

## APPENDIX ONE- SOME THINGS WORTH KNOWING ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY REFORMED CHURCH, EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

from Tom Stark, Lansing, Michigan  
March 2015

### 1. RCA ministers:

a. There are nine ministers in our Great Lakes City Classis who came through the Michigan State University/ University Reformed Church route. That doesn't mean they are "clones" of URC, but they were helped by URC during those important years. Six of them graduated from Western Theological Seminary.

b. There are also RCA ministers from MSU/URC in other classes.

c. There are also MSU/URC graduates who are pastors in other denominations.

2. University Reformed Church has always paid its assessments and askings in full.

### 3. MISSIONS:

a. The URC missions budget (2015) contributes to 23 couples and four singles. All these have been in URC, except for two RCA missionary couples mentioned below and a seminary professor in Equatorial Guinea with WEC.

b. Five current RCA missionaries came through URC, and are supported in URC's missions budget:

Tom Johnson in Niger (over 12 years)

Mark and Deb Wilson in Cambodia (10 years, four years at WTS, back in Cambodia for the past three years)

R. P., a minister in our classis, in the Middle East (4 years)

A. P., husband is J.P., headmaster in the Gulf (6 years)

Others from URC have served as missionaries with the RCA in the past.

For over twenty-five years the URC missions budget has supported RCA missionaries Larry and Linda McAuley. They were first in Kenya for 16 years, then for 10 years they were loaned by the RCA to CRWRC for Larry to direct their work in Malawi and Mozambique. During that time they had a young couple from URC working with them for four years, and another woman from URC teaching in Malawi for one year. For the last three years they have been back teaching in Kenya.

The URC mission budget has also supported RCA missionaries Jeremy and Dr. Susan Beebout since they went to Niger seven years ago.

c. The URC missions budget supports Steve and Joy Van Sloten in Turkey with CRU (Campus Crusade for Christ). Steve grew up in the RCA, and has been supported by his

home church and other RCA churches, including Fair Haven. After ten years in Turkey the Van Slotens were in URC for five years while working with international students at MSU through CRU, and have now been back in Turkey for five years.

d. Steve and Jan Michmerhuizen met and married while at MSU/URC and served with the CRWRC in El Salvador and Zambia, and for the past four years have served with Christian Reformed World Missions in Romania. They have been in the URC missions budget since they went overseas.

e. Other supported missionaries, all of whom were in URC, are:

1. Three marrieds and one single who work with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in Metro Detroit, the Chicago area, Marquette University (Wisconsin), and Hillsdale College.

2. One couple who works with the Navigators in international student ministry at Michigan State University.

3. Couples where one or both spouses were in URC are missionaries in Africa, Azerbaijan, Turkey, China (2 couples- one a tentmaker businessman and the other a tentmaker teacher with the Uigyers in far western China), and they work through AfricaRevolution, CRU, and Pioneers.

4. Single women include a doctor in Afghanistan and a missionary to refugees in Spain, who are sent through Interserve and SEND INTL.

5. Five married missionaries who are in U.S. ethnic or innercity ministries: to inner city kids in Jersey City, NJ; Muslims in Dearborn, MI; church planting among ethnic Albanians in Philadelphia; training churches to engage in cross-cultural ministry; working with the Lummi Indian Nation in Washington State.

f. Words of Hope, ministering in many languages by radio, began through the support of the RCA in the Midwest and continues to be primarily supported by RCA churches and individuals in the midwest and far west. Throughout its history URC has actively supported Words of Hope. Pastor Sani Nomaou in Niger is a Words of Hope broadcaster who is supported in URC's missions budget.

4. URC was strongly supportive of the development of the Synod of the Great Lakes Commissioned Pastor Program, an alternative track for commissioning for ministry, led now by a gifted and experienced Coordinator, Dr. [Ph.D., MSU] Burt Braunius.

5. The Synod of Michigan began a ministry at the University of Michigan in 1960 and called a pastor in 1961. The ministry began at MSU in the fall of 1966. In succeeding years the classis of Zeeland began a campus ministry at Grand Valley State University, later taken on by the Synod, and other ministries began at Western Michigan University

and Ferris State University. University Reformed Church has benefited from those other campus ministries, through URC students who went to those campuses, and the fellowship and support of a long list of staff members who have served at the other four campuses.

6. In 1961 the Synod of Michigan bought land next to the Michigan State University campus, five years before the Synod began the ministry which became University Reformed Church (1966), intending to begin a campus and community ministry.

7. When a building program was undertaken (1975-76), it was paid for by a fund drive in the Synod of Michigan.

8. The Synod subsidized URC's campus ministry for a number of years, and helped with grants for interns and training.

9. URC has sent hundreds of campers to Camp Geneva and Cran-Hill Ranch, both started and owned by the Synod of Michigan (now the Synod of the Great Lakes). Some began or renewed their commitments to Christ there.

10. Over the years literally dozens of MSU students have served on the summer staffs of Camp Geneva and of Cran-Hill Ranch (from its first year of operation). They have made an important contribution to the spiritual lives of their campers. They have also benefited tremendously from a summer-long program of more extensive training, supervision, and relationship- building than happens for staff in two or three week camp experiences.

11. Hundreds of individuals and families from URC have benefited from family camps at Cran-Hill Ranch each summer, and hundreds of people from URC have attended retreats at Cran-Hill and Camp Geneva, for teenagers, college students, men, women, consistory, etc. Both camps are heavily subsidized by supporting RCA congregations and individuals from throughout the Synod of the Great Lakes.

12. URC has sponsored an on-campus student group, Spartan Christian Fellowship, for many years. But there have also been active participants in URC who were staff members or active students in the campus ministries of CRU (Campus Crusade for Christ), InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, the Navigators, and Athletes in Action, and staff members and college students trained for high school ministry with Young Life and Campus Life.

13. URC's student fellowship, Spartan Christian Fellowship, is directed toward single undergrads, but there have been graduate students in the church who were active

participants and leaders in graduate ministries, such as InterVarsity's Graduate Christian Fellowship, the Christian Legal Society, the Christian Veterinary Fellowship, and the Christian Medical and Dental Fellowship.

14. The URC Consistory became concerned that women should be officially exercising a diaconal role in the congregation. In 1980 the consistory voted to establish a fourth office of "deaconess" in URC, adding four elected and installed deaconesses to work with the four deacons. The eight-member board was put in charge of approving the missions budget, advancing community ministry, and responding to needs in URC. These deaconesses have been important and effective in their service, and some have chaired the Diaconate. I am not sure how many women have served since 1980 (with rotating three year terms), but, in addition to the current four deaconesses, there are about 15 women in the congregation now who have served as deaconesses in the past.

15. In an Informational Flyer some 20 years ago the consistory answered a variety of questions, including:

"Question 6. What can men and women do in worship services?"

So far they have planned services, given testimonies, led worship, given reports, led in prayer, read Scripture, sung solos and sung in choral groups, accompanied music, participated in drama, shared concerns, given children's messages, given financial appeals, given mission reports, taken the offering, and have been on Prayer Teams.

Question 7. Are there any things which women in URC have not done in worship services?

No woman has been asked to preach at Sunday services."

16. Women have also been members of all committees, chaired the Missions Committee and the Christian Education Committee, and taught high school and adult classes on Sundays.

17. Alumni of URC have gone on to be elders and deacons in RCA churches in Michigan and elsewhere.

18. URC has been blessed by undergrad and grad students coming to MSU from RCA churches, and others moving to the Lansing area from RCA churches.

19. In recent years, about two-thirds of school age children in URC are home schooled, and a home school network rents URC facilities one day a week. One staff member and one elder with school age children have their children in public schools.