

**General Synod Council
Reformed Church in America
Minutes of June 22, 2021 Meeting
Zoom Video Meeting**

Welcome and Prayer

Ned Beadel, moderator of the General Synod Council (“GSC”), called the meeting to order on June 22, 2021, at 1:03 p.m. (Eastern) followed by prayer.

Members Present

The following members of the GSC were present for all or part of the meeting:

Pedro Agudelo	Kent McHeard
Eddy Alemán, ex-officio	Eric Moreno
Philip Assink	Sheila Moses
Ned Beadel	James Nakakihara
Michelle Chahine	Albert Plat
Charles Contreras	George Rounds
Devonna Cousins	Betty Shuster
EJ de Waard	Clarance Smith (ELCA)
Bruce Deckinga	Kimberly Van Es
Stephanie Doeschot	Leigh Van Kempen
Hellen Harvey	Harris Van Oort
Anna Jackson	Patricia Varga
Robert Johnson	Imos Wu

Members Absent

The following members of the GSC were unable to attend the meeting:

Jamie Dykstra	David Landegent
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Staff and Guests

The following staff members and guests were present for all or part of the meeting:

Terri Boven, *Recorder*
Elizabeth Brand, *Director of General Synod Operations*
Thomas Smith, *Regional Synod Observer from Council of Synod*
Executives
Jillisa Teitsma, *Chief Financial Officer*
Jill Ver Steeg, *Chief Operations Officer*
Angela Worthley, *Recorder*

Minutes

GSC 21-17 Motion made, supported, and carried:

To approve the minutes of the March 23-24, 2021 and May 28, 2021 GSC meetings.

Corporate Resolution

GSC 21-18 Motion made, supported, and carried to adopt the following:

**GSC CORPORATE RESOLUTION
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022**

RESOLVED, that any of the following officers of this corporation (General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America, a New York not-for-profit corporation), to wit:

Eddy Alemán, General Secretary
Jillisa Teitsma, Treasurer

acting alone or together, or any individual expressly authorized in writing by both of the foregoing officers of this corporation to act as a “designated representative” of this corporation for purposes of executing contracts or other agreements or reports to which this corporation is a party, be and they are hereby authorized and empowered to execute and deliver any contract or other agreement or report for or on behalf of the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America, including but not limited to contracts for goods and services, agreements to accept gifts in any amount of money, stocks, bonds, or other marketable securities from individuals, entities, estates, and trusts, informational and other reports and forms for submission to federal and state departments, agencies, authorities, bureaus, and similar administrative or regulatory bodies or operations, and contracts or other agreements for the sale, assignment, transfer or disposition of any stocks, bonds, or other securities or real estate now or hereafter owned or held by the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church In America.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the authority of any “designated representative” to execute and deliver contracts or other agreements for goods or services is limited to contracts or other agreements that provide for payments by this corporation in an aggregate amount not greater than \$25,000.00.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that any individual to whom a copy of these resolutions shall be delivered may rely upon these resolutions until such time as written notice of any change, amendment or cancellation thereof shall have been received by such individual.

Correspondence

The GSC members discussed the following correspondence:

- An email received from a GSC member concerning the financial condition of the RCA and the actions taken reported by the general secretary at the October 2020 and the March 2021 meetings as well as the general secretary's letter of response to it.
- A letter received from Alliance of Reformed Churches (ARC) to express how they see their relationship with the RCA, not as a competitor but as an opportunity to spread the gospel more rapidly, and to correct false allegations concerning the general secretary, named GSC members and RCA leadership as being actively involved with ARC.
- A copy of an email written by an RCA member addressed to the RCA Forward Steering Committee concerning alleged errors that were posted on the RCA Forward website.

Racial/Ethnic Councils

A report was received from the Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries.

Litigation

In accordance with GSC policy EL-9, Communication and Support to the Board, the GSC received brief reports regarding two legal actions that have been filed. One names "Reformed Church in America" and others as defendants. The other names the RCA's Church Growth Fund and others as defendants.

In the first lawsuit the plaintiff alleges that he was abused as a teen while participating in Boy Scout activities. A local RCA church is named as a defendant because it had obtained a charter for the troop. "Reformed Church in America" is also named as a defendant. Counsel has been sought and retained. The plaintiff's counsel has informed our counsel that the suit was filed to preserve the plaintiff's rights while the Boy Scout bankruptcy litigation "plays out". He hopes that compensation from the bankruptcy will be sufficient and that it will not be necessary to litigate this case.

The second lawsuit names the Church Growth Fund (CGF) as a defendant, along with a local RCA church. The plaintiff fell outside the local church's building and claims that the local church and the CGF own the property. The CGF does not own the property and there is no record of ever having made a loan secured by the property. GSC staff has notified our liability insurer and tendered defense of the matter to it. Counsel has been assigned and is seeking dismissal of the case because the CGF does not own the property in question and has no responsibility for its maintenance or operation.

General Synod 2021

A report was received from the joint Vision 2020/GSC process team for small groups at General Synod. It presented a preliminary outline of what the team hopes will take place prior to General Synod, small group sessions that will occur during General Synod, and how the small group sessions and the presentation of the overall Vision 2020 report will fit into the overall General Synod schedule.

Commission on Nominations

GSC 21-19

Motion made, supported, and carried:

To appoint *ad-interim* the nominees named in the 2021 Report of the Commission on Nominations to the General Synod commissions, agencies, and boards, and the boards of trustees of RCA-related educational institutions, [See Schedule GSC 21-19], until such time as the General Synod meets in regular stated session and gives its approval;

And further, to elect Carol Mutch to serve as *ad-interim* moderator of the Commission on Nominations for the 2021-2022 term.

Request for Transfer

GSC 21-20

Motion made, supported, and carried:

To bring the following recommendation to the 2021 General Synod:

To transfer Addisville Reformed Church in Richboro, Pennsylvania, with all of its assets and liabilities, from the Classis of Delaware-Raritan in the Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantic to the Classis of Central California in the Regional Synod of the Far West.

Investment Advisory Committee

The small group of GSC members appointed at the March 23-34, 2021 meeting (GSC 21-14) to study the GSC investment policies, along with the CFO, presented a recommendation based on its evaluation of GSC investment screening policies. This group evaluated areas that could be added to the list of prohibited investments. Some areas discussed (fossil fuels and nuclear energy) were determined to be too broad and not entirely bad, and thus the group is not recommending that they be added at this time.

GSC 21-21

Motion made, supported, and carried:

To direct the Investment Advisory Committee to add screening language to the RCA's investment policies which would restrict investment in companies whose primary business relates to adult entertainment and pornography and firearms and military weapons; and further, to divest of any investments in such companied.

Commission on History

The Commission on History (CoH) sent a letter to the GSC in October 2020 (that was followed by several other communications back and forth) expressing concerns that, among other things, certain records were not being sent to the Archives for processing and retention. A Lean event took place with the intent to begin conversations and to clarify some of the challenges and to get a focused picture of the purpose and mission of the archives. Research was also done on past General Synod and GSC actions regarding authority over and responsibility for the archives as well as *BCO* language around the role and responsibilities of the CoH and the GSC. This research was sent to the moderator of GSC and the moderator of CoH. The CoH has requested a meeting with the entire CoH and the entire GSC, with no staff present, in order to present their concerns.

GSC 21-22

Motion made and supported:

To bring the following recommendation to General Synod 2021:

To instruct the General Synod Council (GSC) to form a working group of 12 members, plus a facilitator, to seek clarity and resolution around the concerns that have been expressed to the GSC by the Commission on History, particularly with relation to oversight of the archives as well as what constitutes archival records. This group would include three members of the Commission on History, three members of the General Synod Council, three members of the Commission on Church

Order, and three GSC staff members, and would plan to meet via electronic means.

GSC 21-23

Motion made, supported, and carried to amend the motion as follows (additions are underlined):

To bring the following recommendation to General Synod 2021:

To instruct the General Synod Council (GSC) to form a working group of 12 members, plus a facilitator, to seek clarity and resolution around the concerns that have been expressed to the GSC by the Commission on History, particularly with relation to oversight of the archives as well as what constitutes archival records. This group would include three members of the Commission on History, three members of the General Synod Council, three members of the Commission on Church Order, and three GSC staff members, and would plan to meet via electronic means. The first meeting of this working group should take place before December 31, 2021.

GSC 21-24

Motion made and supported to further amend the motion as follows (additions are underlined):

To bring the following recommendation to General Synod 2021:

To instruct the General Synod Council (GSC) to form a working group of 12 members, plus a facilitator, to seek clarity and resolution around the concerns that have been expressed to the GSC by the Commission on History, particularly with relation to oversight of the archives as well as what constitutes archival records, and related costs. This group would include three members of the Commission on History, three members of the General Synod Council, three members of the Commission on Church Order, and three GSC staff members, and would plan to meet via electronic means. The first meeting of this working group should take place before December 31, 2021.

GSC 21-25

Motion carried to adopt the following twice amended motion:

To bring the following recommendation to General Synod 2021:

To instruct the General Synod Council (GSC) to form a working group of 12 members, plus a facilitator, to seek clarity and resolution around the concerns that have been expressed to

the GSC by the Commission on History, particularly with relation to oversight of the archives as well as what constitutes archival records, and related costs. This group would include three members of the Commission on History, three members of the General Synod Council, three members of the Commission on Church Order, and three GSC staff members, and would plan to meet via electronic means. The first meeting of this working group should take place before December 31, 2021.

Members Concluding Service

GSC members concluding their term of service effective June 30, 2021 were thanked.

Adjournment

GSC 21-26

Motion made, supported, and carried to adjourn the June 22, 2021 meeting of GSC at 3:05 p.m. (Eastern).

Terri Boven, Recorder
Angela Worthley, Recorder

Schedule GSC 21-19

Commission on Nominations Slate of Nominees for RCA Commissions, Boards, and Agencies

Nominees identified by the Commission on Nominations are as follows. (All terms begin on July 1 and end on June 30. The beginning and ending year of the terms of each class is noted, unless the nomination is to fill a vacancy in an unexpired term, then only an ending year is noted. An * in front of the name indicates that the new term will be the individual's final term. The *BCO* requires regional synod and/or racial-ethnic council nomination for various RCA bodies. These nominees are indicated by the regional synod or racial/ethnic council acronym in parentheses followed by a # sign.):

General Synod Council (GSC)

Class of 2021-2025

- *Davis, Susan
- * Lohre, Kathryn (ecumenical - ELCA)
- *Meyer-Veen, Rev. Michael
- *Nichols, Rev. Eric (RSMAt)#
- *Roller, Rev. Neale (RSMAM)#
- *Spyksma, Glenn
- *Vande Voort, Lee

Commission on Christian Action (CCA)

Class ending in 2023

Stephenson, Rev. Mark (*interim*, to be replaced by new CRCNA Director of Race Relations and Social Justice when hired without further action by GSC/General Synod to appoint/elect the new person) [Ecumenical Observer – Reformed]

Class of 2021-2024

- Ennis, Rev. Leah
- Smith, Rev. Dianna
- *Van Kooten Laughead, Cameron

Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education (CCDE)

Class ending in 2022

Balk, Rev. Ellen

Class of 2021-2024

- *Swart, Rev. Mark
- VanderWaal, Rev. Bradley
- White, Jason

Commission on Christian Unity (CCU)

Class ending in 2023

Veldt, Rev. Mark

Class of 2021-2024

Buettner, Rev. Dale
Busker, Rev. Nathan
*Corro, Rev. Carlos

Commission on Christian Worship (CCW)

Class ending in 2022

Grimm, Rev. Cory

Class of 2021-2024

*Frens, Rev. Kent
*Van Beek, Rev. Troy

Commission on Church Order (CCO)

Class of 2021-2024

Andrew, Brian
Jacobsen, Rev. Christopher

Commission on History (CoH)

Class of 2021-2024

Meeter, Rev. Daniel
Shepler, Rev. Douglas

Commission on Judicial Business (CJB)

Class of 2021-2024

Brooks, Rev. Brion (RSMAM)#
Visser, Carl (RSC)#
[vacancy] (RSMAt)#

Commission on Nominations (CoN)

Class of 2021-2024

*Byun, Rev. Ock Kee (CPAAM)#
Garreton, Rev. Jose (RSC)#
Sealy, Rev. Patricia (RSNY)#
Vermeer, Evan (RSH)#

Commission on Race and Ethnicity (CORE)

Class ending in 2022

James, Earl

Class of 2021-2024

Elivo Lopez, Rev. Rolfi (CHM)#
Merino, Janice
*Spooner, Rev. Kelvin (AABC)#

Commission on Theology (CoT)

Class ending in 2022

Church, William Ruggles

Class ending in 2023

*Estes, Rev. Elizabeth

Class of 2021-2024

*Else, Rev. Travis

McCreary, Rev. Micah [RCA seminary faculty]

Whittington, Robert

Commission for Women (CfW)

Class of 2021-2024

*Blankenship, Rev. Melisa

Reid, Claudette

Bakelaar, Rev. Philip

Board of Benefits Services (BOBS) – New York

Class of 2021-2024

*Chapman, Dana

*Condis, Ralph

Board of Benefits Services (BOBS) – Michigan

Class of 2021-2024

*Chapman, Dana

*Condis, Ralph

Church Growth Fund Board (CGFB)

Class of 2021-2024

Putnam, Anne

Silberstein, Karl

Ministerial Formation Certification (MFCA)

Class of 2021-2024

*Christiansen, Rev. Scott

*Lin, San-Yi Shirley

Pastoral Formation Oversight Board (PFOB)

Class of 2021-2024

Camacho, Israel

*Johnson, Kristen

*Taitt, Rev. Cora

New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS) Board of Trustees
Class of 2021-2024

*Dunlap, Rev. Gregory (RSMAt)
*Kingdom-Grier, Rev. Denise (RSGL)
Morris, Michael (RSFW)
Rohrer, Rev. Ming-Chen Grace
Testa, Rev. Elizabeth

Western Theological Seminary (WTS) Board of Trustees
Class of 2021-2024

*Godwin-Stremmer, Rev. Andrea
Haworth, Matthew
Highstreet, Alden (RSFW)
Hillegonds, Timothy
Spoelhof, Steve
*Taitt, Rev. Cora (RSNY)
Vermeer, Evan (RSH)