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2005
ABSTRACT
of the
MINUTES



20th ANNUAL SESSION
of the
WESTERN CLASSIS
Reformed Church in the United States

March 8-10, 2005

Grace Reformed Church
Willows, California

ABSTRACT
of the
MINUTES
for the
WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States

20th Annual Session
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Willows, California

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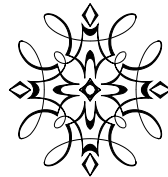
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2005 WESTERN CLASSIS DIRECTORY

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- Voytek, Rev. Michael** **Home (209) 367-1902**
 501 Falls Ave., Lodi, CA 95240 **Church (209) 367-0552**
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20th ANNUAL WESTERN CLASSIS ROLL

For the Classical Year beginning March 8, 2005

Minister	Primarius Elder	Secundus Elder	Charge
Henry Bowen	Michael Peery		Faith, Anderson
George Horner	Darrell Mettler	Jon Stuebbe	Grace, Bakersfield
Gary Mancilas	Rick Lopez	David Helseth	Covenant, Chico
Dennis Roe	Frank Krivohlavek	Steve Wilbur	Covenant, Grass Valley
Jonathan Merica	Associate Pastor, Covenant RCUS, Grass Valley		Grace, San Ramon
Neale Riffert	Mark Reyna	Jeff Mills	Grace, Lancaster
Michael Voytek	Wayne Lingenfelter	Case Van Egmond	Providence, Lodi
Paul Treick	David Stelpstra	Earl Van Houten	Trinity, Modesto
Jim West	Douglas Schlegel	Wayne Johnson	Covenant, Sacramento
Frank Walker	Associate Pastor		Covenant, Sacramento
Guillermo Baloy	Associate Pastor Covenant RCUS, Sacramento		Covenant, San Diego
Vernon Pollema	Ryan Spitzer	Bob Williams	Ebenezer, Shafter
Jay Fluck	Associate Pastor, Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter		Rehoboth, La Habra
Thomas Mayville	Ken Bowen	Joe Gross	Grace, Willows
Paul Henderson	Greg Stewart	James Ochsner	First, Yuba City
Lloyd Gross	Pastor Emeritus, Grace Reformed, Bakersfield		Retired, Mesa, AZ
Robert Sander			Retired, San Jose

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS

President – Rev. Jim West
 Vice-President – Rev. George Horner
 Stated Clerk – Rev. Hank Bowen
 Treasurer – Mr. Chris Fellersen

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

(per communicant member)

Classis Dues	\$7.50
Benevolences	41.00
Home Missions	66.00
Publications	00.00
Home Missions Building Fund	10.00
Heidelberg West Youth Camp	2.00
TOTAL	\$126.50

Treasurer's Address: Mr. Chris Fellersen
 8675 Sleepy Hollow Dr., Elk Grove, CA 95624
 Ph. (916) 423-1741 E-Mail: cfellersen@CS.com

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Executive Committee: J. West; H. Bowen, D. Schlegel

Candidates and Credentials: F. Walker, J. Fluck (1 yr); G. Horner, D. Stelpstra (2 yrs); P. Treick; D. Bender (3 yrs)

Christian Education in the Church: G. Horner, R. Spitzer (1 yr); E. Van Houten, D. Roe (2 yrs); V. Pollema, G. Mancilas (3 yrs)

Missions: P. Henderson, F. Walker (1 yr); W. Lingenfelter, M. Voytek (2 yrs); D. Roe, R. Spitzer (3 yrs)

Interchurch Relations: J. Merica, L. Gross (1 yr); G. Stewart, T. Mayville (2 yrs); G. Baloy, N. Riffert (3 yrs)

Publications: W. Johnson, T. Mayville (1 yr); C. Combs, G. Horner (2 yrs); C. Esparza, K. Bowen (3 yrs)

Diaconal: V. Pollema, G. Baloy (1 yr); J. Warren, S. Wilbur (2 yrs); M. Peery, J. Mills (3 yrs)

Heidelberg West Youth Camp: P. Henderson, P. Treick (1 yr); G. Born, R. Lopez (2 yrs); T. Mayville, G. Stewart (3 yrs)

(Indicates Convener)

DIRECTORY OF CONGREGATIONS**ANDERSON, CA - Faith Reformed Church**

Church Location: 3291 Rupert Rd. (off Stingy Lane)
 Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 902 Anderson, CA 96007
 Church Phone: (530) 365-6874
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 am; Worship 10:30 am
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Hank Bowen/ Patty/ Bethany, Marcus
 Home Address: 22452 Meadowcrest Lane, Palo Cedro, CA 96073
 Home Phone: (530) 365-5280E-Mail: rcushank@sbcglobal.net
 Church Web Page: www.faithrcus.org

BAKERSFIELD, CA - Grace Reformed Church

Church Location: 420 Columbus Street, Bakersfield (north on Union Ave. to Columbus St., east on Columbus to the church)
 Church Mailing Address: 420 Columbus St., Bakersfield, CA 93305
 Church Phone: (661) 325-0165
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:15 AM; Worship 10:30 AM and 3rd Sunday at 6:30 PM
 Pastor/Wife/Children: George Horner / Mary Jo / Tyra, Talia, Elijah, Jerusha, Lydia, Josiah
 Home Address: 6407 Brooklawn Way, Bakersfield, CA 93309
 Home Phone: (661) 835-1842 E-Mail: ghorner@bak.rr.com
 Church Web Page: bakersfieldreformed.org

CHICO, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: Meeting at 1877 Hooker Oak Ave. (Adventist Church Building: Turn east on East Ave., proceed to Hooker Oak Ave., turn right; proceed through first stop sign and turn left into church parking lot)
 Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1612, Chico, CA 95927-1612
 Church Phone: (530) 345-2732
 Service Times: Christian Education 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM
 Mission Pastor/Wife: Gary Mancilas / Gloria
 Home Address: 2 Woodminster Ct., Chico, CA 95926
 Home Phone: (530) 893-5939E-Mail: gmancilas@sbcglobal.net
 Church Web Page Address: www.crcchico.com

GRASS VALLEY, CA - Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley

Church Location: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA
 Church Mailing Address: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA 95945
 Church Phone/Fax: (530) 273-4673
 Service Times: Sunday: 9:45 AM - Bible Classes for all ages; Worship 11:00 AM.
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Dennis E. Roe / Julie / Joanna
 Home Address: 17355 Alexandra Way, Grass Valley, CA 95949
 Home Ph.: (530) 272-6693 E-Mail: mathatas@sbcglobal.net

Church Web Page: www.crcgv.org

LA HABRA - Rehoboth Reformed Chapel

Church Location: 501 S. Idaho, La Habra (Between La Habra Blvd., & Lambert Rd.)
 Church Phone: (562) 947-4837
 Church Mail Address: 11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
 Service Times: Worship 10:30 AM; Sun. Sch. Noon; Eve. Service 6:00 PM.; Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 PM.
 Mission Pastor/Wife/Children: Jay E. Fluck / Loretta / Jeffery, Erin
 Home Address: 11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
 Home Phone: (562) 947-4837 E-Mail: jeffluck@msn.com
 Church Web Page: www.RehobothReformedChurch.com

LANCASTER, CA - Grace Reformed Church (Antelope Valley)

Church Location: 551 West Ave. I, Suite F Lancaster, CA 93534 (From Hwy. 14 bear right on ramp at sign reading "Avenue I." Turn East onto West Avenue I and proceed approximately 1.7 miles. Turn left at the corner of West Avenue I and Beech. The shopping center's marquee reads "Grace Reformed Church." If you reach Sierra Hwy., you have gone one block too far.)
 Church Mailing Address: 551 West Ave. I, Suite F, Lancaster, CA 93539
 Church Phone: (661) 940-4669
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:45 AM
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Neale R. Riffert / Mary Elizabeth / Neale Jr.
 Home Address: 3600 Tanglewood, Rosamond, CA 93560
 Home Phone: (661) 256-1876E-Mail: neale.r@sbcglobal.net

LODI, CA - Providence Reformed Church

Church Location: 245 E. Vine Street, Lodi
 Church Mailing Address: 245 E. Vine St. Lodi, CA 95240
 Church Phone: (209) 367-0552
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm.
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Michael Voytek / Rebecca / Joshua, Tabitha, Abraham, David, Timothy
 Home Address: 501 Falls Ave., Lodi, CA 95240
 Home Phone: (209) 367-1902E-Mail: prclodi@softcom.net
 Church Web Page: www.prclodi.com

MODESTO, CA - Trinity Reformed Church

Church Location: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto (Briggsmore east; right on Coffee, right on E. Fairmont 2 blocks.)
 Church Mailing Address: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto, CA 95350
 Church Phone: (209) 523-3220
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:15 AM; Worship 10:30 AM & 5:00 PM; Thursday: Catechism - 6:30 PM; 1st & 3rd Wednesday: Bible Study - 7:00 PM; 2nd and 4th Wednesday Youth Groups
 Pastor/Wife: Paul Treick / Karen

Home Address: 4005 Masterpiece Dr., Modesto, CA 95357
 Home Phone: (209) 551-2407 E-mail: triwheeler@aol.com

SACRAMENTO, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: 2020 16th Avenue, Sacramento (from Fwy 99 take 12th Ave./Sutterville Rd. Exit. Go west to Freeport Blvd., left to 16th Ave. and left to 2020 16th Ave. From I-5 Fwy take Sutterville Exit, go east on Sutterville to Freeport Blvd., left on Freeport and right on 16th Ave. to 2020 16th Ave.

Church Mailing Address: 2020 16th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822

Church Phone: (916) 451-1190

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM & 6:00 PM

Pastor/ Wife/Children: Jim West / Elaine / Ruthanna

Home Address: 5216 Locust Ave., Carmichael, CA 95608

Home Phone: (916) 488-5569 E-Mail: jimwest3253@hotmail.com

Assoc. Pastor/Wife/Children: Frank Walker / Christine / Bethann, Cathryn, Tari, Jonathan.

Home Address: 6121 Pine Vista Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758

Home Phone: (916) 320-0548 E-Mail: DrFHW@comcast.com

Church Web Page: www.covenantreformedchurch.org

SAN DIEGO, CA - Covenant Reformed Chapel

Church Location: 49 3rd Ave., Chula Vista, CA (Take I-805 South. Go west on Hwy. 54. Get off at Highland Ave. Turn left at light on Highland Ave. Turn left on 3rd Ave. We meet at the CVPOA Building on the left hand side.)

Church Mailing Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977

Church Phone: (619) 460-1321

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 10 AM; Worship 11 AM; Lunch 12:30 PM; Catechism Class and Prayer Meeting: 6:30 PM Wednesday.

Pastor/Wife/Children: Gil Baloy/ Maricar / Ezra, Ethan

Home Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977

Home Phone: (619) 697-0272 E-mail: gilbaloy@sbcglobal.net

Church Web Page Address: www.covenantreformedchurch.org/crcsd

SAN RAMON, CA – Grace Reformed Chapel

Church Location: 110 Ryan Industrial Ct., San Ramon, CA 94583

Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 2866, San Ramon, CA 94583

Church Phone: (925) 918-1422

Service Times: Worship 10:30 AM; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 PM

Pastor/Wife: Jonathan Merica / Marsha

Home Address: 9311 Snow Creek Circle, Stockton, CA 95212

Home Phone: (209) 472-7941 E-Mail: jmerica@aol.com Fax: (209) 472-7941

Church Web Page Address: www.gracereformedchapel.com

SHAFTER, CA - Ebenezer Reformed Church

Church Location: 235 James Street, Shafter (next door to the City Library, Fire, and Police Depts.)

Church Mailing Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263

Church Phone: (661) 746-6907

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:15 AM; Worship 10:30 AM & (6:00 PM on 4th Sunday);

Bible Study 6:00 PM (1st & 3rd Sundays)

Pastor/Wife: Vernon Pollema / Betty

Home Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263

Home Phone: (661) 746-0211 E-Mail: vpollema@juno.com

WILLOWS, CA - Grace Reformed Church

Church Location: 148 W. Sycamore St. (corner: Butte & Sycamore – Exit Hwy 162; head east, right on Butte to Sycamore).

Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 225, Willows, CA 95988

Church Phone: (530) 934-2732

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM; Sun Bible Study - 6:30 PM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Thomas Mayville / Carolyn / Sarah, Joshua

Home Address: 605 5th St., Willows, CA 95988 (mail to: PO Box 623)

Home Phone: (530) 934-3736 E-Mail: thomasmayville@sbcglobal.net

YUBA CITY, CA - First Reformed Church

Church Location: 9882 Highway 99, 11 miles south of Yuba City - 1/4 mile south of Wilkie Ave. on the left.

Church Mailing Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991

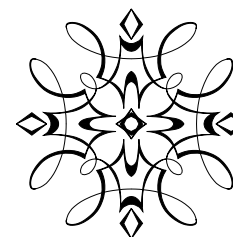
Church Phone: (530) 755-2272

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 11:00 AM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Paul Henderson / Tina / Silas, Melinda, Travis

Home Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991

Home Phone: (530) 671-7579 E-Mail: yubbadubbahendos@juno.com



ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States
meeting
March 8-10, 2005
Grace Reformed Church, Willows, California

Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. . . . The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his

SERVICES

The Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States opened its 20th Annual Session at Grace Reformed Church of Willows, California on Tuesday, March 8, 2005. It began with a devotion by Rev. Thomas Mayville, pastor of Grace RCUS, Willows. Delegates and visitors sang “*I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord.*” Scripture was read from I Peter 5:1-7 and a message was given on “*Christ-like Shepherding.*”

The Tuesday evening Worship Service was held at 7:30 PM with Rev. Frank Walker, Associate pastor of Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church conducting the service. Scripture was read from I Corinthians 2:1-12. Rev. Eric Bristley, a pastor from the Midwest Presbytery of the OPC being examined at this Classis, preached a sermon entitled, “*God’s Message, God’s Power.*” Following the service the congregation welcomed the delegates and disclosed the housing arrangements.

The Wednesday morning devotion was given by Rev. Paul Henderson, pastor of First Reformed Church, Yuba City, CA. Scripture was read from Psalm 23 and Rev. Henderson addressed the delegates under the theme “*The Shepherd and His Sheep.*”

The Thursday morning devotion was given by Rev. Gil Baloy, pastor of Covenant Reformed Church of San Diego, CA. Scripture was read from Acts 20 and he addressed delegates under the theme “*Keep Back Nothing.*”

Mr. Ken Bowen, Elder from Grace Reformed Church of Willows, CA, conducted the closing devotion from John 15:8. All services were closed with prayer.

Each session was opened and closed with prayer to praise God and seek His blessing and guidance for this work of the Church. Following the reading of Parochial Reports, prayer was offered for the particular congregations and pastors. At other times prayer was called for individuals, congregations, and other denominations.

ORGANIZATION

Rev. Jim West, President of the Executive Committee of Western Classis, called the meeting to order at 1:25 PM on March 8, 2005. The initial roll call showed 15 pastors and 10 elder delegates present. The President declared a quorum was present and the meeting was open for business. The Bar of the House was declared to be the first four rows of chairs. The President read the standing rules of the Western Classis as required in Standing Rule 5. Elders Ken Bowen and Douglas Schlegel were appointed as tellers for the meeting.

The following men were nominated and elected to office for this Classical year: Rev. Jim West, President; Rev. George Horner, Vice President; Rev. Henry Bowen, Stated Clerk; and Elder Chris Fellersen, Treasurer.

The President appointed Rev. Gil Baloy as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

The assembly adopted the Agenda, Services, and Order of the Day. A Special Order of the Day was set for Wednesday, following the morning devotion for the examination for licensure of Rev. Eric Bristley.

FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

Rev. Matthew Van Luik represented the Pacific Classis East of the Federation of Canadian Reformed Churches, as a fraternal delegate. He was welcomed, seated in the Bar of the House, and given privilege of the floor.

During the course of the meeting several elders from other Western Classis churches were present. They were welcomed, seated in the Bar of the House, and given the privilege of the floor.

RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS AND CHURCHES

There were no new ministers or churches to be received at this Classis.

STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The President made the following appointments for the Standing Committees:

- A. Examination and Licensure: *Walker, Horner, Fluck, Treick, Modesto Elder
- B. Excuses: *Treick, Bakersfield Elder, Grass Valley Elder
- C. Finances: *Riffert, Voytek, Shafter Elder
- D. Judicial: *Roe, Baloy, Sacramento Elder
- E. Minutes of Synod: *Voytek, Merica, Lodi Elder
- F. Missions: *Pollema, Horner, Yuba City Elder, Chico Elder
- G. Nominations: *Henderson, Fluck, Willows Elder

- H. Benevolence: *Mayville, Merica, Anderson Elder
 I. Overtures: *Mancilas, Henderson, Lancaster Elder
 (*chairman)

**PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF OVERTURES,
 REPORTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS**

All pertinent overtures and materials were given to the Overtures Committee for dispersal to the appropriate Standing Committees. Some items from Permanent Reports, Reports of Officers and Parochial Reports were referred to appropriate Standing Committees. The results of the Classis' actions to the various recommendations are printed in this Abstract as they were adopted.

PRESENTATION OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive Committee

Honorable Western Classis
 Reformed Church in the United States

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee received one request for the Rev. Eric Bristley to be considered a candidate for Associate Pastor at Covenant Reformed Church in Grass Valley. This was referred to the Candidates and Credentials Committee. Only one Executive Circular was necessary this year with three recommendations all concerning this Classis meeting. There were no objections to these, and these have been approved and are listed below.

Recommendation 1: That the 20th Annual Session of the Western Classis convene at Grace Reformed Church, Willows, CA, on Tuesday, March 8, 2005 at 1:00 PM, and conclude at the end of business on Thursday, March 10, 2005.

Recommendation 2: That the following schedule for services be approved:

- Tues. March 8: Opening Devotions at 1:00 PM – Rev. Tom Mayville
 Tues. March 8: Evening Service at 7:30 PM – Rev. Eric Bristley, preaching; Rev. Frank Walker, conducting.
 Wed. March 9: Morning Devotions – Rev. Paul Henderson
 Thurs. March 10: Morning Devotions – Rev. Gil Baloy
 Thurs. March 10: Closing Devotions – Elder from Willows

Recommendation 3: That a Special Order be set at the 20th Annual Spring Classis Meeting

of the Western Classis to examine Rev. Bristley for licensure.

Rev. Jim West, Chm., Rev. Hank Bowen, Elder Chris Fellersen

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

B. Missions Committee

Esteemed Brothers:

The Mission congregations of the Western Classis that are supported by Classis and Synodical funds are Covenant Reformed Church at Chico, Grace Reformed Chapel at San Ramon, and Rehoboth Chapel in the LA Basin.

The Covenant Reformed Chapel in San Diego continues under the oversight of the Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church and does not receive any funding from Classis or Synod.

Covenant Reformed Church, Chico – The Rev. Gary Mancilas

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15: 58).

Brethren, Covenant Reformed Church, by God's all sufficient grace and power, has indeed continued steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord. Operating for only a second full year with their own Consistory and Spiritual Council, God has blessed the saints in Chico with officers who are very spiritually competent men who seek to use their respective gifts to the glory of God and the good of their fellow members.

After meeting with the Consistory for a brief but profitable time, once again, I came away from the meeting with an energized attitude in regard to the work of missions. Their desire to do all things decently and in order, and with an eye single for God's glory, is truly refreshing! For as many of you know, the work of missions can and often is filled with many disappointments, discouragement's, and countless frustrations, as the congregation and its officers seek to remain faithful and true to the reformed faith in an ever increasing “un- or non-reforming,” careless, and independent society!

Yet, the congregation continues to gather for worship each Lord's Day in the Adventist building, where the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is faithfully proclaimed.

The present communicant membership stands at 23 (up from 21 last year). Though small in number, the congregation is striving to meet its financial obligations both to the Classis and Synod. They are very focused and committed on their responsibilities in regards to both the work of the ministry in the Chico area and in the R.C.U.S. *Abounding in the work of the Lord* describes exactly what Pastor Mancilas, the Elders and Deacons, and the members are doing. The grace and power of God is indeed evident in these folk and their labors.

The Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church is therefore requesting that the Western

Classis grant Covenant Reformed Church of Chico, CA, Classical support in the amount of \$7,857.45. Also, that the Western Classis petition the RCUS Synod for Synodical support in the amount of \$8,043.75; and that the Western Classis petition the RCUS Synod for benevolent support in the amount of \$3,600 to help pay for the health insurance premiums of the Rev. Gary Mancilas.

Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon – The Rev. Jonathan Merica.

“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. O fear the Lord, Ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him”(Psalm 34: 8-9).

These verses were read at the beginning of the Rev. Jonathan Merica’s report to the Permanent Home Missions committee as we met on November 30 in Sacramento. Although he has definitely been experiencing some lean times, our fellow soldier of the cross continues by God’s sustaining grace and goodness to remain steadfast, immovable, and abounding always in the work that Christ has called him to in the San Ramon area. Truly we ought to make a special effort within our own fields of labor to pray for our dear brother and his wife, and for the members of Grace Reformed Chapel. Rev. Merica concluded his report with these words (this request!): *“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving: Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ . . .” (Colossians 4:2-3).*

Our committee was requested to reassess the work in San Ramon to determine whether or not it was a viable work. Here are our findings and our recommendations:

- That both the Consistory overseeing the mission work in San Ramon and your committee believe that Rev. Jonathan Merica has remained faithful and diligent in his labors unto the Lord in this work. We give thanks to God for Rev. Merica’s devotion to his Sovereign Lord and to the ministry to His people. We also give thanks for the faithful shepherding provided by the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley.
- That to their credit, the congregation has increased their overall giving beyond the recommendation of this committee when it visited the work in April of 2004.
- That there has been a marked decrease in attendance and membership since our April visit. The statistics provided by Rev. Merica show a decrease in average attendance from 19 to 13 in the past 6 months. He also reported losses in membership as well.
- That, although the members of San Ramon mission work consistently express a desire for an RCUS church in the Tri-Valley area, the fact is that few of them are involved in reaching out to their friends, family, and the community in any significant way. Only one or two individuals, for example, actively bring others to worship. Furthermore, we understand that over half of the members reside outside the Tri-valley area and most have to drive approximately 75 miles one way to attend services. This means that there are only four member families that reside in the Tri-Valley area.

It will therefore be this committee’s recommendation that the Western Classis and the Synod of the RCUS not fund this mission work after January 2006 unless there is a marked improvement in attendance and/or membership.

The committee understands “marked improvement” as consisting in the addition to the membership of at least two (2) families from the Tri-Valley area to the rolls of membership (a family would consist of more than simply a single person) or a significant increase in the

number of visitors from the Tri-Valley area that would give the appearance that this work is vibrant and growing to a new visitor.

Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra – The Rev. Jay Fluck

I had not received a report on this mission work at the writing of this report. I am hoping Rev. Riffert will have a report to give at the Classis meeting. I did receive a projected budget and have included here the following requests contained in an overture received from the overseeing consistory, Ebenezer Reformed Church Shafter, CA regarding the Rehoboth Chapel.

The Ebenezer Reformed Consistory, Shafter, CA, respectfully overtures the Western Classis for mission support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA, as follows:

For 2006, we would request classical support in the amount of \$23,375.00. We further overture the Western Classis to petition the 259th Synod for mission support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA, for 2006, support in the amount of \$13,728.00.

Recommendations:

1. That the Western Classis grant Covenant Reformed Church of Chico, CA, Classical support in the amount of \$7,857.45. And that the Western Classis petition the RCUS Synod for Synodical support in the amount of \$8,043.75; and that the Western Classis petition the RCUS Synod for benevolent support in the amount of \$3,600 to help pay for the health insurance premiums of the Rev. Gary Mancilas.
2. That the Western Classis and the Synod of the RCUS not fund this mission work after January 2006 unless there is a marked improvement in attendance and/or membership. The committee understands “marked improvement” as consisting in the addition to the membership of at least two (2) families from the Tri-Valley area to the rolls of membership (a family would consist of more than simply a single person) or a significant increase in the number of visitors from the Tri-Valley area that would give the appearance that this work is vibrant and growing to a new visitor.
3. That Classis grant Rehoboth Chapel classical support in the amount of \$23,375.00 for 2006. And that the Western Classis petition the 259th Synod for mission support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA, for 2006, support in the amount of \$13,728.00.

*Rev. Paul Henderson, Chm., Rev. Frank Walker,
Rev. Michael Voytek, Rev. Neale Riffert
Elder Don Bender, Elder Wayne Lingenfelter, Elder Jeff Mills*

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Standing Missions Committee.

C. Christian Education in the Church Committee

Esteemed Brethren,

Your Committee was given no mandate and did not meet nor conduct any business

during this past classical year.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. George Horner (Chmn), Rev. Vernon Pollema, Rev. Dennis Roe,
Rev. Gary Mancilas, Elder Ryan Spitzer, Elder Earl Van Houton*

Classis Action: The report was received.

D. Candidates and Credentials Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers:

The Western Classis currently has two men under care: Mr. Scott Henry, a student at Heidelberg Theological Seminary in Vermillion, SD; and Mr. Douglas Schlegel, a student at City Seminary in Sacramento, CA. During this past year, we also received two requests that we bring to your attention. The first comes from Mr. C. Carl Esparza, a member and elder of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter (serving in Rehoboth Chapel in the L.A. Basin), who desires to come under care. The second is the request of Rev. Eric Bristley, a minister in good standing of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, who desires to transfer his ministerial credentials to the Western Classis.

Mr. Scott Henry reports that he is in his sixth year as a student under care of Classis and in his third year at Heidelberg Theological Seminary. His transcript shows a cumulative GPA of 3.73 (his GPA for the fall semester of 2004 was slightly higher at 3.875). Mr. Henry has had multiple opportunities to preach the Word of God over the course of the preceding year. Most notably, he preached twice per month at Emmanuel Reformed Church, Sutton, NE, before the new pastor arrived on the scene (Sept. 2003–May 2004), and has served as a regular pulpit supply at Zion Reformed Church, Menno, SD, since the I.N.S. forced Rev. Kalkman to leave the U.S. in August of 2004 due to problems with his application for a green card. Mr. Henry also served a split internship (five weeks each) at Zion Reformed Church, Menno, SD, and Trinity Reformed Church, Sioux Falls, SD, over the summer of 2004. However, his internship was cut short by three weeks because of the illness and eventual death of his father-in-law in Panama. To aid in his continuing studies, Mr. Henry requests the Western Classis to overture Synod for full student aid (\$4,750.00) in order to complete his studies at Heidelberg Seminary. He also thanks the Western Classis and Synod for its generous support, and extends a special note of appreciation to Rev. Gary Mancilas, who keeps in regular contact with him, and to Rev. Jay Fluck, who has encouraged him with many books.

Mr. Douglas Schlegel, our other student, came under care of Classis last year, though he actually began his studies at City Seminary of Sacramento in the fall of 2000. In September 2004, Mr. Schlegel completed all the requirements for the Associate Theological Studies degree, and graduated *cum laude* with a concentration in New Testament. He is now continuing his education with the goal of earning a Bachelor of Divinity. Mr. Schlegel

continues as an active elder at Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento, CA, and provides for his family by working full time. In addition to teaching the adult Bible class at Covenant Reformed Church, he also takes advantage of opportunities to preach in various churches of the Western Classis (Anderson, Yuba City, Lodi and San Ramon). Of special interest, Mr. Schlegel had the privilege of traveling to Kenya in November–December of 2004 in behalf of the Foreign Ministries Committee of Synod. Because of the generosity of City Seminary (free tuition to RCUS students under care of Classis), Mr. Schlegel makes no financial requests of Classis or Synod. However, he wishes to express his gratitude for the wise counsel and encouragement of the pastors and elders of the Western Classis.

Your committee is pleased to report that Mr. C. Carl Esparza has requested to come under care of Classis as a student for the ministry. The Consistory of Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, CA, endorses his request enthusiastically. A sub-committee of the Candidates and Credentials Committee (viz., Revs. Fluck and Horner, and Elder Bender) met with Mr. Esparza on January 25th of this year to review his background and ascertain his goals. The report of the sub-committee states that Mr. Esparza is thirty-nine years of age and married with four children. He was converted to the Reformed faith in 1991 (from Romanism) as a result of reading Scripture for himself. His education includes two years at Cal. State L.A., one year of technical school, and one year at Loyola. For the past ten years, he has been studying under Rev. Jay Fluck, covering the same material that would comprise the curriculum of a theological seminary. Mr. Esparza has demonstrated his gifts and knowledge in many ways: serving as an elder in Rehoboth chapel, teaching adult Sunday school classes, exhorting in Bakersfield, Shafter and Lancaster. He has an excellent testimony from those who know him well, and a tremendous zeal for the proclamation of God's Word. Mr. Esparza's desire, due to family and employment responsibilities, is to continue his program of self-study under Rev. Fluck's mentorship, and to complete the licensure requirements at the 2007 Classis meeting. The sub-committee that met with Mr. Esparza makes several recommendations to facilitate his preparation for licensure, which will be given below.

Your committee was also informed that Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley, CA, has extended a call to the Rev. Eric Bristley, to serve as its associate pastor without remuneration. Rev. Bristley is known to many of us, having been a licentiate in the RCUS in the early 1980s, and, more recently, for his editing of the *James I. Good Collection* CD-ROM. His ministerial credentials are currently with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but he wishes to accept the call to Grass Valley. He believes that his theology is more in line with the RCUS than the OPC. Rev. Bristley is currently teaching apologetics at City Seminary. His artistic design abilities can be seen in the premier issue of *Leben*, City Seminary's quarterly magazine. Rev. Bristley plans to support himself and his family via computer work, pulpit supply, teaching at City Seminary, etc. A sub-committee of the Candidates and Credentials Committee (Revs. Walker, Roe and Treick) interviewed him on January 12 of this year, and believes that he should undergo the constitutionally-required trials at the forthcoming meeting of Classis.

Recommendations:

1. That the Western Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for student aid in the amount of \$4,750.00 for Mr. Scott Henry to continue his studies at Heidelberg Theological Seminary during the 2005–6 academic year.

2. That Mr. Scott Henry be encouraged to undergo a complete licensure examination at the 2006 meeting of the Western Classis.
3. That Mr. C. Carl Esparza be interviewed on the floor of Classis regarding his request to become a student under care of Classis.
4. That the Western Classis adopt the following program for Mr. Esparza's preparation for the gospel ministry, contingent upon his acceptance by the Classis as a student under care:
 - a. That Mr. Esparza be assigned the usual theological papers that are part of the licensure process and that they be completed by the 2006 Classis meeting, with the results made available in next year's report of this committee.
 - b. That Mr. Esparza be given the Greek examination prior to the 2006 Classis meeting, with the results made available in next year's report of this committee.
 - c. That Mr. Esparza undergo an examination in the theological loci on the floor of the 2006 Classis meeting; the Classis will then determine whether Mr. Esparza needs additional theological study and/or papers before further examination.
 - d. That Mr. Esparza be given the Hebrew examination in the interval between the 2006 and 2007 Classes, with the results made available in this committee's report to the 2007 Classis.
 - e. That Mr. Esparza be examined on the floor of Classis 2007 in all the areas necessary for licensure not previously tested.
 - f. That a subcommittee of the Candidates and Credential Committee oversee Mr. Esparza's preparation for licensure, that this committee meet with Mr. Esparza at least once every other month, and that Rev. Jay Fluck continue to provide a regular mentorship for him.
5. That the Rev. Eric Bristley be examined on the floor of Classis as follows:
 - Intent (10 minutes) — Fluck
 - Followed by questions from the floor.
 - Prolegomena (15 minutes) — Roe
 - Theology Proper (15 minutes) — Walker
 - Anthropology (15 minutes) — Treick
 - Christology (15 minutes) — Walker
 - Soteriology (15 minutes) — Roe
 - Ecclesiology (15 minutes) — Treick
 - Eschatology (15 minutes) — Fluck
 - Followed by questions from the floor.
 - RCUS Standards (20 minutes) — Treick
 - Followed by questions from the floor.
6. That Rev. Bristley, contingent upon his examination being sustained, be licensed by the Western Classis and his name added to the roll of ministers of the Western Classis.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Frank Walker (Chmn), Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. George Horner,
Rev. Jay Fluck, Elder Don Bender, Elder David Stelpstra*

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Standing Examination and Licensure.

E. Interchurch Relations Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

The Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee of the Western Classis has endeavored to maintain close communication with our fraternal brethren of other Reformed and Presbyterian churches. Western Classis delegates have been sent to our fraternal brethren's assemblies. We have been in communication with our fraternal brethren by making telephone calls, corresponding via U. S. mail and e-mail. Letters of invitation were sent to our fraternal brethren to encourage them to attend our 20th Western Classis Meeting. The presbyteries receiving invitations to attend the 20th Annual Western Classis meeting were The Presbytery of Northern California, OPC, The Presbytery of Southern California, OPC, The Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA. An invitation was sent to the Pacific Classis East of the Canadian Reformed Churches in North America. An invitation to attend our 20th Annual Western Classis meeting as an observer was also sent to the Classis Southwest U.S. of the Federation of United Reformed Churches in North America. We look forward to receiving greetings from our Reformed and Presbyterian brethren at our 20th Western Classis Meeting on March 8-10, 2005. May the Lord prosper our labors in the kingdom of God as we proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your servant would like to express a note of gratitude to those who served as Western Classis representatives to various presbytery and classis meetings. The 2004-2005 fraternal delegates or observers who attended other Presbytery or Classis meetings were as follows: Rev. Lloyd Gross served as an observer delegate to the Classis Southwest U.S., URCNA, which convened on March 23 and 24, 2004, at the Calvary United Reformed Church in Loveland, CO. Rev. Gil Baloy served as an observer delegate to the Classis Southwest U.S., URCNA, which convened on September 14-15, 2004, at the URCNA in Oceanside, California. Rev. Jonathan Merica attended the 2004 Spring Stated meeting of the Presbytery of Northern California, OPC as a Western Classis delegate, which convened on March 19-20, 2004, at the OPC in Castroville, CA. Rev. Jonathan Merica also sent a letter of greeting on behalf of the Western Classis to the 2004 Second Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California, OPC which convened at the New Life OPC in La Mesa, CA on May 7-8, 2004. Rev. George Horner served as the fraternal delegate of the Western Classis at the 2004 Third Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California, OPC which convened at Branch of Hope Church in Torrance, CA on October 15-16, 2004. Rev. Gil Baloy served as the fraternal delegate of the Western Classis at the 2005 First Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California, OPC which convened at Calvary OPC in La Mirada, CA on February 4-5, 2005. Rev. Michael Voytek served as the fraternal delegate of the Western Classis at the Pacific Classis East of the Federation of Canadian Reformed Churches in Abbotsford, BC, Canada, which convened on December 2, 2004. Rev. Gil Baloy served as the fraternal delegate of the Western Classis at the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA in San Diego, CA, which convened on February 11-12, 2005. The fraternal delegates and observers representing the Western Classis will be giving their reports when the Western Classis convenes on March 8-10, 2005.

The Western Classis is blessed of God to have a bond of love and unity with our fraternal brethren of other Presbyterian and Reformed churches. It is your servant’s desire that we may make our fraternal bond stronger, and that we may work more closely together. It was suggested by one of our fraternal brothers that we engage more in the exchange of pulpits with our fraternal churches, when possible. I’m sure that we would all concur that is a good idea, but perhaps in the coming months ahead we ought to put it into practice, if we haven’t already.

May God give us the grace in the months ahead to experience in our fraternal relations with other churches, the sweet unity spoken of in Psalm 133:1, **“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”**

Respectfully submitted,
 Rev. Jonathan Merica (Chmn), Rev. Lloyd Gross, Rev. Thomas Mayville,
 Elder Greg Stewart, Elder David Helseth, Elder Rick Lopez

Classis Action: The report was received.

F. Publications Committee

Dear Brethren,

The Publications Committee did not transact any business during the Classical year.

Respectfully submitted,
 Elder Wayne Johnson (Chmn), Elder Chris Combs, Rev. Thomas Mayville,
 Rev. George Horner, Rev. Michael Voytek

Classis Action: The report was received.

G. Diaconal Ministries Committee

Esteemed Brethren,

Your Committee received no requests for diaconal aid during the past classical year. Consequently, the Committee did not meet nor conduct any business.

However, at the 19th Annual Session, the Western Classis approved the following recommendation of the Standing Benevolences Committee: *That the Western Classis grant to Mr. Scott Henry, student under care of Western Classis, benevolent aid in the amount of \$400.00 per month for the next four (4) months beginning March 2004.*

Your chairman assumes that this will appear as diaconal aid expended this past classical year.

Respectfully submitted,
 Rev. Vernon Pollema (Chmn), Rev. Jonathan Merica, Rev. Gil Baloy
 Elder Steve Wilbur, Elder Greg Stewart, Deacon John Warren

Classis Action: The report was received.

H. Heidelberg West Youth Camp Committee

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The 2004 Heidelberg West Youth Camp, according to Camp Director Greg Born, was a great success, thanks to our gracious Lord, and to the many faithful servants that volunteered their time and energy on behalf of God’s covenant young folk. We praise God as well for our young people, and their continued faithfulness unto the Lord of their salvation!

Although yours truly was not able to be present because of “chemo infused nuttiness”, I am truly grateful for the labors of brother Born, as he filled the shoes of Camp Director on such short notice, and did an outstanding job as leader of the troops!

Thus, on behalf of the Heidelberg West Your Camp Committee, I thank you all for your prayers and labors on behalf of our covenant youth. Especially we express our gratitude to Mr. Greg Born and his wife Susie for their magnanimous effort; Mr. Chris Fellersen for his faithful labor as our Camp Treasurer and to Mrs. Judith Reyna for her excellent work as our Camp Registrar.

<u>Financial Report</u>		<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>
Campers (incl. underage)		72	104
Counselors and Pastors		31	32
Total		103	136
Income:	Beg. Balance	\$4,803.60	\$3,910.45
	Registrations	2,376.00	7,440.00
	Guideline	696.00	696.73
	Total	7,875.60	12,047.18
Expenses:	Camp Fee	\$4,025.00	\$4,422.00
	Food	1,100.00	1,310.00
	T-shirts	763.00	1,093.00
	Misc. - recreation	257.00	455.16
	Other stuff	117.32	
	Total	6,262.32	7,280.16
	End Balance	\$2,237.32	\$4,767.02

Recommendation: That a guideline of \$2.00 per communicant member be set for 2005.

Respectfully submitted:
 Rev. Paul H. Henderson (Chmn), Rev. Thomas Mayville,

Elder Greg Born, Elder Greg Stewart, Elder Michael Peery

Classis Action: The recommendation was adopted and the report was referred to standing finances.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

A. The President's Report on the State of the Church

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

In a recent read of mine the author praised Nehemiah's response to the enemies of Israel, who wanted him to come down from the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah told Sanballat and Tobiah that "I am doing a great work and I cannot COME DOWN." Dr. J.D. Jones used this incident to rebuff some individuals in England who wanted him to forsake the pulpit in order to run for political office. His famous response was "It would be a COME DOWN to forsake the pulpit for the political world." As I was reading your Parochial Reports it was easy to discern that all of you love to proclaim the Gospel of Christ so that it would be a "come down" to do anything else. Your reports reminded me of an anecdote about Oscar Wilde, who while checking through Customs was asked if he had anything to declare. He responded: "Only my genius." I would judge that if the same question was asked you at Customs, you would respond, "I *declare* only the Gospel."

All of your reports speak about the faithful preaching of God's word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the imposition of church discipline. Thus, it is a no brainer to conclude that all of the governmental marks of the church are alive and well in our Western Classis churches. This translates into the comforting truth that Christ dwells in our churches by His Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and since all our churches are preaching that truth, we can be assured of God's gracious presence in our midst. The candlestick may not always burn with full flame, but it does burn in a manner that our churches are not in immediate danger of removal.

The statistics for the past year show that our communicant membership is holding steady at 754, up one per cent from the previous year. Non-communicant membership is 315, down 8%. The regular offerings were up 7% to \$1,285,188, but the total receipts for 2004 were down by 9%. On the positive side, giving to the Classis was up a significant 44% to \$95,817 (from \$66,660). Your President notes that there were only two adult baptisms throughout the Classis churches in 2004 (which might mean that there was little evangelism or at least little effective evangelism among the unbelieving population). On the other hand, there were 22 professions of faith in the Classis churches.

Regarding the Parochial Reports, your President summarizes them accordingly:

The Rev. Thomas Mayville reports of his busy labors preaching and teaching God's word. He reports of His work with the youth of the church and of his (and the elders) visiting all the families or heads of households every nine months. Of particular note, is the congregation's election of two qualified men to the office of elder. The greatest need of the church now, according to him, is the election of two new deacons. Related to the work of the church is the establishment of the Oak Tree Christian School, which is now in Orland.

The school is now expanded to K through high school. He reports that this will have a great impact in Glenn County (and no doubt upon the life of the church, too). He is optimistic about the future and his report shows that the church seeks to be on the cutting edge of relevance for the community at large.

Pastor Dennis Roe reports about the ongoing preaching of God's word in Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley. He laments that about one fourth of the congregation schismatically moved on this past year, but with the morning service still averaging 70-80 attendees. He tells us that although schism is "painful," he looks beyond this turbulence to the sovereign hand of God. He knows that schism often reveals God's approval of those who adhere to His truth and who faithfully remain in the congregation. He is also encouraged by the congregation's steadfast zeal and the recent arrival of the Rev. Eric Bristley and his family to the Grass Valley area.

The Rev. George Horner continues to labor faithfully at Grace Reformed in Bakersfield. He speaks about a church which is alive in Christ and that is zealous for God's truth. He speaks of the difficulty of Church discipline and his concern also for the Christian education of the covenant children. He also reports about many visitors to the church, many of which attended recent lectures on the Biblical doctrine of creation. The distinctives of the Reformed Faith continue to be taught boldly and are not a mere footnote on the ecclesiastical page. The church is successfully striving to be hospitable, as fellowship dinners are held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays following the worship service. There is also a hospitality committee whose purpose is to invite visitors home for lunch.

The Rev. Hank Bowen of Faith Reformed Church in Anderson speaks of steady growth and steady attendance at the morning worship services. He sees the church as "alive in her obedience to Christ," and emphasizes the ongoing need to be energetic in personal evangelism. The congregation's greatest need is for additional elders. The church also has a web page to advertise itself throughout the Anderson-Redding area. The giving of tithes and offerings are more consistent and liberal from Lord's Day to Lord's Day. Pastor Bowen is excited about the future for Faith Reformed Church. There is no waning of morale in this congregation.

Pastor Paul Henderson's parochial report was freighted with thankfulness to God and to his brothers for assisting him through a very difficult year in which his health waned and then revived. Amazingly, he was absent from the pulpit only ten times in 2004 and three of these instances were related to Missionfest and vacation! He sees God's Spirit working in the lives of His people in such a way that both godly living and cheerful giving have resulted. He writes about the importance of punctuating all of our plans with the famous words, "If the Lord will." His report is upbeat and positive. He is no doubt looking forward to a prosperous 2005, but always with the words "if the Lord will" before him.

Pastor Vernon Pollema speaks about reaching the wise age of 65. Rather than hearing about the culturally-decreed custom of retirement, we find him speaking about renewing his zeal for the work of the Gospel ministry. The oversight of the elders over the congregation has been faithful, including the oversight of Rehoboth Chapel in the LA Basin. Ebenezer Reformed Church continues to be a fellowshipping church, too. He reports that the labors of the pastor "must continue," reminding us of the Apostolic implosion in Acts 4:20, "For we *cannot* but speak the things that we have seen and heard."

The Rev. Paul Treick urges us not to forget the importance of doctrinal faithfulness, since our day is a day of what he calls theological terrorism. He speaks of his preaching,

serving the sacraments, writing, and also his grief at the death of Mrs. Tina Lark. He reports about Joshua Lark's continuing battle with leukemia and his current stem cell transplant therapy. He tells us about the stable, financial health of the church and the eagerness of God's people to help in the improvement of the building. His report is not only concerned with the marks of the church, but also the marks of the Christian, which (he reminds us) the Belgic Confession describes as faith in Christ, avoidance of sin, the practice of righteousness, loving God and our neighbor, and crucifying the flesh with the works thereof.

Your President's parochial report notes both my labors at City Seminary and in the pulpit at Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento. With regard to pulpit ministry, I preached about five times a month, including three messages about communion versus paedocommunion. In the seminary, I taught the Soteriology class, spending a great deal of time on the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. The giving in the church has been most generous, enabling us to support many local and international ministries. Much of my time this past year addressed domestic issues, both before and after the death of my mother in April. Our church continues to be nearly full every Lord's Day morning, and sometimes the ecclesiastical cup "runneth over." Despite a few jarring chuck holes on "interstate 2004," God's grace continues to abound in Sacramento.

The Rev. Lloyd Gross reports of his touring some Reformation sites in Europe this past year. He writes about his amazement at the apostasy of Princeton Seminary, especially in the light of its Reformed heritage. He reports of his recent diagnosis of prostate cancer and asks your prayers in his behalf. Nevertheless, his trust in our sovereign God is strong.

Pastor Jonathan Merica continues his work as missionary at Grace Reformed Chapel in San Ramon, where he preaches each Lord's Day and teaches every Wednesday night. The mission work is doing virtually everything it can to spread the glad-tidings of the Gospel. This past year the congregation took a sizeable hit, losing five communicant members. Nevertheless, the Chapel still has 18 communicants and does not appear to be discouraged. Pastor Merica again and again in his Parochial Report requests prayer for this work, which has much potential and may open a door to the whole Bay Area region.

Rev. Frank Walker reports of his ministry at both Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento and City Seminary. He continues to find the work of the ministry both in and outside the seminary very rewarding. He reports of his series of sermons on Justification, his teaching Church history to the Adult Sunday School Class, and his preaching "on the road" to other congregations. He loves what he is doing and tells us about his preaching the equivalent of 288 sermons last year!

The Rev. Gary Mancilas at Covenant Reformed Church in Chico exults in the Word that God has commanded him to preach. The main concern of the Consistory this past year was church growth. Attempts were made to disseminate the Reformed Faith via the newspaper and television. The communicant membership there stands at 23. He reports that the church has fallen short of fulfilling the Classical and Synodical financial guidelines. He asks for your prayers in this matter, as well as the congregation's evangelistic outreach in the area which from a standpoint of numerical growth has not yet produced the fruit that our brothers there would like to see.

Pastor Michael Voytek begins his report praising the glory of preaching, which he calls "the greatest and most treasured." He speaks of the congregation's reaching out to the community with hundreds of tracts and the sale of many books, too. He writes about the church's distribution of funds to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of his teaching

schedule, which includes teaching Hebrew and other Old Testament courses at City Seminary in Sacramento.

Pastor Jay Fluck speaks of the geographical meanderings of Rehoboth Chapel in his report, reminding us that not only are we as individuals pilgrims in this world, but entire congregations may be as well. He praises God for the now tranquil meeting conditions of Rehoboth Chapel and for the two ruling elders that serve in its midst. He speaks of the stratospheric cost of renting a building in the LA basin area and of his own physical declension. He is particularly thankful for the generous giving of Ebenezer Reformed Church and the Western Classis. In spite of many trials, the Chapel continues to grow in strength and in numbers.

Pastor Gil Baloy reports that the work of the Lord continues in a steady and encouraging fashion at Covenant Reformed Chapel in San Diego. He speaks of the necessity of preaching, writing that if there is an iceberg in the pulpit, there will be an iceberg in the pew. The church continues to do evangelism in Balboa Park near the San Diego Zoo. He speaks about visiting and counseling activities, telling us that the difference between public preaching and counseling is that counseling is "customized" preaching. He writes that the building is slowing filling up and thus becoming "cozier." He praises God for His enrollment in the Reformed Church in the United States and the Western Classis.

The Rev. Neale Riffert is very positive about a very good year at Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster. Your President remembers years ago quoting Augustine who said that "it is better to limp in the right direction than to run in the wrong direction." He also remembers asking Pastor Riffert how he was doing and hearing the response, "I trust I am limping in the right direction." Nowadays, there appears to be running in the right direction! This past year Grace Reformed Church took in several new members by profession of faith and confirmation. The giving at the Church has been healthy, as the congregation will be asking for a 20% reduction in financial assistance at this Classis.

All in all, your President is encouraged by the faithfulness of the ministers in the Western Classis. Our God has committed a priceless stewardship to us and our responsibility is to be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10). Our central responsibility is the lively preaching of the Word of God. I believe this is being accomplished with vigor in all our churches.

Your President noted a few souls tired and ragged. This may be due to the graying of the outward man, the need for more R&R, or even the need for more fellowship among ourselves that would result in the rejuvenation our spirits. One of the things that we ministers need more of is fellowship among ourselves. There are not too many who can commiserate with us when we are hemorrhaging on the inside and flagging on the outside. We return again to the old expression prominent in the 18th century about the difference between being *tired in* the work and *tired of* the work.

Your President was grieved by the hardships of the missionaries, who have a very tough field to plow. There is no doubt need for better communication with them throughout the year. More fellowship, or a mere phone call would do much to close the communication gap, so that we could pray more fervently and consistently for the missionaries. It is easy for us to forget that the future of the Western Classis lay in the work of missions. There is a great deal of truth in the old aphorism, "Evangelize or fossilize." And there is total truth in the statement that Christ's promise to be with us "always, even to the end of the world," hangs on our commitment to "go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"

(Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). We should also be reminded that the job description of the Permanent Home Missions Committee of Classis is to “diligently” prosecute the works of missions. This is a Mount Everest responsibility for those chosen to serve on that committee.

Your President noted the relative brevity of most of your reports. You spoke with “lapidary succinctness” (a J. Gresham Machen expression). It was obvious that some of you had to restrain yourself from saying too much and that your schedules are so full that you chose to limit yourselves to what was immediately germane to the Constitutional requirements. Sometimes when a minister does not have much to say he is covering up his black and blue marks. This is quite all right because if we are faithful to Christ, we understand that black and blue marks are every bit “the marks of the Christian” as faith, love, etc (Galatians 6:17). On the other hand, when Nehemiah told Sanballat that he was doing a great work of the Lord so that he would not come down, there were no Fourth of July fireworks on top of the walls. It was a great work of the Lord because God commanded him to rebuild the walls to prepare for the restoration of the Theocracy and the (ultimate) advent of the Messiah (exactly what we are doing, too). Indeed, our routine work for the Lord is *routinely great*. May our God continue to energize us to remain at our posts and to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God!

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Jim West

Classis Action: The report was received and it was moved to have it printed in the Abstract of the Classis and in the *Reformed Herald*.

B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The minutes of the 19th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis were typed, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder along with all reports, overtures, and pertinent information. According to the Synod's Committee on the Minutes of Classis, the minutes were corrected as needed.

The Abstract of the 19th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis was prepared and 250 copies were printed, bound, and mailed to the delegates and the congregations of the Western Classis and the Synod within the time limits of Standing Rule #9. For the Western Classis one copy was sent for each delegate and six more copies for each congregation. Three copies were mailed to each of the congregations of the other three Classes of Synod and one to retired pastors. The cost of printing, packaging, and mailing the Abstracts was \$810.71.

The President's Report on the State of the Church was printed in the Abstract and in the *Reformed Herald*. Six overtures along with copies of papers for information from the Western Classis were sent to Synod for consideration. They were acted upon and reported in the Synodical Abstract of the 258th Annual Session. A summary of all financial matters approved by the Classis was sent to the Treasurer.

A letter was sent to Mr. Harold Camping stating that in light of his failure to repent for his teaching regarding the end of the visible church and encouraging Christians to depart

from existing congregations that it is our intention to publically warn the people of God concerning his heretical teachings. As in the past, no letter of response was received, but several pamphlets and books were sent to your clerk.

Your clerk reports that there were no changes in matters pertaining to the Western Classis.

Delegates are reminded that all overtures or correspondence with the Clerk should be on white 8½ x 11 inch paper so it is suitable for filing and/or binding if necessary. All reports must have the signatures of a majority of the members. This year this seems to have been observed for the most part so far. Your clerk has requested that your parochial and permanent committee reports be given to him in an electronic format in addition to the signed hard copy to help facilitate their inclusion into the Abstract in a timely manner. It is not necessary to send statistics or credentials in electronic format as they are not placed directly into the Abstract.

Your clerk would like to bring up one final matter. Like the previous clerk, the Classis laptop computer has come to the day for its retirement as it no longer is capable of handling the work needed to be performed for the Classis. As such the Classis needs to decide what to do with the old laptop and whether it should be replaced?

Your clerk has nothing further to report.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Henry P. Bowen

Classis Action: The report was received. The Classis approved \$1,000 to be allocated to replace the Classis laptop computer.

Stated Clerk, Western Classis,
RCUS Attachment: Letter sent to Mr. Harold Camping

Mr. Harold Camping
Family Stations Inc.
290 Hegenburger Rd.
Oakland, CA 94621

Dear Mr. Camping,

The Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States, at its 19th Annual Session (March 9-11, 2004) discussed your non-response to our letter calling upon you to repent of your teaching on the visible church.

The Classis, therefore, acted to inform you, in keeping with Titus 3:10, 11, that your current teachings on the visible church be declared and regarded as heretical among the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

While we fully comprehend that it is your view that the authority of the visible church no longer exists, you certainly have not proven this point by your allegorical method of

exegesis. As those who God has placed in the Church to oversee the body of Christ, we would be remiss in our office and calling if we did not warn all of the sheep of the danger involved in your teaching of this grievous error.

Your error involves your final conclusion and the hermeneutical method to achieve it. Such methodology, akin to that which liberals and others have employed for years, is neither new nor trustworthy. You have set yourself above tens of thousands of Christians over many years who have vehemently denied such a false teaching.

The damage you have done to the Lord's beloved sheep who have heeded your call to "depart" strikes at the very core of the covenant of grace and the Sovereign God of grace. If your call is obeyed, you have removed the sacraments from the saints as though they were expendable. You have arbitrarily canceled the command of our Lord, "This do as often as ye drink of it, in remembrance of me, for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death until He come." (I Cor. 11:25, 26) You have also assumed a level of perfectionism which assumes that the sheep no longer need under-shepherds or the discipline of the church. You have declared that the Holy Spirit is no longer sovereignly willing to save God's chosen people within the ministry of the local church.

While we too agree that God continues to open His Word to us and that the revelation of His plan of history continues to progress, we strongly object to your false notion that God holds back from man's understanding certain portions of His Word until convenient times in history.

You have previously predicted that Christ would return in 1994 (or very likely so, as you state). In a letter to you dated March 19, 1993, we called for your repentance and repudiation of that teaching. You did not respond. You have been proven completely wrong by God Himself. Rather than repent, you have given that teaching a different application. God's punishment of those who declare what is God's Word when it is not are not only subjecting themselves to the punishment of God, but God also counsels everyone not to give heed to any other teachings he may promulgate (Deut. 18:20-22). Since you did not respond to either of our letters of admonition lovingly calling upon you to repent of these erroneous teachings, we now find it necessary to declare your teachings false and warn the flock of God not to heed your teachings.

We further continue to admonish you to humbly listen to our call, and that of many other Christians, to repent openly of this egregious error and urge your hearers to return to the assembly of the saints in the local church. We understand how far you have gone with this teaching, and that turning back is difficult but not impossible by the grace of God. We continue to encourage you to contact us immediately that our gracious Savior would use such interaction as a means to restore you to the true historical faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Lord's service,
Henry P. Bowen
Stated Clerk, Western Classis, RCUS

C. The Executive Committee of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee of Synod reports that there are no matters from the 258th Synod of the RCUS that require special action at your Annual Classes meetings.

The Classes are advised to check that the new guidelines and interpretations for the Statistical Reports sent to the Classes Clerks are consistently followed. See 258th Synod Abstract p. 95, #'s 5 and 6. This is the first year for these guidelines. Also note that if a mission church (unorganized) is under the oversight of another congregation, the mission's totals are to be added to the totals of the overseeing church, *and* the mission's numbers are to be listed, but not added again in the totals.

Note, that there was an error in the date for the 259th Synod which meets in Bakersfield/Shafter, CA. The date should be corrected so that Synod convenes at 7:30 PM, May 16, 2005. More information on that meeting will be forthcoming.

In the Lord's service,
Paul H. Treick, *Stated Clerk*,
for the Executive Committee of Synod

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Standing Minutes of Synod Committee.

D. Treasurer's Report

The Western Classis Treasurer, Elder Chris Fellersen, presented the following report:

BALANCE SHEET			
December 31, 2004			
	<u>12-31-04</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>	
ASSETS:			
Cash	\$178,618.08	\$163,411.73	\$15,206.35
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$178,618.08	\$163,411.73	\$15,206.35
LIABILITIES:			
Accounts Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$178,618.08	\$163,411.73	\$15,206.35
TOTAL LIABILITIES			

& SURPLUS \$178,618.08 \$163,411.73 \$15,206.35

FUND BALANCES:

General \$6,126.80 \$4,647.60 \$1,479.20
 Home Missions Bldg Fd 119,552.36 110,588.71 8,963.65
 Home Missions 25,177.17 22,562.80 2,614.37
 Benevolence 21,302.85 17,746.39 3,556.46
 Publications 3,118.00 3,062.64 55.36
 Heidelberg Camp 3,340.91 4,803.60 (1,462.69)
 TOTAL FUNDS \$178,618.08 \$163,411.73 \$15,206.35

INCOME STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004

INCOME	C. Mem. 1-01-04	Dues	Bldg Fund	Hm Mis	Benev	Publ	Heid Camp	Total Per Church
Faith -Anderson	31	\$317.75	\$310.00	\$2,201.00	\$1,364.00	\$0.00	\$31.00	\$4,223.75
Grace-Bakersfield	133	1,363.24	1,330.00	9,443.00	5,852.00	0.00	133.00	18,121.24
Covenant-Chico	21	274.72	285.99	742.75	349.34	0.00	13.45	1,666.25
Covenant-Grass Valley	68	787.25	580.00	3,766.00	2,224.00	0.00	79.00	7,436.25
Grace-Lancaster	35	268.50	262.50	1,863.75	1,155.00	0.00	26.25	3,576.00
Providence-Lodi	58	594.52	580.00	4,118.00	2,552.00	0.00	58.00	7,902.52
Trinity-Modesto	63	645.72	980.00	4,907.00	3,242.15	0.00	63.00	9,837.90
Covenant-Sacramento	143	1,465.75	1,430.00	10,153.00	6,292.00	0.00	143.00	19,483.75
Ebenezer-Shafter	115	1,178.75	1,150.00	8,165.00	5,060.00	0.00	115.00	15,668.75
Grace-Willows	35	136.00	850.00	1,800.00	680.00	0.00	34.00	3,500.00
First -Yuba City	47	481.75	470.00	3,337.00	2,068.00	0.00	47.00	6,403.75
Publ Book Sales/Misc		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	35.00	0.00	35.00
F & M Bank-int Allocated		30.90	735.16	149.99	117.97	20.36	31.93	1,086.31
TOTAL INCOME	749	\$7,544.88	\$8,963.65	\$50,646.49	\$30,956.46	\$55.36	\$774.63	\$98,941.47

EXPENSES:

Stated Clerk Expenses:

Gratuity 2004-05 Clerk	\$400.00	
Abstract Expense & Mailing	810.71	\$1,210.71

Executive Committee Expenses:

Classis Meeting-March 2004 (Net)	3,504.62	
Special Committee Expense	74.73	
Office Supplies/Postage	247.90	3,827.25

Benevolences:

Faith -Anderson	14,550.00	
Grace-Lancaster	6,750.00	
Covenant-San Diego	4,500.00	
Diaconal Aid-Scott Henry	1,600.00	27,400.00

Inter-Church Relations:

Travel-Delegate to Can Ref	264.00	
Travel-Delegate to OPC-NorCal	86.10	
Travel-Delegate to OPC-SoCal (2003)	375.60	
Travel-Delegate to URC-NA	302.02	1,027.72

Home Missions:

Covenant Reformed-Chico	8,216.08	
LA Basin-Shafter	25,045.46	
Grace Reformed-Pleasanton	14,676.65	
Committee Expense	93.93	48,032.12

Heidelberg Camp:

Camp Expenses	6,262.32	
Camp Fees Received	(4,025.00)	2,237.32

TOTAL EXPENSES \$83,735.12
 INCOME FOR YEAR \$15,206.35
 CASH ON HAND 12-31-03 \$163,411.73
 CASH ON HAND 12-31-04 \$178,618.08

INCOME STATEMENT BY FUND
 FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004

FUND:	General	Hm Mis Bldg Fund	Hm Mis	Benev	Publ	Heid. Camp	Total
INCOME:							
Giving	\$7,513.98	\$8,228.49	\$50,496.50	\$30,838.49	\$0.00	\$742.70	\$97,820.16
Book Sales/Camp Funds					35.00	0.00	35.00
Allocated Interest	30.90	735.16	149.99	117.97	20.36	31.93	1,086.31
Total Income	\$7,544.88	\$8,963.65	\$50,646.49	\$30,956.46	\$55.36	\$774.63	\$98,941.47

EXPENSE:

Stated Clerk	1,210.71						1,210.71
Exec. Comm	3,827.25						3,827.25
Inter Church	1,027.72						1,027.72
Benevolences				27,400.00			27,400.00
Home Missions		48,032.12					48,032.12
Homes Missions Bldg							0.00
Heidelberg Camp-Net						2,237.32	2,237.32
Total Expense	6,065.68	0.00	48,032.12	27,400.00	0.00	2,237.32	83,735.12
Income (Loss) Yr.	\$1,479.20	\$8,963.65	\$2,614.37	\$3,556.46	\$55.36	(\$1,462.69)	\$15,206.35
Balance 12-31-03	\$4,647.60	\$110,588.71	\$22,562.80	\$17,746.39	\$3,062.64	\$4,803.60	\$163,411.73
Subtotal 12-31-04	\$6,126.80	\$119,552.36	\$25,177.17	\$21,302.85	\$3,118.00	\$3,340.91	\$178,618.09
Balance 12-31-04	\$6,126.80	\$119,552.36	\$25,177.17	\$21,302.85	\$3,118.00	\$3,340.91	\$178,618.09

Respectfully submitted,
 Chris Fellersen

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Standing Finances Committee.

PAROCHIAL REPORTS

Rev. George Horner read the Parochial Report of Rev. Lloyd Gross.

I am aware that old retired ministers do not have to submit a parochial report, but I would like to update you on my activities of the past year.

Once again our covenant God enabled me to do what I love, that is, to preach the Word of God. I was privileged to again preach in our beloved RCUS churches in Shafter, Yuba City, and in Rock Springs, WY. Also, I was able to preach in the OPC, RPCNA, and the URC. I had numerous opportunities to counsel, to do chapel talks at a local Christian school, etc. Other than that, I delight in reading. I have especially enjoyed reading the two volume set on Princeton Seminary from 1812 to 1929 by David B. Calhoun. It is astonishing to read how a Reformed seminary of such giants as the several Alexanders, Hodges, and Warfield could fall to such depths as Princeton has. The powerful prayers of those men that the seminary would ever remain faithful to the Westminster Standard have been disowned in the following generations. How this serves as a warning to churches and Christian institutions. How quickly and how hard they can fall away from our great God and Savior. Let us ever take heed.

Another highlight of the past year was the opportunity my wife and I had to do a tour

on our own of a number of the major Reformation sites in Europe. What a history and heritage God has given us through men who so clearly were not ashamed of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. May God embolden our generation of ministers and congregations to simply stand for His Word whatever the cost. It was most disheartening to see how far Western Europe has turned from that heritage today. We were amazed.

Now a personal note of concern. I was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer and desire your prayers that it might not have spread and that it might still be treatable. We are awaiting further reports concerning possible treatment. We are reminded again of our frailty and mortality in the flesh. God is faithful and we trust Him. I will have to miss the Classis meeting which I intended to attend until we received the cancer diagnosis.

My dear wife is still able to work and support us so that at this time we are grateful that we do not need to apply for ministerial aid.

My prayers are ever with you dear brothers. May God grant you all health and joyful enthusiasm in the work of the ministry of God's Word, the only hope of mankind.

In our blessed Savior Jesus,
Lloyd Gross

Classis Action: Take Note

Rev. Jonathan Merica read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers in the Lord,

Grace Reformed Chapel is thankful for the loving oversight and wisdom of Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley as we labor together in the gospel. At the beginning of last year, I challenged our congregation of Grace Reformed Chapel to "rise up and build," the church as we read in Nehemiah 2:18 where Nehemiah said, "***Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.***"

It is our desire to rise and build the church of the Lord Jesus Christ by faithfully ministering the Word of God to the members of Grace Reformed Chapel, and continuing in prayer for God's blessing. The Word of God is preached each Lord's Day. Each Wednesday the Word of God is taught in our weekly Bible Study. Currently, we are studying the book of Titus. We are very grateful for the labors of Richard Yim who has been faithfully recording the messages, and placing an audio copy on our web site at www.gracereformedchapel.com. We are also thankful for his wife, Lily, who accompanies our singing with her piano playing.

We praise the Lord that the devotional service at the Merrill Gardens Senior residence in San Ramon is continuing. The devotional services are well attended by about 10-15 residents. We continue to have the favor of the management in conducting our services. To God be all the glory. Our service consists of singing hymns, reading of Scripture, prayer and preaching the Word of God. Pray that this ministry will be spiritually profitable to all who attend. Pray especially that any unsaved persons hearing the Word of God preached will come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Grace Reformed Chapel is continuing its outreach efforts by such means as GRC members inviting friends, radio announcements over 770, KCBC, our website, an internet radio spot (sermonaudio.com), distribution of fliers, the yellow pages, and the internet yellow pages. Last year Grace Reformed Chapel had flier and tract distributions at the Stoneridge Mall in Pleasanton, CA, and also at the farmer's market in Pleasanton, CA. Grace Reformed Chapel fliers were distributed, along with witnessing the gospel to others. We also had three very large posters (40 inches x 60 inches) on display with Scripture verses. One passer-by in looking at the Scripture-verse signs gave a hearty, "amen." We praise the Lord for the visitors that were harvested by these means of outreach.

Grace Reformed Chapel lost five of its communicate members last year. We lost two members by transfer. We lost three communicate members by erasure. Our communicate membership is now eighteen and the non-communicate stands at four. Our total baptized membership is twenty-two souls.

In the year 2004, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed on four occasions at Grace Reformed Chapel. We were very honored and blessed to have Elders Frank Krivohlavek, and Steve Wilbur of Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley visiting Grace Reformed Chapel to assist with the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

We are grateful to God for providing an adequate meeting facility for us to use as a meeting place. Our rent is about half of the regular price in the area per square foot. This past year our rent increased by a mere \$20.00. We are now paying \$1,240.00 per month.

We are very thankful for the labors of our Treasurer, Greg Goehring, who has given all due diligence to keep an accurate record of our finances for 2004. Grace Reformed Chapel is taking a 10% reduction in the support from both Classis and Synod in 2005. The impact of this reduction will be significant. We ask your fervent prayers that the Lord will send many more families this year so that Grace Reformed Chapel will be able to meet its financial needs.

Upon the request of "yours truly" members of the Western Classis Home missions committee visited Grace Reformed Chapel on April 4, 2004 to do an assessment of the viability of Grace Reformed Chapel as a mission work. The conclusion of that report stated that "the committee believes that the work has a lot of potential, opens a door for the RCUS to the bay area, and, although at present is under trial, should continue as a missionary outreach of the RCUS."

We praise the Lord for continuing the mission work of Grace Reformed Chapel. We are in great need of more visitors. Please pray for us that the Lord will bless us by sending more visitors to our worship services, and by sending more faithful families to join with us in church membership.

I praise the Lord for His blessings upon Grace Reformed Chapel for the bond of Christian fellowship and love for the truth we are privileged to enjoy. If the mission work of GRC is to prosper in the days ahead, it is important that we pray for the Lord's blessing in the following areas: 1) That we remain faithful and steadfast to the truth in life and doctrine, 2) That our gospel outreach may be blessed of God in bringing more committed families to join in church membership this coming year, 3) That we have qualified men to serve as elders and deacons. I believe the backbone of our mission work rests heavily upon having qualified church officers, 4) That we continue to have adequate resources and an adequate meeting place. I believe our covenant God is faithful to provide all these needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Please pray that God will supply these

urgent needs in the building of His reformed Church in the Tri-Valley area.

As we labor together in the kingdom of God the Apostle Paul reminds us that *“neither is he that planteth any thing; neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase”* (I Corinthians 3:7). Please pray that God by His infinite mercy will grant us the increase in families and finances necessary to carry on with the work of His church.

Let us *“continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ”* (Colossians 4:2-3).

Yours in the Service of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Rev. Jonathan Merica, Pastor

Classis Action: Take Note. Rev. Gil Baloy led the body in prayer.

Rev. Michael Voytek read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

The Psalmist declares; *“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your loving kindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night”* (Psalm 92:1-2). Indeed it is good to consider what God has done for us and to render praise and thanks to Him. Truly He has revealed His loving kindness and faithfulness to us at Providence Reformed Church, Lodi, California.

Among the abundant blessings that we have enjoyed, the preaching and teaching of God’s infallible and inerrant Word stands as one of the greatest and most treasured. The opposite of this blessing is one of the greatest curses that God could bring, namely that of a famine. As the prophet Amos declared; *“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will send a famine, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD”* (Amos 8:11). The question that I have asked the congregations is “Do we take it for granted or do we truly appreciate what the Lord has provided for our growth in grace?” This past year we have continued to consider God’s instruction for us as found in the Book of Psalms. We completed the third book of the Psalter and have begun the fourth book (Psalms 90 through 106). I have decided to move the Psalm series to Communion Sunday in order to give the congregation a break from over three years working through the same book. Therefore, the non-Communion Sunday morning sermons have focused on the life and ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Mark. It is my hope and prayer that the congregation is finding these sermons edifying and useful.

Another change that was intended to build up the body of Christ was the implementation of the new RCUS Sunday School curriculum. The Sunday school teachers and assistants are to be commended for their ability to adjust to the new curriculum while at the same time maintaining a high standard of excellence. Through the use of this new material, those who attend Sunday school now have at their disposal material that allows for everyone in the family to focus on the same portion of Scripture. I have noted some fruitful discussions that have occurred outside of class. Furthermore, Wednesday nights are taken up exploring the Book of Exodus and most recently we are focusing on the various “case laws” found in “The Book of the Covenant” (Exodus 21-23). It is my earnest prayer that

more of the congregation as well as those from outside will avail themselves of this opportunity to study this fascinating and applicable portion of God’s word.

This past August, the Lord provided an opportunity for us to reach out to the local community through our participation in the Lodi Family Faith Festival. We were able to set up a book table where we sold a number of Reformed books and gave away hundreds of tracts. Even though it was over 100 degrees in the shade and most of the time we spent fighting the heat of the sun, many who participated said that they were greatly encouraged. I have encouraged the congregation to consider future involvement in similar outreach endeavors in order to make our presence and the truth of the Gospel known in this community.

There were two other activities that are worth noting. The first was our annual church picnic held at Lodi Lake. It was a great time of food, fellowship, and fun. The only negative event that occurred was that our volleyball game was permanently interrupted when the ball ended up in the lake and the raft that we launched to recover it floated away before someone could board it. Fortunately, we were able to find the owner of a nearby boat who graciously retrieved both ball and raft. The other event was the Sunday evening activities held on October 31st (Reformation Day). There were a number of games for the children and afterwards we formed teams of adults and children and tested our memory of Scripture, reformation history, the Heidelberg catechism, and other Bible facts using Pilgrim’s Progress as the venue. And who said that learning and fun can’t go together!

As you are aware, the consistory of Providence Reformed Church has been serving as overseers of collection and distribution of funds for the economic development of our brethren in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (i.e. Congo Economic Development Fund). This past year we have received and relayed over \$9,000 to the committee in the Congo in order to fund six projects as well as the purchase of 15 sewing machines and material. Please continue to pray for wisdom for the PRC Consistory as God has provided us with a fantastic opportunity to be a blessing to those in great need.

As a church family, we experienced some gains (the birth and baptism of three covenant children as well as the profession of faith of two covenant youth) and some losses (one family moved to Oregon and another become members of an independent Reformed church in Ceres). We have recently completed a new members class and joyfully anticipate receiving one new family and a single lady into membership. Thus our communing membership statistics, although lower at the end of the 2004 than the year before, will in reality actually have increased by one.

Finally, our report would be incomplete if we did not mention a few of the needs that have arisen in our midst and are the subject of our prayers. The most pressing are the physical needs such as Marcus Whitmire, who is battling Huntington’s disease (terminal genetic disease of the brain). By the grace of God, he continues to fight the good fight and has lived longer than the doctors had predicted. He has recently gained some weight which is critical in this battle although he has had some losses in other areas. His family and especially his mother Sheryl, who sacrificially cares for him, need the Lord’s wisdom and grace during this most challenging situation. Secondly, the Lord has also provided an opportunity for us to minister to the diaconal needs of those both within and outside of the church. Please continue to pray for those who are in need of our help. Thirdly, there are a number of elderly among us who would covet your prayers as they also continue to live and serve their Lord even in the midst of failing health. Finally, please remember the officers of this church in your prayers as they continue to strive to faithfully serve our Lord Jesus Christ

and His people here in Lodi.

On a personal note, my wife Becky and I continue to home school three of our children Abraham, David and Timothy. Our oldest son Joshua is a junior at Jamestown College in North Dakota working on a double major in History and English and our daughter Tabitha is a freshman at the University of the Pacific majoring in Engineering Physics. I am currently serving on the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee and am thoroughly enjoying teaching Biblical Hebrew and Old Testament at City Seminary in Sacramento.

To close, your servant offers praise and thanks to God for His faithfulness to His people and for the opportunity to serve Him by serving His church.

Your fellow bondservant in Christ,
Rev. Michael Voytek, Pastor

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Dennis Roe read his Parochial Report.

Dear Mr. President and Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ:

Greetings in the glorious name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only true God and Saviour of the world. I report the following regarding our congregation and my service to Christ:

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

In 2004 I continued to proclaim God's Word in an expository manner each Lord's Day preaching through the Epistle of Philippians. During the year I also gave various messages for special occasions, such as baptism, church membership and the Lord's Supper.

Even though we lost a fourth of our membership this past year, our morning worship service continues to average seventy to eighty in attendance.

This past year in the adult Bible Class on the Lord's Day I finished a series of Bible lessons in the Epistle to the Romans. I then began a new series titled "Basic Christian Doctrine" where we will cover the major tenets of Biblical Christianity in a concise manner. Our adult classes are fairly well attended with an average of twenty to twenty five.

I gave catechetical instruction on Thursday afternoons at the church building. In May, six students recited questions 86 through 129 before the elders and then the congregation. I began a new class in September and we are on the first section of the catechism studying questions 1 through 43. There are presently 5 students enrolled.

I taught, what I call, the Lollards' theology class, Wednesday evenings. We are studying R. B. Kuiper's work titled, "*The Glorious Body of Christ*" (a study on the doctrine of the church). It is a small class with three to five men in attendance.

This past year we did not hold a vacation Bible school. There simply were not enough volunteers to staff it. I pray that this may not be the case in 2005!

We held a number of special services throughout the year with guest speakers. Rev. Michael Voytek, pastor at Providence Reformed Church at Lodi, California, was our keynote speaker at our annual Reformation Bible Conference. He spoke on the subject of "*The Church in The Old Testament*" and "*Paul's Philosophy of Church Growth*". We were also privileged to have in our pulpit Rev. Sardar Din, Dr. Frank Walker, Elder Frank Krivohlavek, Elder Steve Wilbur and Rev. Eric Bristley.

We were happy to welcome Rev. and Mrs. Sardar Din, Directory of Ministries in Pakistan for Westminster Biblical Missions, to our congregation this summer as our missionfest speaker. We were once again encouraged to hear about his labors and the work of God in Pakistan.

We continue to hold services at a local nursing home in the afternoon on the third and fourth Sunday of each month. The Consistory members faithfully took turns leading the devotions on the third Sunday with two other men from the congregation supervising the fourth Sunday visit. We are happy to have this opportunity to serve the Lord.

A new experience for me was to begin as an Adjunct Professor of Missions and Evangelism for City Seminary at Sacramento. I taught my first class on Saturday mornings from January through the first week in May. I likely will only teach a class every other year at the most.

I continue to serve as chaplain for the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Association. This unit is the one in which I served during a one year tour in Vietnam. The Association held its reunion in Louisville, Kentucky in June of 2004. I had the opportunity to preach the gospel to close to 200 veterans and their families. I look forward to continuing to serve Christ as a chaplain for this organization.

It was my joyous privilege to perform two wedding ceremonies. The first was for my beloved daughter Abigail to Mr. Steven Boren. Words cannot describe what a joy and privilege it was for me, as both father and pastor, to marry Steve and Abbie. I also had the privilege to marry two of our members, Daniel Raudy and Heidi Swinford.

As well, my responsibilities also consisted of numerous membership classes, personal and family counseling sessions, and calling upon members and non-members in their homes.

II. THE MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENTS

This past year it was my privilege to conduct the Lord's Supper 12 times with our congregation. The attendance at our communion services was very good with few missing.

I was privileged to celebrate Christian baptism six times in the baptism of five covenant children and one adult.

III. THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS

Our membership saw a number of changes in 2004. We lost 12 communicant members and five covenant children. All were removed by administrative erasure. We praise God that in His covenant mercy He added 3 communicant members and five covenant children to our number. Another great reason for rejoicing was the restoration of a member, who was under discipline, to the Lord's Table.

Presently we have one communicant member under discipline. Let us pray for God's Spirit to graciously restore this person to Christ and His people.

Our Spiritual Council continues to assist Pastor Jonathan Merica at Grace Reformed Chapel. Pastor Merica is to be commended for his faithful attendance at our monthly Spiritual Council and Consistory meetings. At these meetings he provides detailed reports of his labors among the saints at Grace Reformed Chapel. This has been a difficult year for our brothers and sisters at Grace Reformed Chapel due to the loss of members and few visitors. Let us pray that God will turn this around and add to His church at San Ramon!

IV. MISC. DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES

On behalf of Synod, I serve on one committee. I serve as chairman of the Synod's Web Site Committee. This committee has the responsibility of overseeing the denomination's web site and e-mail distribution list.

On a Classical level, I served on a new committee this past year, the committee on

Christian Education in the Church. This was a great committee, in that we did not meet! My service for both Synod and Classis has not taken a great deal of time or travel.

I continue to serve as General Secretary for Westminster Biblical Missions. I again made no international trips during 2004. I did travel twice to the East Coast for board meetings and missed two Lord's Day services here because of these trips. The Lord willing, it is my privilege to continue in this service.

V. CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT

In my last parochial report, I expressed my concern about "sectarianism or schism in the body" at Covenant RCUS. The main issue as I saw it was the inability of some to allow other members a liberty of conscience regarding matters that are not creedal in nature. For example, views were expressed that it is sin for women to work outside the home, that it is sin for daughters to go to college, that females must wear head coverings in worship or they are in sin and that it is sin to use birth control. These views and the like are articulated by the Vision Forum organization which sees as its focus "restoring Biblical patriarchy". In fact, I found one article while browsing their web site with instructions on how to "take over a church" with these views.

While there are many things associated with Vision Forum, and those who hold to similar views, that have merit, it is our Spiritual Council's position that these views are a matter of liberty. Our Council made it clear that it was not acceptable to teach that those who do not hold these views are in sin. Our Council's counsel was rejected and sadly the schism took place and a number of those who were and are very dear to us, decided to leave.

Schism is painful. It is a rent of the garment of Christ's bride the church. Yet, the Scripture tells us in *1 Cor. 11:19* "For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you." In other words, even though the Apostle Paul admonished the Corinthians for their divisions (see *1 Cor. 1:10, 3:3*), these things still take place in the wisdom and providence of God for His purposes.

The congregation demonstrates acceptance of God's sovereign hand in this matter. I was concerned that a "root of bitterness" (*Heb. 12:15*) may spring up in the hearts of God's people, but I do not believe this to be the case. I believe the congregation is now at peace, united in the love of Christ, and is excited about moving forward in the work of the Lord.

The congregation is faithful in their attendance to the Word of God preached and taught. There is an overall desire to know the Scriptures and to live them in a manner that pleases God.

I am also very encouraged by the providential calling of my dear brother Eric Bristley and his family to join us in the ministry at Grass Valley. May God richly bless them and use them to His glory.

I thank our Triune God for the privilege of serving Him another year in the pastoral ministry. Please pray that God the Holy Spirit will help me to stay focused on the pastoral ministry He has called me to, that is, to "Preach the word!" to "...*Be ready in season and out of season*" to ...*"Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching"* - *2 Timothy 4:2*.

In Christ's Service and Yours,
Rev. Dennis Roe

Classis Action: Take Note. Elder Ryan Spitzer led the body in prayer.

Rev. George Horner read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brethren,

I am writing this report on Valentine's Day and in that context am all the more grateful to God for His covenant church which proclaims His covenant love in a world smitten by "cupid". *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* "What a humbling privilege to proclaim not only the first, but then, praise God, the second Adam, Christ Jesus, the Savior and Lord, in the sure confidence that thereby true love becomes known unto the "comfort" of the first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Throughout this past year Grace Reformed Church has sought to exemplify God's definition of His church: *the church of the living God, pillar and ground of the truth* (*1 Tim 3:15*). The officers of the Church, minister, elders and deacons have labored, always aware that we are but weak earthen vessels, to glorify God through our congregational worship, teaching and governing. It is our hope that lives of thankfulness that we have sought to lead have been a worthy example to the flock and that through our labors and lives, in dependence on the grace of God, the Church has continued to be edified and equipped to serve our Lord.

In my calling as the Pastor of GRC, I have proclaimed the gospel each Lord's Day morning with the exception of the two Sundays surrounding Synod, filling the pulpit one Sunday in the RPCNA church in Fresno and one Sunday in conjunction with visiting an ailing family member out of state. I conducted our Mission Fest Service at which we were edified by Rev. Hank Bowen's preaching, and as well the Reformation Rally service at which we were privileged to hear Dr. Allan Strange, professor at Mid-America Reformed Seminary. We were pleased and blessed to have elder Carl Esparza (serving Rehoboth Chapel) exhort from our pulpit on two of my absences and the elders affirmed his gifts for handling aright the Word of God. I preached primarily from the Gospel of John, the Book of Esther, 2 Samuel and proclaimed specifically chosen texts for the occasions of our three infant Baptisms, the four Lord's Suppers that we celebrated, the beginning of the Confirmation season, Confirmation of four young people, as well as for the services held on Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and Thanksgiving. I also proclaimed the gospel for our third Sunday-of-the-month evening service and on the occasion of three funerals and one marriage of two of our communicant members.

In my proclamation of God's Word I seek to make application to the congregants' lives of faith, beseeching them to "*have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (*Eph 4:1-3*). The Spiritual Council, in submission to the Lord and the ordinances of the RCUS, applies the Word of God through church discipline, often a very difficult and seemingly thankless endeavor, and covet your prayers that they may do so with perseverance and love. We find that resisting the temptations of our narcissistic culture at times requires more self-discipline in putting on the whole armor of God than is practiced, to the detriment of committed worship attendance and participation in the various church ministries on the part of some. But we are indeed grateful for the zeal demonstrated by many and pray that the admonishment of the others will be fruitful unto sanctification.

As the pastor and a father, I continue to be concerned that there are yet covenant children being educated in schools which refuse to acknowledge Christ's preeminence in all things. I maintain that, no matter the intent to not allow the false world view to be imbibed, "*evil company corrupts good habits*" (*1 Cor 15:33*). I am hoping and praying that the need

for Christ-centered education will become the conviction of more and more covenant parents so that a need will arise that we can work to fulfill in accordance with the position of Synod via the adopted recommendations of its Special Covenant Education Committee.

The Lord has continued to bring visitors to our worship services and it is always our hope and prayer that the truth would convict them that our congregation is the kind to which they ought to become joined. But this has most often not been the case although we do make considerable effort to demonstrate as well the hospitality of the Reformed faith. But, as we wait upon the Lord while being zealous to proclaim only His gospel, He has added three new confirmed members by profession of faith not through confirmation.

In this past year we have labored more diligently in our outreach with the truth to the community and after considerable planning are, as I write this, hosting an Answers-in-Genesis event. The speaker, Dr. Terry Mortenson, has ably and with charm and zeal demonstrated the foolishness of the prevailing evolutionary explanation of the universe while proclaiming the biblical account of the Creation by the Creator who is the Lord and Savior. Between 100-120 people have so far attended each of the sessions and perhaps half of the attendees were not members of an RCUS church.

We are in the ongoing process of upgrading and updating our web site: www.bakersfieldreformed.com and hope to soon also incorporate MP3 sermon downloads.

For the past several months, a group of seven members, with the pastor, have been studying what will be a two year course leading to certification in Nouthetic Biblical Counseling. This study is not only highly beneficial for the practical application of the Bible's counsel to the lives of the attendees, but we hope that it might lead to the establishment of a ministry of the church, part of our outreach to the community with the gospel.

We are also striving to do what is feasible so that our facility is not a stumbling block to our evangelistic efforts. The deacons have worked hard to perform and oversee building maintenance, including better outside lighting and fixing the roof, and the congregation just approved the funds for exterior trim painting, re-carpeting the worship hall as well as re-upholstering its pews and painting its ceiling and walls.

Under the oversight of the Spiritual Council, this congregation has conducted the following teaching ministries:

1. Sunday School - the enrollment in the K-12 program currently stands at 27, with 19 in K-9 classes, the other grades joining the adult class. The Sunday School classes were also participants in the Christmas program written by yours truly. The SS Curriculum now in use is the one published by the RCUS on CD and although yet needing editing and some revision, it far surpasses as a teaching tool of the Covenant Faith anything else on the market. The adult Sunday School class, prepared, and taught by the pastor, focused on a study of Arminianism as refuted by the Canons of Dort, a study on the book of Hosea, a critique of the "The Purpose Driven Life", a study on Christology, and a study contrasting various doctrinal views of a UCC pastor (serving a former RCUS church) with the Reformed faith, including his view on homosexuality.
2. Confirmation Program - our goal is to have our young people have the sure knowledge whereby they hold for truth all that God has revealed in His Word – the knowledge that is vital to a sincere and true faith in Jesus Christ. The program, spanning grades 6-9, comprehensively teaches the Heidelberg Catechism including its memorization, as well as general knowledge of the books and content of the Bible, the vocabulary of faith, church history, the distinctives of the Reformed faith, including a familiarity with the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Canons of Dort. The classes meet on Wednesday

evenings from September through April with some additional classes scheduled in preparation for the rite of confirmation. The confirmation program also offers a Wednesday evening Bible study, open to all, which has been expositing "The Church"; understanding it in the fullness of the biblical revelation, including the privileges and the duties of its members.

3. 2nd Sunday evening Family Bible Study - this fellowship has studied various topics, including several Psalms, Apologetic material, as well as a study on Hyperpreterism. Average attendance is about 20-30.
4. Vacation Bible School - this one week, half day program this past year taught 10 lessons prepared by your pastor on the theme: **Glorifying God through the Psalms**. The lessons were complemented by music and crafts and the children also enjoyed outdoor activities. This program represents a lot of work but no longer seems to be as much a part of the life of the congregation as it once was.
5. Heidelberg Youth Camp - Our congregation was represented at HYC with five campers and Rev. and Mrs. Horner as counselors. Your pastor preached one of the evening sermons and chauffeured the group to camp.
6. Youth Group - It has become smaller as former participants have married. We have met more sporadically this past year, but did have two get-togethers (for fun) with the youth from Ebenezer. We hope to establish a program that features not only study, fellowship and fun but also service.
7. Leadership Training - This past summer your pastor, using a course material used at New Geneva Theological Seminary, (and by its permission), taught a continuing course in systematic theology as part of leadership training. It is anticipated that leadership training will once again be offered this summer.
8. Womens' Bible Study - A rotating Tuesday afternoon and Thursday evening Bible study has continued throughout this past year, Mary Jo Horner teaching in consultation with yours truly. A new study "Before the Throne of God" has recently been inaugurated.

We continue to foster hospitality and fellowship as essential characteristics of the true church, so we hold fellowship dinners on the second and fourth Sundays following the worship service and as well a hospitality committee invites visitors home for lunch. The Women of Grace meetings offer another fellowship and service opportunity as do the Social Committees that plan and provide various church meals.

The consistory continues to make family visits, an alternating team of elder/deacon and the pastor encouraging the life of true faith and seeking to maintain good communication between the families and Consistory for the sake of unity and blessed fellowship.

My other labors have included serving as the Chairman of the Synodical Christian Education Committee as well as Chairman of the Classical Christian Education in the Church Committee, and I serve as a member of the Classical Candidates and Credentials Committee. I also served as the Fraternal delegate of Classis to two meetings of the OPC Presbytery of Southern California and am a member of the Board of Trustees of Heidelberg Theological Seminary in Vermillion, SD.

I am thankful to God for the good health He granted me to carry out my labors without missing any work due to sickness or infirmity, and for my precious helpmate, Mary Jo, whose worth is indeed far above rubies.

In the providential care of God, this congregation continues to grow in grace and faith and I pray will become an ever more useful instrument for the advancement of the Kingdom of heaven on earth as we look for its glorious consummation.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. George Horner

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Hank Bowen read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

In 1 Peter 2:1-6 the Apostle Peter is at length setting forth an encouragement concerning the nature by which the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is built up: *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*

This year marked the 40th Anniversary of Faith Reformed Church in Anderson. Over the past year, I have labored with a focus on building the congregation up as a living stone in the spiritual house of our Lord. As Church, we are to be about our Master's work, and so it is good to consciously focus on the liveliness of the faith amongst the people of God.

To this end, I have carried out my pastoral duties, preaching 47 times in Anderson, including a series from the book of Haggai, a Passion Series on the Lord's Sayings Upon the Cross, and a continuing series on chapters 4-5 in the Book of Ephesians on the Walk of the New Man. The year was concluded with an Advent series on the Promise of the Seed. I was honored to preach Missionfest at Grace RCUS in Bakersfield. A Reformation Day Service was observed where I lectured on the Life and Times of Dr. Martin Luther.

The adult Sunday School class focused on a study of the Covenant while the children were instructed using the RCUS curriculum. Currently seven youth are receiving catechetical instruction. All covenant youth either attend Christian School or are being home schooled. Faith Christian School has four students attending plus two more in a kindergarten class. This will be the last year for Faith Christian School as the teacher, Ms. Peggy Burgess, will be moving from the area this coming summer.

I administered the Lord's Supper 12 times. There were no baptisms. Four adults were received by profession of faith and three covenant youth were confirmed. One member was dismissed and another, who moved away some time ago, was administratively erased. I carried out my duties as the clerk of the Western Classis to the best of my ability.

Last year at this time God had been pleased to double the number of souls that were regularly attending worship services. This year's average attendance has moved from the high 40's at the end of 2003 to the high 50's as we come into 2005. This is not a great increase but an indication of a stable situation setting in. Many of the regular attenders have either become members or are actively engaged in the life of the church. There have been visitors who came for awhile, but recently have been absent. This gives occasion to ask what things could be done better to retain future visitors?

One of the challenges facing Faith Reformed Church is the continual need to be active in evangelism. Members must be trained and encouraged to be aggressive in inviting people

to visit Faith Church. Jesus teaches that confessing Him as Lord and Savior before the world is the means by which He builds the church. In **Matthew 16:15-18** we read: *He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."* Confessing God and Christ before the world was a continuous thread in Jesus' ministry. The goal for Faith Reformed Church is to be vibrant in the area of evangelism as the ministry of Christ continues to move ahead through outreach.

Overall, Faith Reformed Church is alive in her obedience to Christ. As a congregation, it is my estimation that Faith Reformed is headed in the right direction both as a congregation and as families and individuals. There is a true sense of love amongst the body of Christ. Members do love each other in the way that God said would characterize His people. Every member has and actively does contribute to the overall ministry of Christ according to their gifts.

To improve the outward presentation of Faith Reformed, weekly ads were placed in the local newspapers. The Yellow Pages ad was improved by adding some color and a logo design. A church web page, www.faithrcus.org, was constructed. Initial steps to improve the drive up attraction of the church were taken. The outside was painted. The overgrown landscaping on the street approach was removed and the entrance changed in preparation for a new sign and landscaping.

The church beautification project will continue with the placement of a new sign and roadside landscaping. The big project to be tackled will be the removal, repair and replacement of the roof. Other parts of the plan include the replacement of the clear windows around the church and the paving of the parking lot. At some point soon, playground equipment that was donated will be installed. For a small congregation this is very aggressive, but it is important to the future growth of the congregation. First impressions are crucial as to whether visitors who are looking for a church home will return.

One of the brightest spots of this past year was growth in the number of very talented youth in the congregation. Many of these youth are part of the Shasta County Youth Symphony and on occasion a chamber orchestra has complimented our worship music. A goal this year will be to organize a Youth Fellowship and Sunday School Class for this age group.

Biblical leadership continues to be the most eminent need. The Classical Oversight Committee, because of a lack of Elders on our consistory, was much appreciated. However, at this year's Congregational meeting only Elder Michael Peery and Deacon Floyd Peery were willing to stand for nomination. Elder Michael Peery is still hampered in his ability to carry out his function as an Elder due to his work as a police officer, but his willingness to serve is greatly appreciated. No other men who were approached were willing to be nominated. Inactive Elders, Fred Peery and Rich Elliott, have been called upon and have been assisting the consistory. A Men's Fellowship with a focus on preparing men to serve in the offices is being considered.

Financially, the books are in good shape. Members are faithful in the giving of tithes and offerings. We are thankful to the Classis and Synod for the needed benevolent aid. This aid will begin to be reduced this year with the goal to continue reductions each year until Faith Reformed is self-supporting. As the Lord adds new members to the congregation this goal should be achievable.

Upon closing this report, let me simply say it is a joy ministering in your midst. I am excited about our future as a congregation and look forward to the Lord doing great things at Faith Reformed Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Henry P. Bowen, pastor

Classis Action: Take Note. Elder Jeff Mills led the body in prayer.

Rev. Paul Henderson read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brothers, and faithful praying folk,

I. The year 2004 began as most “new year’s” begin; Lord willing I would do this, and try to accomplish that, and on and on . . . But as I sat next to the hospital bed of a dying church member’s father (Tom) back in early January of 04, I had no idea that cancer was attacking my body.

As I drove to the hospital in route to my first visit with Tom, I remember trying to figure out what portion of God’s word I would read to him as he lay there suffering from the effects of cancer, which had left him with approximately 1-3 months of life to live.

I did not know a whole lot about him except that he was not a believer, and that he was willing to receive a visit from me, a minister of the church where his son was a member. The Lord guided me to Psalm 90 and in particular to verse 12: “*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*” With this psalm and this verse, I tried to encourage him to see his impending death (as predicted by his doctor) as something special, and yes even as a privilege that came directly from the hand of God. Huh? Special, in that not too many folk are given a fixed time for their death; are told that they have only so long to live!

I sought to encourage him that this “time table” was a gracious call from his Creator to set his house in order – to hear the words of wisdom, as they are found in the saving mercies of the Lord Jesus Christ. He actually agreed, and then related to me how that he had already begun seeking to make amends for sins past committed. And I believe that before Tom died, he did indeed call out to Jesus for mercy and forgiveness! And our Lord was indeed merciful! He died a few months later at home with his son on one side holding his hand and his wife on the other.

Little did I know that my Father in heaven would soon call upon me to apply this same verse to my own life! For it was soon after this first visit, that I learned that I was diagnosed with *embryonal cancer of the testes*. A fast aggressive type of cancer. Well, so much for all those precious plans of mine! Clearly the Lord was not willing! But, by God’s continual and all sufficient grace, mercy and power the cancer is gone for now, the lingering effects of the Chemo have almost disappeared, and by God’s grace I have been seeking to learn more and more to *number my days, and to apply my heart unto wisdom* - As a husband, as a father, as a pastor, yea and as a living member of the chosen communion of saints!

Therefore, it is with a grateful and humbled heart that I stand before you this day and proclaim these words: “*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s. -- O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* (Psalm

103: 1-5; 107:8).

Moreover, I praise and thank God for such faithful folk as you all, who kept my family, the church at Yuba City, and myself in your prayers throughout this past year. The many kind words, sound advice, and help from all of you was very much appreciated. I want to especially thank elder Doug Schlegel of Covenant Reformed Church Sacramento for his loving loyalty unto His Lord, and for his unwavering faithfulness to His people, as he filled the pulpit in my absence many times, yes, and sometimes on very short notice! Thank you dear brother. May God provide for you and your family as you continue to heed His call to the Gospel ministry.

For all who helped on the Classis committees on which I was supposed to serve (and chair), I thank you for your diligence and compassion in seeing to the work.

And now to the reporting of my pastoral activities and to the state of the church at Yuba City. I was busy as usual, and the folks are fine! Thank you.

II. As part of the parochial report I submit an *abbreviated list of my duties* for 2004:

First and foremost, I sought to be a faithful husband and father, and brother, uncle, and friend.

1. Prepared for, and carried out the preaching and teaching of God’s Word on the Lord’s Day; and more recently, for the Wednesday evening Bible study on Daniel. I was out of the pulpit a total of ten (10) times in 2004 (two vacation; one Missionfest & seven Chemo Sundays).
2. Along with the elders, I administered the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper 12 times. I was privileged to administer the sacrament of Holy Baptism once this past year - (Son Travis Henry).
3. Prayed for and with the flock – Please pray that I will give more time & energy to this aspect of the ministry!
4. Instructed our young folk in the Confirmation and Catechism classes.
5. Visited the sick and afflicted as I was able.
6. Counseled families and individuals as the need arose, and as I was able. Also, the officers faithfully did their part in regards to visitation and counseling.
7. Performed a memorial and graveside service for Waughneta Sawtelle (Rev. Gene Sawtelle’s dear mother).
8. Served as the chairman of the Spiritual Council and Consistory.
9. Served on a Western Classis appointed supplementary committee concerning Covenant Reformed Church at Anderson, CA (along with the Consistory members of F.R.C.).
10. Served as the Chairman of the Western Classis Heidelberg Camp committee.
11. Served as the Chairman of the Western Classis Home Missions committee.
12. Served as a committee member for the RCUS Synod Special committee to form a denominational seminary.
13. These, along with fixing the toilets, mowing the yards, and other odds and ends filled up my labors this past year!

III. The State of the flock:

We continue, by God’s mercies, which are new every morning, to fight the good fight of faith with the small number of folk that God has called unto Himself. Yours truly, along with the elders and deacons, and the faithful members of First Reformed Church have been constantly reminded that God is on the throne, that Jesus Christ is the Head of His church; that the grace and power of the Holy Spirit is daily needed as we seek to fulfill our many obligations within the home, on the job, and among the saints, and as we battle against the devil and his captains, yea, and against all who would seek to profane and destroy the name

of Jesus Christ and His Holy Bride!

I believe that the “consistency in the Christian life “ is the order of the day for the saints here at First Reformed Church. The folk are like most, they struggle each day to maintain their witness of God’s grace as found in Jesus Christ in an ever increasing and all too pluralistic, luke-warmed religious community! But I do see the Lord working in families, and on individuals, and for this I am very thankful. May God continue to give the increase!

Outreach continues to happen as the people invite, help, and live amongst their neighbors. We have had our share of visitors, and for whatever reason, they do not stay long or they never return. We are always, in light of these phenomena, to check ourselves, to make sure that we are not the reasons for this turning away!

Financially, we are doing great. Thus far, most of God’s people are cheerfully faithful in their giving to the work of the ministry. There are always a few ‘spiritual tippers’ who need to be admonished for their disobedience, and also encouraged in this most blessed of responsibilities or acts of worship!

Respectfully submitted,
Paul H. Henderson, pastor

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Vernon Pollema read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brethren:

“If it works, it is obsolete,” has become a common saying in our technological age. It is a clever way of describing the rapidity of change that is all around us. However, people in every generation, aware of the multitude of changes which now seem to come with an ever mounting tempo, long for something that endures and is not subject to change. Henry Lyte expressed the thought in his well known hymn, *Abide With Me*: “*Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day; Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away; Change and decay, in all around I see; O Thou who changest not, abide with me.*” Many centuries earlier, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul wrote: “*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*” (II Cor. 4:18). Such words are most applicable and appropriate as one prepares to report on his labors and the spiritual condition of the congregation.

The past year this pastor observed his sixty-fifth birthday and this year will observe his eighteenth year as pastor of the Ebenezer Reformed Church. How swiftly, too, those years have passed. The older one becomes, the more swiftly the weeks and years go by! James describes it well: “*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*” (Jas. 4:14). Seen in this light, one’s labors require renewed dedication and importance.

This pastor was blessed with another year of health and strength and thus able to fulfill his preaching and teaching duties. Worship services were held each Sunday morning, an additional evening worship service on the fourth Sunday of the month, and evening Bible studies on the first and third Sundays of the month. The pastor was absent from the pulpit on three Sundays in 2004: the Sunday (Mar. 21) when he preached at the 25th anniversary of a former charge, St. John’s RCUS, Lincoln, NE; the Sunday (May 16) following Synod at Manitowoc, WI, when he and his wife visited with family in

Michigan; the Sunday (Sept. 26) when the congregation worshiped with Grace RCUS, Bakersfield, at its Missionfest. On the Sunday of Oct. 3 the pastor conducted Missionfest services with the Rev. Gil Baloy as guest minister. In the absence of the pastor, the pulpit was ably filled by the Rev. Robert Needham of the OPC as well as Ebenezer’s elders.

The elders remain vigilant and faithful in their oversight of the preaching and teaching of God’s Word, the proper administration of the Sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline. Discipline and conformity to the local and denominational constitutions, as well as the Directory of Worship, is carefully adhered to. Pastoral visitation of the sick and infirmed is faithfully performed. Family visitation, with each elder accompanied by a deacon and assigned a certain number of families, continues to make progress.

The Sunday School consists of five classes of children taught by appointed teachers and the elders, and one class for adults, taught by the pastor. In addition, there is a class for the very young conducted by the parents. Recently, a class was begun for young people (high school and college) with attendance as high as 11. This same group also meets bi-monthly under the acronym, BASIC Training (Brothers and Sisters in Christ Training). The teachers, as well as the superintendent, are appointed by the Spiritual Council, with an elder as assistant superintendent who serves as liaison to the Spiritual Council.

In 2004, one covenant child was baptized, five covenant children received into communicant membership by Confirmation, and three baptized children received through parental membership, bringing the total number of baptized children, including Rehoboth Chapel, to 41. There is a current confirmation class of seven students at various levels of a four year program.

The congregation was saddened by the death of two of its longtime members, but comforted by the assurance “*that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*” (II Cor. 5:1).

Evangelistic outreach continued in a couple of ways: through financial and prayer support of its missionary pastor, the Rev. Jay Fluck, and the Rehoboth Reformed Chapel in the LA Basin (Rev. Fluck will report on the progress of the work there.); through the Grace and Truth Broadcast, a 15 minute radio message by yours truly, which airs every Sunday at 8:00am over KERI, Bakersfield (1180 AM). The radio station is under new ownership, joining the AGM California family of stations consisting now of seven AM & FM stations.

The pastor leads the Bible study at the monthly meeting of the Ladies’ Society, where we are currently studying Christ’s Sermon of the Mount. The Men’s Christian Fellowship also meets monthly, individual members volunteering to do a devotional study on a portion of Scripture, and the pastor addressing a current topic(s) in the light of God’s Word.

In addition, the pastor taught a Vacation Bible School class and was involved in the annual Heidelberg West Youth Camp at Camp Peaceful Pines.

On the Synodical level, this pastor serves on the Executive Committee and the Special Committee to Study a RCUS Seminary.

The labors of the pastor must continue and the spiritual condition of the congregation must grow. May God continue to bless the relationship in the swift passage of time. “*For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding*” (I Chr. 29:15). “*For they that say such*

things declare plainly that they seek a country [and] desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city, . . . which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:14,16,10).

Respectfully submitted,
Vernon Pollema

Classis Action: Take Note. Rev. Neale Riffert led the body in prayer.

Rev. Paul Treick read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brethren,

This is a parochial report. The word “parochial” has the connotation of “narrowness of interests or view.” While this does not indicate tunnel vision, it does mean that the focus of the Christian ministry is to “preach Christ” and follow that narrow way unto life that the Lord has called us to. This I have sought to do by the grace of God and I encourage all the brethren remain steadfast in their office and calling and be parochial in the best sense of the word. I unite with the Apostle Paul who says, *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Eph. 4:1-3). It is therefore vital that the work of the minister’s of the Gospel be reported to the Classis, since our constitution gives it this oversight, to assure that the Word of God is being rightly divided and proclaimed, the sacraments are properly administered, and Christian discipline is faithfully exercised.

In a day of increasing theological restlessness and error within the Christian community as well as outright attacks against Christ and His Church, it is clear that the ministry of the Gospel must be marked by doctrinal faithfulness and the courage to expound it. Congregations are not immune to damage caused when theological terrorists strap on body bombs, stroll into congregations by way of books, media, or their own persons, and detonate their false teaching. Brothers, we are always targets of the fiery darts of the wicked seen in attacks on the fundamentals of the faith – creation, justification, the visible church as the body of Christ, liturgy gone Hollywood, sacramentalism, a return to Romish thought, and a lack of awareness of covenantal commitment and responsibility – to name only a few. We can’t afford any cracks in the Christian armor.

I have sought to fulfill my calling to minister to the congregation of Trinity RCUS as God grants me strength to do it. The three marks of the church are seriously adhered to.

I have preached 100 times in the past year, conducted Sunday School classes, catechism classes, membership classes, and marital counseling. I brought devotions occasionally to Bethany Home and taught at Heidelberg Youth Camp. It was a highlight of the year to preach at the 150th Anniversary of my home congregation in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, in May. I am so blessed by the fondness of family and friends there.

Some of my teaching is by way of writing – especially Sunday School lessons and work for the Reformed Herald. I wish I had more time to do more substantive work in this area. I have always saved certain projects (in my mind) that I would do after I retire. I can’t help but wonder if there will be time enough to do it, for as the spirit is willing, the

flesh gets weaker.

I continue to serve the church as Stated Clerk for Synod, Editor of the Reformed Herald, various Classis Committees, and as Vice-All on the Reformed Faith and Life Radio Administration Committee.

In the congregation we have served the sacrament of Lord’s Supper four times, and administered the sacrament of Holy Baptism to two infant covenant children. I conducted one wedding in the past year and will have two more this summer. It is a blessing indeed to see these young couples marry in the Lord.

The Consistory meets monthly, or oftener as necessary, and has fulfilled its duties faithfully. The Spiritual Council has fulfilled its duty well. We meet at least once a month. We have dealt with some difficult discipline matters. Some are ongoing, and one member was removed under discipline. We have dismissed one family to a local URC congregation, and three individuals were dismissed as they moved out of the area. One new family and one individual were received into membership. We have thirteen children in our weekly catechism class, making preparation for confirmation.

We did have a strange situation which resulted in a family leaving the church. They had been visiting with us for over a year, but it was apparent that there were some serious theological differences that stirred up strife among the members. The Spiritual Council met with them and advised that they either join the church, submit to its confessions, and come under its oversight, or as a family find another church home. Regrettably, they chose the latter course, but peace was restored.

Sadness also struck our congregation with the death of Tina Lark. She succumbed to cancer and went to be with the Lord last spring. She did leave a faithful witness to her joyful faith. She also left a family with a husband and five children, one of whom, Joshua, is still battling leukemia. Josh is presently receiving stem cell transplants with the hope that they will replace his diseased cells. It is an up and down battle, and clearly is in the Lord’s hands. It is our prayer that the Lord will give healing to him and that he will patiently wait on the Lord as His will is performed. The congregation has been helpful in doing things for the family and giving financial aid. Many contributions have been received from congregations of the Western Classis as well as congregations and individuals from throughout the RCUS. For this, we thank God that He has created in the hearts of His people such love and consciousness of the unity of the body of Christ.

Our Youth Group meets twice a month. We have done something new this year in asking the men of the church to donate one month to help out at these meetings. This includes doing the devotions. The Youth Group has sponsored the Rafting Trip and the Lighthouse outing and invited other RCUS youth in the area to join them. These were enjoyable events. The Women’s Fellowship meets in homes once a month. The ladies of the church have again taken on the cooking at Heidelberg Youth Camp.

Financially, the church has had a good year. We were able to fulfill all of our obligations on the local level and to Classis and Synod. The willing and sharing heart is from the Lord. We were able to re-coat the parking lot, do some outside maintenance, and begin a repair and painting project inside the church. We have been looking at the possibilities of selling the property and building a new building, but at this time the cost of doing this is still prohibitive, and we are thankful for what we have. Volunteers for regular work at the church has been good this year.

In our new budget we have dropped our financial support for Ripon Christian School since only two children from the church use that facility. We did not want to eliminate the need to support Christian education as a responsibility of the church, but we did have

some misgivings as to the distinctively Reformed commitment at the school as well. For the time being, we have earmarked Christian education funds for the purchase of books that can be used by our own children in classes within the church.

After discussing this matter with the congregation, the Consistory has decided that, beginning February 27, we will begin our evening Worship Service at 5:00 pm. This was to accommodate families with younger children, and also leave time for more family visiting and fellowship on Sunday evenings. Attendance at both services is good, but the evening service does suffer from a smaller attendance on the part of some. The service change should address this.

After reporting the marks of the church which are set out in the Belgic Confession of Faith, I want to stress that it is also our concern to encourage what is known as the marks of Christians, which the Confession also spells out: "With respect to those who are members of the Church, that they be known by the marks of Christians; namely, by faith, and when, having received Jesus Christ the only Savior, they avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbor, neither turn aside to the right or left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof" (BC, Art. 29).

May the Lord continue to bless us all, as we faithfully and humbly labor together in the up-building of the Church to the glory of our covenant, triune God.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul H. Treick, Pastor

Classis Action: Take note.

Rev. Jim West read his Parochial Report.

Fathers and Brothers,

I am now by God's grace working on my 19th year at Covenant Reformed Church. Compared to many ministers in our denomination, this is a long stay. Yet, the fire and enthusiasm have not waned, even though at times the outward man atrophies (especially when compared to the younger man who came to Sacramento some 19 years ago and who was more prone to mount up with wings as of eagles).

This past year I have continued my normal ministry of teaching the catechumens (there are 15 in all), conducting new membership classes, chairing elder's meetings, visiting members and visitors, preaching and teaching on the Lord's Day, and teaching at City Seminary in Sacramento. This past year found me teaching an entire new course, Soteriology or the Doctrine of Salvation. Preparations for this course began in August, only one month before the Fall semester. This meant that I was forced to devote large chunks of time during the semester for further study and preparation. For example, all of Monday and Tuesday of each week were devoted to lecture writing and rewriting. Thus, every week was "panic week" in this sense. As the faculty of City Seminary gets deeper and deeper into the curriculum, I hope to have a lot less anxiety about my lectures and thus begin to economize my time (although I will never cease to fertilize my mind with new books that are germane to my subjects). Nevertheless, I must always remind myself that the work of seminary is in fact the work of the church, and not something extraneous. Currently, I am teaching a two-unit course on Homiletics, which has caused me to hone in upon the glory of preaching. This is the second time I have lectured on this subject and

find it supremely enjoyable. Above all else, I hope that City seminary becomes known as one that emphasizes the primacy of preaching the Gospel!

I also continued to teach the Catechumens each Wednesday (the catechumens are regularly taught Church history each Lord's Day morning, too). Sometimes, all of Wednesday was spent preparing for this, especially when there are tests to make-up and to correct. Wednesday night was sent aside for Bible study: we studied such themes as prayer, developing a Christian worldview, articles in the Reformed Herald, etc, and the book of Ephesians for a short period until I decided to preach through the book. In addition, I attended the Men's Fellowship breakfast each Wednesday morning. Also, Mrs. Chris Walker volunteered to conduct a monthly Lady's Bible Study. The enthusiasm for such a study is reflected by the many women who are participating. We also have another church Bible study in the northern part of Sacramento during the week.

This past year I preached on such themes as The Seven Churches in Revelation, the Parables of the Bible, the Gospel of John, Ephesians (where I am now at), and a host of potpourri themes. I also preached three messages on 1 Corinthians 11, emphasizing that the Lord's Supper demands discernment and is not for babies or young children who cannot discern. From time to time I have addressed issues that directly concern our church, such as the slide into the legalism of Professor Norman Shepherd and the new catholicity that is being promoted by Andrew Sandlin (the latter of whom leap-frogs over the creeds of the Reformation in an attempt to hook-up with the Church of the first four centuries). I have also felt estrangement from certain ministers in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church who likewise have bought into Professor Shepherd's legalistic view of justification.

In 2004, I also served the Lord's Supper about twelve times and conducted two baptisms. Our church received 22 new communicant members, and lost nine by dismissal. We have five elders, seven deacons, and three ministers (counting our mission work in San Diego). There were no church discipline cases throughout 2004. The total contributions for the year amounted to \$476,976, with \$90,934 of that for Special Offerings. I continue to thank our God for the work of His Spirit, Who continually stirs up our people to give. I am reminded of Ephesians 4:26, where Paul tells us that a primary motive for working is giving, not getting. That truth seems to be "screwed" into the hearts of our people!

Our church also has a comprehensive Sunday School, which is preceded by fifteen minutes of singing out of a Chorus Book, composed uniquely for our Church.

This past year saw nine of our members (four families) leave us to join the Confederation of Reformed Evangelicals (Doug Wilson's misnamed, non-denominational denomination). While some of our members viewed this as a "back-door revival," I was personally and pastorally cut to the heart about it. I do not think that in all my years in the ministry that I have bled so profusely on the inside. A real turning point in my attitude occurred one evening as I watched a rain storm from the doorway of my house. I saw in each beautiful raindrop the sovereignty of God and then began to experience "the peace of God which surpasses all understanding."

Last year was also a tough one from a standpoint of domestic life, too. I was involved in two automobile accidents, and in April my mother died of lung cancer. Since then I have made several trips to Paso Robles to care for my bereaved father. I try to visit him once a month, and call him several times a week, to give him heart and fellowship. But from my mother's death two good things have occurred: First, while she lay dying she expressed a very clear testimony of her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This was

evidenced by her attendance at Bible studies, fellowship with God's people, and knowledge of the Bible. She reminded me of Jacob's confession in Genesis 49 while he lay a dying. She would awake in the middle of the night and cry out to God, "Lord, take me, Lord take me!" Also, as a result of my mother's death, my father (who previously relied on my mother seemingly for most of His spiritual strength) has become more dependent upon the Lord than ever before. Some of his spiritual insights are amazing and some of his theological adventures since her death have amazed.

As far as other developments in our church, our young people are growing up and have grown up. (As of this report we have 90 unconfirmed members alone). There are fewer and fewer baptisms and more and more confirmations and this in turn will lead to more and more marriages (and hopefully, more and more children and more and more baptisms and more and more confirmations, etc). Our current leaders still have a lot of fire in them and are very much dedicated to the work of the Church (with our own Doug Schlegel becoming a "pioneer" missionary to Kenya!). The day will come, of course, when the old guard will pass away, and a new crop of leaders will be elected and ordained to the offices of elder and deacon. Yet, as of this writing, it seems that virtually none of our young men have noticeable leadership skills. Nevertheless, we pray that they are late bloomers, and that the day will come when "a little child shall lead them." The kingdom of God often comes with little fanfare.

Our brothers in San Diego remain our one missionary outreach, but with them doing all the missionary work. The growth of Christ's church in San Diego has not been with great fanfare, but it has been steady and encouraging. We praise our God for the Christ-centered faithfulness of the brothers there, especially the leadership of Pastor Gil Baloy, elder Alfred White, and deacon Angel Lontoc. We look forward to the day when they will organize as a congregation.

Our Reformation Bible Conference was well attended. Our special speaker, Mr. Joel Belz from *World Magazine*, was well received. This year, Mr. Michael Horton from the Whitehorse Inn will be our speaker.

With regard to the Western Classis of the RCUS, I continue (as of this writing) to serve as President. I have enjoyed this position, which I have now served for about five years. It was a relatively quiet year in terms of work between Classis meetings, the matter of the interest of the Rev. Eric Bristley serving as Associate Pastor in Grass Valley taking up a little lion's share of the time.

With regard to Synod, my duties have been minimal. I serve on the Editorial Advice Committee for the Reformed Herald. But no business crossed my desk all of last year. I did, however, write a sermon to be preached by the Rev. George Syms, publicizing the RCUS via radio to a region yet to be named. My topic was: *The Mandate for Church Membership*.

I did only a little writing in the year 2004. I wrote a few articles for the *Faith for All of Life* magazine, and am currently writing a Catechism about the Lord's Supper (which is a primer about the error of paedocommunion). (I am putting it into a catechetical format because it is a lot less formidable read for our members). This is a major issue in our church, as many of our members have Christian friends who are building a distinctively paedocommunion sect in our area. Interestingly, some paedocommunionists are now saying that it is not even necessary for an adult to examine himself!

As I look into this year, I see a church that continues to grow up in Christ. I see high school and college graduations, marriages, musical accomplishments, new members, and many baptisms. We will hope for increased evangelistic efforts, too.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Jim West

Classis Action: Take Note. Elder David Helseth led the body in prayer.

Rev. Frank Walker read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers:

Psalm 46 says, "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." This comforting promise of the Lord's presence among his people assures us of the Lord's goodwill toward his people. No matter what our outward circumstances might be, the church of Jesus Christ cannot be moved.

As we look over the past year at Covenant Reformed Church, it is more than abundantly evident that God has been in our midst. His work has moved forward. Our people have been instructed in the preaching and teaching of God's Word, strengthened by the use of the sacraments, and edified by Christian discipline. Our covenant youth continue to receive weekly instruction from Pastor West. Several of them professed faith in Jesus Christ this year via confirmation. New members have been added to the rolls. All of our members serve Jesus Christ faithfully and zealously. These are things for which we must be grateful.

Perhaps the most noteworthy event of 2004 was the departure of four families from our congregation. These families had embraced the error of paedocommunion several years ago, but did not make it a cause of separation until recently. While this brought a certain amount of sadness (since these families had been part of our fellowship for many years), the elders carefully explained the situation to the covenant heads who remained, warning them of the dangers of allowing their families to be influenced by such sectarian ideas. Since these families left, it has become apparent that their errors have multiplied. Their affiliation with Doug Wilson, Andrew Sandlin and others has resulted in significant changes in their doctrine of justification. These two issues have been dealt with in the public ministry at Covenant Reformed Church. Pastor West preached several sermons on the Lord's Supper, and I have dealt at length with justification in a series of eight sermons. It is clear in my conversations with individual members that both series of sermons have been well heeded by our current members.

City Seminary is doing well. Our students are becoming more and more committed to the necessity and importance of theological education with each passing year. Recently, the seminary published the premier issue of *Leben*, which we hope will be an encouragement to those who receive it. The first issue has been sent to every family in the RCUS. Another advance for the seminary this year was the acquisition of the services of Rev. Eric Bristley, who was added to the faculty as an adjunct professor in apologetics. Pastors West and Voytek continue to give their endless supply of energy and expertise to teaching. And, as you know, that is my primary area of ministry. I taught seven classes in the normal classroom setting (for a total of ninety-six lectures lasting on average an hour and forty minutes each — the equivalent of 288 sermons!), and offered one course via audio CD to two students. There is no doubt that this work is tiring. It can also be frustrating when the students do not complete their assignments and instead offer some rather lame excuses. But overall, I find teaching in the seminary to be extremely rewarding, especially when I see students from non-Reformed backgrounds start to think

differently (i.e., Biblically). The longer I teach, the more committed I am to the concept, goals and vision of City Seminary.

In addition to teaching, I continue to preach frequently both at Covenant Reformed Church and elsewhere. I preached forty-four Lord's Day sermons and a Thanksgiving Eve sermon here. My daughter's wedding and our Reformation Bible Conference brought two additional opportunities to proclaim the marvelous grace of God. I also did a fair amount of teaching in the adult Sunday school class, although I did not keep a record of how often. Other churches invited me to preach on several occasions. I preached in the following RCUS churches in 2004: Modesto, once; Grass Valley, once; Willows, twice; Yuba City, twice; and Lodi, once. I also preached in two OPC churches: Rocklin, four times; and Novato, once. The total number of sermons I preached last year is fifty-eight. Richard Fay, Greg Stewart and yours truly served as borrowed elders in Willows until shortly before Christmas. The Willows church had been without its own elders since the Chico church was organized, and was desperately in need of assistance. I also served on several committees of Classis and Synod throughout the year.

This past year was also filled with great joy for me and my family. Our oldest daughter was married in January. My wife and I celebrated our twenty-fifth anniversary in the summer. Then our first grandchild was born on Christmas Eve. The joy of seeing one's children marry in the faith and bringing forth a new generation of covenant youth is, to say the least, overwhelming. I've pondered the Lord's goodness many times throughout the year. It reminded me that God is not only in the midst of the church as a whole, but he is also intimately involved in the lives of each of its members. We shall not be moved. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is our ever sure defense.

In his service,
Pastor Frank Walker

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Gary Mancilas read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brethren,

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." It is quite evident that the subject matter of this Psalm is in reference to the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. *"The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."* Christ loves His Church, which often goes by the name *Zion*; therefore, Christ has chosen, founded, and taken up His rest and residence in it. Christ loves His Church and her *gates*, or ordinances of public worship; His covenant people, whose delight is to attend corporate public worship; and the worship offered up by the saints, by their prayers, praises, exercise of graces, and every act of good works offered to God by them in faith (Psalm 87:2-3).

There are many glorious things which have been spoken of the church and that have been achieved through the ministry of the Gospel. As ministers of the Gospel, we are called upon to give an account of our labors. As pastor of Covenant Reformed Church in Chico, I give an account of my labors and of the spiritual and temporal condition of the charge.

Enabled by God's grace this past year, the members of the congregation have faithfully served their covenant God. They have come to understand more fully that as

members they are to be personally involved in the spiritual and organic growth of the church and are to unite and commit themselves to function productively in accomplishing the work of Christ in the visible church. As a body, they understand that the church must grow by the addition of individual believers to the congregation, and as a body, they have functioned in unity and served in the church through their gifts, talents, and resources.

In my labors this past Classical year, I preached the Word of God twice at Zion, URC in Ripon; once at Trinity Reformed in Modesto for the Reformation Day Worship Service; and fifty times at Covenant Reformed Church, where my messages were themed around faithfulness to God in every area of life and on the following teachings: Christ's parables of the Kingdom of God; our covenantal relationship in loving and obeying the God of our salvation, therewith, impressing upon God's covenant people the blessings pronounced on covenant keepers and the cursings pronounced on covenant breakers; and on the loving care of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, who has provided for them through His ordained officers the proper oversight of their souls. In the adult Sunday school, your servant taught on two major Biblical studies on "Covenantal Headship" and "The Spiritual Gifts to the Church." Additionally, instructions were provided to one covenant youth in preparation for confirmation. In the broader service of the Church on behalf of Synod, my labors include serving on the Permanent Publications Committee and serving as chairman of the Research e-Books Special Committee.

Scheduled for the first Sunday of each month is the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The elders faithfully assisted their pastor in the administration of Holy Communion and labored with him in the spiritual oversight of the members through Christian discipline, visitation, Christian counseling, and in oversight of the mid-week Bible study.

The work of the deacons through the Consistory has actively provided for the congregation's needs. For the most part, the Consistory concentrated on matters of church growth and the promotion of the Reformed Faith. The Consistory continues to promote the work through the yellow pages; the Internet via our church website; the sermon and teaching tape ministry; the local newspaper; and the first series of the professional production of seven, twenty-eight minute video segments, one of which is broadcasted on Access Cable Television each Sunday in succession, and the segments are rerun throughout the year. Additionally, we had the opportunity to promote the Reformed Faith through an interview with the local newspaper. It was arranged for your servant to meet with an editor of the ER local newspaper for a photo session and interview focusing on the history of both the Reformation and Covenant Reformed Church. From that interview, the staff writer wrote an article titled, "Reformed Church sticks to Calvinist beliefs." The article briefly gave a history of our congregation and our affiliation with the RCUS denomination. I was quoted saying that, "Our denomination is calling people back to the Reformation and to Calvinism in its truest form." Since then, the newspaper rejected an article we submitted for publication on "The Five Points of Arminianism Countered." The article was submitted in compliance with the newspaper's policy, yet it was rejected with a written comment from the ER editor who stated: "...we're interested in sermons, but not statements of beliefs written like a pamphlet or a book. Sermons with personal experiences are ideal.... I believe only a very selective audience would be interested in an essay on beliefs of the reformed church." Another opportunity presented itself when two men representing a group of people from two congregations, in a neighboring town, contacted us inquiring about the Reformed faith. They were provided with a meeting, Reformed material, and invitations to attend our worship services and Bible studies.

Our communicant membership presently stands at 23, having received two into

membership last year. There remains to be one unconfirmed member who, Lord willing, shall be confirmed this year. Currently, there is one sister in Christ in membership class. This year, Lord willing, she shall marry a brother in Christ, who was brought into membership last year.

Covenant Reformed was honored and blessed to host the Synodical Home Missions Committee Meeting and Devotion Service on April 12-13. We welcomed the opportunity for the committee to meet our members and to observe the Adventist Building, in which we hold our worship services, in addition to fellowship meetings upon approval. God's provision for our worship services is, indeed, a blessing.

Financially, the work of the church has been sustained through the faithful support of the members, Home Missions support from Classis and Synod, and the generous gifts of Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento. Thus, we were able to meet the budget approved by the Classical and Synodical Home Missions Committees. It is in our budget for year 2005 to reduce both Classical and Synodical financial aid.

At this time, Covenant Reformed Church falls short of meeting its required financial responsibilities to our denomination. The Consistory continues to diligently work toward meeting the full amount of our Classical and Synodical guidelines for giving. To this end, for year 2004 the reception of special offerings were scheduled quarterly and the Consistory encouraged the congregation to give, in addition to their regular tithes and offerings, toward supplementing our full financial obligation. For year 2003, we budgeted and gave \$532.00, and for year 2004, we budgeted \$1,200.00 and gave \$3,166.00 toward Classical and Synodical dues. The Consistory has been greatly encouraged by the members' faithful response, and the reception of special offerings continue to be scheduled quarterly. Although our projected annual budget, once again, falls short of meeting the full amount due, our Consistory has budgeted to increase giving for year 2005. May the Lord bless our efforts as we continue to serve Him together in Spirit and in Truth.

The saints at Covenant Reformed are thankful for all your prayers, financial support, and love given them, and it is through such care that the work at Covenant in Chico continues.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,
Rev. Gary Mancitas

Classis Action: Take Note. Rev. Jonathan Merica led the body in prayer.

Rev. Jay Fluck read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

That was the year that was! What began in confusion and discouragement, became more confused then resolved in God's time. But what a roller coaster ride it seemed to be! December 2003 saw us without a facility and moving back into the Fluck home, by February we were working out a lease on a space in The Barnett Center and worshipping in the Community Room at a Mobile Home park. By March the lease had fallen away and we were again in the Fluck home, but working on a lease in an industrial park. By May the lease in the industrial park had fallen through. In June the Barnett Center opened up again and by July 1 we had the opportunity to begin holding worship services there. It has been a very calm six months since then. It has been so calm that we have even begun to

report on our whereabouts without an asterisk.

In spite of all the uncertainty, Rehoboth has continued to grow in grace and numbers this year. The faithfulness of the congregation during all the uncertainty in both attendance and giving has been encouraging. January saw an average of 29 in attendance Sunday mornings, by December it was 36. Sunday Evenings remain relatively constant in the twenties with Wednesday evenings averaging 15. Our giving totaled \$50,975; which represents an increase of \$3,000 for the year. This represents the faithful giving of the congregation and not the influx of any one time gifts.

During the year the Lord added to our membership two communicants, three baptized children and one infant not yet baptized (Morgan Anneke Goehring was born too late in December to be presented for baptism this past year). The Lord took one communicant member away by Letter of Transfer during the year leaving us with a membership increase of one communicant and four non-communicants. Our population is 21 communicants and 12 non-communicants. We have eight who are regular in attendance but who have not yet committed to membership. We have seen many visitors this year, the most encouraging are the extended family members of our "regulars".

The Spiritual Council nominated Mr. Clarence Goehring to the office of Elder along with a second term for Mr. Carl Esparza. Both were elected thus the Lord has given us a second Elder. Mr. Goehring was installed February 20th. We have been praying for a Deacon, and the Lord has given us a man whom we are prayerfully considering.

The Sunday morning preaching ministry is currently in the Gospel According to Matthew, with Sunday evening in Colossians. Wednesday evening has seen us progress through Romans to chapter 15:6, making it an even slower study than Revelation. Those in attendance appreciate the pace and the format.

In our visiting among the congregation the teaching ministry seems to be well received and the congregation has expressed its ability to see growth in faith in themselves. The looking for growth in themselves is an encouragement, but the elders see the growth as well and rejoice doubly.

Sunday School has been in Church History for the adults, with Pastor Fluck teaching, Elder Esparza has been modifying the RCUS curriculum for the older children while Loretta Fluck has been teaching the youngest.

The new facility is well received (though no one is happier than Mrs. Fluck) and we have shown increased willingness to invite others to this larger and less "invasive" place. The area is not any more friendly to the gospel nor to reformed theology, yet the Lord has carved out a place for us making our name even more appropriate. We continue to seek all possible avenues to witness, Elder Esparza has opportunity to speak in both a Chinese theological seminary and Biola College. We are grateful for the presence of Elijah Horner as a Biola student, both for his presence and for his witness on campus.

The state of the economy has made it necessary for Pastor Fluck to work outside the congregation more than was hoped but the Lord continues to provide sufficient work to meet the obligations. The vacation which the Consistory granted and Loretta's thrift paid for was a delight, I had become so tired that I longed for a chance to become so rested that I became bored – it almost happened. The physical strain of this ministry is taking a toll on me, please pray that I will have the strength to continue and not falter.

We continue to be grateful to the Western Classis for its continued financial support. Ebenezer continues to support us financially at a rate which amazes us, and the Yuba City congregation has contributed substantially to our needs. Our gratitude is to all who also pray for us, for dollars do not build the church but the work of the Holy Spirit in response

to the prayers of Christ's people does. However, our rent for this facility is approximately \$36,000.00 per year and is a five year lease. Please pray for us because those numbers are frightening. The giving expected from our congregation by the proposed budget is \$56,000.00 for this calendar year. That represents a rise double what the Lord provided last year.

As you pray for the chapel; remember our desire for a deacon, our growing to "maturity" (every teenager either looks for a chance to leave home, or knows how good he has it at home and doesn't want to leave until forced – we aren't going until Ebenezer locks the door behind us -- we desire to grow strong enough to stand alone but are not eager to stand alone), our continued faithfulness in financial support of the ministry, and the Lord's hand on our witness opening hearts and minds to the gospel.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Jay Fluck

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Neale Riffert read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brothers:

The past year was one of great blessing for Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster. It began with frenzied preparations for hosting the 19th Annual Session of the Western Classis, a work which is a matter of course and almost routine for many of the older congregations of the Classis. For us, however, we were sailing in uncharted waters. Nonetheless it was a good experience for us and a blessing for the congregation. As pastor, I am greatly thankful for the spirit of fellowship among the members, and their earnest reception of the word of God, which is reflected in their diligent attendance at the worship services, and in their participation in the work of the church.

Families of the church continue the work of cleaning the church weekly, signing up for a month at a stretch, and this year we actually have more families than months, which will lessen the burden somewhat. During the course of the past year we received into our membership through the rite of confirmation and profession of faith five of our young people, and we also received into our membership, after instruction, five others. Two of those were dismissed to our care from the Bayview Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Chula Vista; two came commended by a Reformed Baptist congregation and were received by reaffirmation of faith, and one, a single man, came from an independent, non-Reformed church in the area. We do indeed rejoice in the hand of God's blessing upon us. With reference to the single man, I spent a good deal of time going through the three forms of unity with him, and was greatly delighted to see how eagerly he welcomed each session. We also had one infant baptism during 2004. I conducted one funeral of an elderly lady who, though not a member of the church, had attended the church for some time.

In the course of the year I have preached through the book of Colossians, began a series on the Kingdom of God which is still ongoing, although it has taken a bit of detour through the "Millennial" issue, and took some pauses

between these for messages pertaining to seasonal events. I preached every Sunday but one during the year, forty-nine of them in Grace Reformed Church, once in the Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, WI as they celebrated their 150th Anniversary as a congregation, and once in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Northwest (Dallas, TX) where my son-in-law John is an elder. I also preached one evening service at the Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield.

Our Adult Sunday School continues in the Heidelberg Catechism, and in the younger class of the Sunday School we have introduced the Promise and Deliverance material. The youngest Sunday School Class is taught by four teachers, each one taking the class for three months during the year. The middle class is taught by the elders. I teach the catechism classes on Wednesday evenings during the months of September through April.

We have recently begun a Friday Night Family Bible Study that meets the second and fourth Fridays of each month, and I am going through the Book of the Acts. I have chosen the Acts because it gives a good background to the epistles of Paul and to the historical perspective of the church's growth. Much of my material is gleaned from F. F. Bruce's Commentary on the Acts that I have found of great value through the years. Our Friday Night Family Bible Study is preceded by a dish-to-pass dinner. The Friday Night Family Bible Study came about as a replacement of the Tuesday Evening Ladies Bible Study and Saturday morning men's Bible Study. If that confuses you, take heart, it confuses me also.

The Lord's Supper was administered four times during the year, and each time followed by a fellowship luncheon. There is a special offering received on each occasion of the Lord's Supper and these are used for various purposes. In 2004 those offerings were sent for the support of the Confessing Reformed Church in the Congo, the Reformed Radio Administration Committee, High Plains Reformed Church, Calhan, CO (in conjunction with the Annual Day of Prayer), and a recently initiated building fund for Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster.

The consistory presents quarterly reports to the congregation as to finances and their work, and the needs of the church in general. There have been diaconal needs that have been attended to, and the elders take up teaching and exhorting on the occasions of pastoral absences.

While our offerings had a healthy increase during the year, and our treasury ended the year in the black, we recognize with great thanksgiving the generosity of the Classis and Synod as well as the Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter in the support of our work in Lancaster. While there will be a request again this year for continued support, it will reflect a 20% decrease.

As a congregation we have been blessed by the Lord, but we have also been tried. We have had two of our young people who, following the course of the wisdom of the world, have departed from the path of light. One is a non-communicant member, the other, one of our recent confirmants. This has been distressing to the Spiritual Council whose prayerful wish is for their return, and to this end we seek your prayers for wisdom and strength.

As a congregation we also have a weakness in our ministry to our youth. This is partly due to the geographical separation of our families, and partly owing to the work schedules of the men of the church, but it is an area that is of some

concern, as our young men and women need the fellowship and encouragement of one another in the faith.

It is with great thanksgiving to the Lord in the supply of His strength that I have been able to continue in this ministry, participating in serving on Classis, and Synod committees, and also participating in the Heidelberg West Youth Camp. Our family has been blessed through the year. The difficulties that Neale Jr. had previously with ulcers has so far abated, for which we praise the Lord, and our daughter Idelette was married in Grace Reformed Church on January 1st of this year. Our grandchildren now total eleven with the addition of Isaiah Braddock born to our daughter Keren on the 31st of January 2005. I thank God for the ministry of our Western Classis, for the company of saints that He surrounds us with, and for the blessings that have come to me through His gracious provision of my faithful wife of forty-five years. With each passing year I am increasingly dazzled by the apostle's words in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*"

By the mercies of God, respectfully,
Neale R. Riffert

Classis Action: Take Note. Elder Greg Stewart led the body in prayer.

Rev. Thomas Mayville read his Parochial Report

Beloved Fathers and Brothers in the faith,

Our faithful Triune God has wonderfully blessed your servant and the saints at Willows this past Classical year!

By the grace of God, I have continued in my regular weekly duties of preaching, and teaching an evening Bible Study each Lord's Day. This past Classical year, I preached a series of 40 sermons using a passage of Scripture each week to expound on a theme from the book, *The Purpose Driven Life*. This series was interrupted for special sermons for Christmas, Easter, Reformation, New Years, and 2 sermons on the 4th Commandment. In February we began a series on John 14 and 15. Rev. Voytek and I exchanged pulpits one Sunday in May, which was a delight for both congregations and their ministers.

Sunday Evenings I led Bible studies on *Pleasing God* (a video series by RC Sproul) a study on the Officers of Christ's Church (using *The New Testament Deacon* by Strauch, *The Elders of the Church* by Eyres, and *The Providence of God* - a video series by R.C. Sproul). I administered the Lord's Supper 12 times. Thankfully, no Church discipline beyond exhortations and admonitions was necessary this year. I had the privilege of remarrying a member who had been granted an ecclesiastical divorce, whose husband was excommunicated and later restored. Now, they are expecting a baby in March, perhaps during Classis!

The Lord blessed me with the opportunity to complete the Confirmation process with four young people and to bring them into Communicant membership. Another communicant should be confirmed in 2005. We received one college student by reaffirmation of faith, and erased two college age young men who have moved far away. Another member is currently living in Texas with her in-laws and two children, having been widowed a year ago. I think that she will decide this year to remain there. A member

living in Nevada is uncertain of whether or not he will stay there permanently. We have two singles in a membership class presently. One family, members of Covenant Reformed of Sacramento, has recently finished the construction of a new home nearby and has expressed a desire to transfer their membership soon. My mother (widowed about a year and a half ago) and sister have recently moved to our county from Kentucky. I hope that next year I can report their desire to become members of GRC. I am also evangelizing a young man who recently graduated from college, and am disciplining a young man whom it seems the Lord has converted recently.

I taught the Adult Sunday School Class in which we studied the major differences between Reformed and Reformed Baptist doctrines. The second half of the year we studied the first, second and third heads of doctrine in the Canons of Dort. An inactive Deacon is teaching the Sr. High and College class Pratt's book, *Every Thought Captive*. This year, the 4-6 grade class used the new RCUS Sunday School curriculum. I had the privilege of attending the Sacramento RCUS Reformation Conference and a *Weekend to Remember Marriage Conference* put on by *Family Life Today*. Four times a year, I have the privilege of ministering to the old folks at Sun Bridge Rest Home. Each family or head of household receives a pastoral/elder's visit every nine months. I make it a point to visit our two distant college students when they are home on break. From time to time I have had members or visitors over for a meal and fellowship.

The demographics of our church, like most, changes from year to year. We have one student at Master's College and another at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. I helped these students find good churches nearby. We also have three students at Chico State University, four at Butte Community College, and four high school seniors. I have been promoting to these students Providence Christian College in Ontario as the only Reformed College West of the Missouri River, and hope you all will do the same in your churches. This year, the Lord provided us with a Youth Group leader in Elder Joe Gross. Our Youth Group has been utilizing Dobson's *Life on the Edge* as a study guide every other week. The book addresses many challenges during *the critical decade* from ages 16-26. We hope and pray that many of these young people will find Reformed spouses, and jobs close to home so that we may continue to see GRC grow numerically through the addition of spouses and covenant children in the near future.

Your servant ministered to several families through marriage and family counseling this year, and I provided individual counseling on many occasions. The Lord enabled me to shepherd his sheep in this way as they faced difficult decisions and struggled with the hardships of life. Four brothers in our congregation lost their father to death this year. John van Tol Sr. had been an elder in the OPC Church in Ramona, CA and is greatly missed. Another member lost his unsaved brother to death. I visited one relation of a member in jail, attended the high school graduations of two members, and visited one member during his hospitalization. I am currently providing pre-marital counseling for a couple planning their wedding for this summer. What a joy this is for me to see, for the first time, one I have confirmed entering the bonds of holy matrimony.

Our congregation has enjoyed a few activities for fellowship this year. Our ladies have been meeting bi-monthly for fellowship and Bible Study using Max Lucado's *A Love Worth Giving*. This summer, several enjoyed the RCUS Northern California annual picnic on the Sacramento River. In July, we had a record turn out of 21 warriors, uh rafters, for the Northern CA. rafting trip. Any elders or pastors up for the challenge this year? In October, our Reformation Celebration was a big hit. During the winter and spring months, the congregation enjoyed evening visits to Chico, Anderson and Yuba City to

participate in Hymn Sings, and hosted a Sing at Willows.

In the fall of 2003, our congregation voted to authorize Rev. Walker and Elders Stewart and Fay to assist our congregation by overseeing the Lord's Supper each month. This past Classical year, they acted as Spiritual Council assisting in interviewing a young man for membership, the examination of two catechumens, the admonition of two members, the oversight of the Lord's Supper monthly, and the examination of two nominees for Elder. Their personal sacrifices to be present and oversee the flock have been a great blessing to me personally and to the flock. We praise God that the Congregation elected Ken Bowen and Joe Gross to the office of Elder this past fall! The congregation has been waiting almost three years for this good news! Thanks to all who participated in their ordination. Please welcome them to Classis and make them feel at home—I know you will.

Again, our Deacons have been so helpful to your servant from Spring to Fall while I shepherded without local Elders. They did their work as Deacons in an exemplary fashion, relieving me of many responsibilities they could attend to. Our Deacons were faithful in distributing diaconal aid, helping a widow move to Texas, cleaning and maintaining the building and caring for the material needs of their pastor as well as providing monetary assistance to Oak Tree Christian School and the use of our building at no charge until June. One of our Deacons has served for 18 years, and the other for seven. One will become inactive this year, and the other would like to become inactive, but will serve one more year. They are hoping that two men we have been approaching and training will be willing to serve as Deacons next year, carrying on their work and letting them enjoy a much deserved rest.

Our Covenant God has blessed our congregation materially as well. He motivated His people to give nine percent more in tithes and offerings than last year. The Deacons oversaw the installation of new windows upstairs so that now our building has all new energy efficient and aesthetically pleasing windows. This coming Sunday (Feb. 20), the congregation will approve a new and much improved look for the exterior. The first phase will begin soon, God willing, but the entire make over will take years to accomplish. Plans are underway for beautifying the sanctuary with new silk trees, and to improve our sound system.

I am pleased with our congregation's involvement in our community and the world. Oak Tree Christian School relocated to Orland, about 18 miles northeast, after three years in our building. I participated in the dedication of their new Campus, which sits on 10 acres. They have now expanded to K-12, partnering with Providence High School. This is huge for Glenn County! (Enrollment stands at approximately 60 K-8 students, and ten 9-12th grade students). I participated in an assessment of the school by interviewing four teachers after the school year. We are hopeful that the Lord will open doors for us to offer a Preschool at GRC Willows for 2005-06, as a beginning for a second Oak Tree Campus here in time. I also participated with other churches in a National Day of Prayer service.

The congregation has grown spiritually this last year. They sent care packages to US troops in Iraq and participated in *Operation Christmas Child* through *Samaritan's Purse*. Preparations for hosting Classis have been a real blessing to our congregation. A new Board was formed this past year at Champion Christian School in Chico where several of our high school students attend, and I participated in the process. The old Board was very mystical and Pentecostal, whereas the new Board is much more solid theologically. This change has been a blessing to our member students. The congregation was very instrumental in distributing Voter Guides throughout the County during the Presidential

Campaign. Getting helpers to help do the work of the church has improved over the last 12 months. Attendance at Sunday School, Youth Group and Sunday night Bible Study has improved over last year. We have three new Sunday School teachers who have never taught before. Several individuals have grown spiritually through various trials and instruction.

Some challenges lay ahead for Pastor, officers and congregation in 2005. The congregation needs two new Deacons to relieve our current ones. Twenty-two adult or young adult members/regular attenders still do not attend Sunday School or Sunday night Bible Study (We average 60 souls for the Worship Service). The congregation would profit by the addition of an activities coordinator. Some regular attenders are still hesitant to join. Efforts at memorization of the Catechism by catechumens need improving. Participation in the RCUS through No. CA Youth outings, hymn sings, camp and conferences needs improvement. A piano fund has been established to upgrade our piano. Members should become more diligent in inviting people to church. Many of the songs in the Trinity Hymnal are beyond the ability of our pianists to play, and several other gifted musicians are reluctant to play.

We would like to run a radio ad and publish newspaper articles. I would like to have every family over for a meal at our home, establish a Young Adult Fellowship, and create a GRC website. I would like to see a men's fellowship and a parenting class. I would love to put together an on-line meeting place for the young people of the Western Classis, separated geographically, but united in heart and mind. Finally, I hope that we can engage in some pulpit exchanges, both inside and outside the denomination this year. May the Lord enable us to achieve some of these goals in 2005 through the sacrifices and efforts of His people and their leaders in Willows.

In Christ's service, relying on His grace
Thomas Mayville, Pastor

Classis Action: Take note.

Rev. Gil Baloy read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

What a blessing to know the Lord from His Word. How we love Him for all that He has savingly done. “Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light...You in your small corner, [my brothers] and I in mine.” What a privilege to serve our sovereign, triune and covenant God in our “small corner” of San Diego. Oh, to obey and serve the One in whom our hearts delight with joy unspeakable and full of glory! (John 14:15).

In one sense, our task is simple: to let our light *so* shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Yes, let us recount to others all that He is, and all that *He* has done *for* us, and *in* us, who are such wretched and miserable sinners. In another sense, our task is difficult: we are so weak and helpless, and fall far short in our service to Him. Who is sufficient for these things?

Our Lord reminds us, “for without Me, ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). For with

Him, by His grace, we of Covenant Reformed Chapel have been able to fulfill all the marks of a true church. The first thing each Lord's Day, I have conducted a gospel ministry at the Convalescent Center in the nearby suburb of Paradise Hills, for a total of 49 times. Two other brothers have filled in for me when I was gone.

I have preached 49 times at our morning worship service. After completing at the end of March the book of James, I began the book of Genesis. That is where the Gospel was first preached in the Bible (Genesis 3:15), as well as in recorded history. I find the narratives like Genesis a great challenge (not easy) to preach. But expository preaching of the whole Bible is necessary, as is preaching the whole counsel (Acts 20: 27). The proclamation of the Word from behind the pulpit is vital for the lifeblood of the congregation. As someone once said, "If there is an iceberg in the pulpit, there will be an iceberg in the pew... but if there is fire in the pulpit, there will be fire in the pew!" Let Scripture qualify that statement with this: "by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Peter 1:12).

Usually, a fellowship lunch follows our one worship service. In the afternoon, I conducted Bible studies in the homes of elderly folks connected to our fellowship. Elder White often accompanied me. Two of our elderly folks have since gone to be with the Lord later last year. They are Dorothy Davis and Eva Jackson. Only one of the original three is left, Josephina Saparsantos. I endeavor to visit her weekly on Sunday, or later in the week. She resides in the same facility where I regularly preach.

Other activities fill three Lord's Day afternoons a month. We still hold open air preaching and testifying meetings at Balboa Park near the San Diego Zoo. It is conducted on the second Sunday of the month. It starts at 3:00 p.m. when the park is still crowded. We have expanded our outreach to include a professional-looking information table: equipped with free booklets, tracts and tapes, with two colorful umbrellas for shade, and surrounded by large picture-framed Gospel verses to catch the public's eye. Mr. Lee Fountain provided all of this from his book table ministry of several years past in Balboa Park.

On every third Sunday afternoon we have the Lord's Supper. We began holding a separate communion service at 2:00 p.m. this month (February). This gives the Spiritual Counsel time to better fence the table. Those who are not members will leave after our fellowship lunch. Since the start of the chapel's existence, we have had the Lord's Supper administered after the morning sermon on a monthly basis. Last year we celebrated it eleven times. There were no baptisms last year.

On the last Sunday evening of the month at 6:00 p.m., we have enjoyed a joint evening service with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of San Diego (RPCNA). The minister, Rev. Mark England, last October invited other congregations which were without a second service. We are the only one thus far to accept. Rev. England and I alternate preaching. It is a more informal meeting with a "Psalm Sing" at the start. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is" to fellowship with those of like precious faith and doctrine (Psalm 133:1). For a time, it is an opportunity to develop our fraternal relationship.

Last Spring, I concluded a study of the Heidelberg Catechism based primarily on Norman Jones' book, Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism, at our "Midweek Oasis" meeting each Wednesday. Elder White is presently teaching the "Five Points of Calvinism" from the book, Faith of Our Fathers Living Still, by Rev. Paul Treick. Now I devote my time entirely to the instruction of the catechumens in Church History and various biblical subjects. Each one recites the Heidelberg Catechism before Elder White

and myself. Afterwards, I would ask questions about the particular Question/Answer from the catechism which was recited. He is expected to show that he understands it by clear-cut answers.

Each Lord's Day, Elder White has been steadily teaching about different Bible topics to the adults in his Sunday School class. Eric Lontoc covered biblical history from the Old Testament, and presently is going through T.U.L.I.P. with his students. He instructs the youth in what it means to know Christ and to live for Him. My wife Maricar nurtures the younger children as if they were her own. Also, she is in her fifth year at Covenant Christian School, a ministry of Bayview Orthodox Presbyterian Church. She is a second grade teacher there. We are blessed in having teachers who truly care for their students.

I taught the membership class on two separate occasions last year. Our membership has only increased by *four* this time. But several new families regularly come (though most of them are only *one* in size!). From that new pool, I have gathered a class of six students. We pray for God to convert any unsaved persons through a prayerful and in depth study of the gospel of Jesus Christ (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:22-23).

Elder White and I are involved in "discipling" others for the kingdom of God (Isaiah 8:16; Matthew 28:18-20). It requires setting aside time for instruction and mutual fellowship in order to get better acquainted, and to better see Christ in His people (1 Corinthians 2:2). Some discipling is done over the phone, like in the case of family members and relatives who live at a distance. I speak with young men interested in serving in the gospel ministry as far away as Barrigada, Guam, and Metro Manila, Philippines. It goes without saying that distance is an impediment to the process. As much as possible, discipleship should be in person. "I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face..." (3 John 14).

We participate in the meetings of the Spiritual Counsel and Consistory of the Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church by conference call on the first Wednesday after the first Sunday of the month. On that same Wednesday when the Consistory meets, the women gather for fellowship and prayer. The "aged women...teach the young women" (Titus 2:3,4). They have started to reach out to others as well, such as to our sick and elderly. Through their efforts more of the saints' feet are being washed (1 Timothy 5:10).

Counseling activity goes on, usually in the course of our pastor and/or elder visitation. It is true that God's people should receive much needed counseling and guidance from the preaching and teaching. But sin manifests itself in different ways with every individual. Personal one-on-one counseling is a vital supplement to *customize* the counseling of the Word to individuals and families. Biblical counseling should always precede any disciplinary action by the church court. Hopefully, in most cases counseling will avert the need for such action altogether. Also, members in the church need to *counsel* one another privately, particularly "if thy brother shall trespass against thee" (Matthew 18:15). It is our prayer, that by the Holy Spirit's conviction, we will know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. The Lord is our wonderful Counselor, even as the Holy Spirit is our Comforter to come alongside us in this vale of tears (John 8:32; Isaiah 9:6; John 14:26).

We continue to meet in the Chula Vista Police Officers' Association Building. As we slowly grow, it becomes a *cozier* place to meet. Of course, *teamwork* is required when we are in a rented facility. Many hands are involved in setting up and tearing down for worship, like the Levites did the Tabernacle in the wilderness. For example, signs need to be hung, and chairs and tables must be arranged. We learn to work together. And the members do it heartily as unto the Lord. John Larson, as our *premier* (only) usher, leaves

a cheerful first-impression with every worshiper who passes through our doors. Laura Miranda is coming right along as our pianist. Ezra Baloy does a great job with the sound system, so that our teaching and my preaching will be loud and clear. Some folks have been toting various paraphernalia back-and-forth and to-and-from the meeting place for years, like the hymnal and songbooks.

During the service, Bibles, hymnals, Catechisms and notebooks would be strewn around our feet on the floor. Last summer I was given the idea of including all the hymns, Scripture and Catechism reading, and other elements of worship to be printed out in an expanded bulletin. It makes for a large ten-page bulletin. We do our own printing to bring down the cost. It is a big help to the worshipers. The older folks and children are able to follow along with greater ease. On top of that, our new and improved bulletin makes for a good invitation to hand out to our neighbors.

Every church or chapel needs “R & R” (Rest and Recreation). Mr. Leonard Miranda has been the one to set up and coordinate our outings. We try each year to have a camping event, such as in nearby Carlsbad State Beach. Likewise, he organizes our men’s birthday fellowship for the month at a restaurant. The ladies get together for fellowship around their birthdays as well. In fact, it was the ladies who *began* the practice. They also have a “kitty” for those who may come up short for the luncheon or dinner. I would be remiss in not mentioning invitations to winter retreats by the Southern California Reformed Fellowship (SCRF), with which our denomination is affiliated. This is for the junior high, senior high & college, and single and young married adults, of our churches. Of course, I encourage the brethren to get involved in our own events, like the Sacramento Church family camp in Lake Tahoe or other classical church camps, and the Youth Heidelberg Camp, *first*.

A final item of note is the coming of an old friend from the Philippines, Pastor Virgilio Larraga. We go back to 1983, when I first gave him the Reformed gospel during my first “missionary journey” there. He has faithfully put his hand to the plow over the years, and has never turned back. It has not been easy without solid Reformed brethren around. He has not been without his share of temptations from false brethren. Last year Rev. Larraga was invited to the U.S. for a speaking engagement by an American minister in the Southern Baptist denomination where he was also ordained. He applied for a visa in good faith. Now it appears that the other party may not be interested in hosting Pastor Larraga at his congregation in Rosamond, California. Yet God marvelously granted Rev. Larraga the visa, which is very difficult to get. I have heartily recommended that he not pursue the original plan. Instead, I invited him to come to our chapel. Also I invited him to attend the Western Classis. By the grace of God Rev. Larraga continues to persevere in the faith. In the will of God I hope to have the privilege of introducing him to the brethren of Classis.

Why do we serve the Lord in His church? As the Heidelberg Catechism declares, “Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing, and that He be glorified through us...” We show forth His praises for what He was pleased to do in saving the sinful likes of us. And if that’s not all, “then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof; and by our godly walk win also others to Christ.” He uses our works, though filthy rags they are in themselves (Isaiah 64:6), to give our faltering hearts assurance that we belong to Him. For, like ourselves, our works are sinful and must be washed in His precious blood (Hebrews 9:14). To think, the Lord ordained that we walk in good works to support our witness *of* Him, so that

others might be won *to* Him (Ephesians 2:10; Proverbs 11:30). Yet, it is in the work of Christ alone that the saints of God glory, and not in their own.

“Thy works, not mine, O Christ,
Speak gladness to this heart;
They tell me all is done;
They bid my fear depart.” (Horatius Bonar)

The Lord has granted myself, my wife Maricar, and children Ezra and Ethan, relatively good health with which to serve Him in our local congregation. I am thankful to be a member of the Western Classis, and to benefit from being under its sound and faithful oversight. As the pastor of the Covenant Reformed Chapel of San Diego, I humbly witness this report of the Lord’s faithful work over the past year to be true.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Guillermo Baloy

Classis Action: Take note. Rev. Dennis Roe led the body in prayer.

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ELDERS

The President addressed the Questions of Article 81 of the Constitution to the Elder Delegates of each congregation. The answers are as follows:

1. *Are the doctrines of the gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God?* All answered yes.
2. *Is careful attention given to the instruction of the youth for confirmation, the reception of members into the Church, and The Christian nurture of the members?* All answered yes.
3. *In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:*
 - a. *Is visitation faithfully performed?* All answered yes.
 - b. *Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution?* All answered yes.
4. *Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution?* All answered yes.
5. *In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship:*
 - a. *Are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?* All answered yes, except for Chico who answered no, and for Grass Valley who answered no but improving.
 - b. *Are these monies sent promptly to the Classis treasurer?* All answered yes.
 - c. *Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?* All answered yes, except for Chico who answered no, and for Grass Valley who answered no but improving.
 - d. *Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer?* All answered yes.
6. *Are the Church records properly kept?* All answered yes.
- 7a. *Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge?* All answered yes.
- 7b. *Is the temporal contract between minister and people adequate to meet his temporal needs?* All answered yes with the exception of Sacramento who answered no in regards to

the San Diego work.

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

The Stated Clerk provided a table of statistics. It appears in the Appendix.

Classis Action: The report on Membership and Financial Statistics was received.

REPORTS FROM CLASSIS' FRATERNAL DELEGATES

Rev. Jonathan Merica reported on the visit of Rev. Lloyd Gross as an observer to the Classis Southwest U.S., URCNA, on March 23-24, 2004 held at the Calvary United Reformed Church in Loveland, CO.

Rev. Gil Baloy reported on his visit as an observer delegate to the Classis Southwest U.S., URCNA, on September 14-15, 2004, held at the United Reformed Church in Oceanside, CA.

Rev. Jonathan Merica reported on his visit as a fraternal delegate to the 2004 Spring Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Northern California, OPC, on March 19-20, 2004, at the OPC in Castroville, CA.

Rev. Jonathan Merica read a letter sent to the 2004 Second Stated Meeting of the Presbytery held at the New Life OPC in La Mesa, CA on May 7-8, 2004.

Rev. George Horner reported on his visit as a fraternal delegate to the Third Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California held at Branch of Hope OPC in Torrance, CA on October 15-16, 2004.

Rev. Gil Baloy reported on his visit as a fraternal delegate to the First Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California, OPC held at Calvary OPC in La Mirada, CA on February 4-5, 2005.

Rev. Michael Voytek reported on his visit as a fraternal delegate to the meeting held in Abbotsford, BC, Canada on December 2, 2004.

Rev. Gil Baloy reported on his visit as a fraternal delegate to the Pacific Coast Presbytery on February 11-12, 2005 held in San Diego.

Classis Action: Take Note.

ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS

The Rev. Matthew Van Luik addressed the body on behalf of the Classis Pacific East of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Classis Action: Rev. Michael Voytek responded to Rev. Van Luik on behalf of the Classis.

EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATE

A Special Order was set for Wednesday following the morning devotion for the purpose of examining the Rev. Eric Bristley for licensure. Rev. Bristley is a member of the Midwest Presbytery of the OPC and is currently a candidate to become the Associate Pastor of Covenant Reformed Church in Grass Valley. The examination followed the procedure outlined in the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee Report, recommendation 5. Rev. Bristley's examination was declared satisfactory, he then read aloud and subscribed to the formula for licensure after which the body welcomed him by extension of the right hand of fellowship to Rev. Bristley.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Special Committee to Study the Issue of Paedocommunion

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The actions of the 2004 Classis regarding our report are listed below to refresh your memories. In the 2004 Abstract, following the recommendations, the Clerk notes the following on page 84: *Classis Action: Following adoption of the recommendations the Report was then recommitted to the Special Committee to edit and perfect the body of the report in a final form for publication.*

You already have in your hands, from 2003 and 2004 the edited and perfected first two parts of our report: West - *The Relevance of Jesus' First Pilgrim Passover Upon The Age of Coming to The Lord's Supper*, Schwertly - *Paedocommunion: A Biblical Examination*.

We have sent to you by e-mail the edited and perfected third part from last year for you to print and bring to Classis: Mayville - *Paedocommunion in the Light of Church History and the Reformed Confessions*. To help you more easily identify the editing and perfecting of this third part by your committee, I have highlighted the editing by putting new of different words for 2005 in a large font with footnotes indicating changes from 2004. Please review these changes before coming to Classis.

Recommendations:

1. **[Adopted as amended]** That this three part edited and perfected report (West - *The Relevance of Jesus' First Pilgrim Passover Upon The Age of Coming to The Lord's Supper*, Schwertly - *Paedocommunion: A Biblical Examination*, and Mayville - *Paedocommunion in the Light of Church History and the Reformed Confessions*) be referred to the Permanent Publications Committee for copy editing and publication.
2. **[Adopted as amended]** That the Publications Committee be instructed to develop this work into an e-book format.
3. **[Adopted]** That the Publications Committee be instructed to publish this report no later than June 30, 2005.

4. [Take Note] That the Special Committee to study the issue of Paedocommunion be dissolved.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev's. Thomas Mayville (Chmn.), Jim West, Neale Riffert;
Elders Richard Elliott, John Heerema

Classis Action: The committee's report was received thereby dissolving the committee.

B. On Possible Inconsistencies in Articles 113, 114, 118, 119

Esteemed Brothers,

Your committee, in examining Articles 113, 114, 118, and 119 of the RCUS Constitution, sought to answer the question of a possible inconsistency in these articles. In particular our task was to sort through the following:

A. Article 113 states that "*profanation of the Lord's Day*" is an offense worthy of discipline.

B. Whether "*Profanation of the Lord's Day*" falls into the category of article 119 "*negligent in partaking of the Holy Communion, or refuses to contribute to the support of the Church, or continually absents himself from public worship.*"

C. If 'B' is correct then why does Article 119 not also require excommunication as does Article 118, rather than erasure?

D. It appears from the original overture that prompted this study, that there is a question as to why some sins result in excommunication, and others in erasure.

Your committee would point out the following:

A. Article 113 and 114 should be understood as the heading reads: Discipline in General. These Articles present the wide scope of discipline – for members, officers, and judicatories and cover public and private sins. Particularly, Article 114 lists censure and deposition which apply to officers. Not all the sins listed here would apply to the membership in general (Articles 118, 119).

B. It would appear that "*profanation of the Lord's Day*" would need further definition if it would always fall under the sins listed in Article 119. While Article 119 lists failures of members in their duties, and these would all be in part a "*profanation of the Lord's Day,*" there are many other profanation categories that Spiritual Councils have judged differently – from listening to a radio on the Lord's Day to operating a business on the Lord's Day.

C. Article 118 focuses on the results of a judicial process which would follow the steps listed in Part III, Section 6 – "Process and Trial" of the Constitution. In Article 118 note the words, "*convicted*" and "*guilty.*" Note that this Article begins, "*who upon being convicted of an offense....*" This would indicate that a trial has already taken place with a guilty verdict and no repentance has occurred. Likewise Article 118 deals with "*an act of public scandal....*" In such a case suspension from the Lord's Supper might be the first step of disciplinary action. Article 119, while dealt with by a judicatory of the church, does not necessarily envision a trial or public scandal.

D. Article 119 deals with failures (negligence, refusals, and absences) of a member to attend to specific duties which are regarded as offenses against the church. While these

are serious matters, these matters have not reached the point of a trial. It may also indicate that Article 119 deals more with private sins than public scandal. In the process of dealing with the sins of Article 119, there may be cases where the accusations and lack of repentance could result in a trial according to Article 118.

E. The greater issue is whether all offenses are deserving of excommunication. Excommunication is a declaration that a person is outside of the bounds of the Christian Church – an apostate person who has been separated from the Church of Christ – "separated and cut off from the communion of the saints, and from the use of the sacraments, so long as he (she) continues without repentance." (Directory of Worship, p. 77) While it is necessary and obvious in some cases, this is the most serious act a church can take against an individual. In the offenses listed in Article 119, it may well be that the individual has not denied Christ. He may be attending another Bible-believing church. He may be backsliding without having denied the faith. While wrong, does it require excommunication? Judicial erasure does effectually remove this person from good standing in the church without declaring him, as yet, to be outside the kingdom of heaven.

F. Your committee would refer the Classis to the Synodical action taken at its 245th Annual Session in 1991. Here the matter of erasure and excommunication was brought up. The action taken was as follows:

"That no change be made in Articles 114 and 119 regarding the change from "erasure" to "excommunication." We regard erasure of name as a form of Christian discipline (II Tim. 4:10, 14; I John 2:19). Whenever erasure is used, it should be recorded, with the reason for the action, in the minutes of the Spiritual Council, with appropriate announcement made to the congregation. In contrast to erasure as a judicial disciplinary measure, the second paragraph of Article 119 deals with erasure of name as an administrative disciplinary measure, and therefore we recommend that it be unchanged."

G. The committee is uncertain why only "*profanation of the Lord's Day*" was thought to fit the duty of members in Article 119, as many or all of the sins listed in Article 113 could also be included.

In conclusion, it should be again noted that not all disciplinary cases in the church follow the full course of a trial resulting in a declaration of an individual as a heathen. While an excommunicated person and the congregation to which the form is read should take this sentence very seriously, likewise the Spiritual Council, Classis, or Synod declaring this sentence must be very sure that this person has denied Christ and is declared to be outside the Church of Jesus Christ.

It should be noted well that a matter that begins under the action of Article 119, might well also end up in the process of Article 118 – with excommunication. When it does, the process of trial must then follow the outline of the Constitution. The Constitution, however, leaves room to consider that not all who may neglect their duties as a member are always judged to be heathens. Some indeed may be attending or have joined another church without receiving a Letter of Dismission. While this is neglect of duty, it is not a heathen act as described in the reading of the Form for Excommunication in the Directory of Worship.

Your committee therefore recommends that no change be made in Articles 113, 114, 118, or 119, but that they be followed studiously.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev's. Paul H. Treick (Chmn.), Michael Voytek;

Elder David Stelpstra

Classis Action: The committee's report was received thereby dissolving the committee.

C. On the Practice of Borrowing Elders

In recent years several congregations of the Western Classis have, through unusual circumstances particular to those congregations, found themselves in the situation where they had but one elder, that being the pastor. It therefore became necessary in order to maintain good order that some means be employed by which those congregations could continue under the governance of a consistory in which there would be a plurality of elders, and the oversight of the congregation.

As the Constitution of the RCUS is mute on the practice of "borrowing" elders (the term being of recent vintage) the practice of providing oversight for congregations that found themselves in situations where they had need of such has precedence within the several classes of the RCUS dating as far back as the *old* Eureka Classis. It also finds support in Articles 83, and 91 of the Constitution of the RCUS. Article 83 addresses matters where the Classis proper has oversight of its congregations, and Article 91 addresses matters where Classis through its executive committee is charged with the duty to advise a congregation *in the amicable adjustment of disputes in the administration of the affairs of the congregations or charges*. This same article (91) states, "*It shall be the duty of this Committee to advise with the Consistory of a vacant charge, to aid the Consistory in securing a pastor and to assist a minister in obtaining a suitable field of labor.*" Certainly the Classis is familiar with a congregation *borrowing* pastors to supply their pulpits when a charge is vacant, though we do not use term *borrowing* to describe this procedure, it is quite similar to the issue at hand. The Classis, often, in such cases of pastoral vacancies, through its Executive Committee, either by itself, or erecting a committee for such purpose assists congregations by setting up pulpit supply, thus establishing *de facto* a "borrowing" of pastors (elders).

With the above background this committee views its task not as implementing a new practice, but as reviewing a present practice that though not spelled out in particulars in the Constitution of the RCUS has within Articles 83 and 91, the framework for the practice. The practice has proved workable and beneficial in recent Classis history (Chico, Willows, Anderson, Lancaster). The committee views the term "*borrowing elders*" to describe either (1) the addition of elders to a present consistory or (2) the addition of elders in order to form a consistory or (3) the addition of elders to a present consistory in order to assist in the maintenance of a congregation. This pertains to an organized congregation, and in each case it is viewed as a temporary situation. Where there is not a minimal plurality of elders (at least a pastor and an elder) it is counted as a very unusual anomaly, although the Classis has had just such in its recent history. Such a situation should be rectified by the Classis in conjunction with the congregation, and a suitable solution found. However, when a congregation is unable, for lack of elders to form a consistory, and thus has need of additional elders, then some action is necessary for the maintenance of the congregation as an organized body.

The committee therefore proposes the following procedure for assisting congregations under such circumstances, which we believe is orderly, charitable, and in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution of the RCUS.

First, the Classis either of itself, or through its Executive Committee will advise the congregation, and seek its relief through the assistance of elders in other/or another Classis congregation(s). Second, the elder or elders who consent to assist, and to whom their consistories give their assent, shall then be presented to the congregation needing assistance, and the congregation will be asked at a meeting for its consent by way of vote. Those elders will then take full part in the consistory actions of that congregation, with all the honor due them, and the authority as that of the local consistory. Third, those elders shall serve for a specified time (three months, six months, until the next annual meeting of the congregation, etc.). Should further service be required, the above procedure would be repeated.

Recommendation: That the above procedure be adopted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev's. Neale R. Riffert, (Chmn.), George Horner; Elder Greg Stewart

Classis Action: The recommendation was approved and the report was adopted.

D. Committee to Supplement the Anderson Consistory

Esteemed Brothers:

My records show that we have met with the Consistory of Faith Reformed Church a total of three times this past calendar year. Partly this was due to Pastor Henderson's and Elder Stewart's bout with cancer, and partly to an agreed upon schedule.

Although our meetings have been informative and pleasant, and we hope that we have been somewhat of an encouragement to Pastor Bowen and the members, we, as a *supplementary* committee, believe that our *supplementary advice* is no longer needed at this time. Moreover, we also believe that we, as an appointed committee of Classis, were never properly appointed to truly serve the members at Faith Reformed Church in a way that is set forth in our RCUS Constitution. We neither acted as a Joint-Consistory (see RCUS Constitution – Art. 13, 61-69) nor did we perform the duties of a borrowed deacon or elder (see Nada - "For I sincerely and respectfully do not know where to find this practice in our RCUS constitution).

Recommendations:

1. That this Special Committee of Classis to Supplement the Consistory and Spiritual Council of Faith Reformed Church of Anderson, CA be terminated at this time.
2. [Ruled out of order] That Faith Reformed Church submit a request to come under a Joint-Consistory according to the constitution of the RCUS or that they submit a request to borrow at least one elder from either the Chico or Willows church, so that they might have a plurality of elders, and that things might be done decently and in order.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Rev. Paul H. Henderson (Chmn.)
 Elders: James Ochsner, Greg Stewart, Werner Stricker
 Deacons: Steve Moore, Bud Milam

Classis Action: The recommendation was approved and the report was adopted.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

The following committee motions and their dispositions reflect the final form of the motions including all amendments which may have been made to the committee's recommendations, and any additional motions that may have come from the floor relative to the committee's report. Unless otherwise noted, the motions below were adopted by the Classis.

A. Examination and Licensure Committee

1. That the Rev. Eric Bristley be examined on the floor of Classis as follows:
 Intent (10 minutes) — Fluck
 Followed by questions from the floor.
 Prolegomena (15 minutes) — Roe
 Theology Proper (15 minutes) — Walker
 Anthropology (15 minutes) — Treick
 Christology (15 minutes) — Walker
 Soteriology (15 minutes) — Roe
 Ecclesiology (15 minutes) — Treick
 Eschatology (15 minutes) — Fluck
 Followed by questions from the floor.
 RCUS Standards (20 minutes) — Treick
 Followed by questions from the floor.
2. That the Western Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for student aid in the amount of \$4,750.00 for Mr. Scott Henry to continue his studies at Heidelberg Theological Seminary during the 2005–6 academic year.
3. That Mr. Scott Henry be encouraged to undergo a complete licensure examination at the 2006 meeting of the Western Classis.
4. That Mr. C. Carl Esparza be interviewed on the floor of Classis regarding his request to become a student under care of Classis.
5. That Mr. Carl Esparza be enrolled as a student under care of the Western Classis.
6. That the Western Classis adopt the following program for Mr. Esparza's preparation for the gospel ministry, contingent upon his acceptance by the Classis as a student under care:
 - a. That Mr. Esparza be assigned the usual theological papers that are part of the licensure process and that they be completed by the 2006 Classis meeting, with the results made available in next year's report of this committee.
 - b. That Mr. Esparza be given the Greek examination prior to the 2006 Classis meeting, with the results made available in next year's report of this committee.
 - c. That Mr. Esparza undergo an examination in the theological loci on the floor of the

- d. That Mr. Esparza be given the Hebrew examination in the interval between the 2006 and 2007 Classes, with the results made available in this committee's report to the 2007 Classis.
- e. That Mr. Esparza be examined on the floor of Classis 2007 in all the areas necessary for licensure not previously tested.
- f. That a subcommittee of the Candidates and Credential Committee oversee Mr. Esparza's preparation for licensure, that this committee meet with Mr. Esparza at least once every other month, and that Rev. Jay Fluck continue to provide a regular mentorship for him.
7. **[Approved by 2/3 vote]** That Rev. Eric Bristley's licensure examination be declared satisfactory.
8. That Rev. Eric Bristley read aloud and subscribe to the formula of licensure and be licensed by the Western Classis.
9. That the call to Rev. Eric Bristley be found in order and approved contingent upon his reception into the ministry of the Western Classis.
10. That the Stated Clerk request Rev. Bristley's dismissal papers from the Presbytery of the Midwest, OPC; and upon reception of these papers and the confirmation of Synod, that the Executive Committee circularize appropriate recommendations pertaining to his reception into the ministry of the Western Classis and his installation as associate pastor of the Grass Valley Church.

B. Excuses Committee

1. Elder Michael Peery was excused from the March 8th sessions of Classis.
2. Rev. Paul Henderson was excused from the morning sessions of March 10th.

C. Finance Committee

1. That travel expenses be paid to delegates to the 20th Annual Session of the Western Classis in the following manner:

Gil Baloy	1,100 mi. @ .30	330.00
Hank Bowen	140 mi. @ .30	42.00
Eric Bristley	224 mi. @ .30	177.20
Covenant RCUS	motel	110.00
Chris Fellersen	218 mi. @ .30	65.40
Jay Fluck	622 mi. @ .30	186.60
Grace RCUS	motel	504.00
Paul Henderson	264 mi. @ .30	79.20
George Horner	730 mi. @ .30	219.00
Frank Krivohlavek	224 mi. @ .30	67.20
Wayne Lingenfelter	280 mi. @ .30	84.00
Gary Mancilas	73 mi. @ .30	21.90
Jonathan Merica	264 mi. @ .30	79.20
Darrell Mettler	airfare	185.40
Michael Peery	130 mi. @ .30	40.20
Neale Riffert	900 mi. @ .30	270.00

Doug Schlegel	190 mi. @ .30	57.00
Greg Stewart	162 mi. @ .30	48.60
Paul Treick	330 mi. @ .30	99.00
Frank Walker	196 mi. @ .30	58.80
Jim West	190 mi. @ .30	57.00
TOTAL		<u>\$2,781.70</u>

2. That Classis reimburse Grace RCUS \$504.00 for the motel costs of various delegates (reflected in recommendation 1).
3. That Rev. Paul Henderson be granted travel expense of 79.20 (reflected in recommendation 1).
4. The new *Guideline for Giving* for Classical Year 2005-2006 is as follows:

Classical Dues	\$7.50
Benevolences	\$41.00
Home Missions	\$66.00
Publications	\$00.00
Home Missions Building Fund	\$10.00
Heidelberg Camp	<u>\$2.00</u>
Total	\$126.50

5. That the Treasurer's Report be adopted.

D. Judicial Committee

1. That the Western Classis petition Synod to replace Standing Rule 5 and 6 with the following:
 5. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel in behalf of Synod, or for delegates to Synod, at thirty-five (.35) per running mile per vehicle. When distance and time require the delegates to use public transportation to Synod, they shall be granted full fare.
2. That the Western Classis petition Synod to amend Article 81 as follows:
 - 7c. Does the temporal contract between minister and people include adequate provision or allowance for retirement?
3. **[Ruled out of order]** That the Western Classis recommend that the churches of C
4. Classis sponsor sending the *Leben Magazine* to the families of the Classis, and that this \$10.00 per family cost be listed as a voluntary line item below the Classis Guidelines, and further, that the Classis overture Synod to adopt a similar recommendation for all the churches of the RCUS.

E. Minutes of Synod

There were no recommendations.

F. Missions Committee

1. That the request from our Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, for classical support in the amount of \$7,857.45 for the 2006 calendar year be granted (this is a 5% reduction from 2005).
2. That the Western Classis petition the RCUS Synod for synodical support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, for the 2006 calendar year in the amount of \$8,451.00 (this is a 5% reduction from 2005).
3. That the Western Classis petition the RCUS Synod for benevolent support in the amount of \$3,600.00 for the 2006 calendar year to help pay for the health insurance premiums for the Rev. Gary Mancilas, pastor of the Covenant Reformed Church, Chico.
4. That the request from Ebenezer, Shafter for classical support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, in the amount of \$23,375.00 for the 2006 calendar year be granted (this is a 5% reduction from 2005).
5. That the Western Classis petition the RCUS Synod for synodical support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, for the 2006 calendar year in the amount of \$13,728.00 (this is a 5% reduction from 2005).
6. That the Western Classis and the Synod the RCUS not fund the San Ramon mission work after January, 2006 unless there is a marked improvement in attendance and/or membership.
7. That the Western Classis budget support for Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, in the amount of \$13,320.00 for the 2006 calendar year contingent upon the continuance of that work (same as 2005).
8. That the Western Classis petition the RCUS Synod for synodical support for Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, in the amount of \$19,980.00 for the 2006 calendar year contingent upon the continuance of that work (same as 2005).
9. That the Classis Permanent Home Missions Committee, in consultation with the Rev. Jonathan Merica, the Grass Valley Consistory, and the Synodical Home Missions Committee, seriously consider relocating the San Ramon work to the Stockton, CA area and should such relocation take place, that the classical and synodical support continue as budgeted for the San Ramon work.

G. Nominations Committee

1. The committee's recommendations for Permanent and Special Committees are as follows:

Executive Committee: J. West; H. Bowen, D. Schlegel
Candidates and Credentials: F. Walker, J. Fluck (1 yr); G. Horner, D. Stelpstra (2 yrs); P. Treick; D. Bender (3 yrs)
Christian Education in the Church: G. Horner, R. Spitzer (1 yr); E. Van Houten, D. Roe (2 yrs); V. Pollema, G. Mancilas (3 yrs)
Missions: P. Henderson, F. Walker (1 yr); W. Lingenfelter, M. Voytek (2 yrs); D. Roe, R. Spitzer (3 yrs)
Interchurch Relations: J. Merica, L. Gross (1 yr); G. Stewart, T. Mayville (2 yrs); G. Baloy, N. Riffert (3 yrs)
Publications: W. Johnson, T. Mayville (1 yr); C. Combs, G. Horner (2 yrs); C. Esparza, K. Bowen (3 yrs)

Diaconal: V. Pollema, G. Baloy (1 yr); J. Warren, S. Wilbur (2 yrs); M. Peery, J. Mills (3 yrs)

Heidelberg West Youth Camp: P. Henderson, P. Treick (1 yr); G. Born, R. Lopez (2 yrs); T. Mayville, G. Stewart (3 yrs)

H. Benevolences Committee

1. That the Western Classis petition the 259th RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,300 per month for the Rev. and Mrs. Robert Sander.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 259th RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett.
3. That the Western Classis petition the 259th RCUS Synod for the ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month each for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe and Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe.
4. That the Western Classis grant Faith RCUS, Anderson, benevolent aid in the amount of \$900.00 per month, and that the Western Classis petition the 259th RCUS Synod in the amount of \$900.00 per month in benevolent aid.
5. That the Western Classis grant Grace RCUS, Lancaster, benevolent aid in the amount of \$425 per month, and that the Western Classis petition the 259th RCUS Synod for \$425 per month in benevolent aid.
6. That the Western Classis grant to Covenant Reformed Chapel, San Diego on behalf of Rev. Gil Baloy benevolent aid in the amount of \$1,000.00 per month.

I. Overtures Committee

1. A request from Rev. Robert Sander to petition Synod for continued ministerial financial aid was referred to Standing Benevolence Committee.
A request from Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church requesting Classis to petition Synod for continued ministerial financial aid for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett was referred to Standing Benevolence Committee.
A request from Faith Reformed Church, Anderson, for continuation of the current level of financial support was referred to Standing Benevolence Committee.
A request from the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, for Classis to petition Synod for continued ministerial financial aid for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe and Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe was referred to Standing Benevolence Committee.
A request from the Ebenezer Reformed Church for financial support of the Mission work in the L.A. Basin was referred to the Standing Missions Committee.
A request from Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, for financial support from Classis and Synod was referred to Standing Benevolence Committee.
2. A request from Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, CA, for financial support was referred to Standing Missions Committee.
That a letter from Mr. Wayne Johnson, editor of Leben Magazine, be considered by Western Classis.
A request from Grace Reformed Church, Willows to petition Synod to amend its Standing Rule 5 was referred to the Standing Judicial Committee.

A request from Grace Reformed Church, Willows to petition Synod to amend the RCUS Constitution, Art. 81 was referred to the Standing Judicial Committee.

A request from Elder Michael Peery to be excused from the Tuesday session was referred to Standing Excuses Committee.

3. A request from Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church for financial support for Rev. Gil Baloy was referred to the Standing Benevolence Committee.
A request from Rev. Paul Henderson to be excused from the Thursday morning session was referred to the Standing Excuses Committee.
4. That the invitation from Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley to host the 21st meeting of the Western Classis in the Spring of 2006 be granted.
5. That the Classis change the current “Request for Accommodations” form used by Classis to include a category for those staying in motels.
6. That the Western Classis commend Leben Magazine to the families of Classis at the cost of \$10.00 per year per subscription, that the churches of Classis consider providing subscriptions to the families, and that Synod be asked to consider doing the same.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

- A. **Expression of Appreciation to the Host Congregation** - The Classis adopted the following statement of appreciation to Grace Reformed Church of Willows, CA, which was to be printed in the Sunday bulletin.

“We, the delegates of the 20th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States render our heartfelt praise to God for your care for us. Those who prepared our meals, brought us into your homes and joined us in worship will be long recalled with fondness. This sweet foretaste of the glorious unity awaiting us at the end of the age will be long treasured.”

- B. **Adoption of the Stated Clerk’s Report, Executive Committee’s Minutes, and the Overtures Committee Report.**

Classis Action: All of the above were adopted.

THE READING OF THE MINUTES

The minutes were typed, printed, distributed, and read at the beginning of business on Wednesday and Thursday, and at the close of business on Thursday. All corrections were made and the final approval was given to the minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:44 PM on March 10, 2005, the 20th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis was adjourned to the 21st Annual Meeting of the Western Classis at Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley, CA, at a date and time to be approved by Executive Circular.

- A. Roll Call** - The roll call was taken at the beginning and end of each business session. The closing roll showed 15 ministers and 11 elders present.
- B. Devotions** - Elder Ken Bowen led the body in a closing devotion from John 15:8 and closed in prayer.
- C. Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Benediction and Doxology** - The President led the delegates in the recitation of the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. He pronounced the Benediction and all joined in the singing of the Doxology.

*Rev. Henry P. Bowen
Stated Clerk, Western Classis*

APPENDIX
TO THE
ABSTRACT
OF THE
MINUTES

MEMBERSHIP

AND

**FINANCIAL
STATISTICS**

STANDING RULES

OF THE

WESTERN CLASSIS



MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS**STANDING RULES OF THE WESTERN CLASSIS**

1. Classical dues shall be paid not later than the first day of December of the current year. ('89)
2. The Parochial Reports and Reports of Statistics shall be submitted at least three (3) weeks before the Spring Meeting of Classis; the Parochial Reports to the President of the Executive of Classis; the Statistics to the Stated Clerk of the Executive of Classis. ('87)
3. The writ of certification for Delegate Elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two (2) weeks before the session of Classis.
4. All congregations shall present an accurate report on confirmation instruction, Sunday School and weekday school. The period of instruction shall, if possible, be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire Catechism before Confirmation. The course of instruction shall include Bible history, Catechism, Bible readings and the study of the books and contents of the Bible; also, singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
5. The Standing Rules shall be read immediately after the defining of the Bar of the House.
6. If pastors, elders, and members of congregations request information from the Executive Committee of Classis concerning constitutional matters and procedures, as provided in Article 91, the answer shall, if the request is in order and in written form, be presented to the parties concerned only in written form and relevant only to the item in question. This correspondence shall be part of the official minutes of the Executive Committee.
7. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis, or for delegates to Classis, at thirty (\$.30) per running mile, per vehicle. ('90, '03)
8. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
9. The Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an Abstract of the Classical Minutes and shall send a copy to each delegate to the Classis plus six (6) additional copies to each charge within sixty (60) days after Classis. The Stated Clerk shall receive a gratuity of four hundred (\$400) per year. ('91)
10. The Classis shall have Permanent Committees as follows: Executive, Missions, Christian Education in the Church, Candidates and Credentials, Interchurch Relations, Publications, Diaconal Ministries, and Heidelberg West Youth Camp. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. ('97)
11. The complete Classis statistics shall be made a part of the minutes at the spring meeting of Classis.
12. Nominations for all officers of Classis shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names of the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.
13. Every charge that will not have an Elder Delegate at the Spring Meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send in the answers to the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. This copy shall be signed by all elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk.

14. The report and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the churches at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis.

15. The religious services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circularized before Classis. (*90)

16. Students for the Ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Classis to attend only such seminaries as are listed as institutions receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States. Only students who attend institutions so listed shall be eligible for student aid while preparing for the Christian ministry.

17. It shall be the practice of Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry to require an internship for them to be spent with a pastor who has served in the Reformed Church in the United States for at least five (5) years. During this internship, particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the distinctives and practices of the Reformed Church in the United States. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed.

18. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Classis two (2) weeks in advance of Classis shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Classis at any time. (*90)

19. Only male members who have reached the age of twenty-one, or who are male heads of a household, shall constitute the voting membership of the congregations of the Classis. (*97)

20. All ministers licensed and ordained in any of the other Classes of the RCUS desiring to accept a call to a congregation of the Western Classis will undergo an examination in Orthodoxy and Purity of Intent. Such examination will take place either before the whole Classis or before the Committee on Candidates and Credentials, as that Committee shall determine in each case. If the examination is before the Candidates and Credentials Committee alone, the recommendation of the Committee must be approved via Executive Circular. (*01)

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2004 Western Classis Statistics	Faith Anderson	Grace Bakers- field	Cov't Chico	Cov't Gr Villy S. Ramon	Grace Lancaster	Provid- ence Lodi	Trinity Modesto	Cov't Sacto* S. Diego	Ebenezer Shafter LaHabra	Grace Willows	First Yuba City	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	% Chg	Rehoboth Chapel LaHabra	Cov't Chapel S. Diego	Grace Chapel S Ramon
1. No. of Elders	1	4	2	2	2	3	4	5	7	2	3	35	36	-3	2	1	0
2. No. of Deacons	1	4	2	0	2	4	3	7	5	1	2	31	33	-6	0	1	0
3. Comm. Last Year	31	#126	21	68	35	58	63	143	115	35	47	742	738	+1	24	12	23
4. Rec'd by Confirm	3	4	0	1	3	2	0	10	5	4	3	45	22	+2	0	0	0
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	3	2	0	0	10	18	-44	2	0	0
6. Rec'd by Prof.	4	0	2	2	4	0	0	9	0	1	0	22	34	-35	0	6	0
7. Tot. Received	7	4	2	3	9	2	3	22	7	5	3	67	74	-9	2	6	0
8. Tot. Old/New	38	130	23	71	44	60	66	165	122	40	50	769	816	-6	26	18	23
9. Lost by Dismissal	1	0	0	3	0	0	5	9	2	0	0	20	21	-5	1	0	2
10. Lost Eras/Disc	1	1	0	15	2	4	1	0	2	0	2	28	31	-10	0	0	3
11. Lost by Death	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	7	11	-36	0	0	0
12. Total Lost	2	4	0	18	2	4	7	9	6	0	3	55	63	-13	1	0	5
13. Comm. this Yr	36	126	23	53	42	56	59	156	116	40	47	754	749	+1	25	18	18
14. Unconfirm. Mbr.	7	29	1	31	23	23	33	90	41	18	19	315	342	-8	11	8	4
15. Total Bapt. Mbr.	43	155	24	85	65	79	92	246	157	58	66	1,100	1,091	+1	36	26	22
16. No. of Families	19	73	13	28	23	32	27	72	58	17	23	385	387	-1	12	12	9
17. No. of S.S. Child.	14	27	0	18	18	19	27	69	36	11	15	255	271	-6	11	8	0
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	7	-71	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	3	0	5	1	3	2	3	1	0	1	19	22	-14	0	0	0
20. Total Baptisms	0	3	0	6	1	3	2	4	1	0	1	21	29	-28	0	0	0
21. No. Rec. LS	35	124	23	64	37	58	65	156	101	40	47	750	729	+3	24	18	18
22. Times LS.Served	12	4	12	16	4	12	4	16	6	12	12	110	101	+10	6	11	4
23. Reg. Offerings	54,486	171,322	39,124	120,631	74,172	80,927	98,048	290,131	185,746	83,458	87,143	1,285,18	1,199,20	+7	50,875	25,574	32,631
24. Special Offerings	0	16,336	3,769	10,881	8,646	1,910	1,076	90,934	7,177	12,058	3,988	156,775	382,442	-59	0	650	1,086
25. Other Sources	26,550	0	30,552	37,208	15,328	8,239	4,882	95,911	55,793	3,754	0	278,217	315,956	-12	49,263	8,894	36,890
26. Total Receipts	81,036	187,658	73,445	168,720	98,146	91,076	104,006	476,976	248,716	99,270	91,131	1,720,18	1,898,07	-9	100,138	35,118	70,607
27. Giv. to Syn	6,022	27,030	500	9,064	7,059	11,541	12,238	28,588	22,339	6,650	6,157	137,188	130,050	+5	4,662	2,441	4,598
28. Giv. to Cla.	4,234	18,121	700	6,396	4,769	7,903	8,638	19,484	15,669	3,500	6,403	95,817	66,660	+44	3,270	1,635	3,134
29. RCUS no-budget	0	324	1,966	0	483	260	1,635	21,174	3,759	639	1,366	31,606	37,473	-16	0	650	0
30. Non-RCUS cause	0	833	100	11,002	0	18,232	1,450	27,367	7,607	400	0	66,991	46,225	+45	0	0	0
31. Other Expenses	65,539	11,648	68,901	147,888	90,254	66,263	81,023	315,438	204,485	72,343	97,070	1,220,85	1,550,49	-21	99,037	26,169	71,500
32. Total Expenses	75,795	162,776	72,167	174,420	102,565	104,199	104,984	412,051	253,859	83,532	110,996	1,657,34	1,830,93	-9	106,969	30,895	79,232
33. Val. of Ch. Bldg.	360,000	500,000	0	432,000	0	229,268	350,000	297,614	412,000	500,000	240,000	3,320,88	2,891,70	+15	0	0	0
34. Val. of Parsonage	0	300,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	150,000	0	135,000	585,000	397,000	+47	0	0	0
35. Impr on Prop'ty	1,207	4,567	0	5,530	0	0	0	42,114	0	5,700	10,963	70,081	68,176	+3	0	0	0
36. Pres Prop'ty	0	0	0	89,648	0	0	67,869	0	0	0	73,000	230,517	265,354	-13	0	0	0
37. Debt Paid Last	0	0	0	6,473	0	0	13,485	0	0	0	7,553	27,511	225,378	-88	0	0	0
38. Syn guidl/comm	194	203	24	133	202	199	194	200	199	190	131	Avg. 170	Avg. 176	-3	199	203	200
39. Clas guidl/comm	137	136	33	94	136	136	137	136	140	100	136	Avg. 120	Avg. 90	+33	140	136	136
40. Tot. RCUS/Com	331	342	151	227	352	340	357	484	373	308	296	Avg.	Avg.	+2	373	394	336

* includes City Seminary

#Revised from last year's figure