

Vol. XLIII

June 7-9 2016

No. 2

MINUTES

OF THE
GENERAL SYNOD

OF THE
**ASSOCIATE REFORMED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
(arpchurch.org)

TWO HUNDRED TWELFTH STATED MEETING



JUNE 7-9 2016

BONCLARKEN CONFERENCE CENTER
FLAT ROCK, NC

PROCEEDINGS**BONCLARKEN, FLAT ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA**

The 212th Annual Meeting of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC) was held at the Bonclarken Conference Center, Flat Rock, NC, June 7-9, 2016.

MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2016

Registration for the General Synod 2016 was held in the Patrick Meeting Room of the Lodge at 2:00 P.M.

The Pre-Synod Conference was held in the Chapel at 7:00 P.M. and featured Josh Packard who spoke on the subject "Church Refugees."

**SPECIAL SYNOD WEEK DENOMINATIONAL
ACTIVITIES**

The *Synod's Kid's Camp* for ages 7-18 was held Tuesday through Thursday at various times. Free child care was offered each day for infants to 6 years old at the Maryalice Cottage.

A *"Meet and Greet Coffee"* courtesy of Erskine was held in the Music Room from 7:30 until 9:00 P.M. on Tuesday.

A *"Pastors' Wives Gathering"* was held in the Jean White Room of Founder's Hall at 10:00 A.M. on Wednesday, June 8 and featured Anne Katherine Ragsdale as the guest speaker.

Erskine Theological Seminary hosted a barbecue picnic Wednesday, June 8 at noon in the Headspring Pavilion.

ARP Women's Ministries sponsored *"OASIS: A Time of Spiritual Refreshment and Renewal"* on Wednesday at 2:00 P.M. in Synodical Hall.

Outreach North America's *"Church Planting Breakfast"* was held Thursday morning at 7:00 A.M.

A breakfast for the wives of church plant ministers, also held on Thursday morning, was sponsored by ARP Women's Ministries.

TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2016

Earl and Harriet Linderman led in the informal "Coffee and Psalm Sing" on the Dining Room porch at 7:10 A.M.

Registration continued at 9:00 A.M. in the Patrick Room of the Lodge.

The *Orientation for New Ministers and Delegates* was held at 9:00 A.M. followed by presbytery meetings at 10:00 A.M.

Lunch was served at 12:15 P.M.

The Opening Worship and Communion began at 2:00 P.M.

OPENING WORSHIP

TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2016

Youth Activities Building

Informal Psalm Sing	C. Earl Linderman
	Harriet S. Linderman, Accompanist
Prelude	Anne Katherine Ragsdale
*Call to Worship	Steve Kern, Vice-Moderator
*Song: "Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It!"	
*Invocation and the Lord's Prayer	Steve Kern, Vice-Moderator
*The Constituting of the General Synod	Jamie Hunt, Moderator
Memorial Service	Steve Kern, Vice-Moderator
The Listing of Deceased Ministers	
The Listing of Deceased Ruling Elders	
Prayer	
*Song: "Arise, My Soul Arise""	
Sermon	Jamie Hunt
"Anticipating the Day"	
Text: 2 Peter 3	
*Song: "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"	
The Administration of the Lord's Table	Jamie Hunt, Moderator
	Sung Song, Pastor
	Southern Korean Church, Charlotte
Prayer of Thanksgiving	
*Song: "The Power of the Cross"	
*Benediction	
Postlude	Anne Katherine Ragsdale
<i>(See Appendix for the tributes and the list of deceased Elders.)</i>	

The President of Bonclarken Conference Center, Joseph H.

(Chip) Sherer, welcomed the delegates to Bonclarken.
Retiring Moderator Jamie Hunt addressed the Synod.

RETIRING MODERATOR'S ADDRESS

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church:

Serving as Moderator of the General Synod has been a unique privilege and a profound learning experience. Thank you! I have learned more of myself, my limitations and the sinfulness of my own heart, in the circumstances in which I have been called to lead.

It is easy to look from the outside and to be critical of those seeking to lead. However, the Moderator, on the inside, develops a different sense of appreciation for those who labor on behalf of the Church, its congregations, ministers, and boards and agencies. I am profoundly impressed with so many able and devoted men and women who serve the Church. I speak of Synod employees as well as committee personnel. Also, I am very grateful for the help of my Vice-Moderator, Steve Kern. I gave him assignments and he never disappointed. Finally, I give thanks to and for my Partner in Ministry, Mrs. Cathy Hunt, who has assisted me well these two years.

This year an unexpected event took place. Mr. Paul Bell submitted his resignation as Executive Director of the ARP Center. Paul's life, with his family, continues on as he serves the Renaissance Assisted Living Center in Due West. The Church will recover and adjust. Today, I want to express appreciation to Paul and I want you to join me in recognizing Paul's labor and leadership.

Now, I want to express a concern for our Synod. I admit that I am not so much a visionary as I am a realist. Our financial condition is not good. The Denominational Ministry Fund(DMF) continues to decline. The Board of Stewardship continues to adjust the budget. The board has asked the agencies to consider and advise of the impact on their ministries of a 10% cut in Synod's budget. This is troubling.

Alarming, however, is the trend of various boards and agencies to invent novel ways to increase their income. These efforts solicit money from the same constituents who are not able or willing to support their churches, and in turn the DMF.

If this trend continues, I predict that there will be a further decline in the ability of the agencies to do ministry and there will be an erosion of good will among ourselves. The boards must exercise self-restraint and

must instinctively follow the leadership of the Board of Stewardship.

As I have had opportunity to address presbyteries and other groups within the Church, I have promoted the work of church planting, particularly by congregations and presbyteries. This seems to me to be a biblical and suitable response to the declining ability to do ministry through the DMF.

Although I questioned the wisdom of Catawba Presbytery when it jumped over other presbyteries to plant churches in Texas and Louisiana, I must conclude that Catawba Presbytery is the only presbytery to be successful in making such a jump. I am pleased with their success.

Some time ago, I was involved with my brothers in cleaning out my mother's belongings. Found among her things is a gavel which recalls the time when the ARP Church had a Texas Presbytery. In anticipation of the organizing of a Texas Presbytery in the near future, I desire to present this gavel to Catawba Presbytery to be given to the Texas Presbytery at the time of its organization. The Inscription reads:

"The Texas Presbytery to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod Chicota, Tex October 22, 1896

Wood taken from "County Line" Schoolhouse in which the first ARP Church in Texas was organized November 14, 1865 by Rev. T. J. Bonner"

Mr. Alan Morrow, Moderator of Catawba Presbytery, and Mr. Guy Smith, Clerk, please receive this gift and see that it goes home to Texas when that Presbytery is organized again.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement in this year. I have sensed your prayers. May God be praised through the witness of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Retiring Moderator Hunt presented Moderator-Elect, Phil Williams, to the Synod. Mr. Williams was escorted to the podium where the Retiring Moderator transferred the Moderator's Shield to Mr. Williams with brief remarks. Moderator Williams presented the Retiring Moderator's Bible to Mr. Hunt.

Moderator Williams presented the following *Moderator's Challenge* to the Synod.

MODERATOR'S CHALLENGE

Following last year's nomination and election as Moderator, I have spent a lot of time in thought and prayer for you and for our church (Synod). A portion of that time has been in reflection on issues, needs, strengths, weaknesses and direction for our Synod. In past years, we have seen issues come and go. Some have been handled well and some have lingered on for quite a while, partly due to varied expectations. We are all well aware of the repetitive challenges that, if not resolved, will hamper us in seeking a biblical and orderly approach to glorifying God as we work together to serve Him and His Church. In unity, we must keep Christ and His word as our standard bearer as we live out our duties and ministry in such a way that it brings glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As we have seen in the past, this can be a difficult task. It is very easy for us to lean on our own understanding and adopt the world's approach to 'church work.' Many times in my life, I have had to draw back and focus on one of the more critical roles of the church, which is proclaiming Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. I know that we in ourselves do not have all the answers to resolve issues and personality differences that lead to angst and discord. Yet if these issues and differences are allowed to continue unresolved, the ability of the called to fulfill Christ's commission is diminished. I also know that only by living in the Word and seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance, will we be able to handle our differences and exhibit the "Fruit of the Spirit" through living in Christian unity. John 17:22-23 exhorts us to be one in unity. ["The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."]

The challenges of the church have not changed over the centuries. What we face isn't new; and ever since we were redeemed by His finished work on the cross, we have had the same problems—just with different issues and different people in a different time.

One example that hit home recently for me is from the Gospel of Matthew 16:21-23: "From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'"

- *Like Peter, we want it our way and we want it now. Whatever the issue or agenda, we tend to lean on our own understanding.*
- *Like Peter, we all set our minds on the ways of man; and*
- *Like Peter, we all stand rebuked.*

It is our nature to put self on the throne and try to control, demand, confront and solve. Looking further at Matthew 16:24-26: we understand it's not about us: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"

We do react just like Peter. It is our "born in sin" nature. Martin Luther said it well; "I am more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his cardinals. I have within me the great pope, Self." It is very difficult, even unnatural, for us to submit to His commandments, His Holy Spirit and become Christ-like in all we say and do.

Since last June, I have prayed and sought for a better understanding of the "Fresh Insights from Ancient Paths" that Moderator Hunt so carefully exhorted us to seek out. As he quoted in his Moderator's address last year from Jeremiah 6:16, "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it. Then you will find rest for your souls." Following the 211th General Synod, I began to re-examine the challenges we face and the barriers that are in front of us as we fulfill the call of proclaiming Jesus Christ to a lost world. In trying to submit to this calling, we all realize that "the heart of the matter is a matter of the heart." We all know overcoming self is a daily battle. Any gain we have in dying to self immediately frees the "Pope" in us. How do we stay honest before the Lord? We need to seek His guidance and then continually examine ourselves to see if we are actually fulfilling the calling as identified in scripture. Specifically from 1Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

As you know, each year the incoming Moderator has the privilege and responsibility of setting the Synod theme to be proclaimed, taught, preached and hopefully, lived by each of us during this entire year. After prayer and thought, the theme I have chosen for the 212th Synod is from Mark 12:29-31: "Jesus answered, 'The most important is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.'"

Our theme consists of four important words: "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength."

Let us live these words as we help our church members and each of us to seek God with our whole heart, to help us understand that we must love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength—to love him so much that we display the evidences that we have denied ourselves, taken up the cross of Jesus Christ, and are following Him.

I am convinced that if we love Jesus with our heart, soul, mind and strength, we will love our neighbor enough to get in front of him and, as commanded in 1 Peter 2:9, "proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

What does "getting in front" of our neighbor, family, co-worker, friend and, yes, even our enemies look like? Is it preaching a sermon, writing a blog, commenting on a web site, exhorting the book of the month we just read? Maybe. Any legitimate means we may use could be helpful and beneficial in proclaiming Jesus. However, I think that the stronger evidence is caring about your brother's soul enough to get in his path and share your love for Jesus. You cannot and will not do this without the help of God's Holy Spirit showing you how to demonstrate the love of the Father – heart, soul, mind, and strength, as you love your neighbor as yourself.

Condition of the Church and the Challenges before us.

Since the 206th General Synod, we have seen our total Church (Synod) lose around 20% of its members. Each year our Denominational Ministry Fund decreases because our churches do not, or are not able to, give to this fund. In looking at the yearly minutes of Synod, do we see evidence that we are a blessed and growing church? Or do we have the same trend that past Moderator Andy Putnam presented to you in the 207th General Synod? Our churches in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church are fewer, smaller, older and struggling. Through the lack of growth, we find ourselves struggling to keep and meet our commitments in ministry. We find ourselves trying to overcome the lack of blessings by looking to other means to raise operational funds. The solution is simple: put your heart, soul, mind and strength into loving, exhorting, and proclaiming the excellencies of Christ to everyone, both the lost and saved. If we live out our lives with this

focus we will not have a resource (money) problem--we will have a space problem. We won't be asking for the blessing of others but will be blessing more of those who are in need.

Are we a church living under the commission to go out and make disciples as commanded by our Lord in Matthew: 28:18-20? "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

We have issues, agendas, and probably more than a few golden calves that need to be ground into dust. Let's not react as scripture indicates Peter did by setting our minds on what we would do to fix "it". Own the greatest commandment. Every day ask God's help to live and love heart, soul, mind and strength so that we will see a growing church.

My devotion for and love of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church has increased significantly through learning more of the history, purpose and commitment of the Scottish Covenanters as they lived and died with their faith and love. In the past, the fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers purposed to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ through devotion to God's established Covenant and Word by faith alone, Scripture alone, Christ alone, Grace alone, with the Glory to God. We are a covenantal people; and it is that covenant that is established by God the Father, fulfilled in Jesus through the Holy Spirit with the promise for each of us, and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord calls to Himself. (Acts 2:38-39) It is through our calling into His covenant and being obedient to His word that we have seen and will see our churches progress and grow.

In your Synod packet you were given a lapel pin inscribed with the four words heart, soul, mind and strength. I ask that you pray and ask God each day to place someone in your path that you can share the work of Jesus with. Wear the pin to remind you to pray toward that end, preach it, and demonstrate it to your family, church, community, co-workers, friends, enemies, and sojourners near and far!

May we leave this 212th General Synod and demonstrate evidence in our lives that indeed "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Ask God's Holy Spirit to enable you to love Him with all your heart. Make it the priority of your church, family, presbytery and our synod to seek with all your

heart, soul, mind and strength the blessing of boldly proclaiming the gospel one-on-one to the unredeemed. If we are obedient to the word and proclaim the excellencies of Christ, we will see the lost saved and our churches will grow. Prepare, pray and ask God to put someone in front of you and witness Jesus Christ every day.

Moderator Williams introduced the Vice-Moderator, Patrick Malphrus, to the Synod.

Vice-Moderator Malphrus presented the proposed program for the 2016 meeting of the General Synod. The program was adopted.

Vice-Moderator Malphrus made the following formal introductions to the Synod:

Moderator Williams' wife, Janie; daughter, Karen Freeman; grandchildren Donna Freeman and Liam Freeman. Vice-Moderator Malphrus also introduced his wife, Amanda Malphrus.

Pages serving Synod this year: Paxton Brown (Catawba), Nicholas DeVusser (First Presbytery), Rob Smith (Second Presbytery), and Jackson Lyda (Second Presbytery)

Videographer: David Powelson

Musician: Anne Katherine Ragsdale

Sound Technician: Lee Lane

Psalm Sing leaders: Earl and Harriet Linderman

New ministers who have been received and/or ordained since the 2015 Meeting of General Synod introduced themselves.

New Missions/Congregations which have joined the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church since the 2015 meeting introduced themselves.

Seminary and special students who are Under Care of Presbytery introduced themselves.

John (Jack) Hill presided over Synod's recognition of retired ministers, retired non-ordained Synod employees and retired missionaries.

Jana Evans, President of the ARP Women's Ministries, brought greetings from Women's Ministries. **A motion carried** to print the greetings in the 2016 *Minutes of Synod*.

I thank you for this opportunity to speak to you on behalf of ARP Women's Ministries. ARP Women's Ministries is both very old, having begun as Woman's Synodical Missionary Union in 1915, and still developing as we seek to assist each other in becoming the women God would have us to be.

*This past year, we recognized that structurally we needed to change our ministry year to the calendar year to accommodate recent changes to our finances. At the same time, we recognized that we needed to acknowledge a ministry focus of helping women connect with one another by adding the word "connect" to our vision statement. This vision statement now reads: "The vision of ARP Women's Ministries is to encourage, equip and **connect** the community of ARP women to minister together for God's glory and purpose."*

Recent ARP Women's Ministries Presidents have each been encouraging our women to connect with one another in a variety of ways. My focus has been to encourage us to nurture one another as well as those in our families and communities. I think that this will come about naturally in our local churches as we, both ARP Women's Ministries and the Elders in our churches, encourage women's ministries that fulfill Biblical roles within each church.

If your church is just beginning to look at women's ministries, or if you think that perhaps your church's women's ministries is a little off course, I suggest that the session and the women's ministries leadership work together to study and pray about women's ministries in your church. Then an appropriate, Biblical ministry that fits your own particular situation can be developed or redeveloped with everyone on the same page. If you would like some suggestions about materials to use for this, contact me or someone else on our board.

I thank you for your interest in women's ministries, both locally and denominationally, and ask that you continue to pray for us.

Principal Clerk C. R. Beard constituted the roll of Synod (see *Appendix* for the Official Roll of Synod). Moderator Williams appointed his Moderator's Committees.

The Principal Clerk called for the official reports of the boards for reference to the Moderator's Committees.

Following the vote to accept a second Canadian Memorial, the three Memorials from the presbyteries were read and referred to the Moderator's Committee on Memorials.

Synod's afternoon session closed with the blessing and closing prayer by Eric Hancox.

TUESDAY, JUNE 7, EVENING ACTIVITY

The Moderator's Committees met during the evening hours.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, MORNING SESSION

Earl and Harriet Linderman led the informal "Coffee and Psalm Sing" on the Dining Room porch.

Patrick Malphrus led the morning devotional.

The morning business session began at 10:00 A.M. Vice-Moderator Malphrus took the chair to moderate the meeting.

Paul Matthews presented the **Recommended 2017 Allocation of Synod's Unrestricted Funds**. An emergency motion was presented with regard to the report. **The motion was debated and carried** by a two-thirds majority. The content of the motion was referred to P.J. McClung for review and comment according to the Synod Rules of Order. The comment to be made at a later time before a vote on the motion and the allocation occur.

The Principal Clerk announced the reception of two complaints submitted to the Synod.

A motion carried that the complaints be referred to the Ecclesiastical Commission on Judiciary Affairs to be taken up within sixty (60) days. The Vice-Moderator led the synod in prayer.

A motion carried that a letter from General Synod expressing its love and concern be sent to the church involved in the complaint.

The report of the **Special Committee to Revise the *Book of Discipline*** was presented and received as information.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVISE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

Between October 14, 2015, and March 14, 2016, three members of the original committee resigned. Three new members have been appointed to the committee which, as reconstituted, met March 16-17, 2016. A unity of spirit was immediately evident, and the new members quickly made up for lost time. Unfortunately, we cannot have a rewritten *Book of Discipline* ready when Synod meets in June. We have, however, covenanted to have such a document in 2017. We solicit your prayers.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Ruschky, Chairman

The report of the **Special Committee to Review the *Form of Government Amendments*** was presented and adopted.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE
FORM OF GOVERNMENT AMENDMENTS**

The **Special Committee to Review the *Form of Government (FOG) Amendments*** met on February 19, 2016 at 3:00 P.M. and March 31, 2016 via teleconference. A quorum was present. The meeting was opened in prayer by Billy Barron and closed in prayer by Jim Klukow.

At the request of the Moderator, the purpose of the committee is as follows:

- 1) To review and report the committee's findings and reasoning on the impact of all current amendments to the *FOG* as listed in the 2015 *Minutes of Synod*.
- 2) To recommend to adopt or not adopt each *FOG* memorial.
- 3) To produce in writing for Synod's *Manual of Authorities and Duties* a standing committee structure for Synod's revision Committee.

- 4) To recommend this present special committee continue for one additional year while Synod's Committee on Nominations can recommend and Synod can approve membership in Synod's standing Revision Committee.

This year there were three memorials from Catawba Presbytery, one from Virginia Presbytery (which included five points), and one memorial from the Moderator's Committee on Memorials totaling five requests to amend the FOG. Discussion on each memorial was conducted in committee with each of the five points of Virginia's memorial handled separately. In this report, the memorials are listed as 1 through 3, 5 and 6, which includes five sub-points. Synod Memorial #4 was not referred to the committee.

Below is a summary of the Committee's findings, discussions, and recommendations.

Memorial #1 (Catawba Presbytery)

2015 *Minutes of Synod*, pp 116, 117

() means to delete and underline is the new text to be added.

WHEREAS, The FOG 5:11 states:

5.11 The congregational treasurer, who is entrusted with the regular offerings of the congregation, shall be responsible to the oversight of the Diaconate. A monthly financial report of the congregational treasurer shall be included in the minutes of the diaconate. An outside entity, someone not directly connected to the congregation, shall conduct a financial review to ensure full accuracy and disclosure of church finances. Such a review shall be paid out of the church's funds, made part of the Sessional record, and made available to any member who wishes to view it. Such a review shall be conducted no less frequently than every third year.

AND WHEREAS, The wording of the above provisions makes mandatory a costly full review of the treasurer's books while the aim is to assure the accuracy of the funds available,

THEREFORE Catawba Presbytery memorializes General Synod to amend *The Form of Government* 5.11 to read as follows:

5.11 The congregational treasurer, who is entrusted with the regular offerings of the congregation, shall be responsible to the oversight of the Diaconate. A monthly financial report of the congregational entity, someone not directly connected to the congregation, shall (conduct) provide outside over-

sight of the church finances (a financial review) to ensure full accuracy and disclosure. Any costs related to that oversight (Such a review) shall be paid out of the church's funds, made part of the Sessional record, and made available to any member who wishes to view it. Such (a review) an oversight shall be conducted no less frequently than every third year.

The memorial requests that the word "review" be changed to "oversight" as well as change a few words in sentence two (changes are in bold and underlined).

An outside entity, someone not directly connected to the congregation, shall provide outside oversight of the church finances to ensure full accuracy and disclosure of church finances. Any cost related to that oversight shall be paid out of the church's funds, made part of the Sessional record, and made available to any member who wishes to view it. Such an oversight shall be conducted no less frequently than every third year.

The definition of words the FOG uses are common American language definitions as does Robert's Rules of Order (RRO) when defining terms. The FOG does not define its terms specifically to judicial or financial contexts. Webster's Dictionary defines a review as "a looking at or looking over again." Black's Legal Dictionary states that the term "review" means to "re-examine, administratively; a second view or examination; to consider for purposes of correction." Neither definition implies one entity has authority over another, or refers to a formal financial review conducted by licensed auditors.

Likewise, as it relates to common financial reporting requirements, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) states that the objective of an accountant performing a financial statement "review" is:

. . . to obtain limited assurance as a basis for reporting whether the accountant is aware of any material modifications that should be made to the financial statements for them to be in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework, primarily through the performance of inquiry and analytical procedures.

In other words, a "review" of financial statements is designed to involve limited procedures that are designed to identify obvious problems. It does not necessarily rise to the level of an audit, which

seeks to provide, "reasonable assurance" (not "limited") that the financial statements are "free of material misstatement."

The term "oversight," according to Webster's Dictionary means "superintendence" or "supervision over" an entity. This term does carry with it the notion of authority over something and would suggest one entity would be subject to another entity as in the case of a formal financial review by licensed auditors. "Oversight" would be a far more reaching term than "review" in both common American language usage, and AICPA language. In fact, the term "oversight" could imply an even greater level of effort than would be contemplated in an audit.

RRO suggests each society (church) conduct an annual financial report, but does not imply or require a mandatory costly full professional accountant audit. RRO uses the term "audit" for inspecting the treasurer's annual financial report, which may produce an "auditors' report" (Ch. 15, section 47, "Action of Financial Report," p. 469). RRO suggests that when the amounts are very large an independent accountant is recommended. "But in ordinary societies (like churches) it is practical to have the financial reports audited by an auditing committee of two or more members of the society (local congregation or sister congregation)." Parenthesis added. RRO allows for either a full accounting review for larger societies or a more informal audit for smaller societies by members related in some way to the congregation. The FOG language follows standard RRO suggestions for a financial statement inspection.

FOG terminology is primarily defined by a religious context. Although the FOG is a judicial and therefore legal document governing the ARPC, it first and foremost defines terms in an ecclesiastical and religious context. Therefore, according to Webster and Black's dictionaries, Robert's Rules of Order, the common American language usage and the AICPA, the word "review" does not necessarily imply a mandatory costly full professional accountant review of the treasurer's books, whereas changing the FOG to read "oversight" is a stronger term (even stronger than RRO "audit" term), and would imply an external, possibly even secular, authoritative body overseeing local church financial reports.

The committee discussed an option of simply dropping the word "financial" so that the FOG would read "shall conduct a review," but that would not alter the intent of having the finances reviewed. The committee also discussed providing a RRO footnote at this point to provide Synod a clearer understanding that a financial review is not

necessarily a formal and complete audit, but aligns with RRO's recommendation of at least a general review of a congregation's budget items.

The committee settled on the following recommended edits, which are designed (1) to provide objective oversight of church finances, (2) allow such oversight to come from within the church if appropriate skills are resident in the congregation, and (3) suggest, but not require, options for greater rigor in the oversight process for larger churches:

5.11 The congregational treasurer, who is entrusted with the regular offerings of the congregation, shall be responsible to the oversight of the Diaconate. A monthly financial report of the congregational treasurer shall be included in the minutes of the diaconate. An objective and financially literate party, someone not directly connected to the maintenance of the financial records, or receipt and/or distribution of church funds, shall conduct an annual financial review. Such review shall be designed to provide at least limited assurance that (1) financial assets are properly safeguarded, and (2) the reported financial statements are complete and accurate.

Memorial #2 (Catawba Presbytery)

FOG 12:10

2015 *Minutes of Synod*, pp. 117

Catawba Presbytery does hereby memorialize the General Synod that in the new Form of Government section 12.10 following the first sentence, delete the present wording and substitute for it, "The meeting shall be initiated in the following manner: At the official request of a majority of the Presbyteries the Moderator, or in his failure to act, the Principal Clerk, shall issue an announcement for the called meeting. The Moderator or Principal Clerk may call a meeting of the General Synod with the official concurrence of a majority of the Presbyteries."

The memorial requests a change in the wording from "at least three presbyteries" to "a **majority** of the presbyteries" twice in this section of the FOG.

FOG current statement:

"A called meeting of the General Synod may be held only at a time of urgency or in the matter of special importance. The meeting shall be initiated in the following manner: The moderator, or in his failure to act, the principal clerk, shall issue an announcement for a called meeting at the official request

of at least three presbyteries or, upon his own initiative with the official concurrence of at least three presbyteries."

Change requested: (in bold and underlined)

*"A called meeting of the General Synod may be held only at a time of urgency or in the matter of special importance. The meeting shall be initiated in the following manner: **At the official request of a majority of the Presbyteries**, the Moderator, or in his failure to act, the Principal Clerk, shall issue an announcement for a called meeting. The Moderator or Principal Clerk may call a meeting of the General Synod with the official concurrence of **a majority** of the presbyteries."*

Also, the following words, referring to the Moderator, are to be removed: "upon his own initiative."

There are currently nine presbyteries. This would increase the quorum necessary for a called meeting of Synod from 3 to 5. The previous FOG (1976 and 1953 editions) only required 2 Presbyteries.

Roberts Rules of Order (RRO) suggests that minimum requirements for quorums be implemented in forms of governments. Larger requirements may impose undue pressure to assemble during times when, by the nature of the concern, a quorum may become impossible to acquire and do legal business.

RRO Ch. 18, section 55, "bylaw," p. 562 9th edition states that when writing bylaws (including quorum requirements) the principle to be "no more restrictive ... than necessary" best serves the assembly. Parenthesis added. Changing the quorum to a majority of the presbyteries brings the quorum requirements for a called meeting at a time of urgency to the same parliamentary standards as the regular annual stated meeting of General Synod. However, in times of difficulties RRO principle of "no more restrictive... than necessary" is currently being followed in the FOG at a level the previous FOG revision committee believed would be the minimum number that can be reasonably assembled, and that also protects against totally unrepresentative action by an unduly small number of persons (RRO Ch. 2, section 3 "Quorum of Members," p. 20.)

The Special Committee to Revise the FOG thought the original two presbytery requirement (1976 and 1953 editions) was in fact inadequate to protect against a totally unrepresentative action by an unduly small number of persons, so the number was kept "no more

restrictive ... than necessary" by increasing it to three. This was an attempt to balance the principle of no more restrictive with the principle of protection against a totally unrepresentative actions by an unduly small number of persons.

Furthermore, since the previous *FOG* editions required only two presbyteries and the 2014 edition of the *FOG* requires three this memorial is requesting not only a change in the *FOG*, but a change in the polity of Synod quorums for "special emergencies" (*FOG* 1953, Ch. III. 4) as it has generally followed RRO in the past. This memorial would require a change from two to five presbyteries. The question arises, "Why a majority as opposed to a minimum number of presbyteries?" RRO suggests this can be an undue burden upon a society when trying to assemble during an already stressful time ("time of urgency"). In times when action needs to be timely, an increase in the current quorum requirements could make attendance requirements too high to conduct any business whatsoever.

Memorial #3 (Catawba Presbytery)

2015 *Minutes of Synod*, p. 117

Catawba Presbytery does hereby memorialize the General Synod that in the new Form of Government section 14.4, delete the word, "decision."

Catawba is memorializing Synod to remove the last word "decision."

Current *FOG*:

14.4 "Proposed amendments shall not be specifically presented to congregations for discussion or decision."

Proposal:

"Proposed amendments shall not be specifically presented to congregations for discussion."

Omission: "or decision."

The context of this memorial is the presenting of an amendment to the *FOG* to the local congregation for a final vote.

In the previous *FOG* the term "decision" was a reference to amending the motion of Synod as presented to the local congregation. *FOG* 14.4 is word for word from the previous *FOG* 15.c.3 ex-

cluding "and proposed church union." There appears to have been an earlier concern to make clear to congregations that neither discussion nor decision (two distinct actions) on a motion from Synod shall be acted upon when Synod requests a vote on a FOG amendment.

Individual congregations are only allowed to vote on a Synod motion when it is presented to them. They cannot discuss it or alter it in any way. There is no discussion on the motion as it arrives at the congregational level as a seconded motion with Synod discussion already closed. The proposed motion to amend approaches the congregation only for a vote and cannot be debated (discussion) or amended (decision).

Removing the word "decision" (or discussion) would leave open for debate if a congregation is allowed to submit an amendment to the Synod motion (or debate the motion). Both would be out of order since the motion has reached the parliamentary level of vote where debate and amendment have ceased.

The committee discussed another option which would be to replace the word "discussion" with the more understandable term used by RRO, "debate" and to replace the word "decision" with the more understandable term used by RRO, "amend." The committee would suggest not adopting Memorial #3 from Catawba Presbytery, or if Synod desires to make these terms clearer, the committee suggests creating a footnote at this point or accepting the above changes in the present two words.

Virginia memorial known as Memorial #5

2015 *Minutes of Synod*, pp. 118-119; 121-122

Whereas, the General Synod in adopting the revised *Form of Government* changed the previous practice of having Active and Inactive Rolls, and thus changed the quorum requirements for Congregational Business meetings;

And whereas, these changes have caused confusion and difficulties for our sessions and congregations in regard to the pastoral care of members and families;

And whereas these changes have also caused difficulties in regard to the establishment of a quorum for congregational business meetings;

And whereas, the Special Committee to Revise the *Form of Government* provided "Guidelines" that state: "It has been brought to our

attention that there is some uncertainty about the method of reporting church rolls according to the Form of Government. The only change that has taken place is that we no longer report an "inactive" number. Churches have rolls for total membership, non-communicant membership, and perhaps associate membership. Sessions of local congregations are allowed to develop their own procedures for internally handling their various membership status. It is advised that whatever procedure is adopted, the elders are to be sensitive to the historical connections families have with their local ARP church (4.16);

And whereas a clear, Biblical definition of "church roll" has not been established; and Biblical, theological and practical reasons for a person to be "removed" from the church roll have not been provided, and whereas at no point in the present *Form of Government* is the Session clearly given the power to remove a person from the church roll, nor is a procedure established for such removal (unless by judicial process in the *Book of Discipline*);

And whereas, the number on the present Communicant Roll is often now much larger than the number on the previous Active Roll and whereas this larger number increases the quorum requirement for a congregational meeting to a much higher number, thus making it more difficult for a congregation to conduct its routine business;

And whereas, both the present and previous *Forms of Government* made clear that practicality is a valid element in determining a quorum number as seen in the practice of allowing larger congregations to operate with a smaller quorum number of ten percent (10%);

THEREFORE, the Virginia Presbytery memorializes the General Synod:

1. To amend the *Form of Government* 4.15 by the addition of:

4.15 D. The annual review of the roll shall include a determination by the Session of the number necessary for a quorum for a congregational business meeting. The quorum number shall be one fourth of the membership that the Session determines to be capable of and eligible to participate in such meetings; or for a congregation of more than one thousand members, the number shall be one-tenth of such members but not less than two hundred fifty. This quorum number shall be reported to the Presbytery in the annual report to Presbytery.

2. To amend the *Form of Government* 6.8 by the addition of a new "G." with the subsequent re-lettering of items that follow:

6.8.G. To remove from the roll without censure persons who the Session determines to no longer be a part of the life of the congre-

gation. No person shall be removed from the roll until the Session has sought diligently to enquire into the status of such persons, has sought to restore them to active involvement in the life of the congregation, and has considered if disciplinary action is appropriate.

3. To Amend the *Form of Government* 4.15 by the addition of "E."

4.15.E Sessions of local congregations are allowed to develop their own procedure for internally handling their various membership needs.

4. To amend the *Form of Government* 4.16 to read:

4.16 No person shall be removed from the roll until the Session has sought diligently to inquire into the status of such persons, has sought to restore them to active involvement in the life of the congregation, and has considered if disciplinary action is appropriate.

5. To amend the *Form of Government* 3.25.E to read:

3.25.E No business shall be conducted without a quorum. The quorum number shall be one-fourth of the membership that the Session determines in the annual review of the roll to be capable of and eligible to participate in such meetings; or for a congregation of more than one thousand members, the number shall be one-tenth of such members but not less than two hundred fifty.

This memorial contains five amendments to the *FOG*, each of which will be dealt with separately.

The context of these five memorials is that since there is no longer an inactive roll there appears a need to create a procedure for congregations to remove people from church rolls. Apparently these congregations have assimilated the inactive roll into the active roll causing a difficulty in reaching quorum requirements. The claim is that congregations are confused by the change of not having an inactive roll and Virginia Presbytery believes the following five amendments, which are additions to the Session's requirements regarding membership care, will clear up the confusion and make pastoral care less difficult.

1) Refers to *FOG* 4.15 and requests a new "D" paragraph (see 2015 *Minutes of Synod* p. 119, 121).

This memorial does not change the percentage of membership necessary to constitute a legal business meeting of a local congregation.

Rather, it includes a provision for the Session to determine who is "capable of and eligible to participate in such meetings."

According to RRO, any members in good standing have all the rights and responsibilities of membership, including voting (see also *FOG* 4.1.A). There is no concept in RRO of capability or eligibility other than that the member must be present to vote and in good standing with the society (some societies allow for proxy voting) (*FOG* 3.25.F). The *FOG* does not leave it up to individual congregations to define a quorum. A congregational quorum is a Synod-defined concept. *FOG* 3.25. E. "Capability" and "eligibility" are not used as voting criteria in RRO and have never been used in the ARPC *FOG*. Furthermore, these terms are not defined in the memorial, making adoption of this memorial an action that would cause the *FOG* to be less clear regarding what it means to be capable or eligible to vote than the present language of the *FOG*.

If this memorial is adopted, the questions should be asked, 1) Should this criteria, if accepted, be applied across the board to all ARPC committees, commissions, boards, agencies, presbyteries, and Synod? And 2) Why would churches be granted an exception to the definition of a quorum when no other body of the ARPC has exceptions?

2) Refers to *FOG* 6.8 and adds a new "G" paragraph necessitating, if accepted, a new numbering of the remaining paragraphs.

If this memorial is the result of assimilating inactive members into active membership rolls, the problem is not assembling a quorum, but is a lack of procedure for timely dealing with inactive members. Such procedures should be added to the church's manual of procedure or the presbytery's manual of procedure and not to the *FOG*. The *FOG* is not a detailed procedural manual for presbyteries or sessions, but a governmental document giving and restricting authority; and providing national standards for the Presbyterian Polity of Synod. Furthermore, if a congregation puts into practice censuring of persons which is not in compliance with the *FOG* it would be the presbytery, and not Synod, that would oversee, and or discipline, such actions. Therefore, this memorial, being a request to define a membership procedure, is more appropriately placed in the jurisdiction of a church or presbytery manual of procedure and not a point of law for Synod (*FOG* 4.13, 14).

3) Refers to *FOG* 4.15 and requests a new "E" paragraph.

Memorial three is similar to memorial two above. Since the presbytery has the oversight of its congregations, it also has the right to develop procedures for its congregations, provided they remain aligned with the principles and authority described in the *FOG*. If a church does not have its own procedure for internally handling various membership needs, the Synod would not step in and direct them or discipline them if they were found in error. These would be the responsibility of presbytery.

4) Refers to *FOG* 4.16 and attempts to provide three details on the manner in which the session makes a "diligent effort" (to inquire, seeks to restore, and considers disciplinary action).

Memorial four is similar to two and three above in that it would make the jurisdiction of membership procedure a matter of Synod responsibility. Proper jurisdiction over membership procedures is a presbytery matter.

5) Refers to *FOG* 3.25.E and adds two criteria used by the session to determine the right of a member to vote 1) if a member is capable of participating, and 2) if a member is eligible to participate.

Such criteria for voting is nowhere found in RRO and appear to be a subjective criteria that, unless well defined, would cause more difficulties than it solves. What does it mean to be capable and eligible? RRO states that all members are "legally entitled to vote" unless they are removed from the rolls, under discipline, or absent (RRO Ch. 13, section 44, "Voting rights..." p. 402, 415). Additional stipulations on the right to vote, if applied to congregational membership, in order to be consistent, would also have to apply to all presbytery and Synod memberships and their committees, boards, and commissions.

Summary of memorial #5 and its five points:

Memorial one requests a new set of criteria for allowing members to exercise their rights of being in good standing, that is, active members. This appears to be motivated by active membership increasing due to the assimilation of inactive members rather than appropriately removing inactive members from the rolls of the congregation.

Memorials two through five appear to be the business of presbytery since they relate more to membership procedures and not to the giving of governmental authority, which is the purpose of the *FOG*. These details would be best dealt with in the Presbytery Manual of

Procedure (FOG 3.23) as the *FOG* gives presbyteries such authority, *FOG 10.3.D* records include membership rolls; and *FOG 10.3.Q* gives presbyteries authority to propose measures when changes in government are made by Synod. *FOG 10.3.S* is a catch-all paragraph giving presbyteries authority for spiritual welfare concerns, the issue proposed by Virginia Presbytery (*FOG 3.23*).

Moderator's Committee on Memorials (Memorial #6)

2015 *Minutes of Synod*, p. 122

The Moderator's Committee on Memorials recommended that 14.4 be replaced with the following:

"Proposed amendments shall not be presented to congregations for the specific purpose of instructing the delegates how to vote."

Catawba Memorial #3 also addresses 14.4 with the request to eliminate the word "decision."

The Moderator's Committee on Memorials is not offering an amendment to 14.4 but requesting a replacement of it with a new concept. The replacement contains substance of a different nature to the current 14.4 statement. The current statement limits the action of a congregation to only voting on a Synod amendment to the *FOG*. Such a motion has passed through the process of motion, amendment, and discussion. By the time a congregation is presented with an amendment to the *FOG* it is at the level of a vote with discussion closed. Replacing 14.4 with this proposal adds a new concept to the *FOG* and removes the directive of no discussion or decision. The point of the present 14.4 is to clarify where the Synod motion is as presented to the congregation. The replacement motion is of a different nature in that it is concerned with voter manipulation.

Furthermore, the replacement motion assumes a proposed amendment, once it has passed through parliamentary procedure, could have added to it a statement giving instructions on whether to vote for or against the motion. A motion by definition cannot include instructions on whether to vote it up or down. The only statement sent to a congregation is the motion with no preferences as to the vote outcome.

This memorial does not contribute substantially to the *FOG*. If adopted it would remove the clarification on the process of a Synod motion as presented to a congregation. Possibly the intention of the memorial was to write a motion that would insure the free exercise of conscience of individual members of a congregation when asked to vote upon a *FOG* amendment. According to RRO this memorial is unnecessary, whereas instruction to the congregation that they are not allowed to debate or amend are important instructions. Not only is a member not compelled to vote (they can abstain, RRO Ch. 13, Section 44, p. 402), he cannot be forced to vote for a particular outcome, but is free to act within the assembly according to his own conscience. Having a vote of equal weight and free of coercion is the foundation of RRO (RRO Ch. 1, Section 1, p. 1).

The meeting was closed in prayer by Jamie Hunt.

Recommendations:

- 1) That the Memorial #1 from Catawba Presbytery **not be adopted**, but that a Robert's Rule of Order footnote be added "Ch. 15, section 47, "Action of Financial Report," p. 469 9th edition" to the *FOG* for clarification. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 2) That in light of the concern for clarity the following changes be made to the *FOG* 5.11:
remove the sentence in **bold** and replace it with the sentence underlined.

5.11

*The congregational treasurer, who is entrusted with the regular offerings of the congregation, shall be responsible to the oversight of the diaconate. A monthly financial report of the congregational treasurer shall be included in the minutes of the diaconate. **An outside entity, someone not directly connected to the congregation, shall conduct a financial review to ensure full accuracy and disclosure of church finances. Such a review shall be paid out of the church's funds, made part of the sessional record, and made available to any member who wishes to view it. Such a review shall be conducted no less frequently than every third year.***

5.11 *The congregational treasurer, who is entrusted with the regular offerings of the congregation, shall be responsible to the oversight of the diaconate. A monthly financial report of the congregational treasurer shall be included in the minutes of the diaconate. An objective and financially*

literate party, someone not directly connected to the maintenance of the financial records, or receipt and/or distribution of church funds, shall conduct an annual financial review. Such review shall be designed to provide at least limited assurance that (1) financial assets are properly safeguarded, and (2) the reported financial statements are complete and accurate. **Synod APPROVED.**

- 3) That the Memorial #2 from Catawba Presbytery **not be adopted**. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 4) That the Memorial #3 from Catawba Presbytery **not be adopted** as suggested. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 5) That the Memorial #5 point 1 from Virginia Presbytery **not be adopted** as it would make the current *FOG* less clear and make an exception to Synod's quorum requirements for only local congregations. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 6) That the Memorial #5 point 2 from Virginia Presbytery **not be adopted** as it would be a violation of the sphere of court authority. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 7) That the Memorial #5 point 3 from Virginia Presbytery **not be adopted** as it would be a violation of the sphere of court authority. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 8) That the Memorial #5 point 4 from Virginia Presbytery **not be adopted** as it would be a violation of the sphere of court authority. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 9) That the Memorial #5 point 5 from Virginia Presbytery **not be adopted** as it would be a violation of the sphere of court authority. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 10) That the Memorial #6 from the Moderator's Committee on Memorials **not be adopted** as it would remove an important directive with an entirely new and unnecessary concept. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 11) The committee recommends that the attached proposal for establishing a standing Synod Committee on *FOG* Amendment Review **be adopted** and that the Committee on Nominations present nominees for this committee at the 2017 General Synod. **Synod APPROVED.**
- 12) That the Special Committee to Review *FOG* Amendments and its current members be reinstated for one additional year giving Synod's Committee on Nominations time to nominate, and for 2017 Synod to approve membership in, the standing Synod Com-

mittee on FOG Amendment Review; and that this Special Committee replace Paul Dillingham with Jerry Belue. **Synod APPROVED.**

ⁱ Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 2nd Edition. NY: NY. William Collins and World Pub. Co. Inc. 1976.

ⁱⁱ Black's Law Dictionary 5th Edition. St. Paul, MN. West Pub. Co. 1979.

Revision Committee
of the General Synod of the
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
(Proposal 2016 with end notes)

(The below proposal is designed to be included in and to conform to General Synod's Manual of Authorities and Duties for the purpose of defining the authority, responsibilities, and limitations of the Revision Committee. It will require a General Synod majority vote to be approved and activated.)

Purpose

The *Form of Government*ⁱ requires that a committee be established by the General Synod to review all revisions related to constitutional matters of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC) that are brought before the General Synod. Constitutional matters include the following documents of the ARPC: the *Form of Government*, the *Directory of Public Worship*, the *Book of Discipline*, the *Manual of Authorities and Duties*, the *Rules of Order*, the *Bylaws of General Synod*, the *Confession of Faith*, and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*.

The name of this committee is dictated in the FOG as the "Revision Committee." ⁱⁱ The Revision Committee of the ARPC, as an agency of the ARPC General Synod, shall fulfill this duty.ⁱⁱⁱ The Revision Committee of the ARPC (called the Committee throughout this document) is a standing committee of the ARPC General Synod.^{iv}

The Committee's purpose is to review all amendments, memorials, motions to add to, or subtract from, changes or requests to modify or remove, or any other type of revision to any statements found in the ARPC constitutional documents (aka *The Standards*), before they are presented for discussion on the floor of the General Synod; and for the Committee to report back in writing to the General Synod at its next meeting the Committee's findings regarding the impact of proposed revisions upon 1) the constitutional document under review and 2) the principles of government contained within the ARPC *Book of Standards*.

Membership

Membership requirements to serve on the Committee shall conform to the *Standards of the ARPC*.^v Synod's Committee on Nominations shall recommend to the General Synod members to the Revision Committee classes as openings arise. To commence the Committee, the Moderator shall appoint the first two classes, which shall constitute a quorum until Synod's Committee on Nominations is able to fill the remaining class openings.

Membership on the Revision Committee shall be as follows:

- 1) At Large: Eight (8) members divided into four classes of two members each. Each class shall be composed of an ARPC elder and an ordained ARPC minister.^{vi}
- 2) Advisory: Moderator of Synod, Synod's Principal Clerk, Synod's Parliamentarian, Executive Director of Central Services.
- 3) Alternates: one ARPC elder and one ARPC ordained minister shall be elected annually by the General Synod to fill the place of any member unable to attend a Committee meeting, or replace a member who resigns before his term has expired. Alternate members only have full membership privileges for the meeting they are called upon to serve, or when installed as a class replacement.

Terms of Service

At large membership shall be recommended by Synod's Committee on Nominations and approved by the General Synod. At large membership shall serve for a term of four consecutive years. Members may be appointed for a second consecutive term (for a total of eight years). After the completion of two consecutive terms, members must roll off the Committee for one year before being reappointed. Appointees filling a vacant position of an unexpired term shall serve the remaining time of that class. Fulfilling a partial or unfinished term for two or more years constitutes serving one full term.^{vii}

Terms shall begin July 1 of the year in which the appointment is made and expires the last day of June of the year of the class appointed.^{viii} In the case of a nominee elected by the General Synod to fulfill an unexpired term, his term shall commence immediately upon being elected.^{ix}

Stated Meetings

The Committee shall meet at least annually. Committee meetings may be called by the General Synod, Moderator of Synod, Synod's Principal Clerk, Chairman of the Committee, by a majority of the Committee, or convene at stated times by the Committee. Meetings shall be given at least fourteen (14) days notice. The Committee may use electronic methods to accommodate and constitute a meeting.

Organization

The Committee shall annually elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary as officers of the Committee upon its first meeting following the General Synod.^x

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Committee members (see note above on the initial Committee appointments). Alternates may be used to satisfy quorum requirements. Advisory members are not counted when determining quorum requirements.^{xii}

The Chairman of the Committee shall be an advisory member to the Executive Board. The Chairman is authorized to designate an alternate should he be unable to attend an Executive Board meeting.

Authority

The Committee, as an agency of the ARPC, shall have authority to assemble and study matters committed to it from the General Synod and report back Committee findings as they relate to revising the ARPC constitutional documents.^{xiii} All amendments brought to the floor of the General Synod shall be referred to the Committee before they are discussed and voted upon by the General Synod.

The Committee Chairman has authority to create sub-committees that shall report to the Committee on specific issues related to constitutional matters.^{xiv}

The Committee shall report directly to the General Synod.

The General Synod shall fund the Committee's activities. The Committee shall present an annual budget reflecting funds necessary for operations.

Editorial changes for purposes of clarity not affecting the substance or intention of constitutional documents may be made by Synod's Principal Clerk or the General Synod Revision Committee. Editorial changes such as grammatical, syntactical, and spelling do not require a General Synod vote.^{xv} All boards and agencies of the General Synod have authority to make non-substantive changes (changes

that do not require General Synod approval) to their documents as needed.

The Committee may suggest to the General Synod editorial improvements to a proposed revision for the purpose of aligning it to the ARPC *Standards*, presbyterian polity and form, and to reflect the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order's* constitutional format for parliamentary rules (10th edition).

The Committee shall not give opinions on proposed revisions, recommendations on the merits of any constitutional matter sent to it by the General Synod, or initiate changes to the ARPC *Standards* unless specifically directed to do so by the General Synod or the Executive Board of the General Synod.

The Committee shall not make evaluative comments on a revision unless the revision contradicts the current *Confession of Faith* or Catechisms.

Individual members of the Committee, as members of the General Synod, have the right to express personal views as individuals on a proposed revision on the floor of the General Synod provided they are not representing the Committee.

The Committee recognizes that the General Synod has authority to act upon a constitutional revision without referring it to the Committee by suspending its rules.^{xvi}

Duties

To serve as an Advisory Committee to the General Synod on constitutional matters during the assembly of General Synod and throughout the year. It shall consider the content of proposed revisions and advise Synod regarding any additional changes to the ARPC *Standards* if a proposed revision is passed.

To study and respond in writing to all revisions made to the ARPC *Standards* presented to the General Synod to the next meeting of the General Synod.^{xvii} The General Synod may provide particular instructions for the Committee regarding its handling of a proposed revision.^{xviii} The Committee shall not provide recommendations, directions on how to vote, or evaluate the merits of a revision unless the General Synod specifically requests such recommendations, directions, or evaluation.^{xix}

To assist and advise the Moderator, Synod's Principal Clerk, Parliamentarian, Executive Director of Central Services, standing and special committees, commissions, boards, and agencies of the General

Synod on constitutional matters between meetings of the General Synod at their request.

To record, maintain, and keep current minutes of the Committee according to *Robert's Rules of Order* (RRO).^{xx} Minutes shall include all Committee members' reports and research related to the revisions brought to its attention.

To recommend its report be received and its annual budget be approved by the General Synod.

Budget

The Committee requests of the General Synod 2016 a budget of \$2,500.00 for transportation, printing, Committee member reimbursements, and other costs related to the Committee's service to the General Synod.

Endnotes:

- i ARPC FOG 14.8 All amendments of substance shall be sent to a standing Revision Committee for review. This committee shall report on how the material affects other provisions throughout the *Form of Government*.
- ARPC FOG 14.9 This review by the Revision Committee will take place before the material comes to the floor for approval. Material presented on the floor will be referred to the committee before being acted upon by the court. Also see RRO 9th edition Chapter 16, section 49, "Standing committees," p. 481.
- ii Ibid.
- iii *Manual of Authorities and Duties*, 2012, p. 3.
- iv *Manual of Authorities and Duties*, 2012, p. 3.
- v ARPC FOG 13:14,15.
- vi *Manual of Authorities and Duties*, 2012, p. 3, #6.
- vii Ibid #3.
- viii *Manual of Authorities and Duties*, 2012, p. 3, #2.
- ix Ibid.
- x RRO 9th edition, Chapter 6, section 13, "Designating the Committee Chairman," p. 173.
- xi RRO 9th edition, Chapter 16, section 49, "Committee Procedure," p. 490.
- xii RRO 9th edition, Chapter 16, section 49, p. 488.
- xiii ARPC FOG 14.8.
- xiv RRO 9th edition, Chapter 16, section 49, p. 488.
- xv Grammatical changes refer to the arrangements of words in a sentence for clarity; syntactical changes refer to the arrangements of words, phrases, or clauses that may need correcting; spelling changes includes correct spelling and correct usage of a particular term.
- xvi To suspend Synod's rule FOG 14.9 requires a 2/3 vote of the body (RRO 9th edition, Chapter 8, section 25, p. 260.).

^{xvii}RRO 9th edition, Chapter 16, section 49, p. 492.

^{xviii}ARPC FOG 13.11.

^{xix}Most committees of Synod provide recommendations. Due to the nature of this Committee's work it does not have the authority to recommend or not recommend submitted changes to the ARPC *Standards*, unless Synod specifically gives the committee such authority. Members of the Committee may speak to a revision on the floor of Synod as individuals but shall not represent the Committee when speaking for or against a submitted revision.

^{xx}RRO 9th edition, Chapter 15, section 47 "Minutes," pp 548-9.

Minutes are to be recorded by the Secretary on what was done not what was said. It shall include the following: 1) the kind of meeting (regular, special, adjourned); 2) the Committee's full name; 3) the date, time and place of the meeting; 4) a record of members present and absent (including advisory, alternates, guests, as well as excused and unexcused absences); 5) whether or not the previous meeting minutes were read and approved; 6) the body of the minutes shall contain in separate paragraphs each subject matter; 7) accurate wording of all motions; 8) whether the subject matter was acted upon including if it was made into a motion, seconded, discussed, voted upon, withdrawn, or amended (MSC and MSF may be used at the end of a motion to indicate Motioned, Seconded, Carried; and Motioned, Seconded, Failed to carry). The last paragraph shall include the motion to adjourn, that it was seconded, voted upon as well as provide the time of adjournment; 9) when appropriate a statement on the time and place of the next scheduled meeting. Each meeting shall have its own separate minutes, which are signed by the secretary and chairman of the Committee (ARPC FOG 13.12.D).

The report of the **Special Committee to Review the Judicial Process of the Ecclesiastical Commission on Judiciary Affairs** was presented.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE JUDICIAL PROCESS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION ON JUDICIARY AFFAIRS

This Report is in reference to a communication from Catawba Presbytery to the 210th Stated Meeting of Synod (2014).

Historical Background

During the conduct of business at the 2014 General Synod, Catawba Presbytery lodged a communication which was styled as a Complaint against Second Presbytery relative to *ARPTalk*, the blog of Charles W. (Chuck) Wilson requesting the General Synod to assume original jurisdiction in the matter.

The 2014 Synod granted the request, assumed original jurisdiction, and referred the matter to the Ecclesiastical Commission on Judiciary Affairs (ECJA). (See 2014 *Minutes of Synod*, p. 462).

During the interim between the 2014 and 2015 Synod meetings, the ECJA investigated the various concerns raised by the Complaint and interviewed those persons who were considered to be the principals in the matters.

Although the ECJA submitted a very large report to the Synod of 2015, the report generated more questions than answers. The ECJA recommended that the report of the Commission be received; that no disciplinary actions should be pursued with reference to Charles Wilson due to the expiration of the statute of limitations and to the absence of any specific charges; and, that the Commission recommit the matter to the Synod to take any action that it might deem to be appropriate.

Therefore, the 2015 General Synod committed the report of ECJA to a special committee of the General Synod, appointed by the Moderator, James Hunt. The committee consisted of Paul Koukos, Vaughn Hathaway, Lee Shelnut, and Howard Wheeler.

Directives.

The Ad Hoc Committee was directed:

- To review the process followed by the ECJA,
- To make recommendations to the 2016 General Synod giving attention to:

How judicial commissions are to:

1. understand their appellate role,
2. define and investigate charges,
3. address internal conflict of interests and views in order to act in unity, and, how presbyteries are to correspond with each other so that disciplinary processes might be handled effectively and graciously.

Committee Observations:

We have a fairly sufficient process for discipline if, and only if, it is engaged faithfully and with pastoral concern. But any good system, if poorly executed, will be a poor system in practice. Greater familiarity with our *Form of Government* and *Book of Discipline* and a commitment to put that knowledge into practice in our courts will be a blessing to the church and her courts. With this in mind, the committee makes the following observations:

1. First, Synod ought to demand of its assembled members that they consider the following very carefully before making motions to refer a case to ECJA:
 - a) That the primary function of the ECJA is appellate and not litigious.
Perhaps a reference from Catawba Presbytery for advice from Synod on how to proceed with Second Presbytery or a request from Catawba for Synod, through the ECJA, to review the case regarding how Second Presbytery conducted their pursuit of discipline would have been more helpful and would have allowed the ECJA to return the process of discipline to the original judicatory with helpful counsel for continuance or conclusion.
 - b) That requests for the ECJA to function in litigation be accompanied by very specific charges.
The motion which referred this matter to the ECJA and gave it original jurisdiction was a "blank check" for ECJA to figure out what to do. It did not give guidance; it did not give parameters for discipline; it did not clearly define a sustainable charge and consequently proved unhelpful.
 - c) That the ECJA be given a way to have Synod give clarification and counsel regarding matters referred throughout the year when General Synod is not assembled.

Motions which attempt to get someone to look at a problem, but which lack the clarity or specificity needed, make the work of the appointed committee exceedingly and unnecessarily difficult.

2. Second, the ECJA could have, and should have, requested that Synod, through its Moderator or Executive Committee, clearly define its purpose, its scope, and its authority. Its internal division was evidence of this need. Any commission, but especially an ecclesiastical commission, has an implicit duty to define the scope, authority, and purpose of its work as narrowly as possible to avoid either the appearance or the reality of usurping the legitimate authority of Synod, or in this case, the presbyteries involved. Furthermore, the ECJA should have insisted on its primary role as being an appellate court and not one for litigation.
3. Third, Presbyteries ought to recognize that when questions

of discipline regarding members go beyond their borders, this indicates a need for greater self-reflection and attention to their responsibilities, and this calls for careful and gracious interactions with those voicing concerns. Presbyteries should be mindful that while being the courts of original jurisdiction for ministers and having the responsibility to exercise that duty appropriately, they can make a reference for advice to the Synod while maintaining original jurisdiction over the minister(s) in question.

All parties should be reminded to adhere first to Biblical principles of reconciliation and restoration in all judicial proceedings. In certain situations, correct procedure then might very well be to lodge charges, following the directives of the *Book of Discipline*.

In light of these observations and the committee's review, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendations:

1. That the General Synod acknowledge that it contributed to the confusion that existed on the ECJA by failing to note that there is no provision in our *Book of Discipline* for one court of the church to complain against the actions of another court (See *Book of Discipline*, X.E.1 and 2.) and by failing to provide the clarity and specificity that the ECJA needed in its assigned duty.
2. That the General Synod appoint a Standing Committee charged with reviewing the constitutionality of communications from the lower courts.
3. That the *Manual of Authorities and Duties* be amended by the addition of a new section (chapter) that shall be a Manual of Judicial Procedure to guide sessions, presbyteries, the ECJA and the Synod on judicial procedures.
4. That an ad hoc committee be appointed to draft such a manual.
5. That inter-presbytery communications be limited to the Stated Clerks of the various courts in their gradations.

Respectfully submitted,

Vaughn Hathaway, Chairman

A motion carried to refer the report to the **Special Committee to Revise *Book of Discipline***.

Special prayer was offered on behalf of **Special Committee to Revise *Book of Discipline***.

The report of the **Committee on Theological and Social Concerns** was presented.

The Order of the Day was called. Synod recessed for lunch with the blessing and closing prayer by John Lim.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, AFTERNOON SESSION

Prayer for the family of John Paul Marr was offered.

The afternoon devotional was led by Eric Hancox.

The report of the **Committee on Theological and Social Concerns** was continued.

COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

**Part I – Report On Women, Selective Service, and Their Role
in Combat**

**Part II – Report On Race Relations and the Associate
Reformed Presbyterian Church**

At the 2015 Meeting of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church the Theological and Social Concerns Committee was tasked by our moderator to take up two topics and report back to the 2016 Meeting of the General Synod with recommendations and advice for the Synod. Attached to this report are two papers covering this request. The first paper covers the questions surrounding current and future Department of Defense authorizations opening combat Military Occupational Specialties to women and the requirement of women to sign up for selective service. The committee has one recommendation concerning this matter. The second paper from historical, exegetical, theological, and pastoral angles discusses the issue of race relations in the past, present, and future of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. We commend both of these papers for your consideration and give thanks to the Lord Our God for the work of this and future Synods.

Recommendations:

- 1) That the following position statement be adopted by the General Synod: *The Word of God gives no warrant expressed or implied that women are to be conscripted into military service or required to participate in military combat. Therefore, the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church opposes the registration of women for Selective Service and the assignment of women to combat duty or to duties which involve a significant risk of engaging in combat.*
- 2) That the paper concerning race relations and the ARPC be received as information.
- 3) That the 2016 report of the Theological and Social Concerns Committee be received as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Glaser, Chairman

Part I - Report to Synod on Women Being Required to Register for Selective Service and Service in Combat

The 211th meeting of the General Synod adopted a recommendation from the Committee on the Minister and His Work "That Synod have the Committee on Theological and Social Concerns study the matter of women being required to register for Selective Service and being required to serve in combat."

Since the meeting of Synod the Defense Department has acted to open all combat roles to qualified women service members. Senior military leaders and members of Congress have recommended requiring women to register for Selective Service. This action removed the rationale used in the most recent Supreme Court decision upholding the restriction of Selective Service registration to men, and it is widely believed that changing the Selective Service Act to include women is only a matter of time.

The Committee on Theological and Social Concerns reviewed major reports adopted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) regarding the matters assigned to us. These reports deal with exegetical, confessional, ecclesiastical, historical and practical issues related to women being drafted and/or serving in combat, and both clearly state opposition to both of these actions. However, both reports also serve to illustrate the complexity of these issues, and both reports included strong mi-

nority dissent. Among the issues raised was: whether or not the positions taken by the assemblies constituted counsel or mandates, matters which impact women who might volunteer for combat or for military service when involuntary assignment to combat was possible; and pastors, churches, and chaplains who counsel prospective or existing service members.

Subsequent to the adoption of the OPC and PCA reports, the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel, of which the ARP Church is a member, included in Section V of its handbook a helpful summary of those reports and guidance for chaplains which could also be useful to pastors and sessions. That summary and the OPC and PCA reports themselves are sufficiently comprehensive to provide the pastors and sessions of our General Synod with the information they need to counsel women on decisions regarding military service in the current situation, and appropriate links are attached to this report.

However, because the ARP Church has taken no position on the issue of women being required to register for Selective Service and serve in combat, our pastors and sessions are left without an official denominational policy to guide them in these matters, and perhaps more important, our women are left without an official denominational position upon which to assert a conscientious objection to such requirements.

In 2006, the Committee on Inter-Church Relations informed the meeting of General Synod that NAPARC had requested that member churches affirm the following statement: "The Word of God gives no warrant expressed or implied that women are to be conscripted in or employed for military combat roles, but rather they are to be defended by men and kept from harm's way that they might fulfill their biblical callings and duties under God." The first part of the NAPARC statement is clear and well supported by the OPC and PCA reports, but the second part raises issues that are problematic. For example, does "kept from harm's way" mean that women should be kept from serving in other potentially hazardous occupations? The ARP Church took no action on the request from NAPARC, but given the possibility that women members of our churches soon may be confronted with these issues, adopting a position is warranted.

Links to Documents:

<http://www.opc.org/GA/WomenInMilitary.html>

<http://pcahistory.org/pca/aiscwim.html#2>

<http://pcamna.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PRCCMP->

[Chaplains-Manual-Feb.-2015.pdf](http://theaquilareport.com/a-letter-from-the-presbyterian-and-reformed-commission-on-chaplains-and-military-personnel/)
<http://theaquilareport.com/a-letter-from-the-presbyterian-and-reformed-commission-on-chaplains-and-military-personnel/>

Recommendation:

1. That the following position statement be adopted:

The Word of God gives no warrant expressed or implied that women are to be conscripted into military service or required to participate in military combat. Therefore, the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church opposes the registration of women for Selective Service and the assignment of women to combat duty or to duties which involve a significant risk of engaging in combat.

**Part II - Report On Race Relations and the Associate
Reformed Presbyterian Church
History of this Question in the ARPC**

Exegetical Considerations

Theological Reflections

Pastoral Application

Introduction

At its 211th stated meeting, the Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church directed the Committee on Theological and Social Concerns to “study our denomination’s history in race relations, examine how we might faithfully apply the gospel in our relationship to racial minorities in the future, and present this report to the 2016 meeting of Synod.” To fulfill this responsibility, the committee investigated the issue from four perspectives: historical, exegetical, theological and pastoral.

The historical section of the paper engages in a substantial survey of our denomination's past regarding societal discrimination and race relations, unearthing patterns that both elucidate shortcomings and offer encouragement to our Synod. The paper then turns to Holy Scripture, so that the inerrant, infallible Word of God may shape our attitudes and practices regarding relations among the races. A systematic-theological exploration of several critically relevant doctrines follows the exegetical portion of the report. Rounding out these three sections, the concluding portion of the paper offers practical suggestions toward deeper engagement with racial minorities in the context of our union with Christ.

It is our prayer that this paper will be read and inwardly digested, and its suggestions implemented, by the churches of the ARPC. Ours is a world shattered by sin and therefore utterly incapable of forging true harmony and love among humans of every nation, kindred, people and tongue. By God's grace in Christ may it come to pass that, even in our midst, the blessed heavenly vision of Rev 7:9-12 will be realized in some measure—to the glory of the only Savior of sinners, the great King and Head of the Church, Jesus Christ.

HISTORICAL SECTION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this brief historical overview is to survey the history of race relations within the ARPC as well as to identify influences upon and actions of the ARP Synod, including historical developments within the denomination and its associated congregations in relationship to past and current social concerns as they bear upon racism within the Church. Seven key time frames illuminate the ARPC's social responses, statements and involvement with discrimination and with racial issues.

SCOTTISH EXPERIENCE

The first issue related to discrimination surfaced during the seminal years of the Associate Presbyterians (Seceders) in Scotland. Under the tyranny of King Charles II of Great Britain, Presbyterians were executed or enslaved if caught leading their families in worship at home. Some of these men were sold into slavery to work on American plantations.¹ From the beginning of the ARPC's formation, slavery became a part of their religious persecution experience. Although this was not technically a form of racism (Europeans were enslaving Europeans, not another race) it was a form of extreme discrimination and oppression of inalienable rights against those who rejected the religious-dictatorial Roman Catholic influences of King Charles.

This was known as the "Killing Time" and was used in an attempt to banish Reformed family worship.² If the husband were put to death or enslaved and his property confiscated, it would reduce his dependent family to a state of beggary. Such persecution of Presbyterians and Puritans was one of the reasons they fled England for areas in Europe and the newly rediscovered America.

ANTEBELLUM EXPERIENCE

The second instance of discrimination in the ARPC came before the Civil War. Many Presbyterians were large land owners

(plantations). The economy was based upon African slave labor for agricultural production. Presbyterians owned slaves. Some Christian slave owners supported race-based slavery to varying degrees while some Presbyterians (nearly the entire body of Covenanters) were so opposed to slavery that they migrated to the Northern states where slavery already had disappeared.³ Most ARPC gentry who owned slaves were concerned for the educational and social needs of their slaves, but this concern did not extend to giving them freedom.

Blacks and whites in the South worshiped together even though seating in churches was segregated. Whites sat in assigned booths while blacks were permitted in the balcony. It was not uncommon for blacks to follow their masters' religion and become Presbyterians. Presbyterians taught blacks how to read, provided Bible lessons, and apprenticed them into a commercial trade. Slaves were offered membership in the church and allowed to take communion with their masters. Some ARPC congregations were more than half "negro" slaves.⁴

The early nineteenth century was an era of institution building, which included unification of like-minded churches. After the Revolutionary War, the AP and RPs united on November 1, 1782, in Philadelphia, becoming the Associate Reformed Synod. In 1803, at the Old Brick Church, the Synod of the Carolinas was organized, uniting churches in North and South Carolina and Georgia. In 1826, the issue of slavery surfaced in the AR Church for the first time. Of the 2,000 members of the First Presbytery of Ohio, 75 percent were slave owners yet held anti-slavery sentiments.⁵ The Synods of the West and South also addressed this question. Discussions on slavery within the AR Synods were mild compared to debates in other denominations.

In 1828 South Carolina politicians thought keeping slaves ignorant would perpetuate slavery. The ARPC opposed this idea as immoral and opposed the making of any laws that kept black slaves uneducated.⁶ The Synod unanimously adopted the following memorial:

"Whereas, it is understood that petitions will be presented to the honorable Legislature of South Carolina, at its approaching meeting, praying the enactment of a law to prohibit the instruction of slaves to read; Therefore, Resolve 1. That in the judgment of this Synod, such a law would be a serious infringement of their rights of conscience. 2. That the members of this Synod use active

*exertions to forward memorials to the honorable Legislature remonstrating respectfully, yet firmly, against the passage of any such law."*⁷

As caring as this statement was, and in light of the social moderation of Presbyterians toward black slaves, the Synod of the South never made a statement, either in favor of or, in opposition to, the institution of African slavery. Synod merely addressed the spiritual nurture of slaves and the slaveowner's moral responsibility toward his slaves.

The Covenanters (RPs) were so opposed to racial slavery in the South they eventually moved to the free states of the West so as not to support black slavery. By 1831, the absorbing question in the country, both politically and ecclesiastically, was slavery. In May of 1831, the Associate Synod of North America, meeting in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, passed a resolution that all the members of the ARPC who owned slaves manumit (free) them immediately.⁸ In previous years, the Associate Synod adopted anti-slavery resolutions and was decidedly opposed to slavery. Of the nine existing presbyteries, the Presbytery of the Carolinas was implicated in this resolution, as few slave owners lived in the jurisdiction of the other eight Presbyteries.

Carolina protested—but to no avail. They did not protest manumitting slaves, but that they "were required to free them forthwith."⁹ Some ministers were unable to enforce the Act of Synod and left their congregations to pastor Northern congregations. The ultimatum drove the Presbytery of the Carolinas to secede. It was not manumitting that offended the Presbyterians as much as it was Synod interfering in civil matters and forcing the immediate release of slaves.

The ARPC was, and has always been, largely and strongly opposed to slavery. The common opinion among ARPC church members was that they did not advocate but rather discouraged the practice of slavery. They believed it was an evil inflicted upon them by the British government and perpetuated by circumstances beyond their control. Several pastors (McElwee, Heron, Anderson, and Kethin, all having more black than white members in their congregations) claimed slavery was "clearly condemned by the law of God."¹⁰ While this view was held, more than half of the members in some congregations remained slave holders. Their collective interest was not so much to immediately abolish the institution of slavery, but to protect black slaves against social injustices and cruelty. It was regarded as impossible under the present social circumstances to immediately free slaves and fulfill one's Christian civic duties.

An example of the general acceptance of ARPC ministers to African Americans is seen in a story of Rev. Dr. John M. Mason, the pastor of an ARPC in New York City (1770-1829).¹¹ Rev. Mason had met the elderly Katherine Ferguson, a "colored" woman who became a member of Dr. Mason's ARP Church some forty years earlier. She kept a confectioner's shop, making enough money to feed, clothe, and educate destitute "colored" children. She was warmly attached to the ARPC:

After Dr. Mason commenced preaching in Murray Street, some 'gay ladies' from Pearl Street said to him: "Doctor, it will not do for those colored people (Katherine and a male relative of hers who had made a profession of religion) to sit at the same table with the white communicants.—They should be at a Table by themselves at the last." The Dr. simply replied, that he would think of it. When the day for the communion came round, and the people were about to take their seats at the Lord's table, the Doctor came down from the pulpit, and taking the two colored persons by the hands, he said, "This is my brother, this is my sister. He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother. In Christ Jesus, there is neither Greek, nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free," and then led them forward to the table and set them down 'first of all.'

The ARPC was not the only Christian denomination struggling with the issue of slavery. Baptists experienced conflicts within their ranks over the issue as well. They divided into Baptists (pro-slavery) and American Baptists (abolitionists) in 1845. The Methodist Episcopal Church prohibited blacks to pray in the presence of whites. Blacks left St. George's MEC in 1894 to form Bethel AME Church. They later affiliated with a Wesleyan denomination and are now known as the AME Church.

CIVIL WAR EXPERIENCE

The "War" broke out in 1861 and devastated many ARP churches. The Synod took the position that it was an "unholy war." They unani-

mously approved a resolution endorsing the cause of the Confederacy as a struggle for independence (a war of aggression between the Northern and Southern states).¹² There remains a debate as to whether the war was about the independence of the states or about the elimination of the institution of slavery. Both issues had strong economic overtones. Slavery was certainly a more popular social issue upon which to justify war than economic considerations or political union.

America's Civil War left the ARPC void of young male leadership. The churches were mainly left with gray-haired men, widows, and orphaned children as the bulk of their membership. The Southern economy was decimated, and many plantations and estates had been ransacked by Sherman's army and/or burned to the ground by federal troops. This left a large portion of the population homeless and economically destitute. Many ARP churches were unable to hire full-time ministers or to serve the needs of their communities. The war decimated church attendance, causing some churches to disappear from Presbytery rolls; doors closed, theological students scattered (Erskine College's endowment dwindled from \$75,000 to \$13,000), and the ARPC was left for dead. This was certainly the case with the once-thriving "Old Brick Church" in Fairfield County, South Carolina.¹³

Blacks especially suffered. With the destruction of their masters' homes and livelihood, they were forced into poverty. There was little viable functioning commerce to employ a "freedman." Without any accumulated wealth or source to generate revenue, it became extremely difficult for an emancipated slave to care for his family. With emancipation came a new type of slavery: forced poverty.

The war freed the slaves but it took the Thirteenth Amendment to formally abolish the institution of slavery in America. However, the institution of slavery was replaced with segregation (the "Jim Crow Laws"). The Supreme Court in an 1896 decision (in *Plessy v. Ferguson*) regarding black and white races said they were to be "separate but equal." Some prominent theologians (e.g., Robert Dabney) defended slavery and opposed educating blacks (although ARPC congregations generally supported the education of blacks). Other Evangelicals like 18th century English theologian Matthew Henry in his commentary on Exodus 21 expressed misgivings with slavery but never explicitly condemned it.

EMANCIPATION EXPERIENCE

The end of the war marked a fourth grouping of race-related activity. Black ARPC members had gained a new status. On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, making them "Freedmen." That same year, Synod requested of ministers to labor among "colored people." They were to teach that the marriage relationship was sacred and to establish Sabbath Schools for their black congregations. A considerable amount of attention was given to the religious culture of the freedmen. Pastor J. Knox Montgomery claimed he was preaching to more "Negroes" in the ARPC than when he preached in Northern UP churches. In 1867, there was a second Synod call for more assistance for the "freedmen." Three recommendations followed:

- "1) That all congregations set up schools where colored children could receive a common education.
- 2) That Sabbath Schools be established for old and young freedmen.
- 3) That the gospel be preached to the colored in separate congregations; but preachers of their own color be discouraged to preach until they were able to instruct and edify their hearers."¹⁴

An idea circulated among a few Presbyterians that the "Negro" was a son of the cursed Ham and that the Bible prophesied that his descendants (Africans) would always exist in a lower position than the Caucasian. Unsigned articles were published in the AR church paper claiming opposition to social equality. In these articles the "Negro" was considered a "brute." D. G. Phillips of Georgia published an article claiming the "Negro" was an inferior race doomed to perpetual slavery and that he could only be saved by man as a slave.¹⁵ There is no record of such discussions reaching the floor of the ARP General Synod or of other ARPC ministers endorsing Phillips' view. ARPs rejected such theology, calling his position "fanciful, illogical, and utterly unscriptural."¹⁶ Nonetheless, ARP advocates for social equality were, for the most part, mute. It should be noted at this point that in some of the historical literature it appears unclear if Presbyterians in general or the ARPs in particular are being mentioned when views on slavery are debated.

Two examples of the ARP attempting to integrate its churches include the Bethany Church in Mississippi and the Due West Church in South Carolina. In 1866, the Bethany Church held separate communion services for whites and blacks. It was said of Bethany, "There is an antipathy between the races and the whites crowd them out of the church and the negroes prefer having their preaching to themselves."¹⁷ Some whites objected to having blacks as members. Pastor Agnew of Bethany opposed such thoughts, saying it was "not pleasing to God"--all the while affirming a segregationist position. In 1871 he wrote, "No decent white or black man desires social equality. Those who come among them, eat with them, sleep with them, kiss them and marry them are a disgrace to humanity."¹⁸

In 1872 the African American members of Bethany financially supported the building of a new sanctuary, but by the end of the year racial hostility had increased. Fear grew that blacks would push whites out of the church. This racial tension led most blacks to eventually leave that church. By 1873 Pastor Agnew claimed the "Negroes" were more trouble than they were worth, as he dealt with five cases of black members involved in adultery and fornication. In 1889, the last black member was removed from the church's membership rolls.

Before the Civil War, the Due West church was quite successful in attracting black slaves as members. During the war, it added 50 black members. In 1865, after the war, black members outnumbered whites (140 to 90). Churches used segregated seating arrangements, as was the case in most institutions. However, when the Due West ARP church built a new sanctuary, there was no "slave balcony." Nancy Nelson, a black woman, was now permitted to sit on the main floor, but her chair was placed inside the door of the pastor's study as she worshipped on Sunday.

T. C. Young, a young black man, prepared for the ministry under Pastor Hemphill's (the Due West pastor and his ex-master) encouragement and discipleship. In 1870, Second Presbytery ordained Young as its first ARPC black minister. One week later the black members of Due West organized their own congregation under the name "Mount Zion." Young was Synod's only black minister and Mount Zion its only African American congregation. In 1882, the church transferred to the Northern Presbyterian Church, a denomination able to supply them with African American pastors.

There were no new African American congregations in the ARPC until 1887. Pastor Peter Bryon organized a "colored" church at Mount

Hebron in Tipton County, Tennessee. For thirty years it remained the only African American church in the ARPC. Upon Bryon's death in 1914 the church closed. In 1892 only twenty-four "colored members" were registered among nine ARP churches. The last statistical records identifying members by race in the ARPC was in 1894. The ARPC attitude toward African American individuals and congregations generally was one of detachment.

During the early twentieth century (1904), the Synod of the South entertained joining the United Presbyterians of the North. During these discussions, questions arose regarding "work among colored people." The Presbyterians did not want "colored" congregations incorporated into their presbyteries (sectionalism). The ARPC held similar beliefs.¹⁹ The ARPC acknowledged they were not meeting their moral or social duty toward the "Negro," yet they wanted to preserve racial separation (homogeneity).

An ARPC standing committee on reform was also established in 1904 to deal with racism -specifically segregation - in the denomination. The committee noted in its report to Synod that mission works in Tennessee and Alabama were always to white and not to "Negro" churches within their Presbytery. The general response to the report was that both groups of people could not be reached successfully. The ARPC concluded that it was called to a white mission.²⁰ ARPC Missionary to Mexico J. S. A. Hunter lamented the "strong antipathy which we have against the colored race." He further stated, "The souls of colored people shall never sparkle in our crowns."²¹ His rebuke of Presbytery received no rebuttal.

The ARPC lagged in evangelistic work among African Americans for two chief reasons:

- "1) There was a reluctance of blacks to follow white leadership in religion in the same manner they would not follow white political leaders.
- 2) The United Presbyterians' theologically liberal tendencies and social views bothered the ARPC even though they considered the UP more courageous in their persistence in reaching blacks."²²

In 1907, a standing committee was created by Synod to make plans using the Tampico, Mexico "Negro" congregation as a model to reach African Americans (under Pastor N. Pressly). Unfortunately, no

plans ever materialized. Once again, race relations among ARPs (and Presbyterians generally) was avoided.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION EXPERIENCE

During the Industrial Revolution, another class of people developed and experienced racism. Textile workers rose as a poor minority in need of spiritual care. In Greenville, South Carolina, of the 48 persons in jail, 24 were black and 23 were mill workers. This was an indication of where missionary work was most needed. ARPs were involved, yet reluctant, to engage this group, just as they had been unenthusiastic about reaching African Americans with the Gospel. On the one hand, the work was difficult for ARPs. Textile workers were a transient population, not willing to accept ARPC disciplines, and whereas ARPs were nearly all middle class and white collar, they found it difficult to identify with, and to reach, a population unlike themselves.²³ On the other hand, Baptists and Methodists set up "mill churches" to meet the mill workers' spiritual needs. The concern to bring the Gospel to American Indians and later to Hispanic/Latino populations is also rarely, if ever, mentioned in evangelistic ARPC endeavors, except for overseas missionary work.

CIVIL RIGHTS EXPERIENCE

The fifth issue of racially motivated activity occurred during the 1960s civil rights movement in America. In the 1930's and 1940's the Great Depression and two world wars pricked the social conscience of many Presbyterians. Liberal Northern Presbyterians were engaged in a social activist form of the Gospel that many, more conservative, Presbyterians (such as the ARPC) rejected. Presbyterians, including the ARPC, valued maintaining peace within their communities and sought not to radically or quickly change (integrate) societal structures such as schools, churches, and public social locations (restaurants, public transportation, and bathrooms). The churches felt growth and recovery would take place more quickly if the races remained segregated (homogeneous).²⁴

During the civil unrest of the 1960s, outspoken evangelicals such as Billy Graham as well as the Congress on Evangelism supported the Civil Rights Movement. They were more demonstrative and confrontational regarding the church's involvement in social change. For example, Dr. Graham saw racism as a barrier to the proclamation of the Gospel.

In 1965, the Voting and Civil Rights Amendments to the U. S. Constitution were passed, certifying that African Americans had the right to vote and making institutional discrimination illegal. In 1967, it became unconstitutional to restrict interracial marriages. Yet these laws did not heal racial wounds. Interracial marriage and bi-racial children unfortunately remain a concern for many Presbyterians and conservative churches.

During this period, the issues of integration and desegregation threatened to divide the ARP Church. The 1963 General Synod appointed a "Committee of Nine" to study the issues and to make recommendations to the next year's synod. A majority report of five members of the committee recommended that ARP churches and denominational institutions should be open for admission without regard to race. But the minority report from the other four members recommended that it was unwise for the General Synod to endorse or to approve integration of the churches and institutions. The minority report was adopted by a vote of 121 to 75.

The issue of integration was especially heated in regards to Erskine College and Seminary. Following the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by the United States Congress, the 1965 General Synod voted 102 to 80 to urge the board of trustees to reconsider its decision not to sign the statement of compliance with the Civil Rights Act. The board of trustees voted to sign the statement at its July meeting by a vote of 24 to 10.²⁵

Stories are not difficult to find where ARPC members have held strong views against interracial marriages and bi-racial children. One story that surfaced during this research was about a pastoral couple who adopted a bi-racial child. His congregation had such strong views against interracial families the pastor felt he had to leave the church. And yet, Erskine College has attracted a significant number of African Americans and various minority populations while maintaining no social restrictions upon students developing interracial relationships.

CURRENT EXPERIENCE

This seventh and final encounter the ARPC is having with racial relationships has yet to conclude. A number of denominations recently have responded to their past and present racial relationship concerns with theological papers, statements condemning racism and confessions of past racial sins. Conservative groups like the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (1964), the Reformed Presbyterian Church

Evangelical Synod (1966), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (1972), the Southern Baptist Convention (1995) and most recently the Presbyterian Church in America (2015) all have published and/or considered national memorials condemning racism, correcting their racial actions of the past, setting forth biblical principles that condemn racism, affirming equality among all races, confessing the sins that allowed institutional racism, and calling for future equitable and free advances of the Gospel by their churches to minority populations.

In 1957, Synod appointed a Committee to "Improve the Lot of the Negro in Our Midst." The committee's formation was also a recognition of continuing racial tensions in society and the church. The concern to support church outreaches to develop the morals and character of the African American Christian, as was already being done among Caucasian Christians, was the committee's main responsibility. The committee confessed that the "Negro" was not always treated with respect and consideration due a member of the "Human family." He was not always treated "justly, honestly, or given the rightful share ... of his labor."²⁶ Civic acts intended to "create fear in Negroes" were condemned. Improvements in the African American's lot would come about by mutual respect and partnerships rather than through legislation. The Church's part in this concern was not to legislate but to proclaim a message of righteousness, kindness, and love toward their fellow African American Christians. A dichotomy had arisen among the ARPC separating political (legislative) involvement from the spiritual aspects of life.

Starting in 1958 Synod minutes included reports from the standing Committee on Morals and Public Welfare. This committee recognized and deplored organizations that fostered antagonism among classes and races. In 1965, the committee again lamented racial strife throughout the world and exhorted Synod to pray. In 1966, it was reported that race relations remained a serious problem. In 1968, the committee stated that the goal of the ARPC was to "be fully reconciled to God and to one another." Finally, it was mentioned that interracial legislation must be considered to help resolve interracial divisiveness.²⁷ The committee regularly stated social and racial concerns, but no actions regarding their concerns were taken by Synod.

In 1969, a Korean Presbyterian group, another minority, requested fraternal relations with the ARPC. Their request was forwarded to the Committee on Ecumenical Relations. The committee recommended that formal relationships with the Korean church group not be

established at that time. In 1970, the Committee on Morals and Public Welfare concluded that poverty was connected to racial discrimination, citing a study that claimed one in seven whites lived in poverty while one in two "Negroes" lived in poverty.²⁸ It was also mentioned the ARPC was out of touch with poverty, as its churches were not located in impoverished areas. Both the Korean Presbyterian interest in the ARPC and the ARPC's concern for African Americans living in poverty indicate the ARPC is still wrestling with racial issues, yet little national attention has led to few effective results.

In 1963, Synod once again appointed a committee of nine to study the race issue. In 1964 the majority report included the following statements. Regarding the preaching of the Gospel, Synod affirmed "that all men of every race and nation, through Him might be saved." It also lamented "with all the fervor at its command the racial strife in our nation." Synod deplored both extremes on the issue, "and pleads for moderation and reason." The report also stated that admission to public worship and to communicant membership were not to be conditioned upon race; that the ARPC accepted all believers in Christ, of whatever race, as brothers; and that race shall not be used as a criterion to bar any person otherwise qualified from full participation in the activities of any institution of our Synod.²⁹

However, the minority report included additional concerns that the government was compelling integration of "Negroes" and whites, which was disrupting the normal development of cordial relations between the races. It also mentioned and deplored the invasion of unwarranted pressures from both extremes and pleaded for moderation and reason. Yet it affirmed racial differences were natural and not caused by racial conflict. Therefore it encouraged Synod not to take any action that would encourage intermarriage of the races or to endorse or approve the integration of races in churches or institutions "at this time."³⁰ No reason was given for opposing interracial marriages, nor was institutional racism addressed as a problem. The minority report with its affirmation of racial differences and its negative view of interracial marriage was adopted by a vote of 121 to 75.

CONCLUSION

By the grace of God, the ARP Church today confesses the same faith which it confessed at its inception in 1782. We therefore receive the Scriptures to be the very words of God:

“The position of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church on Scripture is that the Bible alone, being God breathed, is the word of God written, infallible in all that it teaches, and inerrant in the original manuscripts.”³¹

Accordingly, we confess that the whole human race has descended from our first parents, Adam and Eve.³² We confess that the only hope for fallen sinners is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.³³ Those who believe in Christ are thus united to Christ by faith, and united also to one another.³⁴ Consequently in Christ, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:28).

This has been our confession, but we must confess to our shame it has not always been our practice.

Our churches and institutions have not always been open to all who profess faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet by the grace of God we have turned away from many of these failings. Our current moderator has joyfully reported to this committee that in his visits to ARP churches he is seeing increasing diversity among our people.

From the inception of the ARPC several social guiding principles constantly have emerged, dictating their responses to racial issues. The first was temperance. The ARPC has moved slowly and cautiously through social issues, including race relations, throughout its history. Restraint from the extreme has been one of its stabilizing pillars, even as society reacts in extreme ways to rectify social problems. However, moderation has, on occasion, caused the ARPC to miss timely opportunities to address issues of race relations, such as injustice and inequality.

Second, the ARPC has had a long-standing commitment to preaching the Gospel to all the nations. The early Seceders of the Associate Presbytery eagerly sought for ways to evangelize the New World and to plant churches there. Once planted in America, it sought to take the Gospel to distant lands, especially Pakistan. With this evangelistic focus, the ARPC has professed the importance of the biblical imperatives to treat everyone with love and mercy—but has acted imperfectly on this principle. The denomination has professed, and in many cases demonstrated, an emphasis on the personal care, nurture, education, and respect for minorities. Yet there has been an “us/them” mentality within the ARPC, which in turn has supported homogeneous societies, which historically have fostered apathy to-

ward reaching minorities. The evangelistic zeal that we have shown toward reaching the nations needs to be expressed in our local ministries as well.

Third, when controversies arise, the desire for “keeping the peace” can squelch vigorous response to racial injustices. This practice has been a blessing and a curse. The peace and purity of the Church are taken seriously within the ARPC. The negative side of this principle appears when substantive issues of race relations surface. The ARPC has had a mixed response of complacency or complicity to social and racial injustices, not wanting the peace of the Church disrupted.

Fourth, the ARPC throughout its history has reacted strongly and negatively against being forced into any action, social or theological. Its birth emerged from Seceders, who refused to have forced upon them ministers they had no voice in electing and who rejected liberal views of biblical authority. From congregational rebellion against patronage to the forced release of Southern slaves, the ARPC continues to resist ultimatums that force it to act against its conscience. This principle has served the ARPC well, insofar as it is one of the few mainline confessional denominations that remains theologically conservative and biblical. As with the previous socially guiding principles, this strength also manifests a weakness in the ARPC. Resoluteness also has contributed to unnecessarily delayed actions toward supporting racial minorities when social issues related to justice and equity arise.

The ARPC has understood racism as synergistic: it is a complex, intertwined political, economic, and social problem. It consistently has stated the primary, underlying problem between the races is spiritual failure. The solution is to be found in prayer for humility and through sound biblical preaching and teaching. Individual and corporate piety is needed to bring about true racial healing.

In closing, a public confession of institutional and personal apathy or complicity towards injustices to minority groups on the local, state, and national levels may be appropriate.

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EXEGETICAL SECTION

INTRODUCTION

In approaching the matter of how the church might apply the Gospel faithfully in our relationship to racial minorities, we begin with a brief consideration of Genesis 1:26-27, as that foundational passage establishes man as God's image bearer.³⁵ By virtue of bearing the image of God, all mankind possesses an inherent worth and equality that supersedes every man-made distinction. More to our point, though, this text also reveals that all human beings have our origin in *one* human being: the first man, Adam, the father of the human race. Although sin has marred the image of God in man, such that since the Fall we are conceived in sin (Ps 51: 5; Eph 2:1-3) and engage in such unrighteousness as harboring and promoting racism, this was not man's original state. Because we have been created by God and are descended from one man, there is an underlying unity and equality among all human beings. It is our original sin, inherited from Adam, that has led Adam's descendants to commit the actual sin of denying this equality through racist beliefs, attitudes, words and actions.³⁶

As the redeemed of Christ, however, we are *hopeful* humans. The Gospel gives us reason for hope in the work of the Last Adam, Jesus Christ (cf. – Rom. 5:12-21). And so we have chosen to examine in detail Gal. 3:26-29, as this brief text keenly and summarily addresses the impact of the Gospel – the saving work of Jesus Christ, appropriated by the elect through God-given faith in the Savior – upon famous “division markers” between humans. It is faith in Jesus Christ and not physical traits or effort, Paul writes, that justifies a person before God and marks him or her as a true child of Abraham. If one indeed belongs to Jesus Christ by faith, then he or she enjoys equal access with all other Christians to the benefits of the Savior regardless of ethnic background, sex or social status. To be sure, believers' unity in Christ does not eradicate all points of distinction between us; but our equal need for and enjoyment of the mercies of God in Christ means that the “-isms” (e.g. - racism and sexism) that have fueled such hatred and conflict between peoples have no place among the company of the redeemed. Rather, our life together and our life of evangelistic witness to this fractious world must reflect the unity and diversity found only in the Trinity.

CONTEXT AND SUMMARY OF THE PASSAGE

The church in Paul's day, no less than today, grappled with the ever-present temptation to hope in one's own effort instead of the completed work of Jesus Christ for salvation. False teachers evidently had sought to lure the Galatian believers away from faith alone in Christ alone into a form of works-righteousness that rested in “the flesh” (3:3). Those false teachers had attempted to undermine Paul's apostolic calling and authority (1:1, 11-23), while encouraging the Galatians to confide in their own ability to do the “works of the law” (3:2, 5). They demanded that the Galatians be circumcised for salvation (6:12), doubtlessly appealing to Abraham as their normative example.³⁷ In the face of such threats to the health of the church, Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians.

In chapter 3, however, the apostle turns the false teachers' argument on its head. Far from having earned his standing before God, Paul contends, Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (3:6). Those who are blessed by God are those who, with believing Abraham, are “of faith.” One receives the promised Spirit of God and the blessings of God not through physical descent or through efforts to keep God's law but only through faith in Jesus Christ, the promised Seed of Abraham. Against this backdrop,

the apostle teaches that the true children of Abraham are those who, like Abraham, rest by faith in Jesus Christ. And if one believes on Christ for salvation, he enjoys equal access to “all the privileges of the sons of God” (Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 34) with all other believers—regardless of background, sex or status. Christians' equal enjoyment of salvation in the Lord Jesus thus sets the temporal differences between us in proper perspective under the overarching Lordship of Christ and, we would contend, enables fallen humans to live together in genuine respect, appreciation and harmony.

DETAILED EXEGESIS

26: Paul here makes a monumental assertion about those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior: *all* who trust in Christ are the sons of God; there are no second-class citizens in God's Kingdom. “For (you) all are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus”: the word *for* indicates that what follows will explain what precedes. Paul has just said in vv 24-25 that, in the scope of redemptive history, the OT law was a “custodian”³⁸ that pointed the way to Jesus Christ both salvation-historically and in terms of one's personal salvation. The law was a “custodian” in two senses: first, it pointed men typologically to the person and work of the Savior; and second, it pointed men to their fallenness and native inability to keep its demands. Now that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and kept the law on behalf of his people, suffering the penalty for their law-breaking (see earlier in the chapter at v 13), the law has served its pedagogical purpose (in the first sense) in redemptive history. The law also exposed the sinfulness of fallen humanity—namely, in that era, the sinfulness of the Jews, to whom the Lord gave the law (cf. - Ps. 147:19-20; Rom. 7:7); this function of the law continues today. “Sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ”: To be a “son of God” requires faith in *the* Son of God, Jesus Christ: this is true for the Jew as well as for the Greek. “(You) all”: As πάντες occurs at the beginning of the verse, it assumes an emphatic role in the sentence and, we would contend, in the paragraph.³⁹ In terms of one's stake in Jesus Christ and in his benefits, all who believe in him share equally in his salvation regardless of background, ethnicity, sex or social standing.⁴⁰ “Are sons of God”: “are” is in the present tense, indicating a continuous situation. There is no possibility that a *truly* regenerate person can lose his salvation in Christ and thus forfeit his status as an adopted child of God (cf. John 10:28-29; Phil 1:6). This reality, moreover, ought to have an abiding and continual resonance in the lives of all Christians. Despite temporal changes in this world

(loss of income; a spike in racism in one's locality), the believer's dignified status as a child of God in Christ remains unaltered and unalterable. "Through faith in Christ Jesus": Scripture refers to different people (or groups of people) as "God's son": OT Israel (Hos 11:1), Adam (Luke 3:38), Jesus (e.g. – Matt. 3:17), and believers (Gal. 4:7; Rom. 8:14-17). For the purposes of this paper, observe that Jesus is the "only-begotten Son" (e.g., John 1:14, 18), and through faith in him, all believers are adopted as sons (and daughters) of God. The necessity and absolute importance of faith in Jesus Christ⁴¹--as opposed to relying on one's own efforts to keep the law – for sonship in God's family is underscored by the definite article preceding "faith." Paul is saying, "You all are children of God through faith—*your* faith."⁴² And all who possess this (God-given) faith in Jesus Christ are fully and irrevocably numbered among the sons of God, equal in their interest in Jesus Christ with all other believers.

27: Those who have been "baptized into" Christ—who have entered into union with the Savior by faith in him—have "changed their garments," spiritually, so as to be identified fully as belonging to Jesus Christ. "For as many": the connective *gar* ("for") indicates that what follows will further explain what precedes it. Believers now are the "sons of God" because they have "clothed themselves with Christ," the Son of God, by faith. "As many as": the word ὅσοι serves a perhaps-underappreciated role in the verse. Although the apostle could have written, "*Those* who have been baptized into Christ" (or some similar construction), he uses a word for which the English rendering "as many as" conveys the sense of a collected group of persons who have something in common that constitutes them a united whole. Not one believer is omitted from the group, regardless of his or her background. ⁴³ "Baptized into Christ": It seems most likely that Paul was referring here to water baptism; but given his emphasis in the letter on the ineffectiveness of sacramental signs (such as circumcision in the OT) to save a person *ex opere operato* (by virtue of the act itself), this phrase is best understood as referring to the outward rite of baptism as sign *and seal* of the inward, gracious work of the Holy Spirit in the believer to unite him or her by faith to Jesus Christ. Calvin's understanding of such language in Scripture as reflecting the "sacramental union" between the sign and the thing signified assists the reader both to understand and to appreciate the apostle's use of such terminology.⁴⁴ "Put on Christ": become united to Jesus Christ by faith. The imagery of "putting on" likely is drawn from Hebrew tra-

dition, in which a person changed his clothing to symbolize an inner, spiritual transformation.⁴⁵ This union does not vitiate or annul one's personhood – to the contrary, it brings one's personhood to true fruition (cf. Col. 3:10). In a judicial sense before God, the believer now and forevermore is viewed in the clothing of Christ's perfect, sinless obedience to the Father. But both objectively, and with subjective implications, the Christian has been purchased by Christ at the cost of "his own blood" (Acts 20:28) and belongs personally to the Redeemer. His fundamental identity is not grounded in his racial or ethnic background or in any other aspect of his creatureliness but, rather, in his belonging to Jesus Christ. So, for example, Paul in Eph. 3:1 and in Philemon 1 refers to himself as the "prisoner of Jesus Christ" and in Rom. 1:1 *introduces* himself as a "servant of Christ Jesus."

28: By dismantling three common walls of separation between human beings, the apostle exposes one consequence of Christians' having "put on Christ": we are united in the Redeemer. "For all of you are one in Christ Jesus": although situated at the end of the verse, this phrase informs the rest of v 28 (the effect of Paul's placing *gar* ["for"] near the beginning of the clause)--thus we examine it first.⁴⁶ "All of you": all of those who have been "baptized into Christ" are in view. Paul's use of "you" highlights the personal, applicatory impact of his teaching for the readers. Moreover, "all" of his readers who have believed on Jesus Christ are in view. (In fact, the word "all" begins the phrase in Gk., underscoring its significance). "Are": the verb is in the present tense, which indicates that believers' essential unity in Jesus Christ is an abiding reality. "One in Christ Jesus": all Christians are united in the one and only Redeemer of God's elect (cf. WSC 21) and enjoy the blessings of his mercy and mediation without qualification due to race, sex or status in life.⁴⁷ "There is not": the construction with the negative conveys the sense, "It is not possible."⁴⁸ Paul employs the present tense to highlight this ongoing aspect of believers' being "in Christ." Of course, he is not suggesting that there are no such groups as "Jew" and "Greek," "slave" and "free," or "male" and "female;" such an assertion would be absurd. Instead, he is teaching that such markers of identification (and, frequently, division) are overwhelmed by all believers' essential identity in and with Jesus Christ. "Jew nor Greek": "Greek" is a synecdoche for the Gentile world. Here, Paul begins to dismantle the first dividing wall: that between the Jews and Gentiles. Under the Old Covenant, the church generally was "confined to one nation" (Westminster Confession of Faith 25.2); under the New, as Paul asserts in Gal 3:7-8, *all* who be-

lieve in Jesus Christ—including Gentiles—comprise the people of God. This is a major redemptive-historical shift that transforms the relationship between Jews and Gentiles and sets them on equal footing before the Savior (cf. Eph. 2:11-22). "Slave nor free": the exegete must not read the 19th-century institution of slavery into Paul's use of the term "slave" in this passage. Although we do not have space to compare and contrast ancient and modern forms of slavery, the key point for our exegesis is that in the Roman world, the main legal distinction between people was that of slave versus free.⁴⁹ Observe also that in Eph. 6:5-9, Paul instructs Christian slaves and masters regarding how they are to conduct themselves in their positions. He is not there endorsing the institution of slavery; neither is he pretending that slavery has ceased to exist. The apostle manifests in that passage an expectation that the institution would continue, but here in v 28, he asserts all believers' overriding and equal status in union with Jesus Christ—whether master or slave. Those who have been united to the Savior by faith are redeemed, sanctified and glorified equally in Christ regardless of legal or of social standing. "Male nor female": the Gk. terms ἄρσεν (male) and θῆλυ (female), found in the LXX of Gen. 1:27, signify God's creation order, which was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). That original creation, however, was warped by man's sin and subjected to God's righteous curse. In Jesus Christ, men and women are redeemed and being renewed after the divine image to live—increasingly in this world and perfectly in the next—as God originally intended in the pre-lapsarian period. The apostle does not teach that Jesus Christ eradicates the distinctions between the two sexes; as noted above, Paul suggests quite the opposite: the Savior redeems and refashions men and women according to the Lord's original design. Moreover, gender distinctions and differences in authority in the home and in the church are not the products of sin; they are part of God's order. The very nature of the Trinity, considered from the ontological and from the economic perspectives, in fact reveals the inherent *goodness* of such distinctions and roles for man and woman as *imago Dei* (in the image of God).⁵⁰ Certainly other NT passages teach an economic, functional distinction between men and women in the home and in the church (cf., e.g., Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 1 Peter 3:1-7), and the inspired apostle cannot contradict himself in these Scriptures. Paul's point is not that gender distinctions are irrelevant in Christ. He instead asserts the essential equality of man and woman in union with Christ the Savior, as both also enjoy the gift of

the Spirit. It seems possible that he is suggesting, with the use of “creational” terms from Genesis 1 LXX, that Jesus Christ also enables regenerate men and women to live increasingly according to the Creator’s design.⁵¹ Oppression, bigotry and factionalism find no support either in the pre- *or* post-lapsarian order of God.

29: Returning to a larger redemptive-historical theme in the epistle, Paul summarizes the pericope by asserting that those who are united to Christ by faith are, therefore, the seed of Abraham and—as his spiritual descendants—heirs according to God’s covenantal promise. “If you are of Christ”: the construction of the protasis is a genitive of possession, meaning “belonging to Christ.” The apostle’s words are directed to those who truly believe on Jesus Christ—those whom he has purchased “at the cost of his own blood” (cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6.:20). Interestingly, whereas people tend to demarcate themselves as belonging to one group or another, Christians’ primary “belonging” is to Jesus Christ. “Then you are Abraham’s seed”: the apodosis draws the conclusion that those who belong to Jesus Christ are truly the offspring of Abraham, albeit in a spiritual sense. Yet the whole of the chapter leads to this point: the promised “seed” of Abraham was Jesus Christ (3:16), and Abraham’s genuine seed are those who, like the patriarch, embraced the covenant promises of God by faith in the coming Seed. In the last analysis, writes Paul, Abrahamic descent is spiritual rather than biological or social.⁵² “Heirs according to the promise”: heirs not of a physical territory on earth but of all the gracious blessings in Jesus Christ the Savior, including his promised Holy Spirit and the New Heavens and Earth to come.

SUMMARY

Exegetically, how does the Gospel inform relations between the races? In Gal 3:26-29, we discover that believers’ identity in Jesus Christ supersedes all other forms of identification. What is more, we find that the Savior alone tears down walls of division and brings people together who otherwise would be hopelessly at odds. In the final analysis, any human-generated “solutions” cannot overcome the sin inherent in the post-fall human heart. It is the Lord Jesus who redeems his people and convicts us that whether male or female, black or white, rich or poor, or whatever might be the temporal distinction in view, we are equally rich and blessed in our one and only Savior. What matters is not one’s physical descent, social status or outward characteristics but rather one’s standing before the Lord

Jesus Christ. The life of the church, therefore, ought to bear testimony to this glorious reality.

This does not mean that Jesus Christ does away with all distinctions among believers, or that we should pretend such distinctions are unreal or inherently evil. Is not the magnificent diversity of nations and tongues and voices an essential, and blessed, component of the church's Heavenly worship of God (Rev 7:9-12)? Should this Heavenly exaltation of God not inform the church's earthly witness and worship? As the inter-Trinitarian economy moreover reveals, differences between persons are not in themselves bad and, properly understood, can be good (Mark 10:18) and edifying to the whole body (e.g., 1 Cor 12:12-25). Yet this diversity must ever be held in tension with the unity of the body, as with the triune God. Diversity and unity go hand-in-hand in the life of the Trinity and, therefore, in the life of the church. And it is the Lord Jesus Christ who saves and renews us as his body to bear this multifaceted and blessed life before a world ravaged by racism, sexism and oppression. Perhaps John Stott best captures the "new situation" that is to characterize the people of God on earth:

Christians are not literally 'colour-blind', so that they do not notice whether a person's skin is black, brown, yellow or white. Nor are they unaware of the cultural and educational background from which people come. Nor do they ignore a person's sex, treating a woman as if she were a man or a man as if he were a woman. Of course every person belongs to a certain race and nation, has been nurtured in a particular culture, and is either male or female. When we say that Christ has abolished these distinctions, we mean not that they do not exist, but that they do not matter. They are still there, but they no longer create any barriers to fellowship. We recognize each other as equals, brothers and sisters in Christ. By the grace of God we would resist the temptation to despise one another or patronize one another, for we know ourselves to be 'all one person in Christ Jesus' (NEB).⁵³

THEOLOGICAL SECTION

In the consideration of questions concerning race, the Gospel and the Church from the standpoint of systematic theology, a fundamental question to be addressed is, "What is man?" Specifically, "What constitutes the image of God in man?" and "What does this constitution require of man toward man?" The answers to these questions—essential as they are to a full understanding of the Gospel—will drive the church and Christians in their dealings on race. These answers involve several theological *loci* (places, or branches, of study), namely theology, anthropology, soteriology and ecclesiology. Only a proper understanding of the *imago Dei* will help the church to avoid that sin of which James speaks, "My brothers, without prejudice hold the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ."⁵⁴ Though the prejudice spoken of by James is not of an adverse relationship, but of favoritism toward those who are wealthy, the principle laid down is that Christians are to avoid prejudice toward others (particularly within the church, in the context of James) on any grounds.

The reality of living in a fallen world is that men and women are prone to view differences of outward appearance as issues over which they might separate from others. For the church, outward distinctions are not to be what drives or divides her. Divisions in fellowship(s) ought never to be over economic status, social status, race, or ethnicity. If there is a substantive division, it is to be over matters which truly divide, i.e., fundamentals of doctrine.

The fact of the matter is that the theology the church employs in answering the proposed questions will be the driving force behind how she responds to a number of issues in our day. "This is a doctrine which has implications of the way in which we live, as James notes in his Epistle (James 3:9). It speaks today for those who would end the lives of unborn children, avoid the company of people from another race, argue for the superiority of one gender over another, or care about chimps more than children."⁵⁵

DEFINING THE IMAGO DEI

In what way, then, do we define the image of God in man? There are many matters that could come into play (discussions of the competing anthropologies of monism, dichotomy, and trichotomy are relevant to the question, but not to the specific discussion of this paper), but for the purposes of this paper, we will keep the matters to those most pertinent.⁵⁶ Our confession puts it in these terms:

After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it: and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.⁵⁷

Here we are told that man is separated from other creatures by virtue of reason and immortality. Further, we take note that our Confession, Larger and Shorter Catechisms all pointedly focus on knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, and on man's dominion.⁵⁸ It seems that these are the foci because they are the aspects of the image of God that are notably and seriously tarnished in the fall.⁵⁹ When we speak of these being tarnished by the fall, we do well to bear in mind Chad Van Dixhoorn's warning:

We must be clear that as a defining aspect of our creation, the image of God in us is not erased by the fall. The image of God is not a property that can be abstracted from us; to ask what aspect of humanity contains the image of God is to make a mistake. Understood in its plainest terms, the language of Genesis 1 states that man in his entirety is the image of God.⁶⁰

Morton Smith makes a similar observation: "[A]s we read the passage carefully, we see the thrust is that man is the image and likeness of God. It is the whole man, and not just part....None of these partial identifications take into account the simple language of the passage, which equates man as the image of God. The image is not a part of man, or an added feature to his basic nature. Man is the image of God in the essence of his being."⁶¹

POST-FALL ANTHROPOLOGY

Recognizing that man is the image of God in the essence of his being, we must ask, "What, if anything, happened to the image of

God in the fall? Did he lose the image of God by virtue of the fall?" There are various passages which refer to man, even after his plunge into sin and misery, as the image of God (cf. Gen. 9:6, Jas. 3:9 and 1 Cor. 11:7). The image of God is not used to distinguish between pre-fall and post-fall man, but between man and other creatures. "The Scriptures do not hesitate to speak of the terrible effects of sin on man, and yet they do not apply this language to the image. The implication is that the fact that man is the image is not directly affected by sin."⁶² In what way was man affected? The image was marred, but not eradicated, as we have seen from our reference to several Biblical texts. In the fall, man lost moral excellence (which is not the image of God itself, but a consequence of the image of God in man), and had his reason darkened, and is corrupted in every part by sin, and yet, maintains the image of God.

Though the image is greatly marred by the fall, the saving work of God provides the new birth and the renewal of the whole man so that he becomes "conformed to the image of His Son."⁶³ "It is one of the glories of the Gospel that God confers the restoration in Christ of what was lost by sin. So Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:10 speak of the renewal of knowledge after the image of him, and the creating of righteousness and true holiness after God...[T]he rebirth involves the planting afresh in the heart of man these principles of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness."⁶⁴ It is because of the work of Christ as Mediator of the New Covenant, then, that we address matters of redemption and of His people.

SOTERIOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY

As we address matters of redemption (soteriology) and of the people of God (ecclesiology), there is much that can be expounded; but we will limit ourselves to the consideration of some matters from the covenant made with Abraham. When we speak of "soteriology," we observe that God works through His promises and ordinarily saves people *through* the visible church and *into* the visible church. It is the church that is sent out and makes disciples in the world. For instance, we note that one chapter after God called Abraham, the patriarch begins to proclaim the name of the Lord — this is to say, proclaiming the promises of God and salvation of God in that place.⁶⁵

Throughout the history of redemption, God's plan has never been limited to one ethnicity or race. The promise given to Abraham in Gen. 12:3 concerning the Seed to come from him was, "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."⁶⁶ This promise was reiterat-

ed with Isaac in Gen. 26:4 (“I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”). And we read again God speaking with Jacob in Gen. 28:14: “Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” The promise of God concerning the salvation of sinners always has included various ethnicities and races. That the world was always in view in terms of the salvation that was to be brought by Christ was noted by the Apostle Paul when he wrote, “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations will be blessed in you.’”⁶⁷

In what way(s) do we apply this truth in the church in our day? First, we see that the church is to be indiscriminate in her preaching of the Gospel. She is to go into all the world and proclaim the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus commanded the church in His final words before the Ascension, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”⁶⁸ The Church, as part of her “marching orders,” has been commanded to carry the Gospel to every people group, ethnicity, and race. There can be no justification or Biblical warrant for withholding the good news of the Gospel from anyone made in the image of God. The church, as God’s covenant people, is responsible to her covenant Lord, owing to Him all obedience to His commands.

Further, the church is to welcome all her brothers and sisters throughout the world, and to seek to be as “connected” as possible with the body of Christ. This, of course, is not to say that ethnicities/race/people groups trump doctrine. We are united around the person and work of Jesus as He is set forth in the Scriptures and summarized in our Standards. This unity in doctrine is not a unity into all the minutia; it is a unity in the essentials of the Christian faith. There can be no true unity in this world or in the church that is not founded upon Jesus. All other unity is but transient. For the Church to be united around Jesus is for the Church to be united with her end in mind: that is, being those who redound with the praise of His glorious Person and work. “And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and pur-

chased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”⁶⁹

Her primary obligation as the church—and the way in which she will be most blessed to work—is to thunder the whole counsel of God from her pulpits, and preach and teach what the Scripture says concerning the image of God in man, as well as the consequence of such. This preaching and teaching, when applied to the consciences of individual members, ought to call for repentance in those members in whom the sin of prejudice is found and for action on the part of those members as they go into their lives in the world. They should be called to work in their respective callings to bring about justice and mercy for those oppressed.⁷⁰ Men and women in positions of authority and engaged in law-making ought to seek to alleviate any oppression and systemic and systematic racism and further injustices that they might observe as citizens of this land.

Further, a good and right understanding of the law of God and its applicability to the redeemed life would inflict a drastic blow against any sort of prejudice, particularly in terms of race. Men, who are made in the image of God, must seek to preserve life (against systemic and institutional sins), especially within the body of Christ (for her edification), and more generally in their own spheres of employment—so that they might further and better the cause of other image bearers. The Larger Catechism spells out much of what it means to deal with man as the image of God. The law of God, being “a perfect rule of righteousness,”⁷¹ is the way in which the peace, purity, and prosperity of the Church are maintained. The moral law gauges believers’ love to God and to other men as they frame their lives according to this perfect rule of righteousness. Men who love the Lord also love His law and seek to fulfill it because they love him. Men who love their neighbors seek to live in light of the duty set out in the last six commandments, because they love them. Anything less than seeking to fulfill the law toward our neighbor is not Christian love. We are to “owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. . . . Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”⁷²

Christians, knowing that man is the image bearer of God, also know that God’s law is still required from them—not in any salvific way, but as children seeking to please their Father and in seeking the good of other image bearers. In looking to the section on the law in the WLC, we find much that is helpful in terms of how the church should respond to racial issues:

Q. 135. What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?

A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are, *all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defense thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.*

Q. 136. What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, *all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.*⁷³

Christian love is demonstrated in and by men when they studiously seek to keep God's law in all its implications and elucidations. The command in Ex. 20:13, "You shall not murder," is not fulfilled simply by a person never having taken the life of another with his own hands or carelessness. In other words, the law is not simply negative—it is also positive in what it sets forth. It is helpful here to think in opposites. The opposite of "You shall not murder," is, "You shall preserve and promote life."

The image of God in man requires of the Church-as-the-church to practice intolerance toward any race-based injustice and oppression in her midst. She should actively seek to promote and foster within her ranks openness and love for all the brethren. She is to preach and teach the value of all human life—that all men are made in the image of God—which *demand*s certain things of those individual believers in her ranks. See Mic. 6:1-8, Is. 56:1 and Jer. 22:3 for but a small sampling of verses that exhort believers to act justly toward those who are oppressed. This is especially true of those cases where they find systemic oppression.

Individual Christians, then, have a calling that is broader than the Church as the church. The church as the church is to preach and teach the Word of God and apply it to the lives of her members. The individual members of the body have a broader influence and calling. In their lives, they live as Christians in all their employments and recreations, and can bring the Word of God to bear in places they see injustice, in hopes of seeing justice for their brothers who, like them, are being remade by Jesus Christ to bear the *imago Dei* more faithfully before a watching and broken world.

As we have answered questions about the image of God in man from several theological *loci*, namely theology, anthropology, soteriology, and ecclesiology, we have found that only a proper understanding of the *imago Dei* will help the church to avoid that sin of partiality and prejudice about which James writes. The church is to preach and teach the whole counsel of God, and as His Word is proclaimed, Christians will be mobilized to demonstrate the love of God that has been poured into their hearts.

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PASTORAL SECTION

We live in a world where racism and injustice are widespread and men judge one another on baseless merits of their own choosing. This aspect of fallen nature is acknowledged in the exhortation of James to the early church: "My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory" (Jas. 2:1). As it was then, so it is now. Indeed, there is "nothing new under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9). In spite of the technological and scientific advancements marking both our era and our nation, the unity of man that can only be found in Jesus Christ is just as crucial and needed in our day as it has ever been. How does the Gospel inform believers about the truth of our relationship with one another in Christ? Moreover, how does the Gospel empower believers to practical unity through Christ, and what might these things mean for reaching out to racial minorities in the ARPC? These pressing questions are the focus of this essay, and in addressing these questions we will be looking to John 15 as our primary passage.

BACKGROUND

In John's gospel, Jesus' Upper Room discourse comes almost at the end of his earthly ministry. Chapters 13-17 contain Jesus' final words to his disciples, his closest earthly friends. At this point in the account they have already shared the Passover meal together, Jesus has already predicted Peter's denial, he has predicted his own imminent death, and Judas is in the process of betraying him at that moment. The disciples are greatly troubled. They do not fully understand what Jesus is talking about or why such things have to happen. In chapter 14 Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to give comfort, counsel, and power. Also, and more specific to our purpose, through the power of the Holy Spirit they will be able to follow Jesus' command to "love one another" given in John 13:34-35. After this, as Jesus and the disciples walk to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and to await the coming of Judas, chapter 15 opens with Jesus' command to abide in Him for all that they truly need, as He uses the analogy of a vine and branches.

THE REALITY OF ONE BODY IN CHRIST

Upon walking to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus stops at the temple. The Jewish historian Josephus noted that in the time of Jesus a great golden vine hung over the entrance of the temple, and hanging from the golden branches were golden grape clusters "as tall as a

man.”⁷⁴ This image of the vine or vineyard was a favorite in Judaism during the New Testament period. It was even on its coinage. The Jews prided themselves with the thought they were the “vineyard” of God—His chosen people. Ironically, when Israel was depicted in the Old Testament as a vine or vineyard, it usually was being judged for not bearing good fruit but, on the contrary, for bearing bitter fruit (as described in the “Song of the Vineyard” in Isa. 5:3-5). In contrast to the false notion of the Jewish leaders, in John 15 Jesus says that He is the *true* vine. God’s people are branches growing from the vine of Christ; and any branches not attached to this vine will be “cut off” – like those Jews who thought they had attained righteousness through human merit. In Eph. 2:14-18 Paul speaks of the result of the work of this True Vine:

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one (Jews and Gentiles) and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Here Paul speaks to the fact that true reconciliation between man and man is the result of the reconciliation between God and man accomplished by the work of Christ. All those *in Christ* are now one true community – or, as Paul says, “one body” composed of many “members” (Rom. 12:5).⁷⁵ R. Kent Hughes notes the contrast between this new community and the culture of the day: “The world at that time was torn apart by prejudicial divisions that make many of our differences pale by comparison – master and slave, Jews and Gentiles, and so on. Cultural barriers – the Greeks regarded Jews as barbarians – and the Jews had a reputation of being haters of the world . . . the world seemed helplessly alienated.”⁷⁶ And so Jesus’ command to the disciples to love one another was not grounded in a mutual bond of family, or community, or nation – but only because they were fellow sinners redeemed by Christ. “Their love for each other was to be a reflection of their new status and experience as children

of God.”⁷⁷ The same is true for all believers regardless of time or culture. The bond that believers share is far deeper and greater than anything else that would define them.

THE COMMAND TO BE ONE BODY THROUGH CHRIST

Through the work of Christ believers *are* one in Christ – and because of this great eternal truth, believers therefore are commanded to *be* one body through Christ (to apply this truth in daily practice). In Eph. 4:3-6 Paul says to the church, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.” Such unity among believers can only come about as a result of seeking to abide in Christ.

John 15 shows us that unity with one another flows from looking to the union that Christ has established with us—just as the branch must abide in the Vine in order to bear fruit. Jesus said that such abiding will naturally bear “much” fruit. The analogy of the vine and its branches is a picture of dependency. Fruit is not something a branch can grow on its own. Branches do not have any life in themselves *but receive their life through their union with the vine*. The life-sap of the vine flows through them. But when we fix our eyes on ourselves or on anything other than Christ, our fruit is going to wither—because the disciples were to focus on following their Lord and on relying upon Him, seeking to maintain through Christ the unity He established by the cross.

A.W. Tozer, in his book, *The Pursuit of God*, speaks about the fact that true unity can only happen when we look away from ourselves and look to Christ. In other words, the closer we draw to Christ, the closer we are drawn to one another.

Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same tuning fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which one must *individually* bow. So one hundred worshippers meeting together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be were they to become ‘unity conscious’ and turn their eyes away from God to

strive for closer fellowship. Social religion is perfected when private religion is purified.⁷⁸

This is the triumph of Christ – uniting believers together *in* Him and *through* Him. Kent Hughes adds that on a relational level such unity is also not without human effort.

This unity . . . must be worked at. When a man and woman become one in Christ in marriage, there must be a commitment to oneness – an ongoing commitment to communicate, to share their souls, to spend time together, to have the deepest relationship possible in body, soul, and spirit. Such relationship is utterly wonderful when experienced. . . And the same is true of the unity of believers in this world.⁷⁹

In John 17:23 Jesus calls this kind of unity a powerful testimony of the truth of the Gospel to a watching world. Abiding in Christ changes how we see and love other people. We can only love as Jesus loved if we are abiding in Him as the true source of our life. In Him we receive power to respond to the various situations in our own lives with the love, heart and mind of Christ. But when our gaze is averted from Christ, like Peter's after Jesus' arrest in John 18, we quickly realize the bankruptcy of our own natural ability. As Hughes noted,

We can tie fruit onto our lives like ornaments on a Christmas tree, but the real fruit of his character – comes from the Vine itself. In ourselves we cannot be loving, or patient, or faithful, or holy. That is why God does not shield us from the assaults of life – but rather exposes them, so we will learn... to hold him fast. Jesus said, 'Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.' Abiding involves a growing understanding of our own weakness.⁸⁰

In order to love others in the selfless ways that Jesus exemplified and commanded, we must continually (and persistently) turn away from ourselves and abide in Christ. Unless we are continually seeking to identify with Christ and be changed by Him through the ordinary

means of grace, we can all too easily fall prey once again to the temptation to draw lines of distinction between neighbor and self.⁸¹ The Lordship of Christ is the only true and lasting answer to the issue of division. Whether it is in the world at-large or within our own hearts, the truth is the same: there is no true or lasting peace until Christ is exalted and everything else bows in worship and surrender (Rev. 4:8-11). This is Scripture's ultimate and final word on the issue of division.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

In light of the Upper Room discourse, the discussion of race relations on a denominational, church, and individual level begins with a yet more fundamental question: Are we seeking to abide in Christ? Are we continually surrendering every part of our lives to the Lordship of Christ alongside a deep conviction of our own spiritual bankruptcy? It is only after these questions are addressed that we may begin to address subsequent questions of a more specific and concrete nature – such as: In the effort to be faithful witnesses of the gospel are we engaged in loving our brothers and sisters of other cultures and ethnicities? Are we reaching out in love to our fellow African-American brothers and sisters in the Lord, as well as other racial minorities? If so, in what ways? Moreover, how should we gauge the effectiveness of such outreach? Are we speaking the gospel in such a way that it is understandable to the various ethnic and racial minorities represented in the communities in which our churches are placed? D. A. Carson aptly notes, “[T]he salvation secured by Christ in the gospel is more comprehensive than justification alone: it brings repentance, wholeness, and love for brothers and sisters in the Christian community.”⁸² In his article, *Racial Reconciliation, the Gospel, and the Church*, Dr. Jarvis Williams asserts:

Christians in general . . . must do a better job living out the gospel of racial reconciliation in community with real people in both church and society. Five . . . steps occur to me. First, Christians must believe and preach the whole gospel, including what the gospel says about racial reconciliation. Second, Christians must be honest about our racist past to answer some of the complicated questions in our racist present. Moreover, progress will be difficult, if not impossible, if we deny that racism still exists – individually

and systematically, in both church and society. Third, Christians should work to listen to ethnic minority voices within the Christian movement who have thought long and hard about the race issue, how it intersects with the gospel, and how this intersection applies today. Fourth, Christians and Christian churches must boldly press the claims of the Christian gospel onto a racist society, and we must be willing to stand against any and all forms of racism with legal and peaceful means whenever we see racism raise its ugly head. Fifth, as citizens and residents of the United States, we must hold our leaders accountable. If they commit injustice instead of uphold justice, we should take the necessary legal steps to ensure that justice under the law will be upheld for all citizens and residents.⁸³

Looking fully to Jesus Christ our Savior for strength, we offer some further practical suggestions to our brothers in the ARPC toward fostering unity with ethnic and racial minorities:

- First and foremost, we should beg the Lord to search our hearts for individual sin, giving us a burdened heart of love for all human beings, and the desire to seek the forgiveness of those we have wronged;
- Actively engage in legitimate⁸⁴ Christian fellowship with our brothers of different ethnic and racial backgrounds, including those of bi-racial relationships. Such fellowship could be as simple as a basketball game or as ministerial and purposeful as a community-wide outreach project;
- Actively engage in praying together for our communities;
- Consider how the ARPC might actively plant churches in different racial/ethnic communities, with a view toward earnestness in including minority groups the Lord enables us to reach;⁸⁵
- Actively engage in more concerted forms of evangelism to the full demographic of people groups that make up our communities; and
- Look to a clear re-affirmation that racism in any form is a heinous sin in the sight of God, as this report makes clear.

The Church is both one community in Christ and also called to be

one community through Christ—as we abide in Him, follow Him, and depend upon Him in all that is necessary to fulfill our charge. In Christ the kingdom of God has been inaugurated—yet we live in a world where evil, suffering, and injustice are all too evident; where we long for the completion of the kingdom. On that great day we shall finally see with our eyes everything in heaven and on earth brought under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Until that day, as we fix our eyes on Jesus we will reflect more and more the One whom we follow and receive His strength and joy to do what we have been called to do as his disciples. Such things the Church cannot do on her own—but He can and will do through her.

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- ¹Robert Lathan, *History of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South 1782-1882* (Harrisburg, PA: Washburn Press), 11.
- ²Ibid., 95.
- ³Ibid., 359-360.
- ⁴Ibid., 303.
- ⁵Ibid., 360-361.
- ⁶See Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 92 and 473-474. According to Ford, the ARP commitment to "daily family devotionals" together with the idea that slaves were members of the family household caused them to resist the imposition of laws prohibiting teaching slaves to read. See also *History of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, 1782 – 1882*, p. 303, and Lowry Ware, *Due West: South Carolina's Oldest College Town* (no date or publisher), 7.
- ⁷Lathan, *History*, 361.
- ⁸Ibid., 300.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰Ibid., 302-303.
- ¹¹*The Evangelical Guardian* 4 (November 1846), 285.
- ¹²Ibid., 390; cf. Lathan, *History*, 108, 255.
- ¹³Ibid., 393
- ¹⁴Ibid., 112.
- ¹⁵Ibid., 112.
- ¹⁶Ibid., 113.
- ¹⁷Ibid., 114.
- ¹⁸Ibid., 114.

¹⁹Ibid., 120.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 102.

²²Ibid., 118.

²³Ibid., 123.

²⁴*Minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church 1964*, 7, 9.

²⁵Ware, *The History of Erskine College, 1839 – 1982*, 65-67.

²⁶*Minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church 1957*, 173.

²⁷*Minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church 1968*, 97.

²⁸*Minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church 1970*, 435.

²⁹*Minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church 1964*, Section B.

³⁰Ibid., 8.

³¹*Minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church 2008*, 514.

³²Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. VI. See also *Minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church 2012*, 503-505.

³³See Benjamin B. Warfield, "On the Antiquity and Unity of the Human Race," in *Studies in Theology*, Vol. IX of *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932; reprinted Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 235-258.

³⁴Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. XXVI.

³⁵Cf., e.g., Richard Lints, *Identity and Idolatry* (NSBT 36; Downers Grove: IVP, 2015), 34-42.

³⁶Cf. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1968), 238-261.

³⁷For a helpful background summary of the Galatian situation, cf.

D. A. Carson, Douglas Moo and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 289-303.

³⁸Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 510.

³⁹Note the change to the second-person plural. Cf. Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 185.

⁴⁰Herman Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches at Galatia* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 147.

⁴¹Here we are taking the prepositional phrase "in Christ Jesus" in connection with "faith," thus making Christ the object of faith, as opposed to treating the phrase adverbially such that believers' union with Christ would govern our "sonship-by-faith." See Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 147, n. 8.

⁴²Richard Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Waco: Word, 1990), 152.

⁴³"The expression *as many* seems to limit the *ye all* of verse 26. The intention, however, is to show that in baptism lies the evidence that all sorts of people (cf. verse 28), without any discrimination, share in the grace of Christ." Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 147.

⁴⁴Cf., e.g., Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1982), 159-169.

⁴⁵R.K.Y Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 172.

⁴⁶Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 149.

⁴⁷Richard Hove, *Equality in Christ?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1999), 121. It should be observed that the church's unity in Christ does not mean that members of the church are equal in every sense of the term, or – as we shall see below – that differences of race, sex or status vanish upon confession of faith. Men and women, for example, do not (and should not) abandon their natural composition and function simply because they come to faith in Christ. And from other passages, it is clear that elders and laymen (to name one example) are not equal in authority within the church even though they share equally in the benefits of the Savior.

⁴⁸Rienecker and Rogers, *Key*, 510.

⁴⁹Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 65.

⁵⁰For example, it is the Father who decrees the salvation of the elect; it is the Son who accomplishes that salvation; and it is the Spirit who applies that salvation. Each person of the Trinity fulfills His role in the salvation of the church, but this does not mean that one person is inherently or ontologically superior to the others. And if each person did not fulfill his role in the economy of salvation, how then would the church be redeemed to God? This principle also applies to the family: both husbands and wives play an indispensable role in the production of children and in the general life of the home, but this reality does not make either party ontologically superior to the other. Cf. WLC 9-11.

⁵¹The reader is directed to Hove's thorough and careful treatment of this subject in v 28 and the "gender dispute" throughout his *Equality in Christ?*

⁵²Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 150.

⁵³John Stott, *The Message of Galatians* (London: IVP, 1968), 100-101.

⁵⁴James 2:1 per the author's own translation. Though "partiality" is often used because the word "prejudice" generally refers to an adverse judgment about someone that is preconceived, it can refer to a preconceived favorable opinion of someone, and that fits the context.

⁵⁵Van Dixhoorn, Chad, *Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*, (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 2014), 65.

⁵⁶Cf. Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology: Volume 2*, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 43-91.

⁵⁷Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) 4.2

⁵⁸WCF 4.2, Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC) 17, and Westminster Shorter Catechism (WSC) 10.

⁵⁹Morton Smith, dominion is the consequence of man's being in the image of God. Further, it is likely, given the structure of Genesis 1:27-28, that

we ought to view dominion as something conferred upon man, who is already the image of God. See Smith, Morton, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1* (Greenville: GPTS Press, 1994) 236.

⁶⁰Van Dixhoorn, *Confessing the Faith*, 64.

⁶¹Smith, *Systematic Theology*, 238.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 240.

⁶³Cf. Rom. 8:29.

⁶⁴Smith, *Systematic Theology*, 240.

⁶⁵Cf. Gen. 13:4, וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם which can be taken to mean, “And there Abraham called upon the name of the Lord,” or “And there Abraham began to proclaim the name of the Lord.” Whichever is chosen, what is in view here is more than simply Abraham praying to God in solitude.

This is an “evangelistic” act.

⁶⁶Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture taken from the New American Standard Bible.

⁶⁷Gal. 3:8.

⁶⁸Luke 24:46-47.

⁶⁹Rev. 5:9-10.

⁷⁰Micah 6:8.

⁷¹WCF 19.2.

⁷²Rom. 13:8, 10. Cf. also Matt. 7:12, 22:36-40; Luke 10:30-37; Gal. 5:14, 6:2.

⁷³Italicized for emphasis.

⁷⁴Flavius Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, V.5.4.\

⁷⁵Dr. Jarvis Williams agrees saying, “Gospel-grounded racial reconciliation begins with what Christ accomplished at the cross. He united one-time enemies to God and therefore to one another. He made the two one. Racial reconciliation begins, in other words, with the ‘indicative’ of who we are in Christ. And then racial reconciliation shows itself in our love for the ‘other.’ It flows from the Spirit-empowered obedience and demonstration of who we are in Christ. . . Gospel-grounded racial reconciliation, after all, is supernatural, not natural.” Internet. Available from <http://9marks.org/article/racial-reconciliation-the-gospel-and-the-church>; accessed Jan. 14, 2016. Jarvis Williams is Associate Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Southern Seminary. He is a contributing writer for *9Marks*, a church leadership organization.

⁷⁶R. Kent Hughes, *John: That You May Believe*, Preaching the Word Series (Wheaton: Crossway, 1999), 325. “Alexander Maclaren describes what happened because of Christ’s command: ‘Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, male and female, Jew and Greek, learned and ignorant . . . sat down at one table . . . They were ready to break all other bonds, and yield to the uniting forces that streamed out from the cross . . . No wonder that

the world began to babble about sorcery, and conspiracies, and complicity in unnamable vices. . . The new commandment made a new thing, and the world wondered." Ibid

⁷⁷D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 485.

⁷⁸A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill: Christian Publications, 1993), 90. Emphasis mine.

⁷⁹Hughes, 411-412.

⁸⁰Ibid., 357.

⁸¹"Left to ourselves, we seek our own . . . But when Christ comes, that changes. In the Church of Jesus Christ, we discover that the people we love and with whom we fellowship are different from us." Ibid., 326.

⁸²Internet. Available from <http://9marks.org/article/racial-reconciliation-the-gospel-and-the-church/>; accessed Jan. 14, 2016.

⁸³Ibid. Available from <http://9marks.org/article/racial-reconciliation-the-gospel-and-the-church>; accessed Jan. 14, 2016.

⁸⁴We would define legitimate Christian fellowship as fellowship among those who profess creedal orthodoxy.

⁸⁵Minorities such as African-Americans, American Indians, Hispanic/Latinos, Asian-Americans, the inner-city poor, or other minority groups that have been overlooked, marginalized, or disenfranchised.

Recommendation #1 (That the following position statement be adopted by the General Synod: The Word of God gives no warrant expressed or implied that women are to be conscripted into military service or required to participate in military combat. Therefore, the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church opposes the registration of women for Selective Service and the assignment of women to combat duty or to duties which involve a significant risk of engaging in combat) was debated and **ADOPTED**.

Recommendation #2 was amended as follows (*That we, the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, do confess the sinful failings of our church in the past in regard to slavery and racism. We reaffirm that all people are created in the image of God. We also reaffirm our historic stance that the Gospel should be offered freely to all sinners regardless of race or ethnicity through*

the preaching and teaching of God's holy, inerrant, and infallible Word) and **ADOPTED**.

Synod was led in prayer.

Recommendation #3 (That the 2016 report of the Committee on Theological and Social Concerns be received as a whole.) was **ADOPTED**.

The discussion of the proposed "emergency" motion presented earlier in the day with regard to the report of the **Allocation of Synod's Funds** was reopened. Earlier in the meeting the content of the proposed amendment was referred to a committee chaired by P.J. McClung for review and comment according to the Synod's Rules of Order. The committee report, following its study, recommended that the amendment be defeated.

The amendment as follows was **ADOPTED**:

Whereas the faculty of Erskine Theological Seminary has been reduced in size from 23 to 8 faculty members under Erskine College's 2014 declaration of financial exigency, and

Whereas the remaining Seminary faculty are working at nearly 150% of their stipulated workload, with no compensation for overloads for the last two years, and

Whereas the current Seminary faculty volunteered for an additional 25% pay cut beginning September 2015 (in addition to the 10% cut from 2014) in order to avoid further cuts in Seminary faculty members,

Therefore, in light of the financial burdens placed upon our Seminary and its overworked and underpaid faculty, I move you, Mr. Moderator, that all of General Synod's allocations to Erskine for this coming year be designated for the Seminary alone.

Prayer for the Erskine College and Seminary was offered. The amended Allocation of Synod Funds was **ADOPTED**.

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP
2017 Denominational Ministries allocations
(Amounts shown in \$000 thousands)

Note: The General Synod 2016 voted to designate the total 2017 Erskine allocation to Erskine Seminary.

AGENCY	2016 Approved	2017 Requested	2017 Recommended	%of Total Based on Recommended 2017
Boards and Agencies				
Central Services	\$ 314	\$ 314	\$ 314	12.0%
Benefits (covers board expenses)	6.5	6.5	6.5	0.2%
ARP Center Facility	15	22	22	0.9%
Executive Board & Contingency	179	170	170	6.5%
The ARP	80	88	88	3.4%
Stewardship/Foundation	100	102	102	3.9%
Commission & Committees				
Inter-Church Relations	4.6	4.6	4.6	0.2%
Worship	15	15	15	0.6%
Other Committees (1)	24	27	27	1.0%
Sub-Total for Non-Program	\$ 737	\$ 749	\$ 749	28.6%
Bonclarken	\$ 109	\$ 109	\$ 112	4.3%
Christian Education Ministries	199	199	205	7.8%
Erskine	407	448	421	16.1%
ARP Student Union	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.0%
ONA Operations	547	547	565	21.6%
World Witness	547	547	565	21.6%
Program Sub-Total	\$ 1,810	\$ 1,850	\$ 1,868	71.4%
TOTALS	\$ 2,547	\$ 2,599	\$ 2,618	100.0%

The report of the **Committee on Worship** was presented and **ADOPTED**.

COMMITTEE ON WORSHIP

The Committee on Worship continues to operate under the purposes and duties it received from the General Synod in 2005, revised in 2009.

At our most recent meeting, Matt Miller led the Committee in a devotional. In that time, he made these remarks:

This past summer, we held a concurrent synod meeting with the RPCNA, and they gifted to each of our delegates a book by their professor of theology and worship, Dennis J. Prutow. The title of the book is Public Worship 101, and on page seven, I

found this interesting statement by Dr. Prutow:

“Public worship is preparation for service and worship in the world as individuals.”

Here we find the distinction that provides the key to our answer. All of life is worship, but some of life is set apart for public worship. Throughout the week, we offer God private worship, or all-of-life worship; and on the Lord’s Day, we are called to a time of public worship. Before our public worship, we are in private worship. After our public worship, we continue in private worship.

In accordance with duties 2 and 4 in the *Manual of Authorities and Duties*, the Committee devotes itself, though not solely or entirely, to the studying of *The Directory of Public Worship*. We have been seeking to equip local congregations for the right worship of God on the Lord’s Day, particularly in the planning process.

To this end, we are **a)** providing a practical companion to the DOPW specifically for worship planning, and **b)** hoping to utilize a website under the umbrella of our current *arpchurch.org* domain. To be clear, no movement will take place without it being duly studied, planned, and subsequently approved by this court when the time comes. The Committee has also been discussing the merits of a *Directory of Private/Family Worship* in deference to the ideas that the above quotation illustrates.

In accordance with duty 3, the Committee continues to appoint and provide oversight to its subcommittee for the Bonclarken Music Conference. The conference continues to further musical excellence and spiritual edification. Trip McGill and Lynn Grimsley consistently provide a forum for musical education, as well as ample fellowship and worship for believers. The Committee sincerely honors their service.

The Committee always solicits and welcomes cooperation for the accomplishing of our chief end, be it of the committee or of our individual persons: *to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.*

Recommendations:

1. That the General Synod encourage individuals and sessions to submit nominations of individuals qualified and willing to serve on the Committee on Worship to Synod’s Committee on Nominations. **Synod ADOPTED.**

2. That the 2017 budget for the Committee on Worship be approved. **Synod ADOPTED.**

For God's Glory,
Philip Bunch, Chairman

COMMITTEE ON WORSHIP

<u>Acct Description</u>	<u>2016 Synod Approved</u>	<u>2017 Proposed</u>
<u>Worship Committee</u>		
<u>Revenues</u>		
Worship Committee DM Allocation	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,000
Total Revenues	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,000
<u>Expenses</u>		
Worship Committee Meeting Exp	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,000
Worship Comm Misc Expenses	2,000	0
Total Expenses	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,000
Net income (Loss)	\$ -	\$ -

MUSIC CONFERENCE

<u>Acct Description</u>	<u>2016 Synod Approved</u>	<u>2017 Proposed</u>
<u>Music Conference</u>		
<u>Revenues</u>		
Worship Committee DM Allocation	\$ 10,000	\$ 13,000
Music Conf Special Offering	1,200	1,200
Music Conf T-Shirt Sales	1,300	900
Music Conference Registration	62,145	56,870
Total Revenues	\$ 74,645	\$ 71,970
<u>Expenses</u>		
Music Conf Room & Board-See below	\$ 17,635	\$ 17,495
Music Conf Honorariums/Fees-see below	24,125	20,725
Music Conference Travel	4,535	3,400
Music Conference Supplies-see below	11,150	13,150
Music Conference Fees	16,000	16,000
MC Special Offering Expense	1,200	1,200
Total Expenses	\$ 74,645	\$ 71,970
Net income (Loss)	\$ -	\$ -

The report of the **Committee on Campus Ministry Oversight** was presented. Bob Stone addressed the Synod and presented a video about the work. The report was received as information.

COMMITTEE ON CAMPUS MINISTRY OVERSIGHT

The Committee on Campus Ministry Oversight had our Fall and Spring meetings this year and elected a new moderator of the committee, ruling elder Bob Stone, and a new Secretary, teaching elder Mackay Smith.

The committee would also like to thank Patrick Malphrus for his hard work and dedication to this committee as moderator of the committee.

RUF at Erskine is grateful to God for another busy year of productive ministry. We were blessed to receive two new RUF interns this Fall. Alden and Taylor Groves will serve for two (2) years in Due West. They were married just before graduating from Wofford College in 2015 and have been an asset to ministry on campus this year.

We welcomed students back to campus with a "Read Your Bible!" campaign, providing a Bible and a Bible study of the book of Romans for all interested students. We were happy to give away 40 Bibles and Bible studies and journals to students who requested them.

Freshmen were greeted to campus on move in day in their dorms with a morning and evening prayer card as well as an invitation to participate in the weekly ministry of RUF.

During the Spring semester, we hosted the Gideons on campus for another Bible giveaway in Chapel, where approximately 150 Bibles were distributed to students on campus. Our hope and trust is that God is at work through His Word, which we seek to make available to our students.

Our weekly large group fellowship at the Barn completed a semester of cookouts and study of sin entitled "7 Sins of the Wounded Heart" during the Fall 2015 semester and "The Lord's Prayer" during the Spring 2016 semester. Despite heavy and frequent rains, we were grateful to be able to gather students in community for ministry.

Small groups are provided each semester, led by the campus minister, interns, and upperclassmen.

Our annual participation in the Southeastern RUF Fall Conference at Camp Greystone continues to be a blessing to our students, though

we are no longer able to participate in the RUF National Summer Conference at Panama City Beach due to the prolonged dates of Erskine's spring semester.

A few highlights from outreach events beyond our weekly offering of ministry events this year were:

Christmas Party with nearly 40 students in our home and on our patio for the end of the fall semester and 60 students gathered in our home for a Super Bowl party to begin the spring semester! We are grateful for the financial support of individuals and churches which help to provide the books, snacks, and meals at the Barn and retreat and conference expenses as well as the many occasions we host and meet with students.

Our Guy-Girl Discussion (and Brawl!) event gathered 35 students for dessert and discussion in the Patrick home this spring on the subject of how men and women are different.

Our annual Barn-K "for JOY!" run from campus to the Barn to raise money to send local Due West resident Warren Sullivan to Camp Joy continues to be an effective way for students to learn and participate in ministry and service to others.

Finally, the year of ministry events will conclude with our second annual End of Year Beach Retreat, which is scheduled for the week after graduation and is expected to grow this year. RUF partners with the Student Christian Association for this ministry event which gathers students for a week of fun, fellowship and teaching at Edisto Beach.

The committee has no recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Stone, Chairman

Note: Budget information for Committee on Campus Ministry Oversight is included in the Executive Board report.

Prayer for the work of RUF and Paul Patrick was offered.

A motion carried

That in a further effort to support Erskine Theological Seminary, we the General Synod 2016 request the min-

isters and sessions of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church to encourage prospective seminarians from their congregations and committees to consider Erskine Seminary for their theological education.

A motion carried

That the 212th General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church publicly affirm the faculty of Erskine Theological Seminary for their faithful and tireless service to Christ and His church in providing vital training of men and women for service in Christ's church.

The report of the **Committee on Inter-Church Relations** was presented and adopted.

COMMITTEE ON INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS

Your Committee on Inter-Church Relations met via conference call on July 27, 2015, and March 11, 2016, and has communicated via email on a number of issues since the 2015 Meeting of our General Synod.

Ecumenical Organizations

The ARP Church currently holds membership in three (3) ecumenical organizations: The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF), and the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC).

NAPARC- The 2015 meeting of NAPARC was hosted by the ERQ in Quebec City. Rob Patrick, Lee Shelnut, and licentiate Brooks Pipher represented the ARP Church at this meeting. Our delegation had private meetings with the delegations from the RPCNA and the OPC at their request. The NAPARC constitution, bylaws, member churches, and minutes of the most recent meeting are available at www.naparc.org.

WRF- The WRF is a fellowship of 67 Reformed denominations from around the world. Lee Shelnut represented the ARP Church at WRF in March of 2015 in Sau Palo, Brazil. Rev. Soku Yi, chairman of the Board of World Witness, also attended WRF. More information on WRF can be found at www.wrfnet.org.

ICRC- The next meeting of ICRC will be in 2017. More information on ICRC can be found at <http://www.icrconline.com>.

Churches in Fraternal Fellowship

North American Churches in fraternal fellowship with the ARP are the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). It has been our practice to exchange delegates annually with the RPCNA and the OPC. Our practice is to alternate years of sending and receiving with the other churches.

Your committee was encouraged by the concurrent Synod meeting held in 2015 with the RPCNA. Subsequent to the submission of this report, and prior to the 2016 meeting of our Synod, Rob Patrick and Lee Shelnut will meet with the RPCNA Interchurch Relations Committee in Pittsburg at the request of our RP brothers. There is interest on their behalf in pursuing another concurrent Synod meeting in the future.

Related to the desire for growing fellowship with churches with whom we are in "fraternal fellowship," your Interchurch Relations Committee would recommend that presbyteries extend invitations to their corresponding bodies (presbyteries, classes, etc.) of any such denominations, or those in NAPARC, with which they share geographical bounds, to send observers to stated meetings of presbytery. We believe this may foster a stronger sense of fellowship and connection in our shared labors in the gospel.

Fraternal Delegates/Representatives

In 2016, we intend to send as fraternal delegates: Tim Phillips to the EPC, Lee Shelnut to the RPCNA, and Kyle Sims to the OPC.

This year we have extended invitations to the OPC, RPCNA, and PCA to send delegates to our Synod.

Corresponding Synods

The ARP Church has relationships with two ARP Synods overseas. Jim Coad attended the 2016 meeting of the ARP Synod of Mexico (IPAR) on behalf of your committee. It is expected that Alex Pettett of World Witness will make reports available from the ARP Synods of Mexico and Pakistan.

Other Relationships

In 2010, a recommendation was approved by the Synod that your Committee on Interchurch Relations, "...in consultation with the leadership of World Witness... investigate establishing relationships with at least one national church in all countries where we have missionaries serving." (Minutes of Synod, 2010, p. 366) In keeping with this responsibility, your committee has been exploring relationship with churches in Scotland, Spain, and Lithuania. Communication with the Free Church of Scotland (FCoS) has led to the recommendation that our Synod approve invitation to the FCoS into formal Fraternal Fellowship with our Synod.

Officers for 2016-2017

Committee officers were elected via email. Rob Patrick serves as Chairman, Lee Shelnett as Vice Chairman, and Tim Phillips as Secretary.

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive fraternal delegates at this 2016 meeting from the OPC, RPCNA, and PCA denominations, with 15 minutes allowed to each delegate for greetings. **Synod ADOPTED.**
2. That Synod authorize the following ministers to serve as fraternal delegates this summer: Rev. Kyle Sims- OPC, Lee Shelnett- RPC NA, and Tim Phillips- EPC. **Synod ADOPTED.**
3. The Synod invite the Free Church of Scotland to enter into Fraternal Fellowship with us. **Synod ADOPTED.**
4. That Presbyteries consider extending invitations to corresponding bodies (Presbyteries, Classes, etc.) of NAPARC churches or those with whom we are in Fraternal Fellowship, who may share geographical bounds, to attend Presbytery meetings as observers. **Synod ADOPTED.**
5. That all other actions herein reported be sustained. **Synod ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Patrick, Chairman

COMMITTEE ON INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS

	2015 Approved	2016 Proposed
Denominational Ministry Allocation	\$ 5,500	\$ 4,600
Expenses:		
General Office Expense	\$ 400	\$ 50
Committee Travel	450	450
ARP Fraternal Delegates/Representatives	4,000	3,000
Hosting Fraternal Delegates	350	600
NAPARC Dues	300	500
Total Expenses	\$ 5,500	\$ 4,600
Net Income (Loss)	\$ -	\$ -

Rob Patrick represented the Committee on Inter-Church Relations as greetings from fraternal delegates were received.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church was represented by Peter Van Doodewaard, Presbyterian Church in America by Tom Cannon and Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America by Joel Wood.

Mr. Patrick led in prayer for the OPC, PCA and RPCNA.

The report of the **Committee on Investment** was presented and adopted.

COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT

The Investment Committee oversees various investments owned by General Synod, presbyteries, agencies, congregations, and individuals. The committee meets at least quarterly with its investment consultants to review portfolio performance and asset allocation and make any necessary changes in investment managers or investment strategies. Representatives of Synod agencies and boards with funds invested under the oversight of the committee are invited to participate in Investment Committee meetings in an advisory capacity.

Duties as prescribed in the *Manual of Authorities and Duties* are:

a. Developing guidelines for the work of the committee.

The Investment Committee reviews their Investment Policy Statement on an annual basis to revise as needed.

b. Management of all investment funds under the oversight of the ARP Foundation/Stewardship (including the funds of the General Synod) and the Board of Benefits.

These funds represent three distinct types of investments: The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Retirement Plan Trust, Endowment and Endowment-type Funds, and Charitable Remainder Trusts and Gift Annuities.

(1) Associate Reformed Presbyterian Retirement Plan Trust.

The Investment Committee meets on a quarterly basis with financial advisor, The Corpening Group (subsidiary of Deutsche Bank Alex. Brown), to receive reports, evaluate the performance of the Trust Fund, and make recommendations as to the management of our retirement investments. The value of the Trust Fund December 31, 2015, was approximately \$49,157,671, a \$1,913,346 decrease from the December 31, 2014 value of \$51,071,017.

(2) Endowments and Endowment-type Funds. The Investment Committee also meets on a regular basis with financial advisor, Cornerstone Management, to receive reports, evaluate the performance of these funds, and make recommendations as to the management of our portfolio. These individual accounts belong to churches, presbyteries, and agencies of the General Synod. Four (4) risk model options are available: Conservative, Moderate, Moderate Aggressive and Aggressive. As of December 31, 2015, endowment and endowment-type funds totaled \$20,716,842, a decrease of \$60,440 from the same time the previous year.

(3) Charitable Remainder Trusts and Gift Annuities. The Investment Committee provides investment oversight over the ARP Foundation's charitable remainder trusts and gift annuities on behalf of the ARP Foundation Board of Directors. Each charitable trust is a separately invested entity, with a combined total value on December 31, 2015, of \$338,508. The balance in the Gift Annuity Fund on the same date was \$133,240. The total amount of funds under the management of Cornerstone Management is \$471,748, a decrease of \$63,444 from the December 31, 2014 amount of \$535,192.

c. Reviewing all current investment relationships for funds currently invested under the oversight of the ARP Foundation/ Stewardship and funds of the Board of Benefits.

As stated above, The Corpening Group serves as the investment consultant on the ARP Retirement Plan Trust and, Cornerstone Management, Inc., serves as consultant for the endowment and endowment-type funds as well as the charitable remainder trusts and gift annuities.

Consideration of national and international economic factors led our financial advisors to expect that both 2016 and 2017 would be modest years at best for investments. The Corpening Group was mildly optimistic about the investment climate while Cornerstone Management was more cautious about the markets over the next two years.

d. Discuss with other boards and agencies the possibility of including their funds in those under management.

The committee is available to assist any church, presbytery, or agency of the General Synod, both in an advisory capacity and to exercise particular responsibilities authorized by asset owners. Contact the Executive Director of Central Services with your questions regarding the financial services that may be available to your respective church, presbytery, or agency.

Important considerations for Synod:

The Investment Committee recognizes that 2015 was not a good year for ARP investments. It also appears that the next two years will be modest at best. Therefore, it is important to note that the investment model of our financial advisors and money managers is not based upon the cyclical ups and downs of financial markets but upon a long term strategy. Historic considerations show years when investments do very well and years like 2015 when investments are not strong. Prudence dictates long term financial strategy be the focus of our considerations and not the volatility of the markets.

Officers for 2016– 2017:

Kenneth Richey	Chairman
Michael Noel	Vice Chairman
Chip Smith	Treasurer
Roger Wiles	Secretary/Administrative Officer

Recommendations:

1. That this report be received as information. Synod **ADOPTED**.
2. That a budget of \$5,500 be approved for committee travel and expenses. Synod **ADOPTED**.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Richey, Chairman

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

	2016 Approved	2017 Proposed
Revenues		
Denominational Ministry Allocation	\$ 2,700	\$ 5,500
Total Revenues	\$ 2,700	\$ 5,500
Expenses		
Committee Travel & Meeting	\$ 2,700	\$ 5,300
General Office-Copy, Etc	\$ -	\$ 200
Total Expenses	\$ 2,700	\$ 5,500
Net Income (Loss)	\$ -	\$ -

The report of the **Committee on Minister and His Work** was presented and adopted.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTER AND HIS WORK

The Committee on the Minister and His Work (MHW) met on April 7, 2016, in Flat Rock, NC. John Rogers gave a report from the February 2016 gathering of the Presbyterian and Reformed Council on Chaplains (PRCC). The ARP has three representatives on this council: John Rogers, Mike Yarman, and Charles Edgar, all of whom attended this meeting.

By way of reminder from last year: The fees are scheduled to increase gradually from \$500 per chaplain to \$1000 per chaplain at a rate of \$100/year. The Synod will cover the first \$500 per chaplain of these fees, and presbyteries will need to cover the additional amount for the chaplains who are members of their presbyteries.

The PRCC is providing excellent care and service to our chaplains, and in this climate of changing public opinion about homosexuality and so-called same-sex marriage, we are grateful for our chaplains to be supported by an endorsing agency that is fully in accord with our doctrinal standards.

The Officers elected to serve on the Committee on the Minister and His Work in the coming year are: John Rogers, Chairman; Anthony Navarro, Vice Chairman; and Robert Gordon, Secretary.

Recommendations:

1. That the following people be designated as representatives to the PRCC in 2017: Anthony Navarro, Mike Yarman, and Charles Edgar with John Rogers designated as an alternate. **Synod ADOPTED.**
2. That all travel expenses to the PRCC Annual Meeting be reimbursed through the Minister and His Work budget. **Synod ADOPTED.**
3. That the Committee on Minister and His Work request the Board of Stewardship to increase the budget back to the 2016 level of \$15,700. (Note: the reason for this is to pay for travel expenses to the PRCC Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA) **Synod ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Sutherland, Chairman

COMMITTEE ON MINISTER AND HIS WORK

	2016 Approved	2017 Proposed
Revenues		
Denominational Ministry Allocation	\$ 15,700	\$ 15,700
Presbytery-PRJC above \$600/minister	-	1,900
Total Revenues	\$ 15,700	\$ 17,600
Expenses		
Committee Travel & Meeting	\$ 2,300	\$ 4,300
General Office	\$ 100	\$ -
Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Comr	\$ 13,300	\$ 13,300
Total Expenses	\$ 15,700	\$ 17,600
Net Income (Loss)	\$ -	\$ -

The report of the board of **World Witness** was presented.

WORLD WITNESS

**WORLD WITNESS REPORT
NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE
For more information,
contact 864-233-5226**

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The report of the Board of **Christian Education Ministries** was presented.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES

As spring arrives construction projects sprout up everywhere. In colder climates, long anticipated plans finally begin to become reality. Projects large and small begin with the moving of earth and the construction of what is the least glamorous part of the building, the foun-

dation. People passing by see all types of activities on construction sites, but it is usually an agonizingly (especially if it is your house being built) wait to see anything begin to rise from the surface and climb into the sky. Why? Because if the foundation isn't done correctly, whatever rises above it will be in peril no matter how small and simple or large and grand.

Foundations aren't very spectacular and it often seems like a waste of valuable resources to invest in something that goes in the ground. When's the last time anyone walked in your front door and said, "I bet your house has a great foundation." It's an investment that not many may see and cheer, but makes anything that is built upon it possible.

Christian Education Ministries (CEM) specializes in building great foundations. It is the call of this board to lay the work upon which churches and individuals can build lives that honor and point to Jesus. The knowledge of God's word is not something that can be taken for granted in today's society. More and more people are Biblically illiterate and are looking for help because their lives are crumbling. They lack the necessary foundation that is found in Christ and Scripture.

CEM stands ready to provide the local church (through workshops/training) and individuals (camps/conferences) with resources to build foundations that together with Jesus, make anything possible.

Organization:

Officers: Chairman - Bob Whittet
Vice-Chairman - Ike Hughes
Secretary – Jane Frazier

Committees: Executive Committee
Administrative Committee
Events Committee
Resource Committee
Training Committee
Finance Committee

Board Meetings:

The Board of Christian Education Ministries has held two meetings since Synod of 2015. These meetings were held September 14-15, 2015, and February 7-8, 2016.

Authority:

Christian Education Ministries of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church is the agency of the General Synod which shall plan, organize, administer, and promote the teaching ministry of the Church, except for that higher education provided by Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary; and shall carry out its responsibilities in relation to the presbyteries and congregations in cooperation with the other boards and committees of the General Synod.

In the exercise of its authority, the Board shall comply with the *Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, and its policies and programs shall be consistent with the purpose of the General Synod.

The format of this report is based on the duties and work as defined in the *Manual of Authorities and Duties for Officers and Agencies (MAD)* and *Rules of Order of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*.

Duties and Work Underway:

1. *To employ such administrators and staff as are necessary for the work of the Board and to supervise the execution of the Board policies.*
 - CEM moved the work of the Media/Graphic specialist to a part-time position.
 - CEM utilized Wendy Smith to work along Mark Ross in writing helps for the teacher's edition for the Adult Quarterly. These can be found at www.quarterlyhelps.arpbookstore.com
2. *To prepare and recommend to Synod each year, a budget to do the work of the board and to oversee the use of financial resources designated by the Synod for these purposes. (MAD 2009)*
 - (see budget at the end of this report)
3. *To initiate, develop, promote, coordinate, and evaluate comprehensive programs of Christian Education for Synod, presbyteries, and congregations that will help to equip the saints for their ministries in the world. (Ephesians 4:12) (MAD 2009)*

Training leaders in our churches continues to be an important area of our work in the CEM office. The need for training of Sunday School teachers, leaders and staff is vital to the well-being and healthy growth of our churches and their members. Through individ-

ual consultation, online training, local workshops, resourcing materials and regional conferences, our CEM staff has served a number of our churches and continues to seek opportunity and methods which will make training accessible to all those who request it.

Some highlights of this year have been:

- Elder and deacon training was conducted for Florida Presbytery, Adams Farm Community Church, Crowders Creek, and Covenant of Grace.
 - Training in child safety procedures and policies was given to a number of individual churches and presented to the Tennessee-Alabama Presbytery.
 - An intensive training seminar for church finances or working with church staff payroll, benefits and investments was presented to Virginia Presbytery and is being planned for Florida Presbytery.
 - Training for churches seeking to establish or strengthen outreach to special needs friends and families was conducted at First Rock Hill and Greenville ARP Church.
 - On site and phone consultation with Peachtree, Maupin Avenue, Fayetteville, and Smyrna churches has been positively received.
 - An online training media service, (Right Now Media) carries ARP-created training videos and helps available for everyone, especially those whose distance is too great or expensive to travel.
 - CEM supported the Catawba Spiritual Life Conference and also offered a forum on the scriptures and the need for a doctrinally sound approach to cultural issues of today.
 - CEM, along with ARP Women's Ministries, awarded the Julia Hardeman Rhodes award to Ann Aheron for her outstanding work in Christian Education. Nominations are being taken now for 2017.
4. *To provide and recommend curriculum and other materials necessary for the teaching ministry (i.e., Sunday School, catechism training, mid-week programming, Vacation Bible School, etc.) (MAD 2009)*
- CEM continues to operate bookstores in the Greenville office, Bonclarken and online providing people an opportunity to obtain board-approved resources. CEM traveled with the bookstore to many churches, conferences, annual Synod

meeting, Family Bible Conference and wherever possible to encourage Christian growth.

- CEM continues to expand the Adult Quarterly (renamed The Quarterly), as edited by Mark Ross. The teacher's edition is being studied, explored and expanded. Additional teacher helps have been made available online.
- CEM is constantly expanding the list of resources to equip churches for Word-centered ministry, to promote daily Bible reading and to enable evangelism. We continue to work with ONA in getting resources out to churches for help in evangelism and church growth.
- CEM is working with the ARP Women's Ministries leaders to promote and provide their selected resources for ARPWM.
- CEM is continuing to give particular attention to helping smaller congregations find curriculum resources that are financially reasonable and adaptable for larger age spans and limited numbers in direct response to churches expressed needs.

Suggested Curriculum Resources

A wide variety of curriculum resource materials are currently available for churches. Materials considered need to be studied to make sure they conform to Reformed theology. It is the responsibility of each session to select materials which the session feels is best suited to the needs of the congregation. The following materials have been endorsed and recommended by the Board of Christian Education Ministries as being in doctrinal conformity with the ARP Standards and of excellent quality:

1. The Quarterly of the Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church. Order from the ARP Center, Office of Christian Education, One Cleveland St., Suite. 210, Greenville, SC 29601-3696, (864) 233-2491. Edited by Dr. Mark Ross
2. Great Commissions Publications, 3640 Windsor Park Dr., Suite 100, Suwanee, GA 30174-1800, (800) 695-3387). Sponsored by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America, based in the view that Christian education is for evangelism and personal commitment. Materials are available for preschoolers through adults.
3. ARP Bookstore. The ARP bookstore has available a wide range of thirteen-week studies, youth curriculum and other curriculum resources.

5. To inform Synod, presbyteries, pastors, sessions, DCEs, superintendents, and chairmen of local Christian education committees concerning trends and developments in Christian Education.

- Redesigned and published new Camp Joy website which incorporates responsive design (mobile friendly):
campjoycem.com
- Published new Quarterly Teacher Helps website:
quarterlyhelps.arpbookstore.com
- Implemented new online/cloud based software to track our Quarterly subscriptions (free software):
subscriptions.arpbookstore.com
- Implemented new donation and registration software (free software):
arpbookstore.com/cemevents
- Switched to a new Credit Card Merchant Processing Company to help save \$25-\$50 a month.
- Edited and uploaded 8 of our training seminars/conferences for Right Now Media.

6. To develop and supervise a full program of camps, conferences, retreats, etc. and when requested to assist presbyteries in these areas.

The Board reports the following participation in these events:

- Horizon Conference (Sr. high conference) attendance: 26 churches, 260 students, 62 leaders
- Quest Conference (Jr. high conference) attendance: 28 churches, 275 students, 75 leaders
- Camp Joy NC (4 full sessions at Bonclarken Conference Center) attendance: 174 campers, 191 counselors
- Camp Joy FL attendance: 26 campers
- Camp Joy SC attendance: 23 campers
- Appalachia Mission attendance: 30 churches, 387 participants, 21 sites
- Family Bible Conference attendance: 238 participants

CEM board also is seeking to promote the future of Camp Joy (Special Needs Ministry). This unique ministry has been an amazing piece within the ARP denomination for over 35 years. We are currently promoting information and fundraising dinners across the United States to raise funds for Camp Joy for the stability and organization for the future of this ministry. Dinners have currently

been held in Columbia, SC; Winter Haven, FL; Flat Rock, NC; Rock Hill, SC.

7. *To cooperate with other Christian denominations in carrying out all phases of the teaching ministry.*

- CEM continues to work closely with Great Commissions Publications (PCA and OPC), Christian Education and Publications (PCA) and with other denominations. CEM is currently working with GCP in the possibility of expanding The Quarterly.
- CEM seeks to identify and recruit well-qualified reformed teachers and trainers to serve with us in providing the best possible regional training and resources.
- CEM offers participation in our events to all area churches as presented from a reformed world and life view.

8. *To help local congregations to plan, promote, and execute the best possible teaching ministry by:*

- a. providing and promoting opportunities for leadership training.*
- b. developing and promoting Christian education activities for congregations;*
- c. assisting, when requested, in the development of congregational libraries;*
- d. making available relevant media resources for purchase from the office of Christian Education Ministries.*

Examples of this cooperative effort are:

Teacher training seminars conducted for White Oak and Old Providence churches. CEM works closely with the Family Bible Conference Committee to provide a full program for the whole family.

CEM provided elder and deacon training for Adams Farm, Crowders Creek and Covenant of Grace churches.

CEM staff visited the Virginia Presbytery and several individual churches to provide consulting and training services.

CEM conducted onsite child safety seminars for White Oak, Crowders Creek and surrounding area churches.

CEM is supporting ARP Women's Ministries through the research and development of training resources for their leaders, as well as through speaking for area events.

CEM has made many of their training seminars available online through Right Now Media.

9. To promote job opportunities for those who may be called into the ministry of Christian Education.

CEM continues to promote job opportunities as presented on the CEM website.
CEM assists churches seeking to hire Christian education staff.

10. To collect annual reports from congregations on their teaching ministries and to make summary reports available to the General Synod and to Presbytery committees on the status of Christian Education ministries in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Annual reports were collected via Internet and mail and summary reports were made available where needed.

11. To make an annual report to the General Synod. (MAD 2009)

Recommendations:

1. CEM recommends that the 2017 budget be approved. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
2. CEM asks that Synod continue to pray for the work of Camp Joy (Special Needs Ministry) and the on-going expansion of this ministry. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
3. CEM recommends that Synod encourage presbyteries to take full advantage of CEM's training opportunities and make use of the ARP Bookstore for equipping the saints. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Whittet, Chairman

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES

Revenues	2016 Synod Approved	2017 Synod Approved
Use of Reserve	\$ 24,570	\$ (3,301)
Denominational Ministry Allocation	\$198,879	\$198,879
Easter Offering Allocation	\$9,000	\$8,500
Contributions for Ministry	12,200	12,600
Registration and Fees	247,030	255,370
Sales & Subscriptions	90,800	102,100
Special Endowment Fund Gift	18,693	18,800
Total Revenues	\$ 601,172	\$ 592,948
Expenses		
Total Salary & Benefits	240,481	221,463
Staff Expenses	13,400	9,750
Board/Committee Expenses	9,200	8,500
General Office		
Promotional Expenses	1,000	1,000
Equipment	1,000	500
Communications	8,500	5,700
Rent	12,646	13,250
Office Expenses	7,610	7,200
Total General Office	30,756	27,650
Facility Management	1,550	2,050
Publications		
Adult Quarterly	34,810	33,850
Adult Quarterly Editor	17,500	17,500
Book Store Purchases	28,000	38,500
Other Publications Expenses	750	1,000
Total Publications	81,060	90,850
Conferences and Training		
Room & Board Expenses	122,480	137,680
Honorariums & Fees	61,905	60,730
Travel	10,730	6,850
Planning	3,595	2,550
Supplies	21,525	22,500
Promotional	4,490	2,375
Total Conferences and Training	224,725	232,685
Total Expenses	\$ 601,172	\$ 592,948
Change in Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 108,782	\$ 104,000
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 108,782	\$ 104,000

Vice-Moderator Malphrus took the chair to moderate the meeting.

The report of **Outreach North America** was presented.

OUTREACH NORTH AMERICA

The need for healthy, Gospel driven, Bible believing Reformed churches has never been greater. According to many reliable sources, the church in the USA and Canada is in decline. David Olsen declared that “80 percent of the three hundred thousand Protestant churches in the USA and Canada have plateaued or are in decline...” (*David Olson, the American Church in Crises, 2008, p.132*)

These statistics are alarming if we were to base our metrics on numbers alone. However, our hope and measure of success is not tied to earthly measures, rather to the One who proclaimed that the gates of Hell will not prevail against His church! (Matt. 16:18) To that end, the Board of Directors of ONA encourages each pastor and Session to consult free and accessible websites such as the Association of Religious Data Archives (www.theARDA.com) to discover the religious temperament of their local area, to pray and to seek ways to engage the unreached and unclaimed in their communities. With that as a preface, the Board of Directors of Outreach North America submit this report on the activities, stewardship and progress towards our goal of “helping you reach your community for Christ.”

This report addresses a plan for the stewardship of the duties entrusted to us by the General Synod in the *Manual of Authorities and Duties (MAD)*. Outreach North America is the agency of Synod charged with the responsibility for denominational strategies for evangelism, multi-ethnic ministries, church vitality, new church development, and ARP expansion in the US and Canada. (*MAD*, p. 58). We also take seriously the stewardship of the resources provided by our Synod.

Specifically, these duties are expressed as follows:

Duties:

1. To work with our presbyteries and other agencies to develop and implement strategies for evangelism, including strategies to help our presbyteries and churches reach the increasingly ethnically diverse population in the United States and Canada.
2. To work with our presbyteries and other agencies to develop and implement strategies to enhance church vitality.

3. To work with our presbyteries and other agencies to develop and implement strategies for new church development and for ARP expansion in the United States and Canada.
4. Through the Evangelism and Multi-Ethnic Ministries committee of the board, to serve as liaison to the American Bible Society by assisting them in the annual offering for the American Bible Society as approved by the General Synod, reviewing the annual report of the American Bible Society and reporting items of special interest to the General Synod.
5. To communicate the importance of financial support for these purposes and to oversee the use of financial resources received from all sources for these purposes.
6. To prepare and recommend to Synod each year a budget with which to do the work of this Board.
7. To appoint such administrators as are necessary for the work of the Board.
8. To make an annual report to the General Synod.

For clarity, we will bracket this report in those categories.

1. Evangelism: E3 means to evangelize unbelievers so that they may Embrace the simple Gospel, Equip that new believer for a new life in Christ through discipleship and then Engage alongside that believer on mission. Our E3 strategy is a salient and simple method for churches and individuals to present the Gospel to those in their spheres of influence. It bears noting that E3 is a strategy, not a program. Evangelism Explosion (EE), the “bridge”, Christianity Explored, “Your Spiritual Journey” or other presentations of the Gospel can easily be enfolded into the E3 strategy. So, how is E3 a strategy?

Arguably, we are living in a post-modern, neo pagan world. As such, there are preconceived notions that everyone has about life, after life and especially, God Himself. Those preconceptions have changed radically with each generation of westerners. So, while EE and other pre-suppositional approaches to the Gospel are amazing programs and are extremely valid today, they are most effective only after people have a clear understanding of who the God of the Bible is. In Acts 17, Paul begins his sermon by not assuming that the hearers know who the true God is- thus he begins where they are in their concept of God. In the E3 strategy the Gospel conversation begins with SALT:

START a conversation, ASK the right questions, LISTEN to the person and then ask if you can TELL the story of Jesus as it relates to

that conversation. As we look at an example of our Lord in John chapter 3, we see that Jesus Himself gave us this model of engagement with Nicodemus. So the Embrace portion of the strategy is a Gospel presentation that is based on a verse that just about every church goer knows- John 3:16. The reasoning is to immediately empower every believer to start sharing what they already know with those in their spheres of influence. Using John 3:16, our strategy is to ask two questions- what does someone need to KNOW to be a Christ follower and what do they need to DO? It begins with a clear view of who God is. They need to know God- that's why Jesus told Nicodemus that God so LOVED. For Nicodemus, a "good Jew" he had lived with a God that in his empirical experience may have been seen as One who judged, or perhaps because of his experience with the Temple worship system, was God who was Holy, but distant. Today- when one mentions God to many post moderns or millennials, they may think of anything from a new age "happy spirit" to a Muslim extremist, hate filled tyrant- that's why the first question of SALT is "tell me, what do you think about God?" Jesus invaded Nicodemus' worldview with the emphatic statement that "God so loved...".

So, the first question is "What does a person need to know?" That God LOVED. And since He loved, He GAVE to us the most precious Gift He could, His Son.

What does a person need to DO? Believe in. At this point, as a person has a right view of God, the clear presentation of the fallen and sinful nature of all men, the incarnation, become even more valid and powerful. It is, as RC Sproul presents in this simple explanation of the Gospel: *The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus lived a life of perfect righteousness, of perfect obedience to God, not for His own well-being but for His people. He has done for me what I couldn't possibly do for myself. But not only has He lived that life of perfect obedience, He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice to satisfy the justice and the righteousness of God.*" (Table Talk, July 15, 2010) Within the E3 strategy is the flexibility that allows the presenter to explain the Gospel in as much depth as he is prepared to do (and all of our church members need to be trained and prepared!) But John 3:16 is the starting point that gives every member a way to engage the people in their world with the basic tenants of the Gospel.

At this point, as a new believer accepts the claims and salvation of Christ, the rest of the E3 strategy kicks in. It's simply a matter of implementing the churches pre-existing discipleship plans and mission- al living plans. The point of calling it E3 is to reinforce the point to

the convert and to the presenter that the “job” is not done at the point of conversion, but it’s really just begun. And implementing the strategy is the joy and mission of the whole church.

Our hope and prayer is that each ARP Church would adopt E3 or a similar strategy that focuses on conversion/Gospel presentation, discipleship and local missional involvement.

Our Moderator, Phil Williams, has set aside **the month of September for each ARP congregation to emphasize evangelism**. ONA will offer resources including a prayer guide, evangelism training and encouragement for our churches to help implement this important emphasis.

(1a) Multi Cultural Ministry: ONA seeks to minister to the nations and nationalities in the USA and Canada both in word and deed. Increasingly, with world tensions, wars and the political and religious persecution of so many, tens of thousands of people are fleeing their homes as refugees. Many of those refugees will find themselves in the USA and Canada and some may find themselves providentially placed in towns and communities that have ARP Churches. The Boards of World Witness and Outreach North America recognize the unique nature of this current opportunity. In concert with World Witness, we present a rationale and strategy to encourage every ARP Church to engage in ministry to refugees within their area. The specifics of our cooperative agreement are attached to this report as the “International Refugee Opportunity: World Witness and ONA Joint Response.” ONA is partnering with World Relief to facilitate all ARPC churches to offer a **ministry of helps** for these refugees. This entails working through the local World Relief office to provide hospitality, basic supplies and most importantly, a welcoming spirit and smile as these families arrive in the USA. This hospitality ministry will, by God’s Spirit, open a door to share the Gospel using a tool most Americans and Canadians have at their disposal but most refugees do not- language fluency! Our strategy of Gospel engagement is to equip the local ARP Church with the curriculum to lead an English language school or conversation club. ONA will make a curriculum available for each church to engage in **gospel ministry through teaching English** as well as through conversational English.

We also minister to, and with, our Korean brothers in the ARPC. In September, we hosted an ARPC Korean Pastors Retreat in Charlotte. This retreat featured worship, teaching, and fellowship. We also had a time of training and engagement with the ARPC *Rules of Order, Form of Government (FOG)* and *Book of Discipline (BOD)* as well as

our benefits program which was presented by Central Services staff and translated into Korean. We have plans to repeat this retreat in the northeast in 2016. We are also actively pursuing Spanish language ARP Church plants in several of our presbyteries.

In addition to this element of our multi ethnic ministry, ONA works closely with **ARPCONNECT**. Those who have not seen the new website, please visit <http://www.arpcconnect.org> which features excellent training and ministry resources. With the increase in violence associated with radicalized Muslims around the globe, the ministry of ARPCONNECT is more vital than ever. The vision of introducing Christians to Muslims and Muslims to Christ is more than a slogan, it's our call as believers! Alistair Mitchel and Ken Lotze are always interested in presenting at any church or presbytery function and can be contacted through the ONA office. Additionally, we are in the primary stages of developing a similar ministry with Hispanics in the ARP church with the hope of planting more intentionally multi-ethnic churches.

2. Church Renewal: ONA has continually sought to raise the visibility of our need for ongoing renewal in the ARP Church. As the previous Executive Director of ONA, Alan Avera, has pointed out *"the need for renewal should be expected in this fallen world, and renewal is NOT something churches can do once-and-for-all. The need for renewal is ongoing, and that is true for all living organisms, including the church."* (Synod report, 2007) One of the core values of ONA remains our commitment to **balance our emphasis on church planting with church renewal**. We recognize that both are essential for the future health and witness of our denomination.

While there are many outstanding programs in the area of church vitality (Embers to a Flame, GO Clusters and others), ONA recognizes that apart from the Gospel itself, one of our greatest assets in church ministry is the pastor of that congregation. His vitality is key to the vitality of the church. Therefore, **Erskine Theological Seminary has partnered with ONA to launch the Center for Church Vitality in Greenville, SC, and to offer a D.Min. or Certificate of Study in Church Vitality**. Our goal is, as Michal Milton has said, "to rekindle the passion you had when you were first called to ministry." The unique feature of this program is the D.Min. dissertation will be an actionable vitality plan for the church. The program is also available as a 15 hour certificate in church vitality. All ARPC pastors will receive a significant discount on this course of study or degree program and there are generous scholarship resources available. Please see

the attached report for further information. While we hope, plan and pray that this program will bring much vitality to our churches, we humbly recognize that church renewal is not something we can produce ourselves. It is produced only by the Spirit of the living God; therefore, prayer is the foundation of this strategy. We would ask that each ARP congregation join us in earnest prayer for each of our churches- an Ephesians 3:20-21 prayer- that we would ask humbly for that renewal from *"²⁰...Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."* (ESV)

ONA is acutely aware that oftentimes the communities that surround many of our church buildings have changed in character and demographic over the years. Churches have a desire to engage the local community but often find they do not have the resources to effectively start or sustain ministries that fulfill such a desire. ONA offers the **Dare to Dream grant** as a way for a pastor and session to cast a vision, raise funds specifically to fund that vision and then, with the encouragement of the grant, to realize that vision. To date, we have given over \$35,000 to churches in Florida, Catawba and First Presbyteries. Please see the ONA information table, website or speak to one of the ONA Board members for more information about Dare to Dream.

Last May, ONA hosted a pastors **Gospel Coaching training** in the Charlotte area with Tom Harkus. It was well attended and the teaching was practical. To date, all of our church planters are in coaching relationships with either mentors or former church planters. Our goal is to see each ARPC pastor in some type of gospel coaching or local "Barnabas" peer group.

Within the purview of developing church vitality lies the responsibility for a national denominational presence. The Synod has given the board and the executive director the responsibility of developing a national presence.

(2a) National Presence

Over the past year we have updated the ONA brand and our online presence. The new website is informative, professional and user-friendly. If you have not interacted with it, please visit www.ona-arp.org. This site is organized primarily around the E3 evangelism strategy, church vitality and new church development. There is also information for those pastors or churches interested in joining the ARPC.

Last June, we were blessed to share our ministry, strategies and history with the delegates of the RPCNA. It was encouraging to have a forum to celebrate God's faithfulness to the ARPC for over 200 years and to share our vision for growth in an informative and inspiring context without seeming boastful. The ONA director is willing to share with any ARP church the history and goals of ONA.

It should be noted that we have recruited several very qualified and gifted church planters through connections forged while students and interns have served in ministry or have studied in seminary. Just as with church attendance, arguably the best recruiting tool to build national presence is the personal invitation. Our executive director has had the opportunity to discuss joining the ARPC with several organized churches, primarily in the Southeast. Of those, at least one has joined the ARPC, Christ Community Church in Anderson SC (Second Presbytery). Others are still considering their place within the ARPC family. Please pray for these congregations as they discern their affiliation. **The Board would like to encourage each pastor and elder of the ARPC to recruit those churches that may be in transition or who you feel may be interested in joining our winsomely Reformed family of churches.**

Our director has also been able to participate in some wonderful networking opportunities. We are a part of the Church Planters Leadership Fellowship and the National Evangelism Leaders Fellowship hosted by Ed Stetzer and Lifeway. This is a national gathering of church planting professionals, evangelists and denominational leaders. This networking is invaluable in increasing the influence of the ARPC as a national church.

3. New Church Development: In 2015, ONA used Denominational Ministry Fund (DMF) contributions and other income sources to distribute over \$375,000 to **New Church Development** projects and support in seven presbyteries. We thank the churches who support the DMF for their investment in new churches reaching new communities of people and rejoice in the harvest of souls that the Lord is leading to these mission church plants. New church plants have begun or will begin in 2016 in Catawba, Second, First, Virginia, North-east and Florida Presbyteries. We want to encourage each ARP church to consider these churches as "daughters" in that by your spiritual, financial and leadership investment, these churches have been supported tangibly. That is one of the distinctives of our presbyterian connectionalism.

As a vital step in preparing new mission developers and in exploring new fields for new church development, ONA has helped presbyteries fund the following church planting explorers: Matthew Awtry, (Second), Jay Crout (Second), Glenn Wilkins (First) and Nathan Scholl, (VA).

In addition, the following mission congregations received funding from Synod during all or part of the period since the last Synod meeting:

Catawba Presbytery:

Shem Creek Presbyterian (Charleston, SC) Ben Carver

Hill City (Rock Hill, SC) Daniel Wells

River Crossing (Fort Mill, SC) David Stover

First Presbytery:

City Church (Asheville, NC) Duff James

Grace Reformed (Clayton NC) Ken Kunkel

Florida Presbytery:

Renew Church (Fort Meyers, FL) Steve Reynolds

Northeast Presbytery

Global Vision (Flushing, NY) Peter Lee

Christ Presbyterian Church (Elkins Park, PA) Iain Duguid

Holy Trinity (Grand Rapids, MI) Andrew Savill

Second Presbytery:

Clemson Korean (Clemson, SC) Jae Park

ONA provided training for our explorers and mission developers to help them with the monumental task of planting and growing new congregations. This year, 37 participated in our Church Planters retreat. We also presented training on how to begin an ARP church plant for our new church planting explorers.

We have seen that in the dynamic world in which our church planters are called, ongoing and systematic training is critical. ONA has prepared a 12 month training regimen that includes training cohorts, required reading lists, local networking and national exposure to prevailing churches. This training will be required of all ONA funded church planting explorers and will be included in their year of tilling the soil before launching the new church. The explorer track which is required of all church plants will give the planter time, training and opportunity to define and cast vision, gather a core group, secure funding and infiltrate the local community. He will also use this time to prepare a full and actionable church plant proposal to present to presbytery and ONA for support.

Since the last General Synod meeting, presbyteries have identified eight (8) potential church planting candidates and referred them to ONA for assessment. These candidates represented First, Virginia, Northeast, Florida, Mississippi Valley and Second Presbyteries.

4. To serve as liaison to the American Bible Society and to present the name or names of persons to serve as the denomination's representative to the American Bible Society. To assist the American Bible Society in offering the opportunity of giving through the annual offering for the American Bible Society as approved by the General Synod. To receive and review the annual report of the American Bible Society and to report items of special interest to the General Synod.

ONA receives information from the American Bible Society throughout the year. We have assigned the chairman of our evangelism and multi-cultural ministries committee to serve as the denomination's representative to the American Bible Society. This year that representative is Mark Bolhofner. There is an abundance of information on the American Bible Society website <http://www.bibles.com/>. We encourage pastors, elders, and other church leaders to explore that website.

5. To communicate the importance of financial support for these purposes and to oversee the use of financial resources received from all sources for these purposes.

In keeping with our goals and strategic plan, the Board of ONA has consistently reviewed the way we provide supplements to help fund our mission congregations. The heart of our review is to seek a greater breadth in funding of new mission works. We desire to see a continuing balance between the funding coming from local, presbytery, and Synod sources. In keeping with our presbyterian structure, we anticipate greater initiative from the local church group and planter, the churches of the host presbytery and presbytery levels. While this change is sound polity, it is also judicious. As we recognize the current trends in giving to the DMF, the Board of Stewardship asked us to consider **what impact a 10 percent decrease in DMF funding would have**. That has led us to consider not only how that decrease would impact the goals of the General Synod through ONA, but also how we are allocating our resources across our areas of responsibility. We have also developed a financial forecast that will enable us to be operationally solvent over the next 5-7 years.

Our long term investments are safe and are somewhat substantial. We say this because as I describe our financial forecast we do not

want be considered to be “fear mongering”. ONA will survive financially into the future - we can rest assured of that. However, as we examine our cash flow, asset management and projections into the near future, it is evident that we must examine a new strategy.

Currently, the “cost” to plant a new ARP Church is about \$380,000 over the course of four years. The funding for this endeavor is currently shared equally between ONA, the presbytery, the funds raised by the planter initially, and ultimately, by the plant itself in the later stages of church planting. This is an attractive, but unique strategy.

For example, according to Associate Director of Church Planting, Fred Marsh, in the PCA, the national office, Mission to North America, has not significantly funded any church plants since 2003. This was not only due to financial realities, but also due to the strong conviction that a local presbytery and church planter should be casting a compelling vision in order to raise the funds for the local ministry. MNA does however provide training and assessment and assists presbyteries with the recruitment of church planters.

The EPC provides limited financial resources to plant churches through their presbyteries. The primary fundraising impetus lies with the core group and church planter himself.

Our goal for the ARPC is that every ARP church will be explicitly a “parent, partner, or patron” of church planting, so that every congregation will be intentional in growing God’s kingdom through starting new congregations. While our system of presbyteries planting churches implicitly assures that each church is involved through mutual and shared resources, the “ownership” of specific involvement with a church plant is much like the parenting or grandparenting process. Our updated fair and flexible policy is attached.

6. To prepare and recommend to Synod each year a budget with which to do the work of this Board.

See budget attached to this report.

7. To appoint such administrators as are necessary for the work of the Board.

The Board is pleased with the staff which includes Joel Gardner. Joel is charged with developing the systems to effectively administer the programs and initiatives of the Board and the Executive Director.

8. To make an annual report to the General Synod.

We submit this report on the stewardship and activities of the Board of Directors of Outreach North America.

**Updated 4.21.16- Fair and Flexible Policy for Funding New Mission
Congregations**

1. Church Planting Proposals should identify the projected sources of financial support and the funding anticipated from each source. The mission developer is responsible to work with the presbytery to identify sources of funding.

In general, there are two basic sources of financial Support:

- Sources within the mission itself:
 - ✦ Tithes, offerings, and saving from core group.
 - ✦ Tithes and offerings of new people reached and assimilated.
 - Sources from outside the mission:
 - ✦ Support from mother church or sponsoring churches.
 - ✦ Funds raised by the mission developer.
 - ✦ Support from a parenting church community.
 - ✦ Supplement from Presbytery. Supplement from Synod through ONA.
2. The mission congregation is to evangelize the lost and to multiply mature disciples. The rationale for outside funding is to make-up for the tithes and offerings of mature disciples that the mission does not yet have.
 3. The proportion of the total finances coming from sources outside the mission should decline as the mission reaches the lost, multiplies mature disciples, and teaches biblical stewardship. The mission should strive to become self-supporting as soon as possible.
 4. Mission congregations are expected to have multiple sources of support. Presbyteries should demonstrate their own financial commitment to the proposed work before making a request for ONA to provide synod funding for the work.
 5. It is difficult to provide a set formula for funding since the size and financial strength of our presbyteries differ, and the situations of our church plants differ. A flexible guideline for funding, which can be adjusted as needed, is as follows:
 - 72% from mother church or sponsoring churches, core group(s) or sources within the mission, and funds raised by the mission developer,
 - 14% from presbytery, and
 - 14% from synod funds through ONA.

6. We require mission congregations to budget from the beginning to give a tithe (10%) of the financial support coming from within the mission itself to the denominational ministry fund, in order to connect with the larger mission of the ARP Church.
7. Financial support from ONA will generally not exceed a cumulative total of \$130,000 over a maximum of three years. Support will be provided in monthly installments, decreasing each year as the mission moves to become self-supporting. Support requests must come from Presbytery, and be supported by a church plant proposal and a budget of projected income and expenses for the entire period of requested support.
8. Funding approved for two or more years is not automatically guaranteed for the whole time period. The mission developer must ask, and the provisional session and Presbytery must recommend, continuation of funding. This will be done through a brief continuation request each year reporting on the impact of the funds given and the progress of the mission.

Recommendations:

1. That Synod embrace September 2016 as Evangelism Emphasis month and specifically focus ministry and training on equipping the saints to actively engage in personal and corporate evangelism. Additionally, we encourage Synod to challenge those churches who have reported no adult baptisms in the last year to embrace E3 as their Evangelism strategy. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
2. That Synod encourage churches to include home missions as part of their total missions responsibility and program, and to look for ways to include Outreach North America and ARPC mission congregations and mission developers in their missions conferences and missions budgets. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
3. That Synod encourage presbytery leadership to become familiar with the updated fair and flexible policy for funding new mission congregations adopted by ONA and attached at the end of this report. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
4. That Synod encourage presbyteries and their churches to take advantage of church renewal training offered through the Erskine

Theological Seminary and ONA Joint Certificate and/or D.Min. Degree. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

5. That existing ARP churches consider applying through their presbyteries for a "Dare to Dream" grant from ONA. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
6. That Synod encourage churches to be actively involved in local and international refugee ministry by offering the ministry of helps and Gospel. *See attached report.* **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
7. That Synod allow ONA to continue working together with World Witness and Christian Education Ministries in exploring ways to reach out to the growing ethnic populations in the United States. This may include holding a series of meetings for better understanding with people working with ethnic populations in the United States. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
8. That Synod thank ARP Women's Ministries for the support they have given to mission developer wives each year. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
9. That the proposed budget be approved. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
10. That the report of the Board of Outreach North America be approved. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

In addition, the Moderator's Committee on Outreach North America recommended:

11. That the Board and Staff of ONA be commended for their work this past year. **Synod ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Sattem, Chairman

OUTREACH NORTH AMERICA

	2016 Approved	2017 Proposed
Revenues		
Denominational Ministry Funds	\$ 559,085	\$ 546,800
Contributions for Ministry	60,200	184,951
Invested Fund Transfers for Operations	63,047	29,810
Total Revenues for Operations	\$ 682,332	\$ 761,561
Expenses		
<u>New Church Development (NCD)</u>		
Total Intern Supplement Expenses	22,763	58,500
Total Church Plant Supplements	169,695	291,791
Total Training	43,300	43,300
Total Other NCD Support Exp	35,580	31,000
Total NCD Support Expense	78,880	74,300
Total New Church Development (NCD)	271,338	424,591
Total Evangelism Expenses	45,850	45,850
Total Church Vitality	53,500	33,500
Total National Presence	20,600	19,600
<u>Administration Expenses</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>3%</u>
Payroll & Benefits	228,586	255,497
Total Adm. Support Exp (includes Board	62,458	60,424
Total Administration Expenses	291,044	315,921
Total Expenses	\$ 682,332	\$ 839,462
Net Income (Loss)	\$ 0	\$ (77,901)

The report of the board of William H. Dunlap Orphanage, Inc. was presented.

WILLIAM H. DUNLAP ORPHANAGE, INC.

The William H. Dunlap Orphanage, Inc. is a long standing ministry of the ARP Church. The orphanage was founded in 1905 in the West Tennessee town of Brighton by Annie Bell Dunlap to honor the memory of her father, William H. Dunlap, and her aunt, Elizabeth Dunlap Spain. The orphanage cared for children until 1978 when it was closed by Synod. Assets and proceeds from the sale of the property were turned over to General Synod and invested to provide continuing financial means to provide for the care of orphans. The purpose for Dunlap is stated in the bylaws, which read that the "object of the corporation is to provide care, support, maintenance, and education of orphaned, or fatherless, or helpless, or needy children, and to support projects related to such children." The William H. Dunlap Orphanage, Inc. fulfills this duty through its board of trustees. Board officers for July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017 are: Michael Evans, Chairman; William Kidd, Vice-Chairman; Mary Nell Coblenz, Secretary. Synod's Treasurer serves as Treasurer to the corporation, and the Executive Director of Central Services serves as Administrative Officer for the Board. The board meets two times each year. The March meeting is devoted to receiving updates from our homes which have ongoing relationships with Dunlap and to also consider grant applications from other ministries for the upcoming fiscal year. Grants are effective from April 1 through March 31 of the following year. The board meets again in November by telephone conference call to receive updates on our ministries and consider any interim business.

Dunlap grants are provided in a three-tiered manner.

- 1) Erskine College receives \$20,000 per year (10,000 per Fall and Spring Semester) to be given to orphaned students.
- 2) The Dunlap Board has established ongoing relationships (guaranteed yearly funding) with the following homes:

Collins Children's Home – Seneca, SC
Palmer Home for Children – Columbus, MS
French Camp Academy – French Camp, MS

These homes make a report to the Dunlap Board at our March meeting, and a member of the Dunlap Board serves as a liaison on their board. It is always uplifting to hear the reports of what these organizations are doing to impact children's lives.

3) Other ministries to orphans submit grant applications each year and are considered on a year to year basis.

All ministries must agree with the Dunlap Statement of Biblical Christian Belief. All supported ministries for the coming year have the involvement of ARP members or churches which aid in their work.

For the year 2016-2017 the Dunlap Board of Trustees is grateful to be able to provide financial assistance to the following:

Erskine College	\$20,000
Collins Children's Home (Seneca, SC)	\$30,418
French Camp Academy (French Camp, MS)	\$30,418
Palmer Home for Children (Columbus, MS)	\$30,418
Mabel Lowry Pressly Home (Sahiwal, Pakistan)	\$18,000
Calvary Home for Children (Anderson, SC)	\$10,000
Boys Farm (Newberry, SC)	\$15,000
Miracle Hill Ministries (Greenville, SC)	\$10,000
TOTAL	\$164,254

The Board is thankful to have the financial resources to provide this support for children. Dunlap is unique in its ministry, in that it receives no assistance from General Synod's Denominational Ministry Fund. Resources for Dunlap's work are provided from gifts, endowment earnings, and income from trusts and restricted endowments which name Dunlap as a beneficiary. In today's society with the problem of family breakups and increased drug use leading to orphaned children the need is great to give these children a safe Christian environment to live in. The board wants to encourage ARPs to give to this Denominational Ministry and to consider the services of these children's homes for needy children they may encounter.

Dunlap has two other funds that are in the process of being funded to provide assistance for orphans. The Dunlap Adoption Assistance Fund, started in 2011 to assist families of ARP ministers

who have adopted children. Adoption is a long and expensive process that this fund will help families with. The fund currently has a balance of \$22,784.

The Jim Barker Fund was established in memory of ARP minister, Jim Barker, who served on the Dunlap Board for a number of years. It will provide a scholarship for an Erskine College Student who is orphaned and exhibits characteristics of Christian leadership. This fund currently has a balance of \$5,630.

Both of these funds need a balance of at least \$25,000 in order to provide meaningful assistance on a continuing basis. It is our hope that both will continue to grow to be able to provide orphan assistance.

The Dunlap Board gives thanks to God for the life and service of Dr. Jeff Bost, our Chairman, who passed away in November, 2015. He was an active participant in the ministry of Collins Children's Home and made a difference in children's lives.

Recommendations:

1. That Synod give thanks to God for his provision of resources for Dunlap Orphanage and its long history of service to orphans, and that prayer be offered for children in need of Christian love and assistance. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
2. That sessions make their congregations aware of the services and assistance offered to children by William H. Dunlap Orphanage, Inc. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
3. That the 2017 budget be approved. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

In addition, your committee recommends:

4. That the Dunlap Adoption Assistance Fund be expanded to include all ARP elders and members in good standing with priority given to ministers first. **Synod ADOPTED.**

Sincerely,

Michael Evans, Chairman

WILLIAM H. DUNLAP ORPHANAGE, INC.

Description	2016 Synod Approved	2017 Proposed
Executive Summary		
Anticipated Revenue	\$ 172,500	\$ 169,400
Beginning Fund Balance	8,500	8,600
Total Available	\$ 181,000	\$ 178,000
Less:		
Reserve for Potential Revenue Shortfalls	(8,600)	(8,500)
Percentage of Revenue	5.0%	5.0%
Administration	(9,900)	(9,900)
Erskine	(20,000)	(20,000)
Remaining for Allocation	\$ 142,500	\$ 139,600
Supporting Detail		
Anticipated Income		
B. J. Wade	103,600	103,600
Ola B. Hunter	3,300	3,300
Orphanage Fund	49,300	47,000
Will Ministry Fund (min bal of \$255,022)	16,300	15,500
Total Anticipated Income	\$ 172,500	\$ 169,400
Ministry Expenditures		
Erskine-guaranteed	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Collins Home		7,605
Palmer Home		7,605
French Camp Academy		7,605
World Witness-Mabel Lowery Pressley home Girls' Hostel		4,500
Calvary Home	-	2,500
Boys Farm		3,750
Miracle Hill		2,500
Remaining for allocation	142,500	103,537
Sub-Total Ministry Expenditures	\$ 162,500	\$ 159,600
Central Services	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500
Board	3,900	3,900
Promotional	1,000	1,000
General Office	500	500
Total Ministry Expenditures	\$ 172,400	\$ 169,500
Net Income over/(under) expenditures	\$ 100	\$ (100)
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,600
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 8,600	\$ 8,500

Prayer was offered for the mission of Dunlap and those children who have no families.

The report of **Erskine College and Seminary** was presented.

ERSKINE COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

Introduction

The Board of Trustees of Erskine College and Theological Seminary, through its Chairman, humbly submits this report to the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. We are

grateful to serve our Lord and the ARP Church as we seek to lead Erskine through the challenges we face and the opportunities God gives us. As representatives of the ARP Church we are seeking to develop the organization to fulfill the objectives as presented in the Statement of the Philosophy of Christian Higher Education of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Accreditation and Financial Stability Plan

The 2015 Report to Synod noted that the summer and fall of 2015 would be significant months for Erskine College's accreditation reaffirmation by SACS. The external financial audit statement for our last fiscal year, indicated significant improvement in our financial results, which were spurred by the careful and yet aggressive implementation of the Financial Stability Plan begun in the fall of 2014. Dr. Kooistra delineated the details of this plan in the June 2015 Report to the General Synod.

Erskine's significant financial progress resulted in the reaffirmation of accreditation and removal from probation. This wonderful good news affords Erskine College and Seminary a fresh opportunity to move forward with a continued resolve to strengthen and enhance the school's mission. The Board of Trustees thanks God for His faithfulness in allowing this probationary period to be short and commends Dr. Kooistra, the senior administrative team, and the faculty and staff for their willingness to address boldly and effectively the financial issues facing the school and to put the institution on a more solid path for the future.

As the two years of the initial Financial Stability Plan come to a close in June 2016, the Board of Trustees and the senior administrative team are crafting a Three-Year Post-Sanction Plan to stimulate growth. This includes enhancements in academic programs, student life, development, and athletics. The underlying goal for the future is to align our athletic, academic, and student services programs with the mission of the College, which reads, "The mission of Erskine College is to equip students to flourish by providing an excellent liberal arts education in a Christ-centered environment where learning and biblical truth are integrated to develop the whole person."

Financial Stewardship

Our operating budget for fiscal year 2015-2016 is \$30.9 million, including instructional and academic support, student services, institutional support, auxiliary enterprises, and operational and facility maintenance expenditures. Erskine, like many small liberal arts col-

leges, is tuition-driven; therefore, student recruitment and successful retention of these students are essential.

Augmenting the revenue from tuition are the funds raised through the advancement process and the resources from the Endowment Fund. The endowment is a key component of the financial stability and future viability of Erskine College, and yet, as noted in last year's report, the school has historically depended too heavily on its endowment draw. A major component of the Financial Stability Plan is decreasing the endowment draw from 10% to 4.5 % over a four-year period, a reduction which is indicated by the prudent 5% draw in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

One of our goals this year was to decrease the tuition discounts that are given to students. We were able to increase the average tuition paid per student by 14%, bringing the average amount a student pays to \$21,000 up from \$18,500 two years ago. This change alone has made a big difference in allowing Erskine to meet its financial obligations and has allowed the endowment draw to be substantially lowered.

Development

The Annual Fund for the fiscal year ending in June 2015 finished strongly and surpassed the goal of \$1.6 million raising a total of \$1,733,941, \$590,000 more than was raised in 2014. We are grateful that donors to the Annual Fund increased 16%, including a 243% increase in the number of ARP churches contributing to the Fund. We are also grateful for an increase in the number of presbyteries financially supporting Erskine. Increases in unrestricted funds are due to the disciplined work of the advancement team along with the tireless efforts of Dr. Kooistra with a number of key stakeholders.

Everyone at Erskine is thankful for God's gracious provision that allowed the annual fund to exceed its lofty goal. We are extremely grateful to the individual donors, churches, presbyteries and the General Synod for their contributions and support.

The Annual Fund goal for the 2016 fiscal year remains at 1.6 million dollars. For the first six months of this fiscal year (July 2015 through December 2015), the Annual Fund totaled \$926,760 dollars, which is 51.5% of the goal.

Erskine College

This past fall Erskine welcomed to the campus the largest incoming class in forty years, including 217 freshmen students and 26 trans-

fer students for a total of 243, surpassing our admissions goal of 222. This large freshman class pushed the enrollment numbers of the College to 616 Full Time Equivalent students (FTEs).

Dr. Brad Christie continues to work with the college Curriculum Committee on developing ideas for improving and growing academic programs which will help the institution to increase its undergraduate enrollment to 700 students. An extensive reconstruction of the core curriculum, implemented in 2014, focuses on seven core competencies to emphasize both enhanced student choice and creative integrative work across academic departments. The seven core competencies are the following: communicating clearly and creatively, analyzing information logically and quantitatively, responding to the human story, exploring nature as inquirer and steward, developing a lifestyle for wholeness, engaging society as neighbor and citizen, and seeking faithful understanding. This new core curriculum model is one that “seeks to develop students’ intellect, character, and faith. It encourages students not only to find their own voices and discover their talents, but also to recognize their responsibilities to others in the community.” The academic core includes foundational courses which introduce students to different disciplines and prepare them for advanced learning along with formational courses that challenge students’ thinking about themselves, the world, and God, while honing their skills and expanding their knowledge.

ARP Campus Ministry (Reformed University Fellowship)

Rev. Paul Patrick continues to serve as the ARP Campus Minister and Chaplain at Erskine College. Rev. Patrick also serves on the President’s Senior Team. RUF at Erskine welcomed two new interns to campus this year, Alden and Taylor Groves. The presence of RUF on campus and the ministry of the Gospel it provides for our students is primarily fostered through Chapel services, large and small-group Bible studies, fellowship and service opportunities, and one-to-one discipleship and community building with students. Erskine is grateful for the Synod’s provision of a campus minister and the affiliation we share with Reformed University Ministries.

Student Services

Student Services began the fall 2015 academic year with new leadership. Dr. Wendi Santee assumed the position of Dean of Student Services, and Mr. Jim Van Stensel also began as the Assistant Dean

for Residential Learning and Development. Dr. Santee has 23 years of student services experience, much of which has been in a small, Christian, liberal arts environment. Mr. Van Stensel also brings approximately 10 years of experience in residential life at a small Christian, liberal arts college. The focus thus far in Student Services has been to develop leadership and to implement practices which will better align our campus culture with the mission of the School. The consistent utilization of the student judicial council has provided consistency and accountability for our students as well as offered an opportunity for those serving in this student role to develop leadership skills and to invest in their campus community.

In addition, changes are being implemented to begin a model of residential life leadership that is reflective of a Christian world view as well as being aligned with best practices across the country in the field of student development and residential life at similar college campuses.

A new Coordinator of Campus Life has recently been hired. Mr. David Miller comes to Erskine with a background in Student Development and business. Mr. Miller's unique background will serve Erskine well as he oversees events and activities on campus and develops student leaders for campus clubs and organizations.

Erskine Theological Seminary

The Financial Stability Plan of 2014-2016 called for a balanced budget as well as the recognition that the Seminary must find ways to attract more Masters students. The summer session saw a bump in enrollment and a \$12,000 budget surplus. Unfortunately, the enrollment in the Seminary for the winter term fell short of expectations, and the projected number of students for the spring term has also dipped from the lower fall numbers. We are anticipating that the Seminary will have an operating loss over \$100,000 for the year.

The Seminary enrollment for the fall 2015 was 67.5 FTEs, including 17.75 D. Min/Th.M. candidates and 46.5 MA/M.Div. students. During the past year, 15 M.Div., 9 MA, and 15 D. Min/Th.M. students graduated from the Seminary.

Dr. Chris Wisdom, Vice President of the Seminary, worked to develop plans to put the Seminary on a stronger financial foundation but unfortunately resigned due to ongoing health issues. Dr. R.J. Gore, Dr. Michael Milton, and Dr. Terry Eaves have taken on more responsibility while still carrying their full teaching loads. In the midst of these challenges, the Seminary is anticipating a visit by The

Association of Theological Schools, the accrediting body for the Seminary. The intent of this meeting is to evaluate the financial viability of the Seminary going forward. This visit requires extensive preparation, and our goal is that the accreditation of the Seminary be affirmed.

The MEDCOM students were on campus for the winter term, and this last MEDCOM cohort group will have until May 2019 to complete their degree programs. Going forward, the Board has elected to end the MEDCOM Doctor of Ministry program since changing federal requirements make it impossible for Erskine to continue this partnership and remain faithful to its theological and moral commitments. Therefore, Erskine will not renew its contract options for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years.

The Seminary faces continued challenges. It must begin to operate in a fiscally sound manner while developing a Strategic Plan that will refocus the Seminary on growth and sustainability.

Board Development

Since the beginning of this year, our Board has focused on becoming a more effective and efficient Board. At each meeting, we have an educational program that is focused on the Board's roles and responsibilities, our legal obligations, and the processes that effective Boards use to provide good governance. This continuing education is essential to an effective Board.

To assist the Board in maintaining better oversight of the organization, we have developed regular reporting of key performance indicators to the Board. Our committees also now meet between Board meetings and make recommendations so that these can be received by the Board prior to our meetings. This procedure has helped us be more effective and efficient.

We have also reviewed our Board's structure and believe that a smaller board of 17 individuals can more effectively encourage participation in our meetings, help to develop interpersonal relationships and remain consistent with previous considerations by the Synod. We have adopted changes to our bylaws and are recommending changes to the *Manual of Authorities and Duties* to the General Synod that will implement this new structure. Our recommendations include maintaining the same percentage of ARP ministers as currently exists on our Board.

Statement of Philosophy of Christian Higher Education

For the college and the seminary, the ARP Philosophy of Christian Higher Education continues to be the foundational document which guides decisions made about the key areas outlined in the statement: administration, faculty, students, and curriculum. The statement is published in the faculty handbook of the college, and every faculty member seeks to understand “the enduring relevance of the Christian orientation” as having an essential and central relationship with the subject taught and the students who are here to learn. This essential relationship is “significantly different from those found in secular settings,” and sets Erskine apart as offering a unique educational experience offered from a Christian worldview.

Each new faculty hire and every administrative hire at the director level and above should fully adhere to the principles of this statement and to the revisions implemented in 2008, which offer a clear definition of what is meant by the term “evangelical” and define the authority of the Bible as uniquely “God-breathed, the word of God written, infallible in all that it teaches, and inerrant in the original manuscripts.”

In the College, significant emphasis continues to be placed on the study of the Bible, and from this central core, offerings in the arts, sciences, vocations, and our cultural heritage will be integrated into the liberal arts curriculum as stated in the philosophy of the Church: “The Curriculum for Erskine College at the undergraduate level should be broadly based, with the Christian perspective as the positive integrating factor for all of the disciplines.” Full development of the Philosophy of Christian Education will be achieved as the College community approaches the task with a sense of mission.

The student body of Erskine College is diverse and includes those who come from the ARP tradition along with those who have little or no formal exposure or training either in evangelical Christianity or in the Reformed tradition. In this sense, the missional model of the college allows the faculty and staff to present the gospel to our students both in word and in deed. In this regard, the work of Dr. Kooistra and Paul Patrick in refocusing Chapel on Biblical revelation and the gospel of grace provides a consistent and formal opportunity to present Christ to the students with the ultimate objective to help every student come to an understanding of the truth that man’s chief end is “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

In addition, student services continues to create “the ethos of a college campus which is truly Christian” and manifests a culture which is differentiated from a secular campus. Expectations in the behavior of students in residential housing express Christian values, and each residential director understands that the statement of educational philosophy applies to student culture and to residential life. Moving from part-time to full-time residential directors in the years ahead indicates the need to emphasize the importance of this uniquely Christian community that characterizes the Erskine campus.

Summary

The past year we have seen God’s leadership and blessing on Erskine as we have faced difficult issues and implemented changes that have resulted in affirmed accreditation, financial improvement, and refocused Christian love without compromise. We have seen strong growth in admissions, student spiritual development, and our Annual Fund. All have contributed to a successful year.

Even with these advancements, we continue to face significant challenges as we seek long-term sustainability. We must continue to grow the number of students to at least 700 undergraduates and increase the number of seminary students. We must also receive competitive tuition and fees, improve our existing academic programs and develop new programs that will attract students. Continued financial discipline while providing our faculty and staff with competitive compensation and benefits is critical to our future. Strong performance of our Annual Fund will also be important to Erskine’s future as we rely less on our Endowment.

We are grateful for the unwavering support that we have received from the General Synod, the presbyteries, churches and members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. You encourage us, and it is an honor to serve Christ’s church with each of you.

Finally, we must continue to depend on God’s grace to provide leadership for our future. At the beginning of each of our Board meetings, we spend significant time in prayer and continue praying for Erskine in our personal lives. We ask that you join us in a regular time of prayer. Our united prayer for Erskine is essential to our ability to fulfill our mission. We are all fallen people who must depend on the one true God as we seek to bring glory to Him in everything that we do. Let us depend on Him.

Recommendations:

1. That a season of prayer for Erskine College and Theological Seminary be held in the presbyteries and individual churches of the denomination. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
2. That the *Manual of Authorities and Duties* section on The Board of Trustees of Erskine College and Seminary be amended to reflect the new bylaws, which the Board of Trustees passed in February 2015. These changes would not make any changes to the section on The Philosophy of Christian Higher Education also found in this section of *MAD*. The main change is to reduce the number of Board members from 27 to 17. The change proposes that 20% of the Trustees appointed by the Synod would be ARP ministers, which is the same as in the current system. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

Such an amended document would read as follows
(strikethroughs for material to be deleted, **bold for the text to be added**):

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF ERSKINE COLLEGE
AND SEMINARY**

(~~2012~~ 2016 Synod)

Membership: At Large: ~~Twenty seven members~~ **Seventeen (17)** members, ~~five~~ **three (3)*** of whom shall be Associate Reformed Presbyterian ministers, one appointed each year. (~~NOTE: The Erskine bylaws do not include the requirement that five of the members be ARP ministers. This is a General Synod requirement.~~
Erskine bylaws further define the composition of the board, regarding alumni and gender representation.)

Ex-officio: President of the Erskine Alumni Association; the Moderator of Synod **when elected by the Synod.** ~~ARP Women's Ministries representative (June 30, 2014~~

~~ARPWM representative becomes advisory member.)~~

Advisory: ~~The President of Erskine College, up to six administrative officials designated by the president, the Treasurer, a delegate from the seminary faculty, a delegate from the college faculty, the President of the Student Government Association, the President of the Seminary Student Body, the Chairman of the Board of Counselors, the Director of Christian Education Ministries, the President Elect of the Erskine Alumni Association, the President of the Flying Fleet Club, the Moderator Elect of Synod, and the Executive Director of Central Services. (June 30, 2014 ARPWM representatives becomes advisory member.)~~ **The Executive Director of Central Services is an advisory to the Board. The Moderator-Elect of Synod, Executive Director of Central Services, a representative from ARP Women's Ministries and other individuals are advisors to committees to which they are appointed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.**

~~* "Administrative Officials" are defined as the President, all designated Senior Administrative Officials, all Deans, and all Directors and their equivalents. "Senior Administrative Officials" are defined as all administrators reporting directly to the President~~

Terms of Service:

At Large: Five (5) years.
Ex-officio and Advisory: As determined by the office to which appointed or elected.

Stated Meetings:

~~Four per year:~~ **As determined by the Board to include** August, October, February and May

Organization:	<p>Officers: Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer</p> <p>Standing Committees:</p> <p>Executive Committee College Committee Academic Committee Enrollment Committee Finance and Facilities Committee Development Committee Student Services and Athletic Committee Seminary Committee Committee on Trustees Honorary Degree Committee</p> <p>Ad hoc Committees:</p> <p>Nominating Committee Board Policy Committee Seminary Review Committee Synod Requests Committee</p>
Authority:	<p>The Board of Trustees of Erskine College has direct control of the operation of Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary and is empowered to establish policies and educational programs and to manage all properties and funds.</p> <p>In the exercise of its authority, the Board shall comply with <i>The Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church</i>, and its policies and programs shall be consistent with the purpose of the General Synod.</p>
Duties:	<p>1. To exercise general oversight of the total operation of Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary.</p> <p>2. To establish admission and graduation requirements and to grant appropriate certification to all students for academic work satisfactorily completed.</p> <p>3. To determine all financial charges</p>

~~made to students.~~

~~4. To establish curriculum.~~

~~5. To supervise and promote religious, athletic, and social programs for the academic community.~~

~~6. To determine the annual operational budget; to devise methods for increasing funds, resources, and properties; and to care for, maintain, and secure the physical facilities.~~

~~7. To hold in trust all endowments and titles to properties and to execute them in accordance with the stipulated purposes for which they were given, conveyed, or bequeathed.~~

~~8. To appoint such officers, administrators, and faculty members as may be necessary for the operation of the College and Seminary, and to set salaries of the administrative officers of the College and Seminary.~~

~~9. To submit nominations to Synod's Committee on Nominations. (1986 Synod)~~

~~10. To make an annual report to the General Synod, to include a special section relating to the implementation of the Statement of Philosophy of Christian Higher Education.~~

General Powers.

The Institution shall be governed by the Board which sets all policy for the Institution. The President of the Institution is responsible for implementing these policies.

- a. Only the Board of Trustees may appoint or remove Corporate Officers except the Treasurer, sell or mortgage assets of the Institution, incur debt, dissolve the corporation, modify the bylaws, rescind or modify a decision of the Board or Executive Committee, recognize, bargain with, or contract with employees collectively

- and authorize degrees except the awarding of Honorary Degrees to a Commencement speaker.
- b. The Board grants all degrees and certificates. The administration shall fully inform the Board of changes to admissions policies and graduation requirements.
 - c. The Board shall annually set tuition rates.
 - d. The Board shall approve all changes to the core curriculum.
 - e. The Board shall approve the annual operational and capital budgets; devise methods for increasing funds, resources, and properties; and care for, maintain, and secure the physical facilities.
 - f. The Board shall hold in trust all endowments and titles to properties and will execute them in accordance with the stipulated purposes for which they were given, conveyed, or bequeathed.
 - g. The Board shall hire the President of the Institution and set his benefits and salary. The Board shall, based on the recommendation of the President, approve all persons who shall serve on the full-time Seminary faculty. The President may terminate a member of the Seminary faculty.
 - h. The Board shall submit recommendations to Synod's Committee on Nominations.
 - i. The Board shall make an annual report to the General Synod, to include a special section relating to the implementation of the Statement of Philosophy of Christian Higher Education.
 - j. The Board shall adopt the purpose and responsibilities for each Committee. These shall be reviewed at least every three (3) years.
 - k. The Board shall develop a position description for all Corporate Officers, which describes their roles, authority and responsibilities. These shall be reviewed at least every three (3) years by the Board.

*The wording "at least 3" was added in a motion that carried near the end of the 2016 Synod meeting.

**POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR
PRESIDENT OF ERSKINE COLLEGE & SEMINARY**

The President ~~shall be~~ (the chief executive officer of the college and seminary) **Institution and shall be responsible for executing board policies.** ~~is~~ Under the direction of the Board of Trustees **he shall be responsible for the programs, services and assets of the Institution.** and has "charge of the institution, its Vice Presidents, chaplain, administrative officials, Deans, faculties, staff, students, and all its funds except the Endowment Fund and the Annuity and Trust Fund" (Bylaws, IV, 5).

The president is a member of all committees created by the bylaws of the Board of Trustees and has seat and voice at all meetings, **including executive sessions unless excused by the Board.** He reports to the board at every meeting and makes recommendations as appropriate. The president is responsible for implementing board policies, attaining goals adopted by board resolution, and executing all documents as directed by the board. The president may appoint and remove deans and other administrative officers (~~excepting corporate officers~~). **excepting the Board Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary.** ~~The president is advised by the President's Cabinet, which is composed of the vice presidents and the chief marketing officer. The cabinet generally meets weekly. It has no formal authority and serves at the pleasure of the president.~~

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald J. Vigus, Chairman

In addition, your committee recommends:

3. That Synod express its appreciation to the Board of Directors and to President Kooistra for their courage and wisdom in guiding the college and seminary through rough waters into a better future. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

**Annual Tuition, Required Fees, Room and Board
(fall rates*) 2016-2017**

	BOARDING	COMMUTING
TUITION	\$ 32,540	\$ 32,540
BOARD (all meal plans)	5,300	
ROOM*	5,600	
FEES**	2,020	2,020
TOTAL (boarding)	\$ 45,460	\$ 34,560

- New Students: In addition to the above fees**, new students will be assessed a \$300 enrollment fee to offset the costs of class registration and new student orientation.

- Returning Students: In addition to the above fees**, returning students will be assessed a \$300 returning student fee, \$150 of which will offset the costs of class registration and \$150 will be credited toward the student's fall billing statement.

-*Single room charges are an additional \$800 per semester.

-**Required fees include: activity, artist series/convocation, athletic, computer, medical, and student center fees. (For more information regarding the required fees**, see a copy of the current Erskine College *Catalog*.)

- All students are responsible for the purchase of **books and supplies** and should allow between **\$750 and \$1,000 per semester** or **\$1,500 to \$2,000 per year, (fall and spring semesters)** depending on major or coursework taken.

FINANCES

Tuition and fees for 2016-17

Admission	Fees
Application for Admission	\$35
Application for Readmission	\$75
Enrollment Deposit	\$50
Master's Degree Fees	
Tuition for Master's Level Courses (per sem hr)	\$462
Audit Fee (per course)	\$200
Continuing Education Course (per course)	\$200
Fee for PM 010 Professional Assessment	\$100
Academic Services Technology Fee (Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring)	\$75
Master of Theology and Doctor of Ministry Degree Fees	
Tuition for ThM and DMin Courses (per sem hr)	\$478
Continuing Education Course (per course)	\$200
Audit Fee (per course)	\$200
ThM Research Methodologies Seminar Fee	\$200
DMin Prospectus Seminar Fee	\$200
Candidacy	\$500
Program or Thesis/Dissertation Continuation Fee (per semester or term)	\$150
Extension of Time to Complete Degree (per year)	\$1,500
Readmission Fee	\$200
Dissertation/Thesis Binding, Copyright, Electronic Storage (TREN)	\$200
Dissertation/Thesis Binding per extra copy	\$25
Academic Service Fees	
Late Registration	\$50
Change in Course Schedule (each change)	\$10
Transcript (per copy)	\$5

Application for Graduation	\$150
Graduation Reapplication Fee	\$25
Certificate Upgrade to Master's Level	\$150
CEU Documentation Fee (per course)	\$15

Other Fees

Student ID Card Replacement	\$35
SBA Fee (each semester or term)	\$5
Bible Challenge Exam	\$100

Campus Housing Fees (Due West Only)

Room (Fall-Spring)	\$5,223
Board (all plans, Fall-Spring)	\$4,882
Comprehensive Medical Plan (optional)	\$245
Room Key Replacement	\$25
Guestroom	\$40

**MASTER CASH OPERATING BUDGET
For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017**

	APPROVED 2016-2017 BUDGET		
	COLLEGE	SEMINARY	INSTITUTION
REVENUE AND OTHER ADDITIONS			
Tuition, fees, room, and board	\$ 28,539,900	\$ 856,000	\$ 29,395,900
Less: scholarships and financial aid	\$ 15,433,125	\$ 225,000	\$ 15,658,125
Net tuition, fees, room, and board	\$ 13,106,775	\$ 631,000	\$ 13,737,775
Endowment income (5% draw on endowment funds and unrestricted investments)	\$ 1,566,013	\$ 353,866	\$ 1,919,879
Annual fund*	\$ 1,298,750	\$ 351,250	\$ 1,650,000
Bookstore	\$ 400,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 403,000
Other income (Athletic fundraising, rental income)	\$ 296,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 304,000
	\$ 16,667,538	\$ 1,347,116	\$ 18,014,654
EXPENSES AND OTHER DEDUCTIONS			
Salaries and benefits	\$ 7,457,003	\$ 1,124,053	\$ 8,581,056
Operating expenses - (instructional & institutional)	\$ 7,397,259	\$ 588,533	\$ 7,985,792
Bookstore	\$ 312,000	\$ 3,120	\$ 315,120
Debt service	\$ 1,130,686	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,132,686
	\$ 16,296,948	\$ 1,717,706	\$ 18,014,654
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$ 370,590	\$ (370,590)	\$ -
ESTIMATED CASH SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$ 370,590	\$ (370,590)	\$ -

*Annual Fund goal includes the annual allocation from the General Synod of the ARP Church.

A motion carried

Whereas the Revision Committee is to review any memorial that impacts our Standards and report on how the material affects other provisions throughout the Form of Government (14.8), and **Whereas** this review is to take place before the material comes to the floor for approval, **Therefore** all memorials that impact our Standards

must be submitted to the Central Services office before May 1, in order for that material to be considered at that year's General Synod meeting.

Dr. Kooistra, President of Erskine, addressed the Synod. Synod's afternoon session closed with the blessing and prayer by Ben Carver.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, EVENING SESSION

The evening worship service was led by Neil Stewart. A letter from the faculty of Erskine Theological Seminary was read by the Reading Clerk. **A motion** was presented, debated and **carried**:

That the 212th General Synod go on record in support of the Erskine Seminary faculty's request to separate Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary into two institutions if it is deemed in the best interest of both.

A motion was presented, debated and **carried**:

That the 212th General Synod request that the Board of Erskine College consider the teachings of the Westminster Confession of Faith on the fourth commandment as it pertains to academic and athletic events on the Lord's Day.

The report of **Executive Board** was presented.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board of the General Synod is the agency empowered to carry out the work of the General Synod in the interim period

between meetings of Synod. It provides oversight for the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Center Facility, Central Services, and the promotional work of the General Synod.

The Board met once since the 2015 meeting of the General Synod. This report reflects its activities and presents the recommendations of the Executive Board to the General Synod. In its duty to implement directives of the General Synod, coordinate the work of the Synod and supervise Central Services and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Center Facility, the Executive Board reports the following:

Actions of the board

The Administration Committee of the Board completed its search for a new Executive Director of Central Services and adopted the recommendation of the special search committee hiring Roger Wiles as the new director.

The Executive Board adopted the full report of the Center Facility Committee Proposal (**See Attachment A**)

A motion was adopted to direct Synod's Archivist, Edith Brawley to proceed with discussions regarding a proposal to relocate Synod Archives to Presbyterian Heritage Center in Montreat N.C. (**See Attachment B**)

The Committee on Administration was tasked with the matter regarding domain name protection for the denomination. A report will be offered at a future date.

A request was made by Catawba Presbytery regarding immigration circumstances being assigned a place on Synod's program for 2016. The Executive Board respectfully declined due to time restraints and previously adopted special programming.

A letter to the Erskine Board and Executive Board from the Erskine Seminary faculty was received as information

A combined presentation of World Witness and Outreach North America was granted 15 minutes of program time for Synod 2016.

Recommendations:

1. That the proposed budgets for the ARP Center Facility, Central Services, the ARP Magazine and the Executive Board be approved. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
2. That the Moderator's proposed Theme and Monthly Emphases be endorsed. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

3. That the proposed schedule for the Annual Meeting of Synod 2016 be approved. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
4. That the actions of the Executive Board reported herein be approved. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
5. That Synod approve the transfer of Synod archives from Erskine College to the Presbyterian Heritage Center in Montreat, NC) **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Beard, Principal Clerk

ATTACHMENT A

Center Facility Committee Report

March 2016

As reported at Synod 2015, a contract was executed for the sale of the existing ARP Center Facility. A copy of the report to Synod is attached. The sale of the existing facility to St. Paul's Anglican Church was concluded on September 30, 2015, for a net sales price of \$1,732,920. Concurrent with the sale of the property, a lease was established with a term of 9 months with additional one month options up to a total of 18 months. The lease payments for the first 9 months were included in the sales price above. In February 2016, RSCT Architecture and Design was engaged to evaluate the future programming needs for the agencies at the ARP Center to provide some guidance on the facility required. RSCT has been used by Bonclarken for similar purposes in the past. RSCT provided a report back to the committee and to the heads of the agencies in late April.

After visiting a number of properties, the Committee determined the property at 918 South Pleasantburg was the best property that met our needs and was within our price range. This property had a number of positives. The price was more than we could afford; however, the owner was willing to take a substantial portion of the purchase price as a charitable contribution. The total space is also larger than we need currently allowing us the opportunity to lease part of the facility for now to assist with the expenses while providing the opportunity for future expansion. Additionally, RSCT analyzed the new property in comparison to the requirements from the

programming session and determined the requirements were substantially met.

On February 23, a contract was signed for the purchase of the property. The purchase price is estimated to be \$936,000 consisting of an \$800,000 cash payment plus all commissions and closing costs. The Seller, Stanley and Jeannine Blumenfield, will receive a charitable contribution for the difference in the purchase price and the appraised value. The property was listed for \$2.2 million though the appraisal is expected to be lower. Under the terms of the sale we have 60 days of due diligence which ends on April 23, and we are to close within 15 days after that date.

The due diligence process is well underway, and we expect reports back from the various inspectors in early April. RSCT designed a proposed layout and met with the heads of the agencies. The heads of the agencies have been very helpful, and we have a fairly solid floor plan in place subject to some final tweaks and code review. As the reviews and quotes are still in process, we are not able to provide a detail plan on the up-fit of the facility. There will be some required items such as bathroom modifications and a stair lift. There are also a number of items we would like to do such as painting, lighting, carpeting, ceiling tiles, etc., but we will likely have to prioritize according to our available funds. We will obtain input from the heads of the agencies on the prioritization. A summary of the expected budget follows.

As the facility is located in the city of Greenville, all changes in the facility will require code review by the city. This will also be the case for external signage, which also has a number of ordinances. We hope to start this process in April and start the up-fit after closing in early May. Once we have final plans we can look at establishing a move date but expect it would be in July.

Chip Smith, Chairman
Welch Bostick
Wade Huss
Jimmy Matthews
Bill Milling

Purchase Price	800,000	
Commissions and Closing Cost	<u>135,750</u>	
Total Purchase Price	935,750	
Moving, Network, Related	40,000	
Up-fit	420,535	
Contingency	125,000	Contingency for buildout, HVAC replacement
Endowment/Sinking Fund	175,000	Fund for Future Capital Repairs
Rental Contingency	30,000	Cover expenses prior to external tenant leases
Lease on Current Facility	<u>6,635</u>	Lease for July, net of inter- est earned
Total Used	<u>1,732,920</u>	

Supplement Report

In 2008, the Executive Board reported the following to General Synod at its 204th meeting:

The Executive Board acted to adopt the recommendations of its Center Facility Committee as follows:

The Center Facility Committee was authorized to sell the existing location, and upon the sale of the existing facility the existing Center Facility Committee is commissioned to locate and purchase a new facility. The Committee will be responsible for all aspects of design and layout following the input of the directors of each agency.

General Synod voted to sustain the report. Soon after this action, the ARP Center was put up for sale and an attractive offer was made then subsequently withdrawn. Not long after this withdrawal, the US real estate market sank, and the Center Facility Committee decided to take the building off the market until the return of a more suitable real estate climate.

In the spring of 2014, the committee decided the time was right to try again to sell the property. After marketing the property and considering several offers, the committee recommended the acceptance of the offer from St. Paul's Anglican Church, which adjoins the ARP

Center property. Upon recommendation of the Center Facility Committee and based on the previous authorization noted above, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Inc., the legal entity of the denomination, approved the sale. The St. Paul's congregation hopes to build a sanctuary on the site in the future.

The contract provides for St. Paul's to have a 90-day inspection period, and if all goes well during that time, for closing to occur between September 1 and September 30, 2015. The contract also allows the ARP Center to continue operations on the site under a lease-back agreement for a period of up to 12 months following the closing date.

The Center Facility Committee (Chip Smith, Chairman; Jimmy Matthews; Wade Huss; Welch Bostick; Bill Milling; Paul Bell, Advisory) is reviewing options for the ARP Center's next home. These options are:

1) to purchase property and build a new facility and 2) to purchase an existing building and retrofit it to accommodate needs of the Center. The final outcome will be determined by space needs, operational needs, and budget. Under either scenario, the Center will remain in the Greenville, SC area.

The committee looks forward to announcing to General Synod in 2016 the new address of the ARP Center. We thank God for providing for our denomination its home at One Cleveland Street, Greenville, SC since June of 1978 when it was given to the denomination by the Camp-Younts Foundation.

ATTACHMENT B

Synod Archives

Proposal for relocation of Synod Archives to Presbyterian Heritage Center (Montreat, NC)

A possible opportunity has arisen concerning the storage of ARP archival records.

Since October 2013, Erskine College has been fortunate to serve as the official repository of ARP archival records following the closing of the Historical Foundation at Montreat. Since then, the facility at Montreat has come under new management as the Presbyterian Heritage Center. It has come to my attention that the Heritage Center may now be in a position to serve as the ARP archival repository on a more long-term basis.

I am willing to have an exploratory conversation with the executive director of the Heritage Center to see about the possibility of

Synod entering into a partnership with them if you think there would be interest and support in this idea from the Executive Board of Synod.

Storage space at Erskine is running short, and we have always known that it would only be a short-term solution. The possible opportunity at the Heritage Center would serve as a more permanent solution which would include:

- Relocating materials currently in temporary storage at the Columbia Theological Seminary library archives in Atlanta, GA
- Incorporating materials currently stored at Erskine
- I, the Archivist, would continue to receive, gather, and process materials in preparation for storage

I believe we may be looking at a favorable situation which would allow Synod to regather all of its historical church records back under one roof—and in a location with strong ties to the denomination and ideal space to serve as a long-term repository.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my proposal. I look forward to hearing back from you as to whether the Executive Board feels that this would be worth pursuing. Assuming there would be shared interest at the Heritage Center, I would be willing to take the lead in preparing a formal proposal (including a budget) for submission to the Executive Board and, ultimately, Synod at the General Synod meeting in June.

Edith Brawley
Synod Archivist

MINUTES OF SYNOD

CENTRAL SERVICES

	2016 Synod Approved	2017 Proposed
Revenues		
Current Funds	2.9%	0.0%
Denominational Ministry Funds	\$ 313,846	\$ 313,846
Miscellaneous Gifts	4,000	4,200
Total Current Funds	\$ 317,846	\$ 318,046
Agency Support		
Board of Benefits	\$ 171,204	\$ 179,984
ARP Foundation	5,250	5,250
W. H. Dunlap Fund	4,500	4,500
Total Agency Support	\$ 180,954	\$ 189,734
Total Revenues	\$ 498,800	\$ 507,780
Expenses		
Total Salary and Benefits	\$ 464,072	\$ 493,816
Staff & Program		
Worker's Compensation	\$ 2,451	\$ 2,019
Director Travel & Expenses	1,500	1,500
Staff Travel & Expenses	700	700
Training	1,500	1,500
Organizational Dues	800	800
Total Staff & Program	\$ 6,951	\$ 6,519
Total Equipment	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200
Agency Support		
Agency Support Revenue	(20,000)	(20,500)
Copier Lease	10,035	8,250
Postage Meter/Scales	3,300	3,300
Postage	10,000	9,500
UPS	1,000	-
Paper Purchases	500	500
Net Agency Support Expense	\$ 4,835	\$ 1,050
General Office		
Software Maintenance	\$ 6,000	\$ 7,000
Internet Services	3,800	200
Bank Fees-Net	3,700	6,000
Bank Fees Allocated	(3,700)	(6,000)
Communication	1,008	3,320
ARP Synod Web Page design & maint	2,434	2,800
Office Supplies	8,500	9,000
Total General Office	\$ 21,742	\$ 22,320
Total Expenses	\$ 498,800	\$ 524,905
Net Income (Loss)	\$ -	\$ (17,125)
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 39,738	\$ 32,258
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 39,738	\$ 15,133

CENTER FACILITY

	2016 Synod Approved	2017 Proposed
RECEIPTS		
General Synod Allocation	\$14,602	\$14,602
Rent		
CEM	12,646	12,755
Outreach North America	9,458	6,024
The ARP	3,372	3,440
Director of Gift Planning	2,784	2,840
World Witness	21,536	21,966
Non-Synod Agencies		
101-C	1,573	1,604
101-B	9,151	0
101-A	2,843	2,899
201	1,914	0
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$79,879	\$66,130
Expenses		
Facility Management		
Staff & General Office	\$1,600	\$1,600
Expendable Supplies	800	800
Repairs & Maintenance	7,000	7,000
Facility Management	\$9,400	\$9,400
Facility Maintenance		
Garbage Pick-Up	\$1,900	\$1,900
Yard Maintenance	7,700	7,700
Heating & Air Conditioning	9,000	9,000
Janitorial Services	13,000	13,000
Security Monitoring Fees	500	500
Pest Control	360	360
Facility Maintenance	\$32,460	\$32,460
Utilities		
Electricity	\$21,000	\$21,000
Gas	8,500	8,500
Water & Sewer	1,600	1,600
Utilities	\$31,100	\$31,100
Building, Equipment & Furniture		
Equipment	4,000	4,000
Building, Equipment & Furniture	\$4,000	\$4,000
Contingency for office relocation	2,919	2,919
TOTAL Expenses	\$79,879	\$79,879
Net Income (Loss)	\$0	(\$13,749)
Beginning Fund Balance	\$156,487	\$156,487
Ending Fund Balance	\$156,487	\$142,738

MINUTES OF SYNOD

EXECUTIVE BOARD

	2016 Synod Approved	2017 Proposed
<u>Revenues</u>		
General Synod Allocation	\$ 180,285	\$ 171,820
Minutes of Synod Sales Income	50	50
Plan Book Sales	100	50
Standards Book Sales		50
General Synod Registration	22,400	24,960
Total Revenues	\$ 202,835	\$ 196,930
<u>Expenses</u>		
<u>General Synod Officers</u>		
Moderator	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Vice-Moderator	500	500
Moderator-Elect	1,000	1,000
Vice-Moderator Elect	500	500
Principal Clerk	5,000	5,000
Treasurer	3,675	3,675
Total General Synod Officers	\$ 14,675	\$ 14,675
<u>General Synod Meeting</u>		
Program & Preparation	\$ 10,080	10,080
Honorariums	3,000	1,500
Multi-Cultural Training	1,200	-
Staff Expenses	550	550
Synod Planning	100	100
Synod Room & Board	5,070	5,000
Synod Service Fee	13,620	14,820
Total General Synod Meeting	\$ 33,620	\$ 32,050
<u>Executive Board Meeting & Office</u>		
Board Travel & Meeting Expense	\$ 6,000	\$ 4,500
General Office & Miscellaneous	800	800
Executive Board-Legal	1,000	1,000
Committee to Oversee Campus Ministry	500	500
Total Executive Board	\$ 8,300	\$ 6,800
<u>General Synod Contingency</u>		
Unallocated	\$ 22,030	\$ 25,000
Special Committee-Book of Discipline	1,500	1,500
Special Committee-Board Removal Policy		
Total General Synod Contingency	\$ 23,530	\$ 26,500

	2016 Synod Approved	2017 Proposed
<u>Promotion & Services</u>		
Total Insurance	\$ 9,420	\$ 1,615
Orientation Program	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000
Total Historical Concerns	\$ 3,900	\$ 3,900
New Mission Subscriptions-THE ARP	\$ 500	\$ 500
Total Promotion & Services	\$ 20,820	\$ 13,015
Total Minutes of Synod	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
<u>Plan Book</u>		
Preparation & Distribution	\$ 250	\$ 250
Total Plan Book	\$ 250	\$ 250
Transfer to ECM from DM Allocation	\$ 92,640	\$ 94,640
Total Expenses	\$ 202,835	\$ 196,930
Net Income (Loss)	\$ 0	\$ 0
<u>Erskine Campus Ministry</u>		
<u>ECM Revenues</u>		
ECM Contributions	36,050	37,250
ECM Transfer from Exec. Board DM Alloc.	92,640	94,640
Total ECM Revenues	\$ 128,690	\$ 131,890
<u>ECM Expenses</u>		
<u>ECM Salary & Benefits</u>	\$ 0	3.0%
ECM Salary & Benefits	\$ 92,640	\$ 94,640
Total ECM Other Expenses	36,050	37,250
Total Erskine Campus Ministry Expenses	\$ 128,690	\$ 131,890
Net Income (Loss)-ECM	\$ -	\$ -
Beginning Fund Balance-ECM	\$ 24,250	\$ 24,250
Ending Fund Balance-ECM	\$ 24,250	\$ 24,250
<u>Net Income (Loss) Summary</u>		
Executive Board Revenue	\$ 180,435	\$ 171,970
Executive Board Expenses	(169,215)	(164,880)
General Synod Meeting Net after Registration	(11,220)	(7,090)
<u>Erskine Campus Ministry-Summary</u>		
ECM-Revenue	128,690	131,890
ECM-Director Salary & Benefits	(92,640)	(94,640)
ECM-Director Expenses	(36,050)	(37,250)
Erskine Campus Ministry-Interns Net	-	-
Erskine Campus Ministry Net Income (Loss)	-	-
Total Net Income (Loss)	-	-

MINUTES OF SYNOD

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian

	Synod 2016 Budget	2017 Proposed
REVENUES	0	9.9%
Denominational Ministries Alloc	\$ 79,986	\$ 79,986
Additional Synod Support needed	-	7,918
Miscellaneous Gifts	600	500
ARPWM Contributions	3,000	3,500
ARP Subscription Income	32,200	32,400
ARP Advertisement Income	7,000	6,000
Misc Income	120	120
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 122,906	\$ 130,424
EXPENSES		
SALARY & STAFF BENEFITS	\$ 85,446	\$ 88,193
STAFF & BOARD EXPENSES		
Editor Expenses	1,400	1,400
Staff Expenses	200	400
Dues & Membership Fees	400	200
Total Staff & Board Expenses	\$2,000	\$2,000
PUBLICITY & PROMOTION		
Publicity & Promotion	500	700
"The ARP" Web Page	740	740
Total Publicity & Promotion	\$1,240	\$1,440
Total Equipment	\$500	\$500
Total Communications	\$1,406	\$720
MISCELLANEOUS		
Rent	3,372	3,440
Office Supplies & Misc	1,000	1,500
Bank Fees	130	50
Total Miscellaneous	\$4,502	\$4,990
PRODUCTION EXPENSES	0	19.1%
Preparation & Printing	17,112	20,981
Labels and Postage	5,000	6,000
P2P Subscription Software	1,800	1,700
Materials and Supplies	300	300
Photography Expenses	400	400
Design Services	3,200	3,200
Total Production Expenses	\$27,812	\$32,581
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$122,906	\$130,424
NET INCOME/(LOSS)	(\$0)	\$0
Beginning Fund Balance	\$0	\$0
Ending Fund Balance	(\$0)	\$0

The Synod rose with a round of applause in appreciation for the Central Services staff, the Synod Pages and Cindy Scott.

A motion was presented, debated and **carried**:

That provision be made for reporting the number of deaths of non-communicant members on Synod's Annual Statistical and Informational Report.

The report of the **Board of Stewardship** was presented.

STEWARDSHIP

General Synod has given the Board of Stewardship "responsibility for working cooperatively with the congregations and agencies of General Synod to develop and administer programs and ministries to secure financial resources to meet the operating needs of the General Synod; to present to the General Synod a recommended allocation of those resources; and to receive, maintain, and administer funds given to the General Synod and/or the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Foundation, Inc., and to expend income for the furtherance of the work of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church" (*Manual of Authorities and Duties*).

The members of the Board of Stewardship also serve as the board of directors of the ARP Foundation. Synod's Investment Committee serves as Investment Advisor to the Foundation board.

Duties and responsibilities as delineated in the *Manual of Authorities and Duties (MAD)* are grouped in this report according to the impact of issues on the denomination rather than in numerical order as they are listed in the *MAD*.

Authorities and Duties

Duty 1. Promote the general ministries and programs of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The Board of Stewardship works to promote and support all the ministry and programs of General Synod through the following:

Agencies: Bonclarken, Central Services, Christian Education Ministries, Erskine College & Theological Seminary, Outreach North America, World Witness.

Boards: Executive Board, Board of Stewardship/ARP Foundation Board of Directors, Board of Benefits.

Standing Committees: Worship, Minister & His Work, Investment, Theological & Social Concerns, Inter-Church Relations, Campus Ministry Oversight

Special Commissions and Committees: Ecclesiastical Commission on Judiciary Affairs, Special Committee to Revise *Book of Discipline*, Special Committee to Review FOG Amendments, Special Committee to Review Judicial Process of ECJA

General Synod created these agencies, boards, and committees to serve the entire Church in the proclamation of the Gospel of God by every means possible. **Every agency, board, and committee is dependent upon the free-will giving of every member of every congregation to the Denominational Ministry Fund in the financial support of our Mother Church.**

<u>Easter Offering</u>	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Stewardship/ Foundation	6,716	6,822	7,112	8,249	8,484
Bonclarken	9,906	7,744	8,465	11,400	10,198
CEM	8,112	7,681	7,661	8,906	8,054
Erskine College	10,227	7,672	8,316	10,300	9,012
World Witness	17,994	16,927	14,986	18,711	16,563
Subtotal	52,955	46,846	46,540	57,566	52,311
 <u>Thanksgiving</u>					
Erskine Seminary	6,648	5,358	6,300	5,411	6,483
American Bible Soc.	3,306	3,016	3,010	2,741	3,561
Outreach North Am.	6,396	6,516	6,636	5,714	7,700
Christmas Benev.	51,108	46,681	43,760	33,557	34,807
Subtotal	67,458	61,571	59,706	47,443	52,551

Duty 2. develop and/or identify, and keep current, resources that can be used for the teaching of biblical stewardship in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church;

Members of the Board of Stewardship are available to speak to presbyteries and congregations regarding the Denominational Minis-

try Fund and the work of General Synod. These presentations demonstrate the impact and scope of faithful giving to the Denominational Ministry Fund.

The board has published *Guidelines for Church Finance*, a brochure of suggested internal controls to ensure shared responsibilities within the system of receiving and disbursing monies in the life of the congregation.

For books and publications on stewardship please consider the resources from the ARP Bookstore.

Duty 3. assist in developing financial stewardship models for presbyteries, congregations, and agencies of the General Synod;

The Board of Stewardship continues to support and recommend the Financial Seminars for church and presbytery treasurers and other individuals involved in financial ministry in the Church. Topics include: financial job descriptions, not-for-profit organization issues, budgeting and financial reporting, healthy financial practices for church finances, payroll, gifts and charitable deductions, General Synod employee benefit programs, and "12 Simple Ways to Cultivate Generosity in your Church." If you are interested, please contact Judi Hodges in Christian Education Ministries.

Duty 4. develop and implement programs for securing the funds required to meet the operating needs of the General Synod;

The Denominational Ministry Fund (DMF) remains the primary tool by which the work of General Synod is sustained. The Board of Stewardship stresses that this fund is *denominational* in nature; it impacts the work of every board, committee and agency, with the exception of the William H. Dunlap Orphanage Board of Directors. **The Board of Stewardship expresses its appreciation to every congregation contributing to the work of the ARP Church through the Denominational Ministry Fund.**

The Stewardship Board is encouraged by the modest increases in giving to the Denominational Ministry Fund for 2015 and 2016 (See, Denominational Ministry Fund Statistics). The positive change in 2015 does not equate to a new trend. **Please purpose to give something, no matter how small your congregation, to the broader support of our denomination – missions, church planting, education, benefits, benevolence, etc.**

In addition to the DMF, the Board of Stewardship supports the special Easter and Thanksgiving Offerings collected annually in our churches. The Easter Offering gives additional financial support to the Stewardship Foundation, Bonclarken, Christian Education Ministries, Erskine College and World Witness. The Thanksgiving Offering does the same for Erskine Seminary, American Bible Society, Outreach North America and the Christmas Benevolent Fund.

These offerings are so very encouraging to the respective ministries and essential to the ongoing work of the greater Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. **The Board encourages every minister and treasurer to be sure their congregations have the opportunity to participate in these collections.**

Impact of Reduced Denominational Ministry Giving:

In 2015, the Board of Stewardship asked that to provide a greater understanding of the continued decline in denominational funding, agencies evaluate and report to the Board of Stewardship by the end of 2015 the impact of a 10% reduction in 2016 allocations. For some agencies it was easier to provide specifics, whereas for some of the larger agencies, it was more of the impact to their overall budget. In many cases an additional 10% reduction will further reduce staffing and impact the ministries performed.

The Board determined that the better way to see the impact of reduced Denominational Ministry giving was to look at the impact the agencies have endured over the last several years. The chart below shows the reduction the agencies have experienced since 2008 in dollars. 2008 was the high point of denominational ministry giving and since that time the funds allocated to the program agencies have declined about 25%. Clearly, reductions of this size have impacted the agency's ability to fulfill their mission. For example, at one time, World Witness was able to use Denominational Ministry funds to cover their administrative and basic support costs and let 100% of direct support received go to the missionaries. Now, World Witness has to charge an administrative fee to cover their base operating costs that is deducted from the direct support contributions. The decrease has directly impacted the ministries of the other agencies as well.

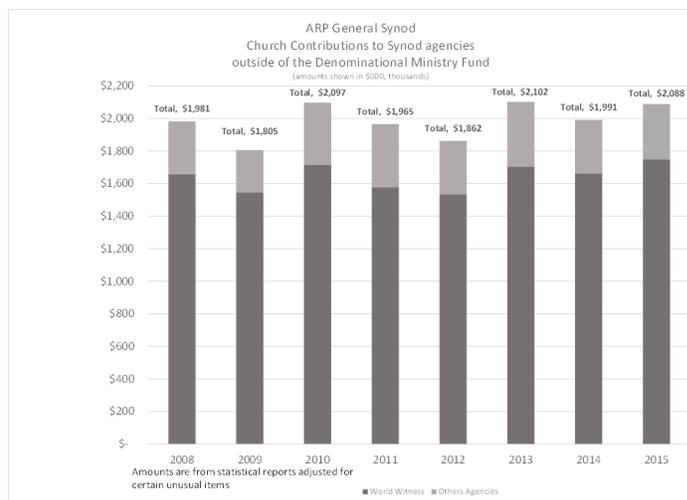
<u>Amount in 000's</u>	<u>Dollar Decrease From 2008</u>	<u>2016 Denom. Min. Allocation</u>
Bonclarken	\$43	\$109
CEM	\$23	\$199
Erskine ¹	\$149	\$407
ONA	\$169	\$547
World Witness	\$169	\$547

¹Adjusted for impact of move of chaplain to Executive Board (\$60k)

Response to 2015 Synod Requests

In 2015, Synod asked the Board of Stewardship to contact all congregations that do not contribute to the Denominational Ministry Fund; and inquire why they do not participate; and report these findings to the 2016 Synod. Due to some transitions this year the Board was not able to accomplish this item and recommends an extension for a year to complete this item.

Also in 2015, the General Synod instructed the Board of Stewardship to consider including a supplemental report on congregational giving to Synod agencies and causes outside of the Denominational Ministry Fund and to report their decision to the 2016 Synod. There was some concern that the Denominational Ministry fund giving was decreasing because churches were giving directly to the agencies. While that may have occurred on a small scale, since 2008, on average, the giving directly to agencies has been flat as shown on the chart below:



Note: Information in chart above is from statistical report adjusted for certain unusual items.

Duty 5. prepare for presentation at the annual meeting of the General Synod a recommended allocation of Synod's anticipated unrestricted income.

The recommended allocations of Denominational Ministry funds are presented separately as "Allocations for Synod's Unrestricted Income" and will be considered at the first business session during the General Synod meeting (See Denominational Ministries Allocations). Note: The Board of Stewardship authorized up to \$30K of reserve for the purchase of furniture for the new facility, if needed.

Duty 6. prepare and maintain denominational budget preparation guidelines.

Every agency, board, and committee of the ARPC prepares and approves their respective budgets. The Office of Central Services then coordinates, compiles, and completes the budgetary process for approval by the Board and presentation to Synod.

Duty 7. receive and maintain a fund or funds of real and personal property and to use, make donations of, and apply the whole or any part of the income therefrom and the principal exclusively for religious, charitable, literary, scientific and educational purposes and for no other purpose;

Duty 8. initiate and carry out programs in support of the religious, charitable, missionary, and educational programs of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, or its successor;

Duty 9. solicit and accept by gift, grant, devise, bequest, purchase or otherwise and to hold for investment or reinvestment and to sell, donate, lend or otherwise dispose of money, real estate, personal property, stocks, bonds, or other securities or any other kind of property;

Duties 7, 8, and 9 pertain to the functions of the ARP Foundation.

The ARP Foundation holds the non-retirement financial assets of the ARPC. ARP Foundation is authorized to receive donations, including, but not limited to, wills/bequests, Charitable Remainder Trusts, Donor Advised Funds, Church Advised Funds, gifts of real property, and special endowments.

Duty 10. refrain from engaging, either directly or indirectly, in any activity that would

(1) prevent it from obtaining exemption from federal income taxation as a corporation described in section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or

(2) cause it to lose such exempt status;

Under the oversight of the Executive Board of Synod, the Office of Central Services serves as an accounting and finance resource for all agencies of the denomination, particularly Synod's committees, Board of Benefits, William H. Dunlap Board of Directors, Board of Stewardship, *The ARP*, Christian Education Ministries, and Outreach North America. Procedures are in place to insure compliance as a non-profit and 501(c)(3) religious organization.

Duty 11. invest endowment-type funds and other long term investments of the General Synod and of those agencies of Synod which commit funds to the Foundation, in accordance with guidelines approved by the General Synod.

The Board of Stewardship, in conjunction with Synod's Investment Committee, sets investment allocations for endowment-type funds belonging to General Synod and funds given to the Foundation. General Synod's Investment Committee monitors the investment programs and has been given the authority by the board to make decisions on investment managers.

Duty 12. serve as the Audit Committee for the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church:

(1) To receive and review audit reports and management letters for all entities audited. (Synod 2007)

(2) To select the audit firm to recommend for use by all agencies (2006)

The Board has engaged the independent auditing firm Scott & Company, Columbia, SC, for the December 31, 2015 audit which includes the books of the Treasurer of Synod, the ARP Foundation's custodial funds, the ARP Foundation's gift annuity funds, and Outreach North America's revolving loan fund. The audit is available online at www.arpchurch.org.

Administrative Information

Officers for July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

Paul Matthews, Chairman

P. J McClung, Vice Chairman

Chuck Wilson, Secretary

Roger N. Wiles, Administrative Officer

Recommendations:

1. That General Synod pause for prayer, thanking God for His provision for our denomination and asking that all current and future ministry needs be met. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
2. That the proposed 2017 budget for the Board of Stewardship be approved (See, 2017 Board of Stewardship Budget). **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
3. That the Easter and Thanksgiving offerings be continued for Fall 2016 and Spring 2017. **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
4. That Synod 2016 allow an extension of one year for Board of Stewardship to complete the 2015 Synod recommendation (to contact all congregations that do not contribute to the Denominational Ministry Fund; and inquire why they do not participate; and report these findings.) **The Moderator's Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jim McLurkin, Chairman

In addition, your committee recommends:

5. That Synod commend the Board of Stewardship for their faithful labors. **Synod ADOPTED.**

DENOMINATIONAL MINISTRY FUND STATISTICS
(Data compiled APRIL 2016)

The figures for 2016, as compared to the previous year, are based on information recorded in Statistical Reports from individual congregations. Total churches = 279.

Category	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Churches meeting goal of 20%	5	2	2	1	5
Churches giving 10% - 19%	31	28	30	37	32
Giving percentage not determined	72	57	77	0	2
Remaining at same percentage	130	113	113	184	175
Increased percentage level	64	79	73	74	71
Increased by at least 1%	43	57	50	48	45
Decreased percentage level	34	104	124	101	106
Decreased giving but at 10% or above	8	39	17	19	19
Submitted a report but did not pledge support	51	56	41		65
Churches who have not submitted reports as of April 25, 2016	54	57	77	33	39

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

	Synod Approved	2017 Proposed
Revenue		
General Synod Allocation-Stewardship	\$ 13,034	\$ 13,034
Additional Allocation over Budget	2,146	6,066
General Synod Allocation-Foundation	87,017	83,013
Special Offering	7,000	6,800
Transfers for Ministry	29,983	37,705
Endowment Transfers for Dir of GP	29,983	37,705
Total Revenue	\$ 169,163	\$ 184,323
Expenses		
Total Director of Gift Planning Expenses	\$ 117,000	\$ 120,718
Board Travel & Expenses	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Administrative Support	5,000	5,000
Promotional	2,400	2,400
General Synod Audit & Legal	7,980	11,000
Ministry Contribution to DM Fund	29,983	37,705
General Office	800	1,500
Total Expenses	\$ 169,163	\$ 184,323
Net Income (Loss)	\$ -	\$ -
Beginning Fund Reserve	\$ -	\$ -
Ending Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -

Prayer was offered in thanksgiving for all God's blessings on the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The report of the **Board of Benefits** was presented.

BOARD OF BENEFITS

The Board of Benefits guides and supervises the benefit programs of the ARPC. The Board endeavors to provide opportunities for security for eligible individuals and families primarily in the areas of benevolence, insurance, and retirement.¹

Benevolence

The ministry of benevolence serves our retired ministers, their widows, families of ARPC ministers who died while serving a congregation, and retired ARPC agency employees with financial support that encourages and strengthens these faithful servants of God that they are not forgotten by the church they loved and served.

The Christmas Benevolent Fund is the source of money for this ministry of mercy. Funded by our annual Thanksgiving Offering, income from the J. C. Lott Endowment, the Helen W. Carson Fund, interest on the Benevolent Fund Endowment, and by special gifts and offerings, a full 100% of the money collected is distributed annually to qualified recipients.² The Christmas distribution was as follows:

Widows Benevolent Fund	\$ 6,264
Need-Based Assistance	\$21,715
Christmas Gifts	\$16,724
Total Distribution	\$44,703

The Board of Benefits wishes to thank all who contributed to the Benevolent Fund last year making it possible to assist those who have faithfully served our denomination. We prayerfully hope that you will continue your generous contributions to the Fund. During the meeting of Synod, please see some of the thank you notes from the beneficiaries on the Board of Benefits table in the Patrick Room of the Lodge.

Insurance

Medical Plan

Synod's medical insurance is self-funded. Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina serves as Third Party Administrator of the plan. While the cost of coverage is high, the benefits are comparable to "platinum" plans available through the federal insurance exchanges.

As a self-funded church plan, we are exempt from most of the expensive and burdensome regulations of the Affordable Care Act. We are required, however, to give all eligible employees the opportunity to enroll in the insurance program and to file forms 1094C and 1095C with the federal government to verify compliance.

Eligible employees include all full-time ministers working at least 30 hours per week serving under terms of a Call, employees of local churches, General Synod agency employees, qualified retired employees, and enrolled ARPC seminary students under the care of a presbytery.

Medical and dental coverage is conditional on employee enrollment within the first 31 days of eligibility. Late enrollment is not allowed under the plan and will result in the denial of benefits. Please contact the Benefit Assistant in Central Services for specific eligibility and enrollment policies.³

The Board and Central Services work closely with Synod's benefits consultant, NFP Corporate Benefits, Inc., to monitor changes in law to keep churches and agencies in compliance with all laws, regulations, and policies. The Board has authorized NFP Corporate Benefits to review our plan and recommend plan design changes. In addition, our benefit consultant seeks out potential providers and competitive bids on an annual basis in an effort to control the cost of premiums.

General Synod's medical and dental coverage terminates at retirement for those who qualify at the age of Medicare eligibility. Persons retiring prior to attaining Medicare eligibility may continue coverage pursuant to certain requirements outlined in the Plan.

Dental Plan

Synod's dental program is also a self-insured plan with Meritain serving as the Third Party Administrator for claims.

Life, Accidental Death & Dismemberment, and Long Term Disability

These three benefits are *fully insured* and *mandatory* for all full-time employees. The premium is borne by the employing church or agency and is not the responsibility of the employee. This premium is mandatory even in the event the employee waives medical and/or dental coverage. There are no exceptions.

HIPAA Privacy

As a self-insured plan, the primary privacy focus is on the protection of Personal Health Information. Plan participants are given a Privacy Notice and Plan Document. Security policies and procedures are in place, including Business Associate Agreements that conform to HIPAA requirements.

Termination of Insurance Benefits

Pursuant to policy adopted by the Board of Benefits, when insurance premiums of an employee are 60 days in arrears, Central Services will write to the appropriate church or agency stating that the account is delinquent giving that church or agency 120 days from the date of the notice to bring the account current. *If the account balance is not a zero (0) within the 120 days, insurance coverage for the employee of the church or agency will be terminated.* The employee's insurance coverage may *only* be reinstated secondary to a qualifying event as stated in the insurance plan plus payments of all past due premiums

Insurance Premiums, Fees, and Reserve Balance⁴

	2013	2014	2015
Total Ins. Premiums Collected	\$4,171,698	\$4,351,325	\$4,259,288
Fees Paid to Third Party			
Administrators ⁵	\$ 756,817	\$ 759,932	\$1,077,650
Paid Insurance Benefit Claims ⁶	\$3,733,293	\$3,076,107	\$3,447,230
Administrative Costs ⁷	\$ 71,862	\$ 73,427	\$ 83,191
Net Investment (gain)/loss	<u>\$ (191,667)</u>	<u>\$ (6,355)</u>	<u>\$ (1,144)</u>
Net Change	\$ (198,607)	\$ 448,214	\$ (347,639)
Balance of Claim Reserve -	\$1,969,420	\$2,417,635	\$2,069,996

Retirement

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Plan (Plan) is a qualified, non-contributory, defined benefit plan. The Board of Benefits Retirement Committee serves as Administrator for the plan. Copies of the Plan are available online under the Central Services tab at www.arpchurch.org.

An eligible employee defined by the Plan is one who serves at least 20 hours per week as an ordained pastor serving a congregation pursuant to a call within the geographical boundaries of the United States,

a career missionary appointed by World Witness, or a supervising employee of a presbytery or Synod agency.

The Board of Benefits monitors the financial health of the Retirement Plan Trust by adjusting assumptions used in its annual actuarial valuations to changes in the demographics of the plan participants, investment outlook, and refinement to actuarial methods used to determine the value of assets and cost. Stanley, Hunt, Dupree, & Rhine Benefit Consultants (SHDR) of Greensboro, North Carolina is the Board's actuary, and provides advice and prepares the valuation. The Board also works closely with Synod's Investment Committee concerning portfolio performance and rates of return on investments. The ARP Retirement Plan Trust portfolio is managed by the Investment Committee with SunTrust Bank of Atlanta serving as Trustee and Custodian of the Plan assets with advisement from The Corpening Group of Winston Salem (subsidiary of Deutsche Bank Alex.Brown). The Chairman of the Board of Benefits' Retirement Committee serves as an advisory member of the Investment Committee.

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Actuarial Value of				
Assets	\$45,107,000	\$46,274,000	\$49,808,000	\$52,291,000
Actual Liability	\$53,213,000	\$52,594,000	\$54,632,000	\$57,393,000
Unfunded Actuarial				
Liability	(\$8,106,000)	(\$6,320,000)	(\$4,824,000)	(\$5,102,000)
Percentage Funded	84.77%	87.98%	91.2%	91.1%

The *Form of Government* requires a Call to have provisions for the church to make contributions at the current 12% of salary to the General Synod in support of the ARP Retirement Plan. Contributions to the Plan are not voluntary.

Suspension of Retirement Benefits

Pursuant to policy adopted by the Board of Benefits, when retirement contributions on behalf of an employee are 60 days in arrears, Central Services will write to the appropriate church or agency stating that the account is delinquent giving that church or agency 120 days from the date of the notice to bring the account current. *If the account balance is not a zero (0) within the 120 days, retirement accrual for the employee of the church or agency will be suspended.* The employee may **only** be reinstated with the payment of all past due contributions plus interest based upon the discount rate that would have accrued during the suspension.

MiscellaneousFinancial Audit

The independent certified public accounting firm of Scott & Company of Columbia, South Carolina, has been engaged by the Board of Benefits and the Board of Stewardship to conduct a formal audit of the Plan which is available at the Central Services office in Greenville. All financial activities of the Board of Benefits are included in the General Synod audit.

Role of Central Services

Central Services is responsible for the administration of benevolence, insurance and retirement benefits for designated eligible employees. Central Services administers accounting functions for the Board of Benefits and is the vehicle by which gifts for benevolent purposes, insurance premiums, and retirement contributions are received, recorded, and disbursed. Central Services provides each church with a detailed invoice for insurance premiums and Plan contributions.

Officers for 2016-2017

Chairman: John (Jack) Hill

Vice-Chairman: Earl Linderman

Secretary: Tom Watson

Treasurer: Guy H. (Chip) Smith, Treasurer of Synod

Administrative Officer: Roger N. Wiles, Executive Director
of Central Services

Recommendations:

1. That Synod give thanks to God for his provision to fund the benevolence, insurance and retirement benefits referenced in this report. **The Moderator's Committee on Benefits recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
2. That the Christmas Benevolent Fund Offering continue to be taken during Thanksgiving and that the churches encourage the members of each congregation to support those in need who have served the Church so well. **The Moderator's Committee on Benefits recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
3. That presbyteries direct their congregations to enroll and pay premiums for all eligible employees to participate in the life, accidental death and dismemberment, and long term disability plans. **The**

Moderator's Committee on Benefits recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.

4. That presbyteries direct all their churches (except Canadian Presbytery) to offer General Synod medical and dental insurance coverage to all eligible employees in compliance with the Affordable Care Act. **The Moderator's Committee on Benefits recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
5. That Synod direct agencies to enroll and pay premiums for all eligible employees to participate in the life, accidental death and dismemberment, and long term disability plans. **The Moderator's Committee on Benefits recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
6. That Synod direct all agencies to offer General Synod medical and dental insurance coverage to all eligible employees in compliance with the Affordable Care Act. **The Moderator's Committee on Benefits recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
7. That the proposed budget for 2017 be approved. **The Moderator's Committee on Benefits recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
8. That all other actions of the Board of Benefits as reported herein be affirmed. **The Moderator's Committee on Benefits recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

John (Jack) Hill, Chairman

BOARD OF BENEFITS

	2016 Proposed	2017 Proposed
Revenues		
Unrestricted for Operations		
General Synod Allocation	6,500	6,500
Total Unrestricted	6,500	6,500
Designated Estimates for Benevolence		
Benevolent Fund Special Offering	35,000	48,900
Christmas Benevolence		1,200
J. C. Lott Trust	3,700	4,400
Total Benevolent	38,700	54,500
Group Insurance Resources		
Group Insurance Premiums	4,429,166	5,017,292
Group Insurance Interest	25	100
Interest on Claim Reserve-ACI Fund	40,000	38,100
Total Group Insurance	4,469,191	5,055,492
Retirement Plan Resources		
Ola B. Hunter Trust for Retirement	3,800	3,800
ARP Retirement Plan	1,592,000	1,772,400
Total Retirement Plan	1,595,800	1,776,200
Total Revenues	\$ 6,110,191	\$ 6,892,692
Expenses		
Board and General		
Board Travel & Meeting	5,000	5,000
Office and Miscellaneous	1,500	1,500
Total Board and General	6,500	6,500
Benevolence		
Benevolence	38,700	54,500
Group Insurance		
Group Insurance Premiums, Claims, Reserve	4,371,000	4,957,000
Group Insurance Administrative Support	83,191	89,992
Fees-A&R Claim Reserve-ACI Fund	15,000	8,500
Total Group Insurance	4,469,191	5,055,492
ARP Retirement Plan		
Audit	8,000	8,000
Actuarial Fees	18,000	10,000
Legal	5,000	5,000
Administrative Support	83,191	89,992
Miscellaneous Expenses	1,300	1,300
Transfer to Trustee	1,480,309	1,661,908
Total ARP Retirement Plan	1,595,800	1,776,200
Total Expenses	\$ 6,110,191	\$ 6,892,692
Net Income (Loss)	\$ -	\$ -

ENDNOTES:

¹See, 2013 Manual of Authorities and Duties, p. 27.

²See, 2015 Minutes of General Synod, Board of Benefits, p. 103.

³See, 2015 Minutes of General Synod, Board of Benefits, p. 106.

⁴Includes medical, dental, life, long-term disability, and accidental death and dismemberment.

⁵Blue Cross Blue Shield (Medical), Meritain (Dental), Flores (Cobra) etc.

⁶Includes medical, dental, life, long-term disability, and accidental death and dismemberment.

⁷Paid to Central Services

A motion was presented, debated and carried:

That the Board of Benefits will notify the appropriate presbytery of notices sent to churches whose retirement contributions are in arrears.

The report of the **Board of Bonclarken** was presented.

BONCLARKEN

Dear Brothers in Christ:

2016 marks Bonclarken's 95th year of service to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Bonclarken continues to hold a special place in the hearts of ARPs and is honored to serve Christ through this conference center ministry.

Our mission "to provide and promote a Christian environment for inspiration and renewal" guides the decisions made by the board. The purpose of this report is to update Synod on the activities of the Bonclarken Board since our last annual report to Synod, to share the ministry impact of Bonclarken, and to make recommendations for consideration by Synod.

We continue to be amazed by the reports of our guest group leaders about young hearts making decisions for Christ and mature hearts being renewed in their faith. But how do we sustain this ministry and continue to be the place where the Holy Spirit works in such a mighty way? This question of sustainability has been at the forefront of our board discussions for over a year. A Strategic Plan Committee has been appointed and has been working during 2015-2016.

The board has employed Run River Enterprises, a consulting firm that works specifically with Christian conference centers, to help with

this strategic thinking. Three overarching pillars have emerged and will be the focus of our May 2016 board meeting: 1) Development of facilities and resources (includes plans for improving facilities and short and long-term fundraising); 2) Financial (in-depth analysis of our financial processes and future operational budgets); and 3) Marketing (to attract additional ARP guests and other Christian and educational groups).

We are excited about this planning process, and we continue to pray for the Lord's guidance in our efforts to sustain and enhance the ministry of Bonclarken for years to come.

The board thanks Synod and the many churches that support Bonclarken through their giving to the Denominational Ministry Fund.

We also thank the hundreds of volunteers who assist with our ministry each year. The Bonclarken staff is always encouraged by the willingness of our volunteers to help in such important ways.

The board of Bonclarken is responsible for the overall management of the Conference Center, which includes all properties owned. In the exercise of this responsibility, the board implements the five duties as reflected in the *Manual of Authorities and Duties*.

These duties are:

Duty #1:

"To be responsible for carrying out the PURPOSE of Bonclarken: 'To serve God through the ministry of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod by providing for the denomination opportunities for Christian worship, education, recreation, and fellowship; by assuring a wholesome atmosphere for Christian development; and by making facilities available to the agencies and institutions of Synod, its presbyteries, and local congregations to fulfill their missions and goals.' In the interest of oneness with God, the facilities may be shared with other Christian and educational groups when scheduling permits."

Response to this duty:

Providing *opportunities for Christian worship, education, recreation, and fellowship* is the primary mission of Bonclarken. The board reviews plans from the administration for keeping this mission foremost in our efforts.

Each Monday morning, Bonclarken President Chip Sherer sends an email to our board (and other individuals) asking for prayer for two things: that our guests will be receptive to the call of the Holy Spirit and that the staff's work will glorify Christ. *Christian development* is fostered when guests are open to the call of the Holy Spirit, and the Bonclarken staff works diligently to *assure a wholesome atmosphere* for this development.

Bonclarken is open year-round, thereby *making facilities available to the agencies and institutions of Synod, its presbyteries, and local congregations to fulfill their missions and goals.* In 2015, Bonclarken hosted numerous ARP events, including General Synod, Family Bible Conference, Women's Ministries, Horizon, Quest, Music Conference, Camp Bonclarken, Camp Joy, Music Drama Camp, various boards of Synod, presbytery youth retreats and individual ARP church retreats.

In the interest of oneness with God, the facilities may be shared with other Christian and educational groups when scheduling permits. Bonclarken hosted numerous events for other Christian and educational groups in 2015.

Duty #2:

"To elect officers and employ and supervise the president of Bonclarken, who in turn will employ and supervise such persons as may be necessary for carrying on the work of Bonclarken in accordance with the policies established by the board."

Response to this duty:

The following officers were elected to serve in 2015-16: Bill Patrick, Chairman; Elise Horton, Vice Chairman; David Brunt, Secretary; John Moore, Treasurer. Committee Chairs: Jim Ashburn, Administration Committee; Marshall Welch, Buildings and Grounds Committee; Calvin Draffin, Promotion and Services Committee.

The board employs and supervises Joseph (Chip) Sherer as President of Bonclarken. The board entrusts Mr. Sherer with the duty of carrying out the policies of the board and managing the day-to-day operations of the Center.

Duty #3:

"To make such rules and regulations for its own government as may be consistent with the Constitution of Bonclarken Conference Center and the policies of Synod."

Response to this duty:

The board regularly reviews its bylaws and board policies as to current applicability and makes revisions when deemed necessary.

Duty #4:

"To manage, sell, or lease any of the property under its control."

Response to this duty:

The board continues to ensure that all property owned by Bonclarken is appropriately managed and took the following significant actions from April 2015 through March 2016:

Actions taken at and after the May 2015 board meeting.

Approved Administration's request to contract with Run River Enterprises for consulting work in the areas of financial analysis and development.

Actions taken at the October 2015 board meeting:

Approved acceptance of a gift of real estate (appraised value of \$140,000) contiguous to the heart of the conference center to fund a gift annuity for the donor. The board approved funding the gift annuity with \$140,000 from our Property Acquisition Fund. Also approved \$10,000 from the Property Acquisition Fund for repairs to the donated home.

Approved Carl Shaw, CPA, to perform a financial review of our 2015 finances.

Noted the plans of the Investment Committee to transfer, for diversification purposes, \$500,000 of our endowment funds from Dividend Assets Capital to a Vanguard Balanced Index Fund.

Actions taken at the January 2016 board meeting:

Approved the 2016 Operating Budget.

Approved the 2016 Endowment Income Budget.

Approved the following policy for the use of Bonclarken Campground: The Bonclarken Campground is designed for use by guests attending a conference/retreat. Bonclarken is hosting yet wanting to stay in their own RV/Camper. We welcome guests to use the Campground for this purpose. Should a request be received from an individual interested in staying in the Campground but not planning to attend a conference/retreat, the following will need to be met: a) is a member of an ARP church, or; b) is a guest of a Bonclarken property owner (property owner must make request), or; c) has approval by the President. During our four summer weeks of large youth conferences, use of the Campground will be very limited and at the discretion of the President.

Approved the following policy for use of Guest Rooms by those not attending a conference/retreat: Should a request be received from an individual interested in staying in our guest housing but not planning to

attend a conference/retreat, the following will need to be met: a) is a member of an ARP church, or; b) is a guest of a Bonclarken property owner (property owner must make request), or; c) has approval by the President.

Duty #5:

“To make an annual report to the General Synod.”

Recommendations:

1. That the following technical corrections be made to the duties of the Bonclarken Board of Trustees as stated in the *Manual of Authorities and Duties*:

Duty #3 - “To make such rules and regulations for its own ~~gov~~ ~~ernment~~ ~~governance~~ as may be consistent with the ~~Constitution~~ ~~Charter and Bylaws~~ of Bonclarken Conference Center and the policies of Synod.”

Duty #4 - “To manage, sell, ~~or lease any of the property under~~ ~~its control~~ or purchase real property as determined appropriate by the Board to carry out the mission of Bonclarken.”

The Moderator’s Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.

2. That the meeting of General Synod for 2018 be held at Bonclarken beginning Tuesday, June 5, 2018. (*The meeting of General Synod for 2017 was approved by the 2015 Synod to be held at Bonclarken beginning Tuesday, June 6, 2017.*) **The Moderator’s Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
3. That General Synod continue to support Bonclarken through the allocation of funds from the Denominational Ministry Fund and through the annual Easter offering. **The Moderator’s Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**
4. That General Synod encourage all presbyteries, boards, and churches to encourage and assist their members in attending the various camps/conferences/retreats hosted by Bonclarken during the year. **The Moderator’s Committee recommended approval. Synod ADOPTED.**

In addition, your committee recommends:

5. That Synod commend the board and staff of Bonclarken for their service to the ARP Church. **Synod ADOPTED.**

6. That a moment of prayer be observed during the Synod meeting for the staff and ministry of Bonclarken. **Synod ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

William B. Patrick, Chairman

BONCLARKEN CONFERENCE CENTER

	2016 Approved	2017 Proposed
Revenue		
Operating Revenue:		
Rooms	\$ 984,862	\$ 1,005,000
Meeting Room	19,000	20,000
Food Service	520,000	525,000
Service Fee	70,000	72,000
Programs	26,000	28,000
Camps	60,000	61,000
Gift Shop/Nibble Nook	32,000	32,000
Property Owners	40,000	40,000
Miscellaneous	31,000	31,000
Total Op. Revenue	\$ 1,782,862	\$ 1,814,000
Non-Operating Revenue:		
Synod's DMF	\$ 108,799	\$ 108,799
ARPWM	4,500	4,500
Mountain Club/Churches	220,000	220,000
Easter Offering	8,000	8,000
Other	27,608	27,608
Total Non-Op. Rev.	\$ 368,907	\$ 368,907
Total Revenue	\$ 2,151,769	\$ 2,182,907
Expenses		
Cost of Sales:		
Food - Revenue Meals	\$ 205,000	\$ 208,000
Food - Nonrevenue Meals	39,000	39,000
Gift Shop/Nibble Nook	14,000	15,000
Total Cost of Sales	\$ 258,000	\$ 262,000
Total Pysl/Benefits	\$ 1,253,630	\$ 1,276,407
Other Expenses:		
Administration	\$ 124,884	\$ 125,000
Camps	\$ 49,300	\$ 49,000
Financial fees	\$ 25,499	\$ 25,000
Food Service	17,700	18,000
Guest Services	56,378	57,000
Prop and Liab Insurance	67,776	68,500
Maintenance	109,000	110,000
Marketing	13,700	15,000
Recreation	19,625	20,000
Utilities	156,277	157,000
Total Other Expenses	\$ 640,139	\$ 644,500
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 2,151,769	\$ 2,182,907
Net Surplus (Loss)	\$ -	\$ (0)

Prayer for the staff and ministry of Bonclarken was offered.
The closing prayer was led by Joseph Rolison.

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, MORNING SESSION

Earl and Harriet Linderman led in the informal “coffee and Psalm Sing” on the Dining Room porch.

The devotional was led by Alex Campbell.

Vice-Moderator Malphrus took the chair to moderate the morning business.

Following discussion, the Synod sang songs from the new Psalter in place of the break.

A motion carried:

That in future meetings of General Synod, special attention be given to the singing of Psalms during times of worship.

The report on **Memorials** was presented.

MEMORIALS

CANADIAN PRESBYTERY MEMORIAL #1:

Preamble: The challenge to keep the ARPC on a path that embraces a meaningful confessional foundation needs to be kept in the foreground. In that regard, the Canadian Presbytery has reviewed the membership vows each prospective member is required to affirm. Of particular interest has been the old #5¹, and the new #6².

Whereas, we believe the intent of rewording the vows of membership was to safeguard the doctrinal integrity of the ARP Church, and to allow for a substantive organic union amongst her members, and

Whereas it is the considered view of Canadian Presbytery that, in seeking to strengthen our confessional commitment,

we have actually weakened it with the adoption of the new #6³, and

Whereas the church is well served by the opportunity to grapple with the meaning of ‘membership subscription’, and what being confessional looks like at the membership level.

Be it resolved that General Synod take appropriate action to reinstate the edited version of the old #5 in place of the new #6. The vow would thus read: Do you accept the doctrines and principles of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, so far as you understand them, as agreeable to and founded on the Word of God, and are you willing to submit to them as a member of this church?

Be it further resolved that General Synod emphatically remind each congregation’s session that it is a violation of the Form of Government to tamper with the meaning and intent of any of the vows, including the subscription vow; and that when allowance is made in chapter 4.5 A to use “the following or equivalent questions,” the word equivalent does not allow for any substantive changes.

¹ *Do you accept the doctrines and principles of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, so far as you understand them, as agreeable to and founded on the Word of God? (2008 FOG, p. 192)*

² *Do you accept that the doctrines and principles of the Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church are founded upon the Scriptures? (2014 FOG 4.5.A.6)*

³ *There are two reasons we believe that the old vow is superior: 1) because the old vow emphasizes that the doctrines and principles are not only founded on the Word, but also agreeable to it, and 2) because the old vow includes the phrase “as far as you understand them.”*

CANADIAN PRESBYTERY MEMORIAL #2:

Memorial to the General Synod from the Canadian Presbytery, ARPC
Regarding Church Planting Paradigms Implemented by Outreach
North America

Whereas the need for starting new churches is unquestioned, and the ARP (ONA) is proposing 10 paradigms for church planting. *
See Appendix 1

Therefore: Canadian Presbytery memorializes General Synod (ARPC) to task the Theological and Social Concerns Committee to study and to determine if each paradigm is grounded in the Word of God and agreeable to the ecclesiastical standards of the ARP Church; and further, to report their findings back to the stated 2017 Meeting of the ARP General Synod.

#	Church Plant Paradigm	Notes, Comments & Questions
1	parachute	Most difficult, but how else do you push into new territories? do exploratory work to determine interest? have several families relocate? two planters? use the one year residency?
2	multi-cultural	Challenge of the pastor being ordainable, group being willing to be Reformed and Presbyterian, and being ARP specifically. Expenses would be less because of facilities.
3	core group	Are the people really wanting to plant a church and stay?
4	church of opportunity	Would have to be evaluated against national strategy.
5	multi-site	Does it feed into cult of celebrity? knowing your shepherd? what about multi site with the live preacher? build in some safeguards to protect our ecclesiology?
6	area church plant	ONA financial support would depend on size of churches supporting this.
7	daughter church	ONA support would reflect the ability of the core group and the mother church to give.
8	surrogate model	The perpetual tie seems difficult for a planter and session and congregation.
9	host church	This seems like a parachute with a facility (which can be a bonus). Risk of losing the spot. Could also work the other way around, with a church welcoming a planter to reach a different demographic.
10	multiplying cell groups	Planter's role? Does the planter initiate, oversee, organize the groups? Who would shepherd each group? Elder?

FIRST PRESBYTERY MEMORIAL:

Whereas in the providence of God, First Presbytery has an opportunity to invest itself in Gospel ministry among college students in Charlotte, NC, at Queens University and has agreed to call a minister to develop a campus ministry focused on evangelism and discipleship, and

Whereas the ARP Synod has witnessed its sister denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America, invested in campus ministry for many years in the form of Reformed University Ministries (RUM), and

Whereas the PCA has experienced significant spiritual and numerical growth from such a faithful and Gospel ministry, and

Whereas RUM has agreed to partner with the ARP in a campus ministry at Queens University directly affiliated with RUM as is the RUF Erskine College, and

Whereas the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church has established a committee of Synod to oversee the faithful and successful Erskine College RUF ministry that has directly benefitted the spiritual and numerical growth of our own denomination, and

Whereas the Committee on Campus Ministry Oversight is best suited to coordinate and oversee existing and future campus ministries,

Therefore, be it resolved that First Presbytery memorializes Synod to direct its Committee on Campus Ministry Oversight to oversee a new Gospel work known as RUF Queens University at Queens University in Charlotte, NC.

The **Moderator's Committee on Memorials** recommended:

1. That Canadian Memorial recommendation #1 on membership vows be approved. **A motion carried** to refer Canadian Memorial #1 to the Committee on Theological and Social Concerns.
2. That Canadian Memorial recommendations #2 on membership vows be approved. **A motion carried** to refer Canadian Memorial #2 to the Committee on Theological and Social Concerns.
3. That Canadian Memorial recommendation #1 on ONA church planting paradigms be approved. **A motion carried** to amend the recommendation on church planting paradigms by referring the memorial to Outreach North America. **Synod ADOPTED.**

Prayer was offered.

4. That First Presbytery memorial on RUF Queens be approved. **Synod ADOPTED.**

In addition, your committee recommends:

5. That the Canadian Memorial on ONA church planting paradigms **NOT BE APPROVED**

Due to the adopted amendment in #3 above, this recommendation was ruled OUT OF ORDER.

The Moderator opened the floor for nominations for the office of Moderator of the General Synod 2017. Morrie Lawing nominated Lee Shelnutt. The nomination was seconded by Jamie Hunt. Mr. Shelnutt was elected to the office of Moderator-Elect by acclamation. Mr. Shelnutt addressed the Synod by accepting the nomination.

The Moderator opening the floor for nominations for the office of Vice Moderator of the General Synod 2017. Moderator-Elect Shelnutt nominated Bill McKay. Mr. McKay was elected by acclamation and addressed the Synod.

The report of the **Committee on Nominations** was presented and adopted.

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

The Committee on Nominations (CON) met on Wednesday, February 24, 2016, at the ARP Center in Greenville, SC and again by teleconference on April 21, 2016. During these meetings several items of business were addressed.

The following officers were elected for the Committee on Nominations 2016-2017:

Paul Patrick, Chairman
David Lauten, Vice Chairman
Dean Turbeville, Secretary

The 2017 stated meeting of the Committee on Nominations is

scheduled for Wednesday, February 22, 2017, at 9:00 A.M. at the ARP Center, Greenville, SC.

The deadline for submissions for nominations (excluding Erskine) will be Friday, January 6, 2017.

The committee appointed John "Ike" Hughes to serve on the 2016-2017 Sub-Committee on Nominations for Erskine (SCONE) for the slot previously held by David Lauten. Tim Phillips and Jac Coad will continue to serve on the SCONE.

The Committee on Nominations has agreed on the nominations for service listed below. At the conclusion of the committee's process, a motion to approve the slate of nominees passed. The committee presents the following nominees for service on boards, committees, the Ecclesiastical Commission on Judiciary Affairs, and as officers or representatives of the General Synod. The terms of service will begin July 1, 2016, and will expire June 30 of the year indicated. All nominees have indicated a willingness to serve if elected. The committee expresses appreciation for those who were nominated and are willing to serve.

Recommendations:

1. That those persons listed in this report be approved for service in the positions indicated. **Synod ADOPTED.**
2. That each presbytery consider appointing an alternate representative to Synod's Committee on Nominations in the event that the chairman of a presbytery's committee on nominations is not able to attend Synod's committee meeting. **Synod ADOPTED.**
3. That presbyteries consider making recommendations for service during their fall meetings. **Synod ADOPTED.**
4. That sessions consider making recommendations for service during their November and December meetings. **Synod ADOPTED.**
5. That recommendations for the Board of Erskine College and Seminary be made by Friday, October 14, 2016. **Synod ADOPTED.**
6. That those making Recommendations for Service to the Committee on Nominations (by mail or online) use the proper form and provide helpful information concerning qualifications for each person recommended. **Synod ADOPTED.**
7. That various boards, committees and commissions of Synod provide a clear and concise needs analysis and recommendations for service to the CON following their Fall stated meetings and that

they clearly communicate their ministry and needs to pastors, sessions and presbyteries through in-person presentations, video, or other social media in order to educate the larger connectional church regarding opportunities to serve. **Synod ADOPTED.**

8. That all persons resigning from Synod Boards and Agencies be reminded to submit their resignation request to the Principal Clerk of General Synod and the chairman of the board or committee they are resigning from. **Synod ADOPTED.**
9. That General Synod be mindful that nominees for Synod Officers presented in this report (Synod Principal Clerk, Synod Bill Clerk, Synod Treasurer and Synod Archivist) will be serving their second consecutive term and, if approved, will be ineligible to serve for another term. **Synod ADOPTED.**
10. That all presbyteries appoint an advisory member to the Board of World Witness. **Synod ADOPTED.**
11. That the General Synod authorize \$4,000.00 for committee expenses 2017. **Synod ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ike Hughes, Chairman

<i>Board/Committee/ Commission</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Nominee</i>
Benefits	2022	Riley McLane
Benefits	2022	
Benefits	PR-2019	Mike Avato
Bonclarken	2022	Dan Williams
Bonclarken	2022	James A. Cook
Bonclarken	2022	Brad Anderson
Bonclarken	2021	Paul Bell
CEM	2020	Benjamin Glaser
CEM	2020	Gail Fowler
CEM	2020	Randall S. Anderson
CEM	PR-2020	
CEM	PR-2017	Buzzy Elder

Dunlap	PR-2022	
Dunlap	PR-2022	
Dunlap	PR-2021	Mike Jones
Dunlap	PR-2021	Calvin Draffin
Dunlap	2022	Kristen Shoger
Erskine	2021	Jim Augustine
Erskine	2021	Chris Bethea
Erskine	2021	Clint Davis
Erskine	2021	Jamie Hunt
Erskine	2021	Philip Malphrus
Erskine	2019	Rex Casterline
Erskine	2017	Alan Broyles
Executive Board	2020	Donnie Bowker
Executive Board	2020	Fred Hartin
Executive Board	2017	Bobby Adams
ONA	2022	Wayne Frazier
ONA	PR-2022	Peter Kemeny
Stewardship	2019	Nathan Beard
Stewardship	2021	
Stewardship	2021	
Stewardship	2021	
Stewardship	2022	
Stewardship	PR-2022	Brian Howard
Stewardship	PR-2022	Michael Noel
Stewardship	PR-2022	Charles Wilson
World Witness	2017	Matt Joldersma
World Witness	2022	William Sutherland
World Witness	2022	Robby Woodard
World Witness	PR-2022	
World Witness	PR-2022	
World Witness	PR-2022	
Ecclesiastical	2020	Peter Lee
Ecclesiastical	2020	Craig Woods
Ecclesiastical	2020	Bob Illman
Ecclesiastical	Alternate	
Ecclesiastical	Alternate	

<i>Board/Committee/ Commission</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Nominee</i>
Campus Ministry Oversight	2021	Nathan Frazier
Inter-Church	2022	William Barron
Investment	2021	
Minister & His Work	2019	Mike Avato
Minister & His Work	2020	Matthew Harmon
Nominations	2020	
Theological & Social	2020	John Hoeprich
Theological & Social	2020	Stephen Jordan
Worship	2020	Charles Roberts
Worship	2020	
Worship	2020	
Worship	2017	
Synod Principal Clerk	2020	Ron Beard
Synod Bill Clerk	2020	Leland Beaudrot
Synod Treasurer	2020	Chip Smith
Synod Archivist	2020	Edith Brawley

A motion carried:

That the Synod permit the Committee on Nominations to fill current vacancies as qualified individuals are made known to them.

A motion carried:

That the *Manual of Authorities and Duties* be amended in the Section on Board of Trustees of Erskine College and Seminary membership as follows:

Membership: At-Large: Seventeen (17) members, at least three (3) of whom shall be Associate Reformed Presbyterian ministers.

The Moderator made remarks to the Synod.

A motion was made by Jim Coad to adjourn the meeting of Synod. **Motion carried.**

A motion carried that the Minutes of General Synod 2016 be adopted without reading, and that the final roll call be waived.

The Synod joined in the singing of the song of Christian Unity, Psalm 133.

Synod adjourned with a scriptural benediction by the Vice-Moderator.

Respectfully submitted:

Phil Williams, Moderator
Patrick Malphrus, Vice-Moderator
C.R. Beard, Principal Clerk
C.F. Edgar, Reading Clerk
Leland R. Beaudrot, Bill Clerk
J.D. Cook, Assistant Clerk
Andy Putnam, Parliamentarian

