Canada)#

Mary Linge (Regional Synod of New York)

COMMISSION ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

Class of 2011

Kevin McMahan

Class of 2012

The Rev. Lewis Tait

Santos Gonzalez (Council for Hispanic Ministries)

The Rev. Keith Ross (Native American Indian Ministries Council)

COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY

Class of 2012

Eugene Fisher

*The Rev. Angie Mabry-Nauta

David Timmer

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Class of 2012

Kathryn Brogan

*The Rev. Mark Bush

*The Rev. Stacey Midge

BOARD OF BENEFITS SERVICES

Class of 2010

Timothy Zeutenhorst

Class of 2012

Dennis Bolling

*John De Koster

*Mary Draayer

The Rev. Vernon Hoff

*Craig Vander Molen

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CHURCH GROWTH FUND

Class of 2012

The Rev. Stephen Hanson

Ben Sweet

EDITORIAL COUNCIL OF THE *CHURCH HERALD*

Class of 2012

William Te Winkle (Regional Synod of Mid-America)

The Rev. Anthony Vis (Regional Synod of the Heartland)

*The Rev. Mary Wisner

*Willem Zwiep (Regional Synod of Canada)

MINISTERIAL FORMATION CERTIFICATION AGENCY

Class of 2012

The Rev. Eddy Aleman

*The Rev. Renee House

*The Rev. David Theonugraha

NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

All nominees to the boards of the seminaries are the official nominees of the board. However, some of them have been made in consultation with a regional synod (MGS 1993, R-4, p. 300). These are indicated in the list that follows.

Class of 2011

Vacancy

Class of 2013

The Rev. Jae Hong Han

*Bradley Lewis

*The Rev. J. Michael Sanders

Vacancy

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

All nominees to the boards of the seminaries are the official nominees of the board. However, some of them have been made in consultation with a regional synod (MGS 1993, R-4, p. 300). These are indicated in the list that follows.

Class of 2010

*The Rev. Phyllis Palsma (Regional Synod of Albany)

Class of 2012

*Cathy Koop

The Rev. John Lee (Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics)

The Rev. Jon Norton (Regional Synod of New York)

Vacancy

Vacancy

Vacancy (Regional Synod of Canada)

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CENTRAL COLLEGE

Class of 2013

Peter Cartwright

Barbara Kniff-McCulla

Vacancy

HOPE COLLEGE

Class of 2013

The Rev. William Boersma

R-46

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.

R-47

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

**REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA
REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT**

(See reverse side for detailed instructions on how to calculate travel costs.)

Name (please print)

Street address

(_____) _____
Telephone number

City / State or Province / Zip or Postal code

Name of meeting: _____

Location of meeting: _____ Date of meeting: _____

Mileage: _____ miles x 55¢ per mile = \$ _____

Please attach receipts for any of the following:

1. Tolls (bridge, turnpike): \$ _____

2. Parking: \$ _____

3. Airfare: \$ _____

4. Other expenses (please specify):

a. _____ \$ _____

b. _____ \$ _____

c. _____ \$ _____

Total Other Expenses \$ _____

TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT \$ _____

Date _____

Signature of payee: _____

Approved by: _____

Account code: _____

Vendor code: _____

REIMBURSEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Be sure to indicate the precise name, location, and date of the meeting in question.
2. Be sure to include your telephone number in case we need to reach you.
3. Representatives of the Reformed Church in America should consider reasonable economy in selecting accommodations and mode of travel. Please use the following guidelines for reporting travel costs:
 - a. Personal automobile: The reimbursement rate is 50.5¢ per mile, plus tolls and parking charges. An additional five cents (\$0.05) per mile should be added for each passenger accompanying the driver for official attendance at the same meeting. Use of private transportation for reasons that are primarily personal convenience should not be reported for more than the economy rates for public transportation or group airfare when applicable.
 - b. Submit airfare based on round-trip cost for the most direct route, using coach class fares.
 - c. Arrange the best fare possible and consider double-booking of round-trips if the dates and arrangements for two different meetings are firm.
 - d. When reporting the cost of meals, please include all gratuities.
 - e. Share a double-room whenever practical. If an individual requests a single room when double accommodations are available, the additional cost should not be reported on this form.
 - f. “Other expenses” include valid business expenses such as taxi service, charges for tips, and laundry or valet service if the trip is five or more days long. All other personal charges that are nonrelated business expenses, such as personal telephone calls, video rentals, and incidentals, should not be reflected on this report.
 - g. Avoid unnecessary duplication of rental cars and taxi service.
4. Please attach appropriate receipts when available.

RETURN THIS FORM TO: Juel Grevenstuk
Reformed Church in America
4500 60th Street SE
Grand Rapids MI 49512