CALL TO ORDER

The president called to order the eighth meeting of the General Synod at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 16, 2021. Hellen Harvey, corresponding delegate from the General Synod Council and member of the General Synod Council serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod, offered prayer.

The General Synod viewed a brief video presentation featuring the work of mission personnel JJ TenClay. Upon the request of the president, the vice president offered prayer.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, CONTINUED


RF 21-1 was presented to the house (GS Workbook p. 99). Rev. Palsma summarized highlights and common themes regarding RF 21-1 from the discernment groups.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend RF 21-1 as follows (deletions are stricken):

“To direct the General Synod Council to appoint a team of at least 10 but no more than 15 people tasked with the specific work of developing a restructuring plan for the denomination with a view to optimizing the RCA’s sustained spiritual and organizational health, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and any other bodies it finds necessary. This team should be composed
of several executive RCA staff members, and of representatives from around the RCA drawn from regional or local assemblies …”

**VOTED:** To not adopt the amendment to RF 21-1 (yes 68; no 140).

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend RF 21-1 as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

“To direct the General Synod Council to appoint a team of at least 10 but instruct the Commission on Church Order, consulting with no more than 15 people and other commissions as needed, to develop a task with the specific work of developing a restructuring plan for the denomination with a view to optimizing the RCA’s sustained spiritual and organizational health, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and any other bodies it finds necessary. This team should be composed of several executive RCA staff members, and of representatives. Those consulted should be from around the RCA drawn from regional or local assemblies that have expressed an intention to remain in the Reformed Church in America, and should be representative of the racial, ethnic, gender, age, socio-economic, geographic, and other forms of diversity present in the RCA. This team should use the four principles stated above as it does its work and limit its work to BCO Chapter 1, Parts II, III, and IV, and should bring any recommendations for restructuring that require General Synod approval, including any proposed changes to the Book of Church Order, make its first report to General Synod 2023-2024; and further,

“To approve the 0.29 per member assessment to fund the added work of this team.”

**VOTED:** To not adopt the amendment to RF 21-1 (yes 65; no 142).

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend RF 21-1 as follows (deletions are stricken):

“… This team should use the four principles stated above as it does its work and should bring any recommendations for restructuring that require General Synod approval…”

A motion was made and supported from the floor to cease debate.

**VOTED:** To cease debate (yes 171; no 39).
VOTED: To not adopt the amendment to RF 21-1 (yes 63; no 145).

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend RF 21-1 as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

“…This team should use the four principles stated above as it does its work and should bring any recommendations for restructuring that require General Synod approval, including any proposed changes to the Book of Church Order, to General Synod 2023 2024; and further…”

A motion was made and supported from the floor to cease debate.

VOTED: To cease debate (yes 188; no 20).

VOTED: To adopt the amendment to RF 21-1 (yes 159; no 41).

RF 21-1 as amended was before the house. It reads as follows:

“To direct the General Synod Council to appoint a team of at least 10 but no more than 15 people tasked with the specific work of developing a restructuring plan for the denomination with a view to optimizing the RCA’s sustained spiritual and organizational health, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and any other bodies it finds necessary. This team should be composed of several executive RCA staff members, and of representatives from around the RCA drawn from regional or local assemblies that have expressed an intention to remain in the Reformed Church in America, and should be representative of the racial, ethnic, gender, age, socio-economic, geographic, and other forms of diversity present in the RCA. This team should use the four principles stated above as it does its work and should bring any recommendations for restructuring that require General Synod approval, including any proposed changes to the Book of Church Order, to General Synod 2024; and further,

“To approve the $0.29 per member assessment to fund the work of this team.”

A motion was made and supported from the floor to cease debate.

VOTED: To not cease debate (yes 125; no 76).
Discussion continued regarding RF 21-1 as amended.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to further amend RF 21-1 as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

“…This team should **use consider** the four principles stated above as it does its work and should bring any recommendations for restructuring that require General Synod approval, including any proposed changes to the Book of Church Order, to General Synod 2024…”

VOTED: To adopt the further amendment to RF 21-1 (yes 135; no 68).

The twice amended RF 21-1 was before the house. It reads as follows:

“To direct the General Synod Council to appoint a team of at least 10 but no more than 15 people tasked with the specific work of developing a restructuring plan for the denomination with a view to optimizing the RCA’s sustained spiritual and organizational health, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and any other bodies it finds necessary. This team should be composed of several executive RCA staff members, and of representatives from around the RCA drawn from regional or local assemblies that have expressed an intention to remain in the Reformed Church in America, and should be representative of the racial, ethnic, gender, age, socio-economic, geographic, and other forms of diversity present in the RCA. This team should consider the four principles stated above as it does its work and should bring any recommendations for restructuring that require General Synod approval, including any proposed changes to the *Book of Church Order*, to General Synod 2024; and further,

“To approve the $0.29 per member assessment to fund the work of this team.”

A motion was made and supported from the floor to postpone further discussion of RF 21-1, until the Advisory Committee reports on Overture 10.

VOTED: To not postpone further discussion of RF 21-1 (yes 39; no 166).

The twice amended RF 21-1 was again before the house.
A motion was made and supported from the floor to further amend RF 21-1 as follows (additions are underlined):

“To direct the General Synod Council to appoint a team of at least 10 but no more than 15 people from a stratified random sampling as per Acts Chapter 1:12-26 (casting lots). Each Regional synod will put forth three names. One name will be randomly drawn from each Regional Synod. These people will be tasked with the specific work of developing a restructuring plan for the denomination …”

**VOTED:** To not adopt the further amendment to RF 21-1 (yes 23; no 189).

A motion was made and supported from the floor to cease debate.

**VOTED:** To cease debate (yes 178; no 27).

**VOTED:** To adopt the twice amended RF 21-1 (yes 135; no 69).

RF 21-2 was presented to the house (GS Workbook p. 101). Rev. Engel summarized highlights and common themes regarding RF 21-2 from the discernment groups.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend RF 21-2 as follows:

“To form a new nonprofit mission agency independent of the RCA that will buttress what currently makes up the RCA’s work in global missions; and further,

“To direct the GSC to form an implementation team that will be tasked with incorporating the new agency as a 501(c)(3), drafting bylaws, and recruiting a board of directors, who would then be responsible for appointing an executive director for the new agency in the manner specified in the bylaws. The implementation team should work closely with the RCA Global Mission team to ensure diligent care for current RCA missionaries for faithful utilization during the transition to the new agency. And further,

“To instruct the general secretary to transfer a portion of the current RCA missions budget to the new agency as seed money (to be determined by the general secretary in consultation with GSC); and further,
“To urge RCA churches and individuals that currently support RCA missionaries and mission projects through Partnership-in-Mission (PIM) shares to continue that support through the new agency.”

A motion was made and supported from the floor to cease debate.

VOTED: To cease debate (yes 177; no 22).

VOTED: To not adopt the amendment to RF 21-2 (yes 28; no 174).

RF 21-2 in its original form was once again before the house.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to cease debate.

VOTED: To cease debate (yes 187; no 18).

VOTED: To not adopt RF 21-2 (yes 9; no 198).

RECESS

The president declared the General Synod recessed at 4:58 p.m., following prayer by the Rev. Dirk Gieser, corresponding delegate from the Commission on Christian Worship.