GENERAL SYNOD
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

2022 Journal of Actions
Meeting 11
Monday afternoon - June 13, 2022
H.S. Kuyper Fieldhouse

CALL TO ORDER
The president called to order the eleventh meeting of the General Synod at 1:33 p.m. on Monday, June 13, 2022. Patricia Gilmer-Van Dorp, seminarian seminar participant, offered prayer.

MISSIONARYVIDEO
The General Synod viewed a brief video presentation highlighting Keith Krebs, RCA missionary. Kimberly Van Es, regular delegate from the Classis of East Sioux and member of the General Synod Council serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod, led the Synod in prayer for this mission work.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT
The president called upon the general secretary to review the procedures for electing the president of General Synod (GS Workbook, p. 32). The general secretary addressed the General Synod. The tellers distributed and collected the ballots for the election of the president.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON GLOBAL MISSION
The president called to the platform the Rev. Dr. JP Sundararajan, Director of Global Mission, to present the Report of the General Synod Council on Global Mission (GS Workbook, pp. 139-142). Rev. Dr. Sundararajan addressed the synod.

GM 22-1 was presented to the house.

VOTED: To adopt GM 22-1 (GS Workbook, p. 142) (yes 172; no 0).

A motion was made and supported from the floor as follows:

For General Synod to instruct the leadership of Global Missions and Church Multiplication to communicate to all RCA Classes/Congregations in 2022 an update and explanation regarding current RCA initiatives in “International Church Planting”, speaking to the historic RCA global mission value of work with indigenous and local church partners rather than establishing RCA congregations outside of North America.
The president agreed to a request from the floor that the motion be revised as follows, and there was no objection.

For General Synod to instruct the leadership of Global Missions and Church Multiplication to communicate to all RCA Classes/Congregations in 2022 an update and explanation regarding current RCA initiatives in “International Church Planting”.

The motion as revised was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt the motion as revised (yes 165; no 10).

**TABLE DISCUSSION #3 – MISSIONARY PRAYERS**

The president led the delegates through a guided exercise to educate about the work of, and send encouragement to, RCA missionaries.

**ELECTION OF PRESIDENT, CONTINUED**

The president announced that as a result of the electing ballot cast for president, the Rev. Dwayne Jackson was declared president-elect of the General Synod. Rev. Jackson addressed the Synod and the president offered prayer.

**MISSIONARY VIDEO**

The General Synod viewed a brief video presentation highlighting Angel Lopez, RCA missionary. The Rev. Maudelin Willock, regular delegate from Classis of New York, led the Synod in prayer for this mission work.

**THE REPORTS OF THE RCA’S COLLEGES: NORTHWESTERN AND HOPE**

The president noted that Northwestern College and Hope College chose to present a video report. The delegates viewed a video report by Gregory Christy, president of Northwestern College (GS Workbook, pp. 273-276) and a video report by Matthew Scogin, president of Hope College (GS Workbook, pp. 269-272).

**REPORT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA CHURCH GROWTH FUND, INC.**

The president called upon the Rev. Dr. Michael Bos, corresponding delegate from and president of The Reformed Church in America Church Growth Fund, Inc., to present the board’s report. (GS Workbook, pp. 151-154). Rev. Dr. Bos addressed the Synod.

**REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, CONTINUED**

The president invited the Rev. Ned Beadel, moderator of the General Synod Council and moderator of the General Synod Council serving as the

EC 22-9 was presented to the house.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate (yes 157; no 14)

**VOTED:** To reject EC 22-9 (GS Workbook, p. 41) (yes 109; no 58).

EC 22-11 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt EC 22-11 (GS Workbook, p. 46) (yes 143; no 20).

EC 22-15 was presented to the house. It reads as follows:

To declare the amendment to the Bylaws of the General Synod specified in EC 19-11, adopted in first reading by the 2019 General Synod, to be approved for incorporation into the 2022 Book of Church Order.

**VOTED:** To adopt EC 22-15 (yes 151; no 15).

**REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND NEW BUSINESS**

The president called upon the Rev. Cora Taitt, moderator of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, and the Rev. Corinne Ellis, vice moderator of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, to continue the committee’s report (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, Part 3). The Revs. Taitt and Ellis addressed the Synod.

In response to the first item of new business that was accepted, ONB 22-9 was presented to the house (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, Part 3, p.1). It reads as follows:

To instruct the general secretary to convene a meeting with other appropriate RCA ecumenical officers or representatives and at least two representatives from the Commission on Christian Unity to craft a resolution to be brought to the World Council of Churches (WCC), calling for the suspension of the Russian Orthodox Church from WCC membership until it repents of and retracts its support
for Russia’s unprovoked, unjustifiable and brutally inhumane war against Ukraine; and further,

To instruct the general secretary to distribute the resolution to all RCA assemblies and congregations; and further,

To instruct the Commission on Theology and the General Synod professorate to examine whether the conditions surrounding Russia’s unprovoked war against Ukraine meet the criteria for a declaration of status confessionis, a full break in communion due to the gravity of the breach of faithfulness to the gospel by any Reformed or Lutheran communion supporting Russia’s (and Belarus’s) war against Ukraine, for report and recommendation to the 2023 General Synod.

Reasons:
The committee supports all the reasons stated in the new business as presented. The committee emphasizes the following reasons that directly apply to the Russian Orthodox Church:
1. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church has repeatedly given full moral endorsement to this use of violence against the Ukrainian people.
2. This action recognizes the Russian Orthodox Church’s resistance to the call of global church leaders to advocate for peace, including general secretary Alemán and general secretary emeritus Granberg-Michaelson as co-signers of a letter which stated: “Before God, we bear witness that there is no religious justification from any side for the destruction and terror the world is witnessing daily.”
3. Status confessionis has been invoked twice: in response to Nazi Germany and in response to apartheid South Africa, recognizing times of profound loss of life and wanton disregard for human dignity. The conditions reported out of Ukraine merit theological consideration as potentially parallel and equally deserving of this firm public stand of the Church of Jesus Christ.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend ONB 22-9 (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

To instruct the general secretary to convene a meeting with other appropriate RCA ecumenical officers or representatives and at craft a resolution to be brought to the World Council of Churches (WCC), calling for the suspension of the Russian Orthodox Church from WCC membership until it repents of and
retracts its support for Russia’s unprovoked, unjustifiable and brutally inhumane war against Ukraine; and further,

To instruct the general secretary to distribute the resolution to all RCA assemblies and congregations; and further,

To instruct the Commission on Theology and the General Synod professorate to examine whether the conditions surrounding Russia’s unprovoked war against Ukraine meet the criteria for a declaration of status confessionis, a full break in communion due to the gravity of the breach of faithfulness to the gospel by any Reformed or Lutheran communion supporting Russia’s (and Belarus’s) war against Ukraine, for report and recommendation to the 2023 General Synod; and further,

To instruct the General Secretary, the Chief Ecumenical Officer of the Reformed Church in America, to support any move that the World Council of Churches may make to enter into a process to suspend the Russian Orthodox Church at the WCC Central Committee Meeting on June 15-18 in Geneva, Switzerland.

A motion was made and supported to further amend ONB 22-9 as follows (additions are double underlined; deletions are double stricken):

To instruct urge the General Secretary, the Chief Ecumenical Officer of the Reformed Church in America, to support any move that the World Council of Churches may make to enter into a process to suspend the Russian Orthodox Church at the WCC Central Committee Meeting on June 15-18 in Geneva, Switzerland.

VOTED: To reject the further amendment to ONB 22-9 (yes 19; no 148).

Original amendment to ONB 22-9 was before the house.

VOTED: To adopt the amendment to ONB 22-9 (yes 151; no 10).

A motion was made and supported from the floor to further amend ONB 22-9 as follows (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

“…To instruct the Commission on Theology and in consultation with the General Synod professorate to examine whether the conditions surrounding Russia’s unprovoked war against Ukraine meet the criteria for a declaration of status confessionis, a full break in communion due to the gravity of the breach of
faithfulness to the gospel by any Reformed or Lutheran communion supporting Russia’s (and Belarus’s) war against Ukraine, for report and recommendation to the 2023 General Synod…”

VOTED: To adopt the amendment to ONB 22-9 (yes 165; no 2).

ONB 22-9 as twice amended was before the house. It reads as follows:

To instruct the general secretary to convene a meeting with other appropriate RCA ecumenical officers or representatives and at least two representatives from the Commission on Christian Unity to craft a resolution to be brought to the World Council of Churches (WCC), calling for the suspension of the Russian Orthodox Church from WCC membership until it repents of and retracts its support for Russia’s unprovoked, unjustifiable and brutally inhumane war against Ukraine; and further,

To instruct the general secretary to distribute the resolution to all RCA assemblies and congregations; and further,

To instruct the Commission on Theology in consultation with the General Synod professorate to examine whether the conditions surrounding Russia’s unprovoked war against Ukraine meet the criteria for a declaration of status confessionis, a full break in communion due to the gravity of the breach of faithfulness to the gospel by any Reformed or Lutheran communion supporting Russia’s (and Belarus’s) war against Ukraine, for report and recommendation to the 2023 General Synod; and further,

To instruct the General Secretary, the Chief Ecumenical Officer of the Reformed Church in America, to support any move that the World Council of Churches may make to enter into a process to suspend the Russian Orthodox Church at the WCC Central Committee Meeting on June 15-18 in Geneva, Switzerland.

VOTED: To adopt ONB 22-9 as twice amended (yes 157; no 14).

In response to the second item of new business that was accepted, ONB 22-10 was presented to the house (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, Part 3, p.3). It reads as follows:
To deny the second item of new business

Reasons:
1. The committee understands the significant problem and real suffering that is taking place due to the extreme rise in gas prices. However, due to the complicated nature of this issue and the lack of in-depth information in this proposal, the committee is not able to recommend this action at this time.
2. The committee does encourage congregations and individuals to study this issue and to take the moral and ethical stand that they feel led by the Holy Spirit to take.

VOTED: To adopt ONB 22-10 (yes 146; no 18).

RECESS
The president declared the General Synod recessed at 4:53 p.m., following prayer by the Rev. Brian Keepers, regular delegate from the Classis of East Sioux.