

Report on the R-16 Task Force Missional and Reformed Discussions

First of all I want to apologize for my confusion resulting in my absence at our meeting on April 14. I pray that God's presence was with you and that it was a time of encouragement and excitement for the Kingdom of our Risen Lord.

I serve as a member of the R-16 Task Force and just want to give you a bit of an update on what is happening. Our task is as follows according to R-16: To continue the denomination-wide dialogue and data collection with written survey and other means on the missional purpose and work of the Reformed Church in America, its assemblies and congregations; and further, with all regional synods, all classes, consistories, and other bodies, to facilitate this conversation in order to gather wisdom, share ideas, and encourage experimentation, so that the RCA might discover new means by which to more effectively equip congregations for mission and ministry with measurable outcomes; and further to share the results of these actions with the General Synod no later than 2010, in order to determine what future steps, if any, might be undertaken.

At the moment we have and are attempting to tackle this task in three ways. First, we invited Dr. Richard Mouw as a speaker to the 2008 General Synod to facilitate this discussion. These sessions were recorded on a DVD and sent out denomination wide along with a study guide. We have received some feedback on this resource with mixed reviews. We continue to deal with the problem of information overload, which prohibits the resource from ever getting looked at, along with things like it was too scholarly so hard to understand and classes, which are too busy with business to look at resources. On the other hand there were a number of positive reviews as well from those who did put the resource to use. We are continuing to seek ways to promote the use of this resource. If you cannot find your copy just go to the RCA.org and in the left hand list you will find the Reformed and Missional section and there is an online copy there or contact the RCA office in Grand Rapids if you would like another sent to you.

Second, we have been working on a stolen idea from the Story Corp Project that is often used on National Public Radio. We are developing our own archive of stories. The power of sharing stories is crucial to our missional task not to mention is it very biblical and reformed. We have recorded some stories at General Synod 2008 and will be doing the same again this year. If you would like to listen to a few of those stories just go to this link <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=5298> and you should find six stories that have been shared. Also, we invite anyone in the denomination who has a desire to collect stories or if you have a story to share to contact us. We will do our best to help you get the proper equipment and we can send you some information about the process and some sample questions.

Lastly, we are putting together a survey to gather information regarding this conversation. The survey will seek information on the DVD resource that was sent out as well as other resources that are being used. It will have a strong focus on our structures. We want to know how our structures are facilitating or impeding communication and supporting or

inhibiting missional engagement. It will also seek ideas regarding what is working or what is being experimented with in different places. This information will be gathered from a collection of names Pastor, elders, and deacons across the denomination. The survey is first being sent out to a random sample in order to gage its effectiveness and need for modification. Each member of the task force was asked to submit some names for the random sample since the task force has representation from every regional synod.

As you can see from the directions from the 2007 General Synod and the manner in which the task force is working at this assignment, peoples' participation is crucial. If you want to be heard or you want change or you want to see the Kingdom be blessed it takes your response. I urge you sisters and brothers to use our or some type of resource towards this discussion, share your stories with each other and with us, and if your are selected for the survey, do not put it off, fill it out immediately.

May Christ bless you and keep you!
Bob Rook