



- 1. The Regional Synod of Mid-America Synod Assembly met for its annual session on April 5, 2022 at 10am Central Time via Zoom. Members present: (page 2)**
- 2. President Bob Wierenga began the meeting by declaring a quorum and with devotions based on Ecclesiastes 3:1-4. He then presented his president's state of religion report and opened with prayer.**
- 3. Minutes from the Annual Session and Special Session of 2021 were approved by Motion/Second/Carry (M/S/C) (page 3)**
- 4. The Executive Team/Regional Synod Executive/Financial Reports were given by Chad Schuitema and questions answered. (page 6)**
 - 1. Executive Team Member Election took place in breakout rooms of Zoom with each classis voting on their Executive Team member. The new Executive Team will be Chad De Jager (CHI), Chad Farrand (CdIN), Stu Swenson (ILA), Bill Reeher (IL), and Bob Wierenga (WI).**
 - 2. Chad De Jager was nominated for president and Chad Farrand was nominated for Vice President by M/S/C.**
- 5. A written report from Manitoqua Ministries was presented for information. (page 11)**
- 6. A written report from our regional representative on the General Synod Council was presented for information. (page 13)**
- 7. The Facilitator for Multi-Ethnic Church Partnerships Report was given by Wayne Van Regenmorter and questions answered. (page 15)**
- 8. There was a motion to cast a joint ballot for Chad De Jager (President) and Chad Farrand (Vice President). M/S/C. Past President Bob Wierenga was thanked for his time as president of the RSMA.**
- 9. There was a motion to adjourn following comments and closing prayer by new president Chad De Jager. M/S/C.**

Respectfully Submitted

Rev. Chad R. Schuitema

Members Present via Zoom:

Chicago Classis (3): Rich VanSwol (E-2022), Marge Vanderwagen (M-2023), Chad DeJager (M-2024). **Illiana Classis (3):** Don MacDonald (M-2022), Stu Swenson (E-2023), Corey Buchanan (E-2024). **Illinois Classis (3):** Chelsea Lampen (M-2022), Scott Stephan (M-2023), Mike Senneff (E-2024). **Classis de las Naciones (3):** Chad Farrand (M-2024), Lionel Rogers (E-2025); Fredy Aviles (E-2023) was absent. **Wisconsin Classis (3):** Bill TeWinkle (M-2022), Jon Garbison (M-2023), Bob Wierenga (E-2024). **Staff:** Chad Schuitema (Stated Clerk/Treasurer/Synod Executive) and Wayne Van Regenmorter (Facilitator for Multi-Ethnic Church Partnerships).



- 1. The Regional Synod of Mid-America's Synod Assembly met on April 20, 2021 at 10:00am Central Time both in person at Christ Community Church of Lemont, IL and on Zoom. Roll Call was done by sign-in and by Zoom log in (see [page 10](#)). A quorum was declared by President Bob Wierenga.**
- 2. President Wierenga opened the meeting with prayer and combined his devotions from John 14 with his president's report. In his president's report, President Wierenga made this statement with "fear and trepidation": If you are worrying and debating about staying in the RCA, if you cannot see the wonderful things happening in the RCA, then you are encouraged to move your ministry to another denomination. The president ended his time with Romans 5:4: "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."**
- 3. Minutes from the RSMA Annual Session 2020 were approved by motion, second, and carry (m/s/c) ([page 3](#))**
- 4. The Executive Team Report, Administrative and Ministry Leader Report, and Regional Synod Executive Report were combined and given together ([page 7](#))**
 - 1. Executive Team Member Election from within Classes will be done by email post-annual session due to logistics.**
 - 2. Chad De Jager is our nominee for vice-president. Chad was elected by m/s/c. He will finish out this one year unfulfilled vice-president term and begin his term as president at the close of our annual session 2022.**
 - 3. Financial Reports were given for information ([page 11](#))**
- 5. Laura Vroom, Executive Director of Manitoqua Ministries provided a written report ([page 13](#))**
- 6. Stephanie Doeschot, our regional synod representative to General Synod Council provided a written report ([page 15](#))**
- 7. All the churches who make up New Thing Classis have filed letters of intent to the leave the Reformed Church in America. Chad Schuitema offered a prayer of thanks for the ministry New Thing Classis has done in the RCA and a prayer of blessing as they leave. Their delegates were thanked for their service.**

8. Facilitator for Multi-Ethnic Church Partnerships Report (page 16)

- 1. Wayne Van Regenmorter highlighted new opportunities and Chad Farrand, Executive Leader for Classis de las Naciones presented a powerpoint showing the incredible kingdom growth happening as the result of the Holy Spirit moving through Classis de las Naciones. Churches from all across the world are connecting with the classis and new Reformed Church denominations are being dreamed of in each country they are connecting with. The RCA is in a new age where new mental models are being established for this kind of growth. Chad Schuitema offered prayer for Classis de las Naciones and all the churches in our region.**

- 9. A motion to adjourn was seconded and carried and President Wierenga closed the session in prayer.**

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Chad R. Schuitema, clerk



1. President Bob Wierenga led with devotions on trusting God from Proverbs 3 and opened in prayer. Present: Marge Vanderwagen, Rich Van Swol, Mike Sennef, Scott Stephan, Chelsea Lampen, Bob Wierenga, Jon Garbison, Jason DeVries, Don Mac Donald, Stu Swenson, and Chad Farrand. Excused were Bill TeWinkel, David Venard, and Chad De Jager. Staff present: Chad Schuitema and Wayne Van Regenmorter. A quorum was declared.

2. President Wierenga and members of the Executive Team gave background information on the New Thing Classis Disbanding

1. According to the Executive Team of New Thing Classis, all churches in New Thing Classis have completed the process to leave the Reformed Church in America. Their final classis meeting was July 8, 2021. They plan to cease operations on August 31, 2021.
2. Dissolution Resolutions from the Executive Team were accepted by New Thing Classis.
3. Dissolution Resolutions from the RSMA Assembly should be approved to include with the minutes of the disbanding.
 1. Per email exchange with RCA CFO Jillisa Tietsma, regional synods are not responsible for unpaid assessments by a classis.
 2. New Thing Classis will pay assessments to the RCA General Synod through 2021.
 3. New Thing Classis states they will also continue to support RCA missionaries.
 4. New Thing Classis has agreed to pay RSMA assessments through 2022.
4. **Motion made, seconded, and carried:** The Regional Synod of Mid-America, in accordance with its responsibilities set forth in the Book of Church Order (BCO 1.III.2. Sec. 3), effective August 31, 2021, disbands New Thing Classis, which includes the churches Calvary Reformed Church, Orland Park, Illinois; Faith Reformed Church, Dyer Indiana; Living Springs Community Church, Glenwood, Illinois, First Church, DeMotte, Indiana, and The Cornerstone Church, Bourbonnais, Illinois; along with adopting the following resolutions:
 1. Resolutions to New Thing Classis from the Regional Synod of Mid-America Assembly **(page 2)**

3. Motion to adjourn following prayer M/S/C.

4. President Wierenga closed in prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Chad R. Schuitema, clerk

Executive Team/Regional Synod Executive Report to the 2022 Regional Synod Annual Assembly

Chad Schuitema
Regional Synod of Mid-America Executive

Much has changed in the Reformed Church in America over the last six months, including our regional synod. One thing that hasn't changed is the solid leadership we have on our Executive Team. The Executive Team is currently comprised of Bob Wierenga (President), Chad DeJager (Vice-President), Chad Farrand (At-Large), Scott Stephan (At-Large), Stu Swenson (At-Large), Wayne Van Regenmorter (ex officio member, Facilitator for Multi-Ethnic Church Partnerships), and Chad Schuitema (Stated Clerk/Treasurer/Regional Synod Executive). Per our bylaws, this team is responsible to carry out the will of the Synod Assembly and to act on behalf of the Synod Assembly between sessions. The Executive Team annually evaluates the staff of the RSMA, determines budget and oversees business and ministry. The Executive Team meets regularly through video communication methods.

While the Executive Team hasn't changed, our staffing structure has. Wayne Van Regenmorter began 2021 in his new role as the Facilitator for Multi-Ethnic Church Partnerships and has been focusing mainly on Classis de las Naciones but has been utilized by our other classes who are feeling called to multi-ethnic partnerships. As I'm sure you'll see in his report, much new ground has been plowed by Wayne as the RCA is beginning to do things multi-ethnically that it has never done before and doesn't have current systems and structures with which to partner with these churches. Chad Schuitema filled the role of Synod Executive and continued in the roles of clerk and treasurer beginning in 2021 and continues in those roles into 2022, but they have been reduced to part-time with a focus on providing the essentials of our regional synod.

In 2021 we had a balanced budget even with a lowered assessment. Our spending was at 84.3% of our budget and our income including 2022 assessments paid upon leaving the RCA by all churches of the former New Thing Classis. This income, combined with the reduced staffing allowed us to lower our assessment to \$5 per confessing member. This is a significant savings to our churches and running this deficit budget will use up some of our reserves as we wait in limbo to see the recommendations of the restructuring team that was formed following General Synod 2021. While our regional synod is quite active and provides many resources compare to some other regional synods across the denomination, it seems quite certain the that RCA will function in the future without this intermediate level adjudicatory.

We work with the RCA Commission on Nominations to fill vacancies on denominational commissions and boards. The CoN needed an elder for our regional synod representative to

General Synod Council and we recommended Neale Roller from Wisconsin Classis who has served both as an Elder and Minister of Word and Sacrament within the RCA.

The Salary Committee of the RSMA is moderated by the Chad Schuitema. This committee is:

Chicago Classis:

Rich Van Swol - 2024 (2nd)
Coleen Winterfeld - 2022 (2nd)

Illiana Classis:

Gary Summers - 2023 (2nd)
Roger DeGraff - 2022 (1st)

Wisconsin Classis:

Anne Daane - 2024 (2nd)
Vacant - 2025 (1st)

Illinois Classis:

Rich Huizenga - 2024 (2nd)
Vacant - 2025 (1st)

Classis de las Naciones

Lionel Rogers - 2022 (1st)
Paul Harold - 2023 (1st)

The action taken by the Salary Committee has been previously published and is available on our website: www.rsmam.org. These guidelines are submitted to each classis as recommended salary guidelines and each classis tends to adopt them. These guidelines are also translated into Spanish.

I am a member of the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team (CPAT) for the RCA and help classes with their commissioned pastor processes. This year Chad Farrand attended a Zoom meeting of this team to share how our region is engaging Commissioned Pastors.

I continue to serve as our representative on the Council of Synod Executives (COSE) and have met multiple times with leaders from other regional synods and the RCA as we process issues in the RCA and work towards fruitful ministry in all of our regions. We are also scheduled to meet with General Secretary Eddy Aleman prior to General Synod to discuss restructuring.

I continue to maintain all communications to and from the regional synod including newsletters and our website. I recruit for denominational commissions and lead the teams of our regional synod. I maintain all financial records to ensure the financial health of the regional synod doing all bookkeeping. I also act as a connector within our region: connecting pastors and churches to resources they need and being a resources as I am able.

I am thankful for the opportunities to resource classes, be a clerk to the classis clerks and assist them, lead ministries in our region, and work with our executive team to develop fruitful ministries in the region. My work may look a little differently and you may not get my on my phone as quickly, but we believe that we can continue to provide a high level of help and resourcing for our classes and pastors even with these changes in staffing.

– Chad Schuitema, Regional Synod Executive

Elections

Per our bylaws, each classis elects from among its Regional Synod of Mid-America Synod Assembly members (delegates) a representative for the RSMA Executive Team. Currently those Executive Team members are Chicago: Chad DeJager, Illiana: Stu Swenson, Illinois: Scott Stephan, Naciones: Chad Farrand, Wisconsin: Bob Wierenga. We will take time at our annual session for each classis to appoint a member to our Executive Team.

Bob Wierenga has fulfilled the term of president with honor and high calling. His term is ending at the close of our annual session. Chad DeJager has served as vice president this last year and interim vice president much of the previous year. We will be holding a vote during the Annual Session and Chad DeJager will be our candidate for president. Chad Farrand has agreed to be our candidate for vice president.

2021 RSMA Budget Status

As of 12/31/21 (100% through year)

General Fund Income	Budget	Actual
Assessment Income	\$256,756.50	\$347,919.06
Interest Income	\$25.00	\$32.64
TOTAL	\$256,781.50	\$347,951.70

Fund Totals	01/01/2021	12/31/21
RCA-CGF 18mo Certificate #1	\$115,847.87	\$0.00
RCA-CGF 18mo Certificate #2	\$115,847.87	\$0.00
RCA-CGF Demand Certificate	\$32,922.60	\$318,603.65
Providence Bank Checking	\$62,438.20	\$90,940.87
TOTAL	\$327,056.54	\$409,544.52

DISBURSEMENTS	BUDGET	CURRENT	PERCENTAGE
Synod Executive			
Services	\$139,676	\$129,548	92.7%
Continuing Education	\$1,236	\$1,112	90.0%
Travel	\$12,000	\$5,001	41.7%
FMECP			
Services	\$23,000	\$21,083	91.7%
Travel	\$8,000	\$8,994	112.4%
Administration Expenses			
Executive Team	\$3,000	\$0	0.0%
OJB	\$500	\$0	0.0%
Synod Annual Session	\$3,500	\$422	12.1%
Office Expenses			
Insurance	\$2,500	\$2,727	109.1%
Financial Review	\$900	\$930	103.3%
Utilities	\$4,700	\$4,354	92.6%
Office Supplies	\$1,000	\$1,012	101.2%
Office Equipment	\$2,000	\$1,680	84.0%
Miscellaneous	\$2,000	\$1,693	84.6%
Ministry Expenses			
Manitoba Contribution	\$20,000	\$20,100	100.5%
Leadership Equipping	\$5,000	\$2,456	49.1%
Churches Learning Change	\$6,000	\$401	6.7%
STM	\$3,000	\$0	0.0%
Miscellaneous Ministry	\$1,000	\$91	9.1%
Total Expenses	\$239,012.00	\$201,604	84.3%

DISBURSEMENTS	2020	2021	2022	NOTES
RSMA Executive				
Salary + Housing	\$82,388	\$90,000	\$27,000	
Health Insurance	\$32,795	\$32,891	\$1,111	
Travel	\$7,000	\$12,000	\$6,000	
Total	\$122,183	\$134,891	\$34,111	
Facilitator of Multi-Ethnic Church Partnerships				
Salary + Housing	\$93,162	\$23,000	\$23,690	
Travel	\$17,000	\$8,000	\$10,000	
Total	\$110,162	\$31,000	\$33,690	
Administration Expenses				
Executive Team	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$1,000	
Office Expenses				
Insurance	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,700	
Financial Review	\$900	\$900	\$950	
Utilities	\$4,700	\$4,700	\$4,700	
Office Supplies	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	
Office Equipment	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	
Miscellaneous	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	
Admin/Office Total	\$15,100	\$16,100	\$14,350	
Ministry Expenses				
Manitowish Contribution	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	
Leadership Equipping	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	
STM	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	
Miscellaneous Ministry	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	
Ministry Total	\$29,000	\$29,000	\$29,000	
Total Expenses	\$276,445	\$210,991	\$111,151	

Income	Projected
Assessment Income 2021 RSMA Members 8757; \$5 Assessment	\$43,785.00
Interest Income	\$35.00
Total:	\$43,820.00

Summary	Proposed
Personnel Expenses	\$67,801
Administration Expenses	\$14,350
Ministry Expenses	\$29,000
TOTAL	\$111,151

SYNOD REPORT

Board Members:

Joe Paglia	Toby Thomack
Joy Lavens	Don Spender
Christine Parker	Bob Wierenga (Synod Rep)
Susan Lange	
Joan Iwema	

God's Spirit Changing Lives

TO: REGIONAL SYNOD, Annual Session
FROM: LAURA VROOM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | Camp Manitoqua and Retreat Center

Manitoqua Ministries, a God-Centered organization, serves guests by providing a setting and programs for retreating, camping and outdoor education.

2022

- It is a huge time of change for many of us. As we watch as the world changes and as we try to understand what our new reality is, Manitoqua Ministries is no different. Manitoqua Ministries has gone under contract with an organization called Vision Works to try to track what our steps forward might be and to come up with a plan for our future. Things that come into play are:
 - Our retreat guests have declined (Example: A school group has been bringing 200 kids a weekend but will have 44 this year)
 - Our ability to find Christian staff has declined (Summer and year round)
 - Our struggle to manage food needs and price increase
 - The amount of churches that have left the RCA and the lack of support
 - Our summer camp filing within hours of registration opening
 - We have a 2 million dollar debt on the property

Property:

- Manitoqua Ministries is excited that we are looking at building another new cabin. It will be identical to our Acorn Cabin.

Events:

- I would like to invite you and your church to join us on April 23, 2022 for our Work Day. Please contact Tamara McDonald at volunteer@manitoqua.org or 815.469.2319.

Prayer Requests:

- Need plenty of quality summer staff and year round staff. Also, pray that they become equipped to share the gospel as much as possible. If you know people, please encourage them to contact us.
- That campers, staff and families be changed by our work!
- Find people who have a passion to help us in our ministry and grow our donor list.
- Growth in church partnerships.

- Fundraising for building the new cabin.

Closing words:

- I know it has been a hard year for many in this world, in our communities, and in our churches. If you would like to work with Camp Manitoqua to further the Gospel please ask. We want to work with you.
- For more information about Manitoqua, please visit Manitoqua.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Vroom
Executive Director



RSMA General Synod Council Representative Report Neale Roller, 2022

It has been my pleasure to serve as a representative for RSMA to the general General Synod Council since my ad interim appointment July 1, 2021. I was relieved when this was made official at the General Synod meeting in Tucson, Arizona, in October of 2021. To say the least, this has been an interesting year with more on the horizon.

The 2021 General Synod meeting received the long awaited Vision 2020 Commission report and acted on the three proposals it contained.

The first proposal was to appoint a task force to study a restructuring of the RCA and bring a proposal to the 2024 General Synod meeting. This proposal was passed and in GSC meetings via Zoom this winter the General Secretary proposed a representative group from throughout the denomination to serve on this task force. The list was approved by the GSC. At a GSC meeting this week another person was approved for the task force so that all seven regional synods are represented in the group.

The second proposal from the Vision 2020 team was to set up the missions program of the RCA as a separate 501c3 organization. This proposal was defeated.

The third proposal from the Vision 2020 team was to encourage procedures for graceful separation for congregations wanting to leave the RCA. This proposal was approved and has been in the process of working out already in the months following the General Synod meeting in October, 2021. At our GSC meeting March 22-23, 2022, it was reported that 113 congregations have left or initiated paperwork for transfer from the RCA. The estimated current membership of remaining congregations was approximated at 90,000. The General Secretary projected that there would be a decline in the decade of the '20s and then a return to growth in the number of congregations in the '30s. The office of the General Secretary estimated that the total membership of the RCA could go as low as 70,000.

The General Secretary's office has dealt with the financial ramifications of the declining membership by cutting expenses. There has been a decrease of 16 staff over the past year. GSC voted to recommend to the June, 2022, General Synod meeting a \$1.00 increase (from \$46.10 to \$47.10) in assessments. This will be the first proposed increase in four years. GSC also approved the establishment of an endowment fund to be initially funded with \$4 million from current reserve funds which could provide income to supplement the annual budget and assessment income.

Another agenda item that created a lot of discussion at the October, 2021, General Synod meeting was the request from Western Theological Seminary to change its status with the RCA. After much discussion the item was referred to GSC to consult with the Commission on

Church Order. During our March 22-23, 2022, GSC meeting the report of this consultation was reviewed. The GSC voted to approve the technical revisions to the proposal recommended by the CCO and to recommend it to the June, 2022, General Synod meeting.

General Synod Council has dealt with another issue in the time I have served which may be of interest to some of you. At a recent meeting we voted to transfer the ownership of the property in Annville, Kentucky, to the local ministry currently using the space, Grace Covenant Ministries. This will make it easier for that ministry to make changes and repairs to the property and reduce liability exposure for the RCA.

Finally, let me encourage you to make use of the resources available to you on the rca.org website. There is a wealth of material useful to ministers and lay leaders alike. There is a link to the missions ministries of the RCA and many discipleship/christian education items under the new Faithward tab. There are seasonal/church year resources for worship and devotions. Many of the resources that used to come to our congregations in print are now available and searchable online.

If you would like more details about anything I have mentioned in this report or are wondering about something I didn't mention feel free to contact me at eaglerollers@charter.net or call me at (262)745-8279. Of course snail mail at 114A Eagle Pointe Dr., Delavan, WI 53115 works, too.

Hopefully you will be hearing more about many of these things as you participate in 30 days of prayer leading up to the General Synod June 9-14 at Central College in Pella, Iowa. Look for you invitation to arrive soon.

Respectfully submitted,
Neale Roller
March 24, 2022

Facilitator of Multi-Ethnic Church Partnerships Report

April 2022

Beginning with four anchor churches (Rolling Hills Community Church, Zellwood, FL; Bayshore Gardens Community Church, Bradenton, FL; First Reformed Church, Tampa, FL; and Iglesia Cristiana – CN Church, Davie, FL) on June 25, 2020, Classis de las Naciones has grown in about 1 ¾ years to 14 organized churches, 7 new church plants in Florida and Georgia, and financially supporting 7 new church plants in the Dominican Republic. The classis is privileged to see the mighty hand of God at work in Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and other places around the world like Venezuela, Colombia, Honduras, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Guatemala, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Chile, Thailand, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. The heart and core focus of the churches and pastors in the classis remains the same: “Making disciples who make disciples who plant churches.”

I am working with Chad Farrand and Luiz Ruiz to identify new church partnership opportunities around the world. We are connecting to an ever-growing number of adopted churches and new church plants that are requesting to become a part of Classis de las Naciones and the Reformed Church in America. In our work, we are engaged in building church and classis systems, training, certification of pastors, and supporting new consistory leaders, Elders and Deacons, pastoral staff and pastors as they grow in understanding the theology, history, mission and polity of the RCA. There are a variety of BCO competency classes taught in Spanish available to the classis. Streamlined processes have been developed for Preaching Elder, Commissioned Pastor, and Minister of Word and Sacrament as we seek to develop strong competent leaders who are equipped for ministry aligned theologically with the RCA. There is constant movement in recruiting new congregations and church leaders who have a passion to be engaged in the vision of Classis de las Naciones. We help support and resource church leaders, especially through bi-weekly Zoom prayer meetings, sharing resources such as financial grants, monthly “Simple Church” training, classis seminars on “Generosity” and “Characteristics of a Healthy Church”, “Discipleship”, and personal pastoral care along with the Classis Care Team. At the current time we are particularly focused on covocational church planting, which is the place where many of the new church planters find themselves. Brad Brisco is teaching on this subject in Classis de las Naciones using his book: “Covocational Church Planting: Aligning Your Market Place Calling and the Mission of God”.

I also work with all the legal matters that are in process but yet to be resolved dealing with churches of the former Florida Classis. Chad and I have connected with CMT leaders in other classes in the region to cast vision for multi-ethnic churches. We meet frequently with the leaders of Central Plains Classis to share ideas and resources and navigate through similar types of multi-ethnic church partnership opportunities.

Let me share some of what God is doing in Classis de las Naciones, the region, and around the world. God continues to show us the scope of His abundance in expanding His kingdom as the RCA is becoming a global denomination.

- On June 26, 2021, nine pastors were ordained and installed as Ministers of Word and Sacrament. Four pastors were commissioned as Commissioned Pastors. There were also a number of other pastors who were received by transfer from Michigan, New York, California and other places. These pastors are joining Classis de las Naciones because they want to be a part of the vision of the classis.

- Classis de las Naciones continues to receive numerous requests from international pastors and churches desiring to be a part of the classis. This movement of receiving international brothers and sisters into the classis is a new adventure of faith and mission. In order to accommodate this growing need, I wrote a document called “Provisional Guidelines for Preaching Elders, Commissioned Pastors, and Ministers of Word and Sacrament from International Denominations and Network Churches”. This document was approved by the Classis Executive Team and the RSMA Executive Team as a process document for use in receiving international churches and pastors into the classis.
- Because of the 100+ churches that want to join Classis de las Naciones, the classis formed a new team called the International Mission Team. This team was formed to process and train the numerous pastors and churches waiting to join the classis. Rev. Luiz Ruiz, who is a member of Classis de las Naciones from Michigan, leads the team. He currently holds the position in the RCA as the Supervisor of RCA Mission in North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean in RCA Global Mission. He is familiar with the work of international churches and pastors. I am also a member of that team and Chad Farrand serves as an ad hoc member. This team is expanding rapidly as we are working with more and more countries.
- In June 2021, Chad Farrand, Fredy Gutierrez, and I planned a multi-ethnic church planting vision trip to the Midwest. We met with pastors and church leaders in the Chicago Classis as well as pastors and church leaders in the Illinois Classis and Wisconsin Classis. We explored the possibilities for Hispanic church planting in the various areas we visited and identified significant Hispanic populations. Contacts were made with local Hispanic pastors. We encouraged leaders to consider adopting Hispanic church plants and planters and starting new Hispanic churches in their classis area.
- In September 2021, thirteen Elders were examined as Preaching Elders, and their exams were sustained. Each of these Preaching Elders were commissioned in their individual churches. About ½ of these Preaching Elders are serving in international churches.
- Adopting and starting new church plants internationally is a new movement within the RCA. Not only Classis de las Naciones and Central Plains Classis, but Global Mission is moving in a new direction by planting churches outside North America. As Classis de las Naciones adopts international churches and plants international churches, the leaders of CdIN are working closely with Global Mission and the RCA Church Multiplication Team. We are breaking the Global Mission past tradition by saying that our partnership in mission is not with established denominations (like the Presbyterians), but with “reverse mission partners”. Those who received missionaries from the West are now in North America leading church planting movements. The plan is that the RCA will partner with this movement and move forward in this direction with reverse mission practitioners. Classis de las Naciones is a model of how this movement is spreading across the RCA.

Global Mission and Classis de las Naciones are creating a pathway to incorporate international leaders and churches into the RCA. This is being done in four steps:

- ✓ To form a team of international leaders, both from North America and international, who will work together in unity in welcoming these international churches.

- ✓ Classes will adopt and plant international churches and process pastors for ordination and commissioning into the RCA.
- ✓ Classes, with the help of the Regional Synod, will launch international classes and networks.
- ✓ The international classis will launch an international network/denomination and function as a Dual Affiliation Network of Reformed Churches. In other words, the Network of Reformed Churches will exist both as a classis of the RCA and as an international church in its own country, with the ability to have representation and voting privileges in each context.

This movement was the main discussion at an event held on January 12-14, 2022, in Orlando, FL. About 30 RCA leaders including General Secretary Eddy Aleman and key leaders from Global Mission, the RCA Church Multiplication Team, Classis de las Naciones, Central Plains Classis, Ontario Classis, some RCA missionaries, and a missiologist met to discuss this movement. There is a cooperative spirit among all parties as we work together to build a more global RCA.

- The International Mission Team is working with Brigido Cabrera and Moses James in the Iglesia Reformada Dominicana (IRD) denomination in the Dominican Republic to provide training for seven church planters and to help them in establishing covocational church planting. I have written a binder on the Commissioned Pastor process to help in preparing the pastors to be Commissioned Pastors. Classis de las Naciones has designated \$42,000 in funding to support these seven church plants in 2022- 23. The team is working to provide a coach and a mentor for each church planter to help them succeed in planting. The goal is to establish a new classis with three organized churches in the Dominican Republic by the end of 2023. Currently there are an additional 23 people that have been identified in the Dominican Republic to be church planters. This is called Project 30.
- The International Mission Team of Classis de las Naciones is currently working in ten different countries and other states with networks of church planters.
 - ✓ Rev. Fredy Aviles is working with 8 churches and church planters in Puerto Rico in preparation to come into Classis de las Naciones. He also has a church in Maryland and New Jersey.
 - ✓ Rev, Fredy Gutierrez is working with 4 churches from Colombia in the network with Vida de Reino to come into Classis de las Naciones. He has a partnership with Christ Community Church in Lemont, IL, for financial support and also to cast vision and establish multi-ethnic churches in the Chicago area.
 - ✓ Pastor Sebastian of a church plant, Montreal Church in Hialeah, FL, is working with two churches in his network in Argentina to come into Classis de las Naciones. Montreal Church has a huge online campus offering worship services and teaching classes on the Heidelberg Catechism. Hundreds of people from around the world are being taught the Heidelberg. Montreal Church has two churches in Honduras and one in Mexico.
 - ✓ Pastor Jose Rea of Global Ministries Church in Orlando, FL, is working with Grace Harbor Church in Michigan to launch a new English-speaking campus in Orlando. Global Ministries is known for growing new disciples and raising new leaders. Global Ministries has two more large church campuses in Venezuela – one pastored by Jose’s brother -

and other church campuses in Panama, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and 4 church sites in Lima, Peru.

- ✓ Pastor Jerry Reyes is planting a new church in Brandon, FL. He also has a network of 8 churches in Puerto Rico.
- ✓ Pastor Julio Canas is planting a new church in Atlanta, GA. He also has a church in Columbia and Venezuela.
- ✓ Rev. Jesus Perez of Renacer Church has 78 churches in his network from Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Peru, Ecuador, and Chile. Currently the International Team is working with just two churches in his network of 78 churches. Of those two churches, the church in Venezuela has 30 churches in its network and the church in Colombia has 26 churches in its network. So currently the International Mission Team is only working with 56 churches to prepare them to come into Classis de las Naciones.
- ✓ Rev. Joe Martinez, the church planter of Regalo de Dios in Orlando, FL, has a church in Venezuela.
- ✓ Rev. Gustavo Azar, the church planter of Vision Familiar in Miami, FL, has a church in Uruguay.

In receiving these international pastors and churches the International Mission Team uses this process:

1. International Mission Team Process

The flow chart describes the process from a global contact to becoming a member of CdIN. The IMT will recruit and assign a mentor to walk alongside the global partner through the flow chart process. The mentor issues a progress report to the IMT Executive.



2. Global Partnership Protocols

These protocols serve to provide evaluation and determine how CdIN will partner with global networks.

Criteria Evaluation

- a. Assess church network – evaluate assets and resource needs
- b. Assess the commitments to Reformed theology and RCA Standards
- c. Assess contextualizing polity and governing structures
- d. Assess leadership competencies and avenues for equipping
- e. Assess how to partner together

Resource Evaluation

- a. Determine the equipping modules to support the church network
- b. Determine the polity and structures to support the church network
- c. Determine outreach opportunities to support the church network

Fellowship Evaluation

- a. Determine how and when we gather together
- b. Determine how and when we will learn from each other
- c. Determine field visits and short-term mission trips

- Classis de las Naciones has seven new church plants currently in Florida and Georgia, five which are receiving financial support:
 - ✓ Montreal Church, Pastor Sebastian Gimenez, in Miami, FL.
 - ✓ Ministerio Internacional El Buen, Rev. German Moreno, in Palm Springs, FL.
 - ✓ Vida de Reino, Rev. Fredy Gutierrez, in Sarasota, FL.
 - ✓ Iglesia El Olio, Pastor Andres Sancho, in Royal Palm Beach, FL.
 - ✓ Mision 7, Pastor Jerry Reyes, in Brandon, FL.
 - ✓ Casa de Oracion Internacional, Pastor Julio Cesar Canas Lozano, in Atlanta, GA.
 - ✓ Berea Internacionol Inglesia, Pastor Miguel Zapata, in Westin, FL
- Classis de las Naciones has three new church plants in process:
 - ✓ Sigfredo Ramos
 - ✓ Javier Rodriguez
 - ✓ Carlos Correa
- In 2021-22 Classis de las Naciones organized the following new churches in Florida and Georgia. In January 2021, Iglesia Lugar Alto in Duluth, GA, was organized. Regalo de Dios, a new church plant in Orlando, was organized by Classis de las Naciones on April 8, 2021. Renacer Church, an adopted church in Doral, FL, was organized on January 16, 2022.
- The congregation of Venice Community Church met with Rev. Sung Kim of Grace Harbor Church in Ann Arbor, MI. It was decided to merge Grace Harbor Church with Venice Community Church in Venice, FL. The plan is to invite a new pastor into the church and launch a new church in the Venice Church facility.

- The following is an update on the Classis de las Naciones legal issues. I continue to work on the legal issues with Classis de las Naciones.
 - ✓ Settlement Agreement with Cross Community Church, Deerfield Beach, FL. The classis received a letter from the Law Offices of Robert L. Shearin, the attorney for Cross Community Church in Deerfield Beach, FL. The letter was a response to a complaint filed by Classis de las Naciones, Reformed Church in America, Inc., regarding a breach of the settlement agreement. The Cross Community Church attorney states that his client is no longer in breach of the settlement agreement because they have reduced the listing price of the church property from \$10,000,000 to \$9,500,000. In the meantime, Greg Light is serving Cross Community Church with a discovery document to find out exactly what efforts they have made over the past couple of years to sell the church property.
 - ✓ Comunidad de Fe Update. Greg Light, the Classis de las Naciones attorney, reported a tentative trial date has been set for July 2022. The court issued a scheduling order setting out strict deadlines to get this case on track and avoid any further delays by the Mezas. The attorney that had been handling the file for them no longer works at that firm which contributed to most recent delays. Our attorney plans to file a motion for summary judgment at the first possible moment, but because the Mezas requested to amend their counterclaim and the court has yet to rule on that, Greg hasn't been able to file it yet.
- The consistory of Rolling Hills Community Church filed a petition on January 24, 2022, to withdraw from Classis de las Naciones and leave the Reformed Church in America. A Task Force Team was appointed to handle the process of RHCC leaving the RCA. I am leading that Task Force. Other people appointed by the Executive Team to be on the Task Force Team are: Rev. Daniel Davila Sr., Rev. Fredy Gutierrez, and Rev. Fredy Aviles.

I believe that most churches in Classis de las Naciones are committed to stay with the RCA. Churches and pastors are committed to the RCA vision to plant 1,000 churches between 2018 – 2038, to transform the RCA landscape by multiplying disciples, leaders, and churches globally. A colleague of mine writes: "The global south, the new center of the Christian church, is experiencing thriving ministry and relevancy in its diverse and complex societies. As a result, many leaders are involved in multiplication strategies reproducing in quantifiable and measurable ways.

Missiologists have predicted that the global south is the new leader of world evangelism in the 21st century, motivating the North American church to facilitate collaboration and innovation to become more effective missionaries in a post-Christian world western context."

It says in Acts 17:26-28 (NIV), "From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'"

Wayne Van Regenmorter
Facilitator of Multi-Ethnic Church Partnerships
Regional Synod of Mid-America