

**ABSTRACT**  
**of the**  
**MINUTES**  
**for the**  
**WESTERN CLASSIS**

Reformed Church in the United States



24th Annual Session  
March 3–5, 2009

Grace Reformed Church  
Bakersfield, California







## Table of Contents

2009 WESTERN CLASSIS DIRECTORY .....	3
Ministers .....	3
Primarius Elders .....	4
Secundus Elders .....	5
Student under Care of Classis .....	5
24 <sup>th</sup> ANNUAL WESTERN CLASSIS ROLL .....	6
INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY .....	7
DIRECTORY OF CONGREGATIONS .....	8
ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES .....	13
SERVICES .....	13
ORGANIZATION .....	14
FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS .....	14
RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS AND CHURCHES .....	14
STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS .....	14
PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF OVERTURES, .....	15
REPORTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS .....	15
A. Executive Committee of Classis .....	15
B. Missions .....	16
C. Christian Education .....	19
D. Candidates and Credentials Committee .....	21
E. Interchurch Relations .....	22
F. Publications .....	23
G. Diaconal Ministries .....	23
H. Heidelberg West Camp .....	24
REPORTS OF OFFICERS .....	26
A. The President’s Report on the State of the Church .....	26
B. The Stated Clerk’s Report on the Minutes .....	30
C. The Executive Committee of Synod .....	31
D. The Treasurer’s Report .....	32
PARCOCHIAL REPORTS .....	34
Rev. Neale Riffert read his parochial report. ....	34
Rev. Michael Voytek read the parochial report of Rev. Gene Sawtelle. ....	35
Rev. Lloyd Gross read his parochial report. ....	35
Rev. Frank Walker read his parochial report. ....	36
Rev. Tracy Gruggett read his parochial report. ....	39
Rev. Jim West read his parochial report. ....	40

Rev. Gary Mancilas read his parochial report.....	43
Congregational report of Grace Reformed Church, Willows.....	45
Rev. Eric Bristley read his parochial report.....	46
Rev. Jay Nelken read his parochial report.....	47
Rev. Jonathan Merica read his parochial report.....	50
Rev. Michael Voytek read his parochial report.....	51
Rev. Dennis Roe read his parochial report.....	53
Rev. Jay Fluck read his parochial report.....	55
Rev. Vernon Pollema read his parochial report.....	57
Rev. Sam Powell read his parochial report.....	60
Rev. Hank Bowen read his parochial report.....	61
Rev. Gil Baloy read his parochial report.....	64
Rev. Paul Treick read his parochial report.....	65
The Clerk prepared the following summary of Rev. Thomas Mayville's report.....	67
CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ELDERS.....	70
MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS.....	70
REPORTS FROM CLASSIS' FRATERNAL DELEGATES.....	71
ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS.....	71
REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES.....	71
A. Benevolences.....	71
B. Missions.....	72
C. Examination and Licensure.....	73
D. Minutes of Synod.....	73
E. Judicial.....	73
F. Nominations.....	74
G. Finances.....	74
H. Excuses.....	75
I. Overtures.....	75
MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS.....	76
A. Expression of Appreciation to the Host Congregation.....	76
B. Adoption of Stated Clerk's Report, Executive Committee's Minutes, and Overtures Committee's Report.....	76
THE READING OF THE MINUTES.....	77
ADJOURNMENT.....	77
NECROLOGIES.....	78
MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS.....	80
STANDING RULES OF THE WESTERN CLASSIS.....	82
INDEX OF POSITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS.....	84

## 2009 WESTERN CLASSIS DIRECTORY

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- Gross, Rev. Lloyd** Home (480) 854-3701  
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- Mayville, Rev. Thomas** cell 0752-391-278  
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- Powell, Rev. Sam** Home (530) 674-8797  
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*Primarius Elders*

<b>Bowen, Mr. Ken</b> 837 I Street, Box 445, Williams, CA 95987 E-Mail: pegbowen@frontiernet.net	<b>(530) 473-2755</b>
<b>Helseth, Mr. David</b> 420 Autumn Gold Dr., Chico, CA 95973	<b>(530) 893-0277</b>
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*Secundus Elders*

- Born, Mr. Greg** (209) 599-6786  
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- Spitzer, Mr. Ryan** (661) 871-6388  
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*Student under Care of Classis*

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 8135 Pixley Way, Sacramento, CA 95828  
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## 24<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL WESTERN CLASSIS ROLL

*For the Classical Year beginning March 3, 2009*

<b>Minister</b>	<b>Primarius Elder</b>	<b>Secundus Elder</b>	<b>Charge</b>
Henry Bowen	Michael Peery		Faith, Anderson, CA
Tracy Gruggett	Jeff Jones	Jon Stuebbe	Grace, Bakersfield, CA
Lloyd Gross	(Pastor Emeritus, Bakersfield)		Retired, Mesa, AZ
Gary Mancilas	David Helseth	Jim Gochnauer	Covenant, Chico, CA
Dennis Roe	Steve Wilbur	Frank Krivohlavek	Covenant, Grass Valley, CA
Jonathan Merica	(Associate Pastor, Grass Valley)		Calvary Chapel, Stockton, CA
Eric Bristley	(Associate Pastor, Grass Valley)		Grass Valley, CA
Jay Nelken	Mark Reyna		Grace, Lancaster, CA
Neale Riffert	(Pastor Emeritus, Lancaster)		Retired, Sherman, TX
Michael Voytek	Wayne Lingenfelter	Case Van Egmond	Providence, Lodi, CA
Paul Treick	Earl Van Houten	Greg Born	Trinity, Modesto, CA
Jim West	Wayne Johnson	Doug Schlegel	Covenant, Sacramento, CA
Frank Walker	(Associate Pastor, Sacramento)		City Seminary, Sacramento, CA
Guillermo Baloy	(Associate Pastor, Sacramento)		Covenant Chapel, San Diego, CA
Vernon Pollema	Bob Williams	Ryan Spitzer	Ebenezer, Shafter, CA
Jay Fluck	(Associate Pastor, Shafter)		Rehoboth Chapel, LaHabra, CA
Vacant	Ken Bowen	Joe Gross	Grace, Willows, CA
Thomas Mayville	(Associate Pastor, Grace RCUS)		Mbale, Uganda, East Africa
Sam Powell	Greg Stewart	James Ochsner	First, Yuba City, CA
Gene Sawtelle	(Pastor Emeritus, Yuba City)		Yuba City, CA

## INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

### OFFICERS

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

### CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

(per communicant member)

Classis Dues	\$12.00
Benevolences	48.00
Home Missions	56.00
Publications	-----
Home Missions Building Fund	5.00
Heidelberg West Youth Camp	3.00
TOTAL	\$124.00

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

### PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

#### Indicates Convener

Executive Committee: J. West, H. Bowen, W. Johnson

Candidates and Credentials: D. Helseth, E. Van Houten (1 yr); P. Treick; R. Spitzer (2 yrs); J. Fluck, F. Walker (3 yrs)

Christian Education in the Church: J. Merica, M. Reyna (1 yr); G. Mancilas, K. Bowen (2 yrs); J. Gochnauer, E. Bristley (3 yrs)

Missions: J. Gross, W. Lingenfelter (1 yr); M. Voytek, S. Powell (2 yrs); J. Nelken, B. Williams (3 yrs)

Interchurch Relations: R. Wegis, D. Helseth (1 yr); T. Gruggett, J. Jones (2 yrs); D. Roe, J. Merica (3 yrs)

Publications: G. Mancilas, A. White (1 yr); S. Wilbur, M. Peery (2 yrs); P. Treick, N. Riffert (3 yrs)

Diaconal: V. Pollema, J. Warren (1 yr); G. Baloy, T. Gruggett (2 yrs); D. Roe, A. White (3 yrs)

Heidelberg West Youth Camp: G. Born, M. Reyna (1 yr); J. Fluck, G. Stewart (2 yrs); G. Baloy, J. Nelken (3 yr.)

## **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; Evening 6:00 PM  
Pastor/Wife/Children: Hank Bowen/ Patty/ Bethany, Marcus  
Home Address: 22452 Meadow Crest Lane, Palo Cedro, CA 96073  
Home Phone: (530) 549-5704 E-Mail: rcushank@sbcglobal.net  
Church Web Page: [www.faihrefus.org](http://www.faihrefus.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 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 6:30 PM  
Pastor/Wife/Children: Tracy Gruggett / Michelle / Samantha, Angela, Lydia, Corissa  
Home Address: 7016 Rhone Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93308  
Home Phone: (661) 587-3723 E-Mail: [tmgruggett@bak.rr.com](mailto:tmgruggett@bak.rr.com)  
Church Web Page: [bakersfieldreformed.org](http://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: Sunday School 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM  
Mission Pastor/Wife: Gary Mancilas / Gloria  
Home Address: 2 Woodminster Ct., Chico, CA 95926  
Home Phone: (530) 345-2732 E-Mail: [gmancilas@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gmancilas@sbcglobal.net)  
Church Web Page Address: [www.reformedchico.org](http://www.reformedchico.org)

### **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) 273-6280 or 273-4673  
Service Times: Sunday: 9:45 AM - Bible Classes for all ages; Worship 11:00 AM.  
Pastor/Wife: Dennis E. Roe / Julie  
Home Address: 17355 Alexandra Way, Grass Valley, CA 95949  
Home Ph.: (530) 272-6693 E-Mail: [pastor@crcgv.org](mailto:pastor@crcgv.org)  
Assoc. Pastor/Wife/Children: Eric Bristley / Kathleen / Matthew, Nathaniel  
Home Address: 15287 Brewer Rd., Grass Valley, CA 95949  
Home Phone: (530) 272-8792 E-Mail: [eric.rcus@cebridge.net](mailto:eric.rcus@cebridge.net)  
Assoc. Pastor: Jonathan Merica (See Stockton - Calvary)  
Church Web Page: [www.crcgv.org](http://www.crcgv.org)

**LA HABRA - Rehoboth Reformed Chapel**

Church Location: 501 S. Idaho, Suite 120, 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 10:00 AM; Sun. Sch. 11:30 AM

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: jefluck@msn.com

Church Web Page: [www.RehobothReformedChurch.com](http://www.RehobothReformedChurch.com)

**LANCASTER, CA - Grace Reformed Church (Antelope Valley)**

Church Location: 211 E. Ave. K-6 Ste. C, Lancaster

Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2331, Lancaster, CA 93539

Church Phone: (661) 940-4669

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 10:45 AM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Jay Nelken / Mandy / Alexander, Justice Anne, Noah, Julianna

Home Address: 4237 Jonathon St., Lancaster, CA 93536

Home Phone: (661) 943-9695 E-Mail: nelken@jslink.net

Church Web Page: [gracereformedchurch.net](http://gracereformedchurch.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 10:45 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) 367-1902

E-Mail: [prclodi@softcom.net](mailto:prclodi@softcom.net)

Church Web Page: [www.prclodi.com](http://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. 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM & 5:30 PM

Pastor/Wife: Paul Treick / Karen

Home Address: 4005 Masterpiece Dr., Modesto, CA 95357

Home Phone: (209) 551-2407

E-mail: [triwheeler@aol.com](mailto:triwheeler@aol.com)

**SACRAMENTO, CA – Sacramento 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: Jim West / Elaine  
 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 / Tari, Jonathan.  
 Home Address: 6121 Pine Vista Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758  
 Home Phone: (916) 320-0548 E-Mail: drfhwalker@gmail.com  
 Assoc. Pastor: Gil Baloy (See SAN DIEGO - Covenant)  
 Church Web Page: www.covenantreformedchurch.org

### **SAN DIEGO, CA - Covenant Reformed Chapel**

Church Location: 49 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.  
 Mission Pastor/Wife/Children: Gil Baloy / Maricar / Ezra, Ethan  
 Home Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977  
 Home Phone: (619) 697-0272 E-mail: g\_baloy@yahoo.com  
 Church Web Page Address: www.covenantreformedchurchSD.org

### **STOCKTON, CA – Calvary Reformed Chapel**

Church Location: Clarion Inn, 4219 E. Waterloo Rd., Stockton  
 Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 692426, Stockton, CA 95269  
 Church Phone: (209) 470-7174  
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM  
 Mission Pastor/Wife: Jonathan Merica / Marsha  
 Home Address: 9311 Snow Creek Circle, Stockton, CA 95212  
 Home Phone: (209) 472-7941 E-Mail: jonmerica@sbcglobal.net  
 Church Web Page Address: www.calvaryreformedchapel.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 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday); Bible Study 6:00 PM (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays)  
 Pastor/Wife: Vernon Pollema / Betty  
 Home Address: 8514 Sun Harbor Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93309  
 Home Phone: (661) 589-8680 E-Mail: vpollema@sbcglobal.net  
 Assoc. Pastor: Jay Fluck (See LA HABRA - Rehoboth)

**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: VACANT

Assoc. Pastor/Wife: Thomas Mayville / Carolyn

Home Address: Box 1307, Mbale, Uganda, East Africa

Home Phone: E-Mail: thomasreformed@gmail.com

**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: Rev. Sam Powell / Susan / Amanda, Raymond, Kaerie, Maggie

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

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# ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States  
24<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting  
March 3–5, 2009  
Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, California

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all.  
For God will bring every good work into judgment,  
including every secret thing, whether good or evil.  
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

## SERVICES

The Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States convened its 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Session at Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield, California on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at 1:00 PM with a devotion given by Rev. Tracy Gruggett from Ephesians 3:14-21 and 4:7-16 under the theme, "*The Goal of Christian Ministry.*" Rev. Gruggett closed in prayer and lead the delegates and visitors in singing the hymn, "*Not What My Hands Have Done.*"

The Tuesday evening worship service was held at 7:30 PM with Rev. Julian Jay Nelken, Pastor of Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, conducting the service. The Scripture reading was from Acts 20:13-38 and Rev. Paul Treick, Pastor of Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto preached a sermon entitled, "*Faithfulness is Better Than Life.*" Following the service the congregation welcomed the delegates.

Elder Doug Schlegel, candidate for the ministry, led the body in the Wednesday morning devotion with the singing of "*The Ends of All The Earth Shall Hear.*" He then read Isaiah 49:1-7 and Matthew 28:18-21 and gave the sense of the passage under the theme, "*The Mission: Imperative.*"

Rev. Mancilas led the body in the Thursday morning devotion with the singing of the hymn, "*God Himself is With Us.*" He then read Colossians 1:19-29 and gave the sense of the passage under the theme, "*The True Church.*" The body closed with the singing of "*My Hope is Built on Nothing Less Than Jesus Blood and Righteousness.*"

Elder Jeff Jones led the body in a closing devotion from Acts 8:26-30 and closed in 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 their pastors. At other times prayer was called for individuals and the needs of the congregations.

## ORGANIZATION

Rev. Jim West, President of the Executive Committee of Western Classis, called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM on March 3, 2009. The Rev. Lloyd Gross led the body in prayer. The initial roll call showed seventeen pastors and seven 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 two rows of tables. The President read the standing rules of the Western Classis as required in Standing Rule 5. Rev. Sam Powell and Elder Jeff Jones 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. Tracy Gruggett, Vice President; Rev. Henry Bowen, Stated Clerk; and Elder Chris Fellersen, Treasurer.

The President appointed Rev. Sam Powell as reporter for the Reformed Herald.

The assembly adopted the Agenda, Services, and Order of the Day.

## FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

Rev. Gary Findley, was seated in the bar of the house and given the privilege of the floor as a fraternal delegate from the Pacific Northwest Classis of the URCNA.

Rev. Tim McCracken of the RPCNA was seated in the bar of the house and given the privilege of the floor as a fraternal delegate from the Pacific Coast Presbytery.

Rev. Alan Camarigg, Elder Brent Smith and Elder Chuck DeWaard were welcomed as visitors from Covenant Grace Reformed Church in Lynden, WA.

These RCUS elders were also welcomed and seated in the bar of the house and given the privilege of the floor: John Guinn from Shafter, Alfred White from San Diego, Chris Fellersen from Sacramento, Ryan Spitzer from Shafter, and Craig Combs from Bakersfield.

## RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS AND CHURCHES

The President welcomed Rev. Sam Powell as a minister ordained and installed in the Western Classis as pastor of First Reformed Church in Yuba City.

Rev. Neale Riffert led the body in a prayer of thankfulness for Reverend Sam Powell's reception. There were no new churches added this year.

## STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The President made the following appointments for the Standing Committees:

- A. Examination-Licensure: Walker, Fluck, Treick, Gochnauer, Van Houten
- B. Excuses: Mancilas, Merica, Stewart
- C. Finances: Merica, Fluck, Stewart, Jones
- D. Judicial: Powell, L. Gross, Bristley
- E. Minutes of Synod: Riffert, Roe, J. Gross
- F. Missions: Johnson, Voytek, Roe
- G. Nominations: Bristley, Baloy, Mancilas, Reyna
- H. Benevolence: Pollema, Gruggett, Williams
- I. Overtures: Gruggett, Nelken, J. Gross

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

### *A. Executive Committee of Classis*

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee received and handled the following requests in four circulars:

1. The installation of Rev. Jay Nelken to Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, and aid for Rev. Nelken's moving expense. The approval of the election of Rev. Neale Riffert as pastor emeritus of Grace RCUS, Lancaster.
2. The approval of Rev. John Sawtelle to be eligible to candidate in the Western Classis churches.
3. The formation of a special committee to represent the Executive Committee as advisors in the amicable resolution of a dispute in the Covenant Reformed Church in Chico. The committee included Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Michael Voytek, Rev. Hank Bowen and Elder Joe Gross.

The committee met in Yuba City on December 17<sup>th</sup> with the Chico Spiritual Council and two members of Covenant Reformed Church. The result was that both sides agreed to come together and work through the issues before them. A possible appeal to Classis was withdrawn.

4. The arrangements for the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Classis meeting.

The following recommendations were made and no objections were registered.

**Recommendation 1:** That the Installation Service for Rev. Jay Nelken be scheduled for Friday, June 6, 2008 at 7:00 pm with Rev. Jim West officiating and giving the charge to the pastor, and Rev. Vernon Pollema giving the charge to the congregation, along with the Elders of Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster.

**Recommendation 2:** That the Western Classis grant benevolent aid to Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster in the amount of \$3,000 to help with the moving expenses of Rev. Nelken.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Classis approve the election of Rev. Neale Riffert as Pastor Emeritus of Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster.

**Recommendation 4:** That Rev. John Sawtelle, a minister in good standing of the URC, be declared eligible to receive a call in the churches of the Western Classis.

**Recommendation 5:** That a Special Investigative Committee made up of three members of the Classis be appointed by the Executive Committee of Classis to investigate the Appeal of Mr. Mark Dill and Ms. Betty Dill concerning charges against them by the Covenant Reformed Church in Chico and report back to the Executive Committee as to the best means to resolve this appeal.

**Recommendation 6:** That the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Western Classis convene at Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA, on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at 1:00 PM, and conclude at the end of business on Thursday, March 5, 2009.

**Recommendation 7:** That the following schedule for services be approved:

- Tues. March 3: Opening Devotion at 1:00 PM -- Rev. Tracy Gruggett
- Tues. March 3: Evening Service at 7:30 PM -- Rev Paul Treick, preaching;  
Rev. Jay Nelken, conducting.

Wed. March 4: Morning Devotion -- Elder Doug Schlegel  
 Thurs. March 5: Morning Devotion -- Rev. Gary Mancilas  
 Thurs. March 6: Closing Devotion -- Elder from Bakersfield

Respectfully submitted,  
*Rev. Jim West, Pres., Rev. Henry P. Bowen, Clerk, Elder Wayne Lingenfelter*

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**Classis Action:** The report was received and adopted.

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## ***B. Missions***

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers:

The responsibility of our committee this year mainly involved the following mission works that received support from Classis and Synod: Covenant Reformed Church in Chico, California and Rehoboth Chapel – La Habra, California. At least two members from our committee were able to visit each of these works. We report the following:

### **Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California – The Rev. Gary Mancilas**

Per the request of Synod (2008 Abstract, XV.A.7, pg. 74), our committee, consisting of Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Michael Voytek, Rev. Sam Powell, Elder Wayne Lingenfelter and Elder Joe Gross met in Chico, California on September 10, 2008 with Rev. Gary Mancilas, Elder David Helseth and Deacon Jim Gochnauer, members of the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church in Chico. Rev. Mancilas gave an oral report on the situation at the church that included the following:

1. Attendance and financial support is good. There are several interested visitors. Among them are one family that is in the process of transferring from the OPC and another family of four that have relocated from the Fresno area and are members of the RPCNA church there. Attendance averages from 25-30 individuals. Giving to Classical and Synodical guidelines is good.
2. Church life: Sunday school is held for adults and one catechumen. A mid-week Bible study is held twice a month and a Women’s Bible study is also held twice a month.
3. Building: a Seventh Day Adventist building is rented (@ \$750 per month) with a good relationship existing with their landlords. An evening service is being considered.
4. Outreach: radio and TV are being used with 15 to 30 minute broadcasts. They have also formed a Promotion Committee with the following goals “to better reveal to the community what the Reformation was all about, by engaging people in conversation, by engaging in various community projects, by conducting a survey to see how much the members of the Chico community already know of the Reformed faith and then publishing the results.”
5. Attitude of the congregation: the consistory indicated that they felt a Reformed Church in Chico was very important and would continue with or without financial aid from the outside, and would make changes accordingly if that happened. There is great potential in the area for ministry and outreach. There is a good spirit of cooperation and commitment by all members. The consistory felt that it would be too early to cut off support as more time is needed for growth.

The finding of our committee is that there appears to be some improvement in the overall outlook for the future of this congregation. While there was not real growth in numbers, the consistory believed that the potential for the near and distant future was good.

Furthermore, the committee sent two of its members to visit the congregation during the morning worship service on Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup> (Rev. Sam Powell and Elder Wayne Lingenfelter). Finally, on Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, our committee met in Sacramento to prepare our report for the Western Classis. After reviewing the report from Rev. Mancilas as well as the three year budget and statistics for classis, we were disappointed to read that the communicant membership has remained the same as the previous year. However, Rev. Mancilas assured us in his report that he anticipates that two families (with a total of six communicant members) will be received into membership in February of this year. He also reported that at the congregational meeting a second elder was elected and that now the consistory consists of one pastor, two elders, and one deacon. In order to assist the Chico congregation in its growth and ability to be self supporting, we would ask that the congregations of the Western Classis along with Covenant Reformed Church, Chico be strongly encouraged to work together to initiate new activities and interactions to promote greater fellowship with the Western Classis churches.

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

Two committee members, Elder Alfred White and Rev. Michael Voytek, visited Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, California on Sunday, January 18, 2009. They submitted the following report:

“Your servants, Elder Alfred White and Rev. Michael Voytek, had the privilege of visiting with the saints at Rehoboth Chapel in La Habra on Sunday, January 18, 2009. Rev. Voytek was given the opportunity to preach the Word at the morning worship service. His message was well received by members and visitors alike. The congregation was very attentive and exhibited a reverent deportment during the service. There were approx. 60 people who attended the worship service. The meeting place is very attractive and suitable to the congregation’s needs at this time. Since last year’s visit, they removed the partition that had separated the “sanctuary” from the “fellowship area” in order to expand the seating capacity for the worship service. The difference was a great improvement.

Following the close of the worship service, Rev. Voytek and Elder White were given the privilege of conducting a meeting with the congregation. In addition to Rev. Fluck, elders Clarence Goehring and Carl Esparza as well as deacon-elect Derek Valenzuela were in attendance. The installation of Mr. Valenzuela as deacon will occur on January 25<sup>th</sup> of this year (We were told that another man was considered for the office of deacon but declined at this time due to the special needs of a son). This is a very encouraging blessing to the congregation and especially to Rev. Fluck. We strongly encouraged the brother to take up his office with zeal and determination. The meeting went very well. Our questions to the congregation were designed to gather information as well as to teach and challenge them concerning their responsibilities as members. One of the greatest areas of improvement that is still a concern is the need to develop a greater commitment to the church as a family rather than as a place to come to receive from the ministry of Rev. Fluck. We addressed this issue and even went so far as to ask the members of the congregation about their commitment to the work if Rev. Fluck was

providentially taken from them. The overall response was that they are desirous to continue the work with or (God forbid) without him.

After the meeting, the congregation hosted us with a wonderful fellowship luncheon. We were informed that they hold this luncheon every Sunday. We enjoyed the food and especially the fellowship of the saints. We were especially impressed by the spiritual maturity and hunger for God's word that was evident among many with whom we conversed. Rev. Voytek also attended the Sunday evening Bible study that was held in the same location at 6:00 pm. There were approx 20 people in attendance including a number of children. Rev. Fluck reported that after last year's Missions Committee visitation that the attendance at both the Sunday evening study and the mid-week study grew significantly but unfortunately has since slowly declined to the same numbers as before.

Even though the attendance numbers are about the same as last year, it is evident that the Lord is effectively building His church at Rehoboth Chapel. Their greatest need is the development of an emphasis on community or family connectedness. As for the ministry of Rev. Fluck, we commend to you our brother as an example of a home mission pastor and a godly man. During our meeting with Rev. Fluck and his wife, he asked us to present the following question to both the Classis and Synod Home Missions Committee. "*Would my leaving Los Angeles (to pursue another call) be a deterrent to the work so much so that the committee would advise against it?*" He has been in conversation with a couple of churches and desires our counsel concerning these opportunities."

Among other things that we discussed in our committee, we addressed a question which Rev. Fluck had raised. It was the unanimous opinion of the members of the committee that there is nothing that we know of that should keep Rev. Fluck from considering whether to receive a call from another congregation, if the Lord opens that door of ministry. We also received an email from the overseeing Consistory at Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, CA requesting that the Home Mission Committee petition the Western Classis for home missions support for Rehoboth Chapel in the amount of \$20,391 for 2010. Furthermore, they requested that the Western Classis overture Synod for home missions support in the amount of \$10,116 for 2010.

### **Future Home Mission Church Planting by the Western Classis**

Our committee also spent time discussing the development of a 3-5 year strategic plan for our mission endeavors within the bounds of the Western Classis as directed by the *RCUS Home Missions Manual* (II.4). We believe that our first priority is to the existing works of classis. Thus our key focus for the near future will be encouraging the cooperation and involvement of existing congregations of the Western Classis with the mission works in order that they may become fully established and self-supporting. We will also work on developing goals for future growth of the classis as well as developing means of outreach, both through the use of printed (i.e. the production of a series of pamphlets dealing with the current issues of the time and the biblical response) as well as electronic means (i.e. the Internet and possibly the development of radio programs). At the suggestion of elder Alfred White, we are also considering looking into reaching out to the Afro-American churches in the Los Angeles area who may be interested in becoming involved with the Reformed Church in the United States.

We closed the meeting with prayer for the existing classical home mission works as well as those being overseen by individual churches (i.e. Covenant Reformed Chapel in San Diego, California and Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton, California).

**Recommendations:**

1. That the request from the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California, for classical support in the amount of \$14,880 for the year 2010 be granted and furthermore we recommend that the congregations of the Western Classis along with Covenant Reformed Church, Chico be strongly encouraged to work together to initiate new activities and interactions to promote greater fellowship with the Western Classis churches. Note that the amount of reduction is \$1,860 which is the annual 10% reduction.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 263<sup>rd</sup> Synod for mission support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California, in the amount of \$14,880 for the year 2010. Note that the amount of reduction is \$1,860 which is the annual 10% reduction.
3. That the request from the Ebenezer Reformed Consistory, Shafter, CA, for classical support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra in the amount of \$22,000 for the 2010 year be granted. Note that the amount of the reduction is \$2,913 which is the annual 10% reduction.
4. That the Western Classis petition the 263<sup>rd</sup> Synod for mission support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, California, in the amount of \$10,116 for the year 2010. Note that the amount of reduction is \$1,445 which is the annual 10% reduction.

Respectfully Submitted in Christ's Service,  
*Rev. Michael Voytek – Chairman, Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Sam Powell,  
Elder Wayne Lingenfelter, Elder Joe Gross, Elder Alfred White*

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

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**C. Christian Education**

Esteemed Brethren:

Although your committee was neither given nor received a mandate by the 23rd Annual Session of Classis, it conducted business to consider projects that would possibly benefit our churches educationally.

To this end, your committee corresponded by email to evaluate and recommend the development of a *resource list* of completed educational and instructional materials, authored by ministers and members of the RCUS, which are not currently inventoried in the RCUS Book Depository. The resource list would contain, by permission of the authors, when necessary, the following: the names of the materials, the authors' names, and where the materials would be made available.

The recommendation for the project is predicated upon the committee's research that there is excellent material within our denomination that the committee believes our churches would benefit from but may not know about due to the lack of circulated information regarding the written material and/or its availability.

The following is a sample list of possible materials for inclusion, by permission of the authors, when necessary, in the resource list:

*Sunday School Curriculum*, by Rev. William (Bill) Haddock: I Samuel, Apostles Creed, Creation, Daniel, David, Divided Kingdom, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Mark, Northern Kingdom, Prayer, Solomon.

*Reformed Church Government, The Church Fulfilling Its Calling*, by Dr. Frank Walker

The following works by Dr. Robert Grossmann: *The Protestant Reformation and World History, The Meaning and Administration of Biblical Baptism, Holy Catholic Church and Its Biblical Government, The What, Why and How, Outline History of the Reformed Church in The United States, What We Think Before We Think, Weekly Communion and The Heresy of Sacramentalism*

*What is the Reformed Church in the United States* (membership instructions), by Rev. David Fagrey.

*To Walk in the Light, Biblical Comments on Age Old Problems*, by Rev. Dorman Savage.

*Doctrine of the Church, a Study Outline*, by Rev. Paul H. Treick.

*Discerning Christ's Body: Requirements for Participation in the Lord's Supper and a Refutation of Paedocommunion*, by Rev. Jim West, Mr. Brian Schwertley, and Rev. Thomas Mayville (a Western Classis Work).

*Church Membership Booklet, With Study Questions and Answers on The Heidelberg Catechism*, by Dr. Robert Grossmann and Rev. Hank Bowen.

The following works by Rev. Jim West: *The Baptism of Infants in the Old and New Covenants* (a Western Classis Work), *Christian Courtship Versus the Dating Game, The Art of Choosing Your Love, The Covenant Baptism of Infants, Daddy, When Should I Take the Lord's Supper?, The Glorious Foundation of Christ: The Missing Clincher argument in the Tongues' Debate.*

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the Committee obtain information on completed educational and instructional materials, authored by ministers and members of the RCUS, and a resource list from there be compiled and presented to the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of Classis.
2. That the resource list be titled *Western Classis Resource List* and be published.
3. That the *Western Classis Resource List* be made available to the Consistories of the Western Classis.
4. That the *Western Classis Resource List* be submitted to the editor of the *Reformed Herald* for publication.
5. That the *Western Classis Resource List* be provided on the RCUS Website.
6. That updates to the *Western Classis Resource List* be considered annually.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Rev. Gary Mancilas, chairman, Rev. Jay Fluck, Rev. Jonathan Merica,  
 Elder Ken Bowen, Elder Mark Reyna, Elder Bob Williams*

**Classis Action:** Recommendation 1 passed as amended. Recommendations 2-6 were ruled out of order by the chair.

**Classis Action:** A motion was passed that the Western Classis Permanent Publications Committee come with a recommendation to the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Western



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Classis as to the best way to market published works of the Classis beyond the Western Classis.

A motion was passed that the Standing Judicial Committee consider the question as to whether it is appropriate for a Permanent Committee to do work for which no mandate has been given to them by the Classis.

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#### ***D. Candidates and Credentials Committee***

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

The work of your committee this year was significantly reduced over previous years, since the Western Classis currently has only one student under care and no licentiates. We continued to oversee the seminary education of Elder Doug Schlegel, who hopes to complete his studies at City Seminary by the end of summer. In addition to this, we met with Rev. John Sawtelle to give him a preliminary examination in orthodoxy and intent. Rev. Jay Fluck has also been in contact with a couple of men (Rev. John Jackson, a minister in the ARP, and Mr. Travis Grassmid, an OPC student who recently graduated from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) interested in the pulpits of Shafter and/or La Habra; however, it appears at this time that these contacts will be unfruitful.

Doug Schlegel, in addition to his studies at the seminary, working full-time to provide for his family and serving as an elder at Covenant Reformed Church at Sacramento, has continued to proclaim the Word of God as often as possible, though he asks with the apostle Paul, “Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Cor. 2:16). He expresses his gratitude for the privilege of studying under RCUS ministers at City Seminary, and demonstrates his appreciation by maintaining a 3.67 GPA. In anticipation of the completion of his studies this year, he has requested a partial licensure examination at the 2009 annual meeting of the Western Classis. He has also submitted three papers in fulfillment of licensure requirements, viz., a written sermon, and exegetical paper and a theological paper. Your committee will make recommendations concerning these papers at Classis.

At the request of the Shafter consistory, your committee examined Rev. John Sawtelle in orthodoxy and purity of intent on May 29, 2008. The report of this examination was subsequently circularized, and Rev. Sawtelle was given permission to candidate in the churches of the Western Classis. However, the desires of his own consistory and the needs of his family have prohibited him from making a move, at least for the present. We will leave this door open, trusting the Lord to guide this brother.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. That Doug Schlegel, per his request, be given a partial examination before the 2009 Western Classis as follows:

- A. Orthodoxy (15 minutes each)
  - i. Prolegomena — Treick
  - ii. Theology Proper — Fluck
  - iii. Anthropology — Fluck
  - iv. Christology — Walker
  - v. Soteriology — Treick
  - vi. Ecclesiology — Walker

- vii. Eschatology — Treick  
*Followed by questions from the floor.*
- B. RCUS Standards (30 minutes)
- viii. Three Forms of Unity (20 minutes) — Treick
- ix. Constitution and Directory of Worship (10 minutes) — Van Houten
- C. Apologetics (20 minutes) — Fluck
- D. Practicum (20 minutes) — Van Houten  
*Followed by questions from the floor.*
2. That Doug Schlegel's written papers and the recommendations of this committee regarding them be referred to the standing committee on Education and Student Aid for consideration.

On behalf of the committee,  
*Rev. Frank Walker, chairman, Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Jay Fluck,  
 Elder David Helseth, Elder Earl Van Houten, Elder Ryan Spitzer*

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**Classis Action:** Recommendations 1 and 2 were passed.

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### ***E. Interchurch Relations***

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

The following is a summary of your committee's work to nurture fraternal relations in 2008.

The following regional fraternal bodies have been invited to attend our 24<sup>th</sup> Western Classis meeting; the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada, OPC; the Southern California Presbytery, OPC; the Pacific Coast Presbytery, RPCNA; the Pacific Classis East of the Canadian Reformed Churches in North America; and the Classis Southwest U.S. of the Federation of United Reformed Churches in North America.

Rev. Jonathan Merica attended the 2008 meeting of the Pacific Classis East of the Canadian Reformed Churches in North America. This convened in Lynden Washington, March 13, 2008.

Rev. Jay Fluck attended the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual meeting of the Classis Southwest U.S. of the Federation of United Reformed Churches in North America, meeting in Chino, CA June 30, 2008.

Your committee received an invitation to attend the 2009 meeting of the Pacific Classis East of the Canadian Reformed Churches in North America. A letter of greeting has been sent.

At present, your committee chairman has received no invites from other presbyteries and classes.

On behalf of Classis, your committee wishes to thank Rev. Merica and Rev. Fluck for taking the time to visit the others bodies.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Rev. T. Gruggett (chairman), Rev. M. Voytek, Rev. L. Gross,  
 Elder R. Wegis, Elder D. Helseth, Elder J. Jones*

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**Classis Action:** The report was received.

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### ***F. Publications***

Dear Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

Your committee did not have any publications work before it this past Classical year and did not meet nor expend any funds.

It might be noted that the Western Classis section of the denominational website was updated in the past year prior to the site undergoing recent redesign. When made live, the new site will provide an opportunity for members of Classis to update their own addresses, email, and other information. It will also include resources for committees to share their ongoing work.

In the service of Christ,  
*Rev. Eric D. Bristley, Chairman; Elder D. Mettler, Rev. G. Mancilas,  
Elder A. White, Elder S. Wilbur, Elder M. Peery*

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**Classis Action:** The report was received.

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### ***G. Diaconal Ministries***

Esteemed Brethren,

This past year your committee conferred via email concerning one matter of diaconal aid. Typhoons ravaged parts of the Philippines including Pangasian where the San Carlos United Covenant Reformed Church of the Philippines (UCRCP) is located. Emails were received from the Rev. Nap Narag and two elders in San Carlos requesting help. Your committee approved diaconal aid in the amount of \$2,000.00 which was forwarded by our Classis treasurer to the Synod treasurer for dispersal to the Philippines.

Your chairman would also remind the body that at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Session of Classis, diaconal aid was granted to the Rev. Jonathan Merica “in the amount of \$800.00 per month, beginning Dec. 1, 2008 for medical insurance until he finds adequate employment or compensation to support his family needs, or until the 2009 annual meeting of the Western Classis, whichever comes first” (2008 Abstract, page 73, #9).

Respectfully submitted,  
*Rev. Vernon Pollema, Chairman, Rev. Jay Nelken, Rev. Michael Voytek,  
Elder Joe Gross, Rev. Gil Baloy, Deacon John Warren*

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**Classis Action:** The report was received.

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### ***H. Heidelberg West Camp***

Another year has passed and with a total of only 70 attendees in 2008 it was the smallest camp I can remember in the last 12 or 13 years. However, the 2008 camp was in my estimation very successful. The subject of “Running the Race of Faith” was broken down over Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings into studies on; “The desire necessary to compete,” “The dedication or perseverance necessary to achieve the goal,” and finally, “the discipline necessary in competition.” Heidelberg West Youth Camp has always had some of the best teaching and preaching you’ll find anywhere and 2008 was no different.

The camp, being smaller as it was, seemed to afford a little more closeness amongst those attending. We had some different people participating in accomplishing various tasks that helped to make the camp operate smoothly. I do believe the camp is going through a transition period, probably moving in the direction of a younger camp as a pretty good sized group of kids in the 16 –18 age range went through the camp two years ago and most of that group didn’t make it to the camp this last year. I believe this is a natural transition and we will begin to see the numbers pick-up, probably in the younger age groups, for this year’s camp. Some of the changes referred to earlier involved key people who make the camp successful. We have some folks who have been around for 12 or so years who are retiring from their responsibilities. In particular, this will be the case with our Activity Directors, Greg and Suzie Born of Modesto. This is a very important position at the camp and requires diligent attention to the various events which take place during the three days of camp. I am hoping to get Todd Crabtree of the Shafter congregation and Dale Perry of the Bakersfield congregation to fill Greg and Suzie’s shoes.

It was also encouraging for me to have some of the younger and newer ministers of the Western Classis prove to be very willing and helpful last year. A special thanks to such ministers as Rev. Tracy Gruggett, Rev. Jay Nelken and Rev. Sam Powell. Other older faithful ministers have continued in making the camp a very pleasant and edifying experience for all.

One issue that is necessary for the Classis to consider will be who manages the kitchen for the camp. Over the last four years the job has been done by Modesto, Yuba City, Sacramento and a Yuba City/Modesto combination. We really need some participation from some of the other churches.

A breakdown for the 2008 camp came in with the total number of campers at 46, counselors weighed in at 11, the cooks/pastors at 13 for a grand total of 70 on Wednesday.

The date for this year’s camp will be Tuesday, June 16 – Friday, June 19, 2009. The theme this year will be “Justification by Faith,” based on Romans 5:1 as the text.

Last year the camp registration fee was raised to \$90.00 for full pay campers and \$75.00 for campers of camp staff. The guideline was left at \$3.00 per communicate member and this arrangement proved sufficient to run the camp plus have some surplus as the financial report shows.

Beginning Balance 1-01-08 \$64.66

Income:

Guideline through 12-31-08	\$1,671.70	
Camper Fees – 2008	4,275.00	
Camper Fees Refunded – 2008	-285.00	
Allocated Interest Income	<u>1.11</u>	
Total Receipts		<u>5,662.81</u>
Total Funds Available		<u>5,727.47</u>

Expenses:

Greg Stewart: meeting expense	80.75	
Dynamic Designs: 70 shirts	658.21	
Rev. Paul Treick: Camp food	348.46	
Katie Stewart: Camp food	715.09	
Camp Peaceful Pines	3,015.00	
Suzie Born: Crafts	<u>88.17</u>	
Total Expenses		<u>4,905.68</u>
Ending Balance 12-31-08		821.79

Note: A guideline payment was received in January 2009 for 186.00 for the Heidelberg Camp fund making the current balance \$1,007.79.

**Recommendation:** That last year's amounts be continued with the Guideline at \$3.00 per communicate member, full pay campers at \$90.00 each, and the children of counselors at \$75.00 each.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Elder Greg J. Stewart, Chmn., Rev. Jay Fluck, Elder Mark Reyna,  
 Elder Chris Fellersen, Elder Greg Born, Elder Tom Lagomarsino*

PS: It seems to me that a format similar to this, only shorter in duration would be excellent for instructing groups here in the Western Classis on matters which the Classis or even an individual church deemed important.

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**Classis Action:** The recommendation was passed.

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## REPORTS OF OFFICERS

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

Dear Fathers and Brethren,

As the President of the Western Classis for some nine years running, I am delighted to write another synopsis of your reports concerning the state of the Church in our Western Classis, which will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year.

Let me begin my President's Report with Proverbs 4:18, which reads "But the path of the just is as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day." Among other lessons, this verse teaches what should be true for every Christian, that in spite of the sins that do so easily beset us and the opposition of Satan to our testimony, that God's grace in Christ is always working more and more and brighter and brighter. For us this means that even death itself is a "perfect day" because death brings us closer to Christ and Christ closer to us. But the verse also impacts our morale and outlook for the present, too, especially in our churches. The great question is: Is the candlestick shining brighter than the previous year? Is the effulgence of the Gospel shining brighter and brighter, as the word of God is preached, the sacraments dispensed, and church disciplined meted-out? After reading your reports, I am convinced it is. By God's grace, we are a city set on a hill and a city on a hill cannot be hid (Matthew 5:14). Your reports brought to mind Acts 9:31, "Then had all the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified: and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied."

Concerning some of the specifics of your parochial reports:

Pastor Tracy Gruggett expresses his gratitude for being a minister in the RCUS and for being able to pastor 141 baptized members. He tells of the evangelism thrusts of Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield while recognizing the need for even more evangelism from the members, not so much for "numerical growth" but simple obedience to Christ. He sees the need to grow in our love for the lost as the "chief need" of the congregation.

Pastor Frank Walker of Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church reports a very trying year for him and his family as one of his dear children was excommunicated from the Church. Nevertheless, he is grateful for the privilege to minister God's word even in the furnace of affliction. He speaks of the necessity of prayer, not just for individual members, but for the entire Reformed Church. He notes that preaching and teaching are important if we don't cast ourselves before the throne of grace in prayer.

The Rev. Michael Voytek of Providence Reformed Church praises God for the 15 in attendance at his new membership class. He is confident that most of these will join the congregation. He sees the greatest need of Providence Reformed Church to be the "development of godly men." While noting that the congregation displays the three marks of the Church, he also informs us that the elders and deacons of Providence Reformed Church are diligent in their oversight of the congregation. He praises God continually for His governmental gifts to the Church.

Pastor Gary Mancilas in Chico tells us of his busy labors for the Denomination and of the small, but steady attendance of Covenant Reformed Church of Chico. The church has nineteen communicants and three unconfirmed members. The visitation of the Church is faithfully performed and the Church recently nominated to the office of elder

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their current deacon-treasurer-- Jim Gochnauer. The marks of the Church continue to shine. The radio ministry of the congregation continues, too, with several sermons being preached on “The Hour of Reformation.” The congregation as a whole remains very committed to the Reformed Faith.

One of our newest ministers, Jay Nelken, speaks of the joy of serving in his first full year at Grace Reformed Church of the Antelope Valley. The word of God was preached and there were no formal discipline cases. Jay is also conducting evangelism classes at Grace Reformed Church, which will continue throughout this year, too. He bemoans the loss of four members and five tithing families, who relocated out of State. As a result, he addresses the issue of declining finances, as the church often finds itself living “month to month.” The Church appears to be running low on funds. He wants us to understand that it is difficult enough to meet their fixed expenses, let alone the other discretionary expenses. As a result of *this result*, the Church would not financially survive without the help of benevolent support of Classis and Synod. He earnestly covets our prayers and advice about this matter.

The Rev. Jonathan Merica tells of the new meeting place of Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton, that is twice the size of its previous building. He tells of the many evangelism efforts, including a very busy website that translates into over ten thousand sermons downloaded since last year! He also praises God for the help of the elders of Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley. He also tells us that his attempts to find a full time job have been abortive up to this time. He thanks God for the financial aid of Western Classis, especially as it relates to health insurance for his family, which covers the expense of his wife’s “chronic health issues.”

Pastor Dennis Roe thanks God for being able to minister God’s Word in Grass Valley. The Sunday morning services continue to average 60-70. The Rev. Eric Bristley helps out in the preaching and teaching, especially during the time when Pastor Roe was undergoing treatment for hepatitis. But he praises God that his hepatitis is in full remission and hopes that within two years he will be pronounced cured by his doctor. Perhaps the greatest concern for the Church is with four families who are in danger of losing their homes because of the current economic slump. He thinks that 2009 may be a year of great trial for the Church.

Pastor Sam Powell reports of good things happening at First Reformed Church in Yuba City. The Church is God’s family and shows it. New members were added and the summer saw the Church “eating bread with joy and drinking wine with a merry heart.” Both the elders and deacons are faithful workers in Christ’s vineyard; the congregation is active and energetic. The Church website averages 30 sermon downloads per month. He writes of being overwhelmed by the goodness of God through God’s people.

The parochial report of Pastor Hank Bowen informs us of dwindling attendance, which on some Sundays even plummets into the teens. Also, there are no children to have a Sunday School. Yet, he faithfully continues to preach God’s Word twice each Lord’s Day. He reports there are currently no new prospective members and even a drought of visitors in 2008. He tells us that if progress is not made in 2009, that the “viability of the congregation may need to be addressed.” He praises God for the Benevolent aid of Synod and Classis last year, as several members lost their jobs and the giving declined as a result. His report ends with his determination to be the Lord’s agent in bringing new families into the Church, as he employs biblical methods of evangelism for 2009.

My own (Jim West) report concerning Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church is that many good things are happening. City Seminary continues to thrive, the many youth

are instructed, God's people are becoming instant in prayer, the gospel is preached in two worship services, and the Church continues to push ahead in various missionary enterprises. Fellowship opportunities abound throughout the week, as the Church tries to practice "the communion of the saints." If there was any thorn in the rose last year, it would be the discipline cases, that resulted in two excommunications and one suspension from the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless, all the people are supportive of the work of the elders, who burn the midnight oil in order to advance Christ's cause and truth. The Church also sees many, many visitors each Lord's Day.

Pastor Gil Baloy reports about the ongoing work at Covenant Reformed Chapel in San Diego. While the Church continues numerically in the day of small things, what sustains his spirits is laying the foundation of the Word of God. The congregation is blessed by a steady stream of visitors, not counting their "regular visitors." Evangelism continues to be a priority emphasis of this congregation, including the spread of the Gospel in public parks, people's homes, and shopping malls. Additionally, this missionary push extends across the oceans, too, --all the way to the Philippines, where Pastor Baloy plans another journey shortly after this Classis meeting ends.

Pastor Vern Pollema's report focuses upon his desire to retire from the pastoral ministry, even though in recent years his intent has not been realized. With the decision by Pastor Jay Fluck to continue at Rehoboth Chapel, Pastor Pollema states that it should be easier for the Consistory to find a new minister in Shafter. The other news is that the work of the Church continues in terms of outreach, weekly Lord's Day services, and a host of other Christ-centered activities (too many to mention here). He concludes his report saying that this could be his final report of his labors in Shafter, and thanks God for the fellowship of the saints there.

The Rev. Paul Treick speaks of preaching God's word some 100 times at Trinity Reformed Church in Modesto. There were a number of births in 2008 at Trinity Reformed Church and nine children attend the weekly catechism class. The rapport among the leaders is good, even in the midst of disciplinary matters. The Reformed doctrines are preached, taught, and practiced. The mortgage debt on the building is nearly retired. There are abundant opportunities for God's people to fellowship as the congregation remains strong in the faith serving the Lord.

The report of the Rev. Lloyd Gross speaks of his various preaching junkets to churches of other denominations. He also reports of his declining physical condition, as his prostate cancer has returned after a number of radiation treatments in 2006. Yet he praises God for being blessed with 75 years of life serving the Lord. The final paragraph of his report finds him exhorting us all to "unflinchingly proclaim that gospel to a world that so desperately needs it."

Pastor Jay Fluck reports of an average attendance of about 50 each Lord's Day morning at Rehoboth Chapel. The Church conducts two worship services on the Lord's Day, and a mid-week meeting which averages about 14. The giving increased to about \$97,000 for 2008. The Church has a monthly men's fellowship and a monthly woman's fellowship. There is a fellowship dinner each Sunday afternoon, too. With regard to finding a replacement minister for Rehoboth, Pastor Fluck says that "we need to be desperately in prayer for men" to be willing to consider Rehoboth. Yet, he recognizes that for the time-being it is God's will for him to remain on there. He praises God for the support of Synod, Classis, and especially Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter.

The elder's report about the work of the church in Willows, California speaks of a communicant membership of 32, with a total of 43 baptized members. Members of the



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Church continue their faithful attendance each Lord's Day. Many RCUS ministers have preached in Willows the past year, including Gene Sawtelle and Frank Walker. Elder Doug Schlegel has also proclaimed God's word there. The Church has "real unity of heart and purpose." Your President notes that little was said in the report about attempts to find a full time pastor; perhaps at this meeting Classis can receive an oral update on this important issue. Your President also reports that he has been in touch with the elders of Grace Reformed Church, although not in a formal setting with the whole Consistory present.

Pastor Emeritus Gene Sawtelle reports of preaching some 21 times at Grace Reformed Church in Willows. He also reports his physical ailments, including excruciating migraine headaches which he experiences at least five out of seven days. He requests prayer for his back problems and these tortuous headaches which will not permit him to attend either Classis or Synod this year.

Pastor Emeritus Neale Riffert relates he preached and taught, mostly in Orthodox Presbyterian Churches in Texas during the past year. He reports of teaching the adult Sunday School class on a regular basis in Sherwood Shores Chapel in Gordonville, Texas. He gives praise to God for guiding him throughout the golden years of life which he calls his "gray" years. He especially gives thanks to God for the generosity of God's people in supporting him in his years of retirement from the pastoral ministry.

Associate Pastor Eric Bristley speaks of his many labors in Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley. He tells us about his teaching at City Seminary, his labors in the area of publishing, and his "pinch-hitting" for an ailing Dennis Roe both in preaching, teaching, and counseling. He is also involved in many publication projects for the Synod of the RCUS. Additionally, he assists Westminster Biblical Missions and Middle East Reformed Fellowship. One of his deepest passions is that he might become "more faithful and effective" in serving the Lord in whatever path God chooses.

Foreign missionary, Thomas Mayville reports of his busyness in Uganda and Kenya, while teaching, preaching, and doing even diaconal work. His greatest joy is teaching in the theological seminary, especially those students who brave it from Kenya. He reports that his stay in Uganda will be drawing to a close in about 18 months. He covets our prayers for good health for himself (as he suffers from asthma) and for his wife, Carolyn. His morale seems to be buoyant, despite the difficulties of the physical and spiritual climate. But he is very optimistic about the future, believing that within the next 100 years that the Church in both Uganda and Kenya will become significantly larger and stronger. He also tells us that, God-willing, he will be present at the next Synod of the RCUS where he can be debriefed further.

With regard to the statistics of Western Classis, it was difficult to discern anything out of the ordinary. According to the statistics I have before as of this writing, the total communicant membership for 2008 stood at 714 compared to 697 in 2007. The total baptized membership stood at 949 versus 932 in 2007. The total receipts were \$1,930,664 versus \$1,930,757 in 2007! The number of adult baptisms was two compared to one in 2007. In the area of regular offerings we jumped to \$1,472,688 from \$1,421,841. There are different ways to analyze statistics that do not dramatically fluctuate—everything from the negative of stagnation to the positives of stability or holy pruning. A church can have growth, but the question is: Is it the growth of mushrooms or the trees of the Lord? Applying these questions reasonably is even more difficult when it come to analyzing a Classis of churches and mission works. So, your President defers to (I hope wisely!) some of our wiser sages about these matters.

Regarding an overall assessment of your parochial reports, I believe that the three marks of the church continue to thrive in the Western Classis, the morale of the ministers is upbeat despite a few ecclesiastical tempests, the yearly elder's visitation of God's people runs hot and cold, and the craving to do more evangelism remains intense (although how to do this remains problematic). I believe that on this matter of evangelism it is the pastor of the church who will have to be in the vanguard of leadership. More evangelism is not going to happen by our mourning the lack of evangelism or by our telling our members, "If you want evangelism, *you* do it!" As shepherds of the sheep, it is our responsibility to *lead*. If there is only a token amount of evangelism, this may indicate that we as ministers and elders are not leading. But the bright side of our repeated concerns about evangelism show that we *do* have compassion for the lost and that we do not have a fortress-mentality or a hyper-Calvinistic view of the Reformed Faith. I have often said that the greatest act of love that we can show to our neighbor is to invite him to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise God that we see the people outside the Church as sheep having no shepherd! And, that we desire to reach these people with God's truth. A city on a hill cannot be hid and *must* not be hid.

A most urgent issue continues to be the filling of two, perhaps three pulpits, that is, finding pastors for Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, Grace Reformed Church in Willows, and Rehoboth Chapel in La Habra. The fact that these congregations have not been able to find the Lord's replacement indicates that qualified men are not "a dime a dozen" and that finding replacements is—ultimately—not our choice, but God's. Just as Samuel examined all of Jesse's sons before he found "the man's after God's own heart," these churches find themselves in a similar predicament. Let us earnestly pray for pastors after God's own heart to fill these pulpits.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Pastor Jim West*

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**Classis Action:** The report was received and adopted, and it is to be spread upon the Abstract of the Minutes, and submitted to the Reformed Herald for publication.

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### ***B. The Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes***

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

There were 250 copies printed and bound. Each of the congregations of the Western Classis were mailed ten copies. Three copies were hand delivered to the delegates of the congregations in the Classes and one to each retired pastor of the RCUS Synod close to the time limits of Standing Rule #9. The cost of printing the Abstract was \$556.63, and to package and mail the Abstracts was \$61.11 for a total of \$617.74.

The President's Report on the State of the Church was printed in the Abstract and in the *Reformed Herald*. Ten overtures from the Western Classis along with copies of the supporting documents for information were sent to Synod for consideration. They were acted upon and reported in the Synodical Abstract of the 262<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session. A

summary of all financial matters approved by the Classis was sent to the Treasurer. Your Clerk invested in an RCUS forms disc at the cost of \$34.63 for the purpose of producing the ordination certificate for Rev. Sam Powell.

A letter was sent to a previous member of Grace Reformed Church in Willows in response to a letter from him expressing some concerns about how the search for a new pastor was being pursued.

Your clerk reports that there were three changes in matters pertaining to the Western Classis. The installation of Rev. Jay Nelken as pastor of the Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, the approval of Rev. Neale Riffert as pastor emeritus of the Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, and the ordination of Rev. Sam Powell and his installation as pastor of First Reformed Church in Yuba City.

Your clerk has received word that necrologies for Elder Bob Baze, who served in the Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, and for Rev. Doug Neff, who was a minister on the rolls of the Western Classis at one time, should be forthcoming.

The Clerk wants to commend the congregations for their diligence in submitting their statistics and reports in a timely manner in a transferrable form. Not only does this greatly reduce the time to prepare the Abstract after Classis, but it allows time to review the information for accurateness and make corrections prior to Classis. It also allows the President of Classis to review the statistics in the making of his report on the State of the Church. Your clerk is seeking to become familiar with the MS Word 2007 program as problems seemed to always arise with the printer using the WordPerfect program. Your clerk also would like you to be aware that the current Classis laptop is now five years old and is running very slow. Your clerk can think of nothing further to report.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Rev. Henry P. Bowen*  
*Stated Clerk, Western Classis, RCUS*

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**Classis Action:** The report was received.

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### ***C. The Executive Committee of Synod***

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee of Synod reminds the Classes of the RCUS of the following matters which require attention or action:

1. Any new requests for benevolent or diaconal aid should follow the procedure set out in Abstract of 262 Synod p. 23, and 75.
2. Each Classis Home Missions Committee shall develop a 3-5 year strategic plan for their mission endeavors, and annually report on its progress to the Synod Home Missions Committee (Abstract of the 262 Synod, p. 35, #10). This plan should appear in your Classis Home Missions Committee Report. Also Classes are encouraged to reflect budget money for future works (Abstract of the 262nd Synod, p. 36, #17).
3. Note the change in Synod Standing Rule #13 (Abstract of the 262nd Synod, p. 79, Judicial Committee #3).
4. That the stated clerk of each classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring meeting of Classis.

5. Classes should note the corrections, etc. to their respective minutes as noted on p. 81 of the Abstract of the 262nd Synod.

Classes are reminded that the 263rd Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS meets May 11-14, 2009 at St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church of Hamburg, MN.

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

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

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### *D. The Treasurer's Report*

#### **BALANCE SHEET** As of December 31, 2008

	12-31-08	12-31-07	CHANGE
<b>ASSETS:</b>			
Cash	\$186,646.73	\$160,437.35	\$26,209.38
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$186,646.73</b>	<b>\$160,437.35</b>	<b>\$26,209.38</b>
<b>LIABILITIES:</b>			
Accounts Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b><u>\$186,646.73</u></b>	<b><u>\$160,437.35</u></b>	<b><u>\$26,209.38</u></b>
<b>TOTAL LIAB &amp; SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$186,646.73</b>	<b>\$160,437.35</b>	<b>\$26,209.38</b>
<b>FUND BALANCES:</b>			
General	\$5,138.28	\$3,489.87	\$1,648.41
Missions Building Fund	139,367.03	136,008.11	3,358.92
Missions	22,035.19	4,178.84	17,856.35
Benevolence	15,587.08	13,313.69	2,273.39
Publications	3,511.35	3,382.18	129.17
Heidelberg Camp	<u>1,007.80</u>	<u>64.66</u>	<u>943.14</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$186,646.73</b>	<b>\$160,437.35</b>	<b>\$26,209.38</b>

#### **INCOME STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2008**

	1-01-08	Dues	Bldg. Fund	Missions	Benev	Publ	Camp	Total
Faith -Anderson	26	312.00	26.00	2,548.00	1,118.00	0.00	78	4,082.00
Grace-Bakersfield	112	1,416.00	554.55	19,221.10	8,361.80	66.85	605.70	30,226.00
Covenant-Chico	19	240.00	0.00	1,060.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,300.00
Covenant-Grass Valley	40	516.00	8.00	784.00	344.00	0.00	24.00	1,676.00
Grace-Lancaster	36	432.00	36.00	3,528.00	1,548.00	0.00	108.00	5,652.00
Providence-Lodi	47	564.00	0.00	1,624.00	1,773.00	0.00	0.00	3,961.00
Trinity-Modesto	62	1,488.00	62.00	7,431.00	2,666.00	0.00	186.00	11,833.00
Covenant-Sacramento	155	1,860.00	155.00	15,190.00	6,665.00	0.00	465.00	24,335.00
Ebenezer-Shafter	115	1,380.00	115.00	11,270.00	5,045.00	0.00	345.00	18,155.00
Grace-Willows	39	468.00	39.00	3,822.00	1,667.00	0.00	39.00	6,045.00
First -Yuba City	46	555.50	18.00	4,589.00	2,046.00	4.00	7.00	7,219.50
Misc. - Book Sales		0.00	0.00	0.00	(100.00)	0.00	0.00	(100.00)
F&M Bank-int Alloc		<u>60.18</u>	<u>2,345.37</u>	<u>72.06</u>	<u>229.59</u>	<u>58.32</u>	<u>1.12</u>	<u>2,766.64</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>\$9,291.68</b>	<b>\$3,358.92</b>	<b>\$71,139.16</b>	<b>\$31,373.39</b>	<b>\$129.17</b>	<b>\$1,858.82</b>	<b>\$117,151.14</b>

**EXPENSES STATEMENT**

Stated Clerk Expenses:			
Gratuity 2008-09 Clerk	\$400.00		
Abstract and Mailing	791.93	\$1,191.93	
Executive Committee Expenses:			
Classis Meeting-March 2008	4,379.10		
Candidates/Credentials Committee Expense	723.25		
Special Committee Expense	289.80		
Office Supplies/Postage	41.75	5,434.40	
Benevolences:			
Faith -Anderson	6,300.00		
Grace-Lancaster	8,100.00		
Covenant-San Diego	11,100.00		
Philippines – Diaconal Aid	2,000.00		
Jonathan Merica – Diaconal Aid	1,600.00	29,100.00	
Inter-Church Relations:			
Travel-Delegate to RPCNA: Seattle	635.93		
Travel-Delegate to Canadian Ref.	381.01	1,016.94	
Home Missions:			
Covenant Reformed-Chico	18,445.00		
LA Basin-Shafter	33,458.34		
Committee Expense	1,379.47	53,282.81	
Heidelberg Camp:			
Camp Expenses	4,905.68		
Camp Fees Received	(3,990.00)	915.68	
Publications:	0.00		
TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>\$90,941.76</u>	
INCOME FOR YEAR			<u>\$26,209.38</u>
CASH ON HAND 12-31-07			\$160,437.35
CASH ON HAND 12-31-08			<u>\$186,546.73</u>

**INCOME STATEMENT BY FUND**

FUND:	General	Missions Bldg Fund	Home Missions	Benevolen	Publicat	Heid. Camp	Total
INCOME:							
Giving	\$9,231.50	\$1,013.55	\$71,067.10	\$31,143.80	\$70.85	\$1,857.70	\$114,384.50
Book Sales/Camp Funds					0.00	0.00	0.00
Allocated Interest	<u>60.18</u>	<u>2,345.37</u>	<u>72.06</u>	<u>29.59</u>	<u>58.32</u>	<u>1.12</u>	<u>2,766.64</u>
Total Income	\$4,944.57	\$3,358.92	\$71,139.16	\$31,373.39	\$129.17	\$1,858.82	\$117,151.14
EXPENSE:							
Stated Clerk	1,191.93						1,191.93
Exec. Comm	5,434.40						5,434.40
Inter Church	1,106.94						1,016.94
Benevolences				29,100.00			29,100.00
Home Missions			53,282.81				53,282.81
Homes Missions Bldg							0.00
Publications							0.00
Heidelberg Camp-Net						915.68	915.68
Total Expense	<u>7,643.27</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>53,282.81</u>	<u>29,100.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>915.68</u>	<u>90,941.76</u>
Income (Loss) Yr.	<u>1,648.41</u>	<u>\$3,358.92</u>	<u>\$17,856.35</u>	<u>\$2,273.39</u>	<u>\$129.17</u>	<u>\$943.14</u>	<u>\$26,209.36</u>
Balance 12-31-07	\$3,489.87	\$136,008.11	\$4,178.84	\$13,313.69	\$3,382.18	\$64.66	\$160,437.35
Balance 12-31-08	\$5,138.28	\$139,367.03	\$22,035.19	\$15,587.08	\$3,511.35	\$1,007.80	\$186,646.73

Respectfully submitted,  
*Chris Fellersen*

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

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## PARCOCHIAL REPORTS

### *Rev. Neale Riffert read his parochial report.*

Esteemed Brothers,

During the past year I've had the opportunity to preach in RCUS, OPC, and PCA churches. In the RCUS I preached in Lancaster in March following our Classis meeting, and was given the honor of being elected by the congregation as pastor emeritus for which I am both humbled and greatly pleased, as it allows me the privilege of having a home church in the RCUS, and particularly in the Western Classis, the association with, and the fellowship of, which I especially cherish. I also had the privilege of preaching at the Mission Fest services of Providence Reformed Church in Rock Springs, Wyoming in November, and immensely enjoyed visiting with the saints there. Mary Elizabeth, myself, and Neale Jr. attend the Sherwood Shores Chapel (PCA) in Gordonville, Texas, about 30 miles from Sherman. I have preached there five times in the past year, teach the adult Sunday School each week, and make hospital visits when asked to do so. We are also associate members there. I also preached in the Faith OPC Church, in Garland, Texas, four times, and have led their Sunday evening Bible Study when invited to do so. I am thankful for the opportunities to serve where I can.

This was the first full year of retirement, and we found it necessary to make some mental and economic adjustments, but the Lord has been gracious to us, and our praise to God is ceaseless as what sometimes seems insurmountable to us, amazingly dissipates into nothingness.

I am thankful for each day the Lord gives me. My cholesterol level, and blood sugar levels are greatly lower, but I do constant battle with my blood pressure, nonetheless it has moved out of the perilous zone, to the cause-for-attention zone, and I monitor it regularly, but it sometimes discourages me. But I am ever and increasingly aware, that what our common culture by its worldly wisdom refers to as the *golden years*, Solomon in Ecclesiastes by the wisdom of God, describes not as golden, but as – well – gray (Ecclesiastes 12). I do indeed rejoice in the generosity of God's people, particularly those in our classis as well as the other classes of Synod who faithfully uphold and support, through ministerial aid, those who have served them through the years, of which I am but one. I cannot express with adequate words the gratitude I owe to the Synod of the RCUS for its ministerial relief and humbly request the Western Classis to petition the Synod for continued support.

It is a great joy to be among you, brothers.

Yours, in Christ Jesus our Lord,  
*Neale R. Riffert*

**Classis Action:** Referred to the Standing Benevolence Committee.

***Rev. Michael Voytek read the parochial report of Rev. Gene Sawtelle.***

Esteemed Brothers,

*It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not counted consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-23).*

May God, through His daily mercy and grace, enable us to serve Him and others in His church, and to be faithful in preaching His Word.

By God's grace I was able to preach in Grace Reformed Church, Willows, CA 21 times, and in First Reformed Church, Yuba City, CA once. I served the Lord's Supper in Yuba City until Rev. Sam Powell was ordained and installed. I have also served the Lord's Supper in the Willows congregation several times in 2008. I thank God for the strength He has given me to preach His Word, and for the opportunity to do so.

It is difficult for me to travel because of the on-going back problems. I am also being treated for migraine headaches which have returned with a vengeance. I have learned through blood tests that I am very allergic to milk, eggs, pork and chocolate and have a sensitivity to wheat. There is a book called MIGRAINES FOR DUMMIES that has been helpful for an old boy like me! It lists dozens of "triggers" that may be responsible for causing these headaches. The physician I go to has prescribed Maxalt Mxt 10 mg to help with the pain. It works well, but only ten per month are allowed. I have migraines five out of seven days. Please pray for Sharon and I as we deal with these physical afflictions. In addition, I had emergency gall bladder surgery in September which led to problems with my pancreas resulting in a week's stay in the hospital. God's grace is sufficient for us each day.

We do appreciate your prayers for us. I will not be able to attend Classis this year. May God bless you as you do the very important work of the Church during the 24<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Western Classis.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Rev. Gene Sawtelle, Pastor Emeritus*

**Classis Action:** Take note.

***Rev. Lloyd Gross read his parochial report.***

Brothers in Christ,

Here is a brief report on what my ministry was about in this past year. Once again I was greatly blessed by the Lord and Savior of His church, Jesus Christ. I was blessed with the privilege of another year of having been able to preach numerous times in Christ's church. Most frequently I preached in OPC churches, as well as in the URC, the RPCNA, and the RCUS. This has been a great delight to me and I thank God for His wonderful grace. It is my deep desire to do this as long as the Lord calls me to it.

I should reflect a bit perhaps on my health situation. It appears that my prostate cancer has recurred after 43 radiation treatments back in 2006. I am scheduled for an MRI as well as a bone scan this coming Thursday, Feb. 12, to see if the cancer has spread to my bones and the rest of the body. If those tests come back negative then that would indicate the cancer is still confined to the prostate and in that case I would be a candidate for cryotherapy.

In light of the above, it is uncertain whether I will be attending the upcoming Classis meeting in Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield. As you all know that is a church I was privileged to serve and love very much.

So my prayer is God's will be done. He has blessed me with 75 years—half way between the “three score and ten and four score years” that Moses says is normal for our lives on this earth. How grateful we must be as Christians that Jesus has prepared a place for us in the mansion of glory. And it reminds us of the urgency of preaching the gospel of God's sovereign grace which, when believed, is the only way anyone will ever reach that mansion of eternal glory.

God bless you, dearly beloved brothers, as you unflinchingly proclaim that gospel to a world that so desperately needs it. Labor faithfully knowing your “labors are not in vain in the Lord”.

In Christ's love,  
Rev. Lloyd Gross

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**Classis Action:** Take note. Rev. Eric Bristley led the body in prayer.

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***Rev. Frank Walker read his parochial report.***

Beloved Brethren in the Lord:

The longer I am in the ministry, the more I realize that each year has its own unique characteristics. One year I might feel like Paul, growing intellectually in my understanding and appreciation for the great doctrines of the faith. Another year I might feel more like John, whose love for the Savior stirs the hearts of God's people. But if I had to give a name to this past year, the only one that would fit is Jeremiah. After suffering incredible abuse and mockery at the hands of the Jews, the prophet almost gave up in despair. He said, *I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name.* And yet, his love for the Word of God would not let him do so, for as soon as he threatened to quit, he added, *But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay* (Jer. 20:9).

Some of you know what I'm talking about. The work in the church and seminary are going exceptionally well. I rejoice daily in the positive feedback that I receive from my preaching and teaching because it testifies to the fact that the Lord is using my work, which so often seems inconsequential, to advance his kingdom on earth. Rather, the trial of which I speak began when my wife and I returned home after last year's Synod meeting. One of my daughters had moved out of our house, leaving only a note taped to the bare wall in which she said that she had left our home for good. Later in the year, my wife and I came to the conviction that we had no choice but to bring charges against her. At her trial this past December, the Spiritual Council found her guilty of fornication and violating the fourth vow of church membership, and excommunicated her from the body of Christ.



There have been so many times when I wanted nothing more than to walk away — build a cabin on the top of a mountain somewhere and spend the rest of my life studying and writing. The grief of having a child depart from the faith, live in sin and suffer excommunication has been overwhelming. The fact that she hurt so many in the congregation is inexcusable. Once in a while, I almost wish that I had done something so heinous and so unforgivable that would justify her behavior. At least, then, the blame would be mine. But I understand, of course, that she is responsible for her own sin, and that the Lord is using this whole ordeal to make me, the other members of my family and the entire congregation more like he wants us to be. We continue to trust the Lord's covenant mercies as we await the day when he will bring her back to himself and to us. Until then, we rejoice in the countless blessings that are still ours — the great redemption that we have in Jesus Christ, the love and support of his church, and our children who walk in the faith. Less than a month ago, we also had the joy of welcoming our second grandchild, Lucy Christine Rodriguez, into the world. She is without a doubt one of the two cutest granddaughters in the entire world! The other one, of course, is her sister.

When we returned home from Synod last May and found that our family was under assault by the evil one, I immediately asked the elders for a leave of absence from the ministry for an indefinite duration. Originally, I wanted to use this time to figure out what had happened, since neither my wife nor I had any indication that it was coming. I also wanted to use the time to work through the issues with our daughter, though at the time I had no idea what I was facing. I was successful with the former but not the latter. In any case, it didn't take long for me to realize that her behavior raised another issue that I had to deal with, namely, my confidence in my own work. I have never been one whose self-confidence was very strong. This situation, however, completely eroded whatever little bit of confidence I may have had. That's why I said earlier that there have been so many times that I just wanted to walk away. This is something that I still struggle with, though not quite as much now as earlier, and it is only compounded by the fact that I have been physically exhausted for several months.

I mention all of this to you for several reasons. First, I earnestly beg you to keep me and my family in prayer. We no doubt needed this humiliation. My wife and I have been married for thirty years this coming June and I cannot imagine the possibility of a happier marriage. She is my best friend and I love her with all my heart. I was also so proud of my children, who were not only well-behaved and extremely capable but seemed to be very sensitive to the things of God. My wife and I needed to be reminded that this was all of his grace and not the result of anything that we had done. Second, it explains why I was not in the pulpit for several weeks and why, even now, I am so preoccupied.

From a ministry perspective, the most positive effect of the events of this year is that it changed my entire perspective on the preaching ministry of the church. When Peter preached his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2, it resulted in the Spirit of God pricking the hearts of those who heard (v. 37). Being a good Calvinist I understand that only the Holy Spirit can prick a man's heart with the truth, but that does not excuse us as preachers from challenging men with the Word of God in a way that forces them to evaluate their thinking and their lives on the basis of sound doctrine. I have known many reformed preachers who are exceptionally good at exegeting the text, communicating sound doctrine, and developing practical application, but fail miserably at really challenging men to increased faithfulness and commitment. So, one of the first questions I now ask about any sermon — whether mine or another's — is, "Does it speak to the heart?" If it doesn't, the church is only marginalizing itself into an ecclesiastical and cultural oddity,

which means, of course, that it is failing in its mission. I really believe that we need a renewal of zeal for men's souls, such as the apostles had in the first century and such as our forbears had in the sixteenth century.

In regard to the ministry at Sacramento, Covenant Reformed Church remains faithful and true to the Word of God. Pastor Jim West faithfully encourages God's people to look to Jesus Christ and find him to be their only hope. The sacraments are administered in accordance with Scripture and our standards. Church discipline, though at times extremely painful, is diligently carried out. In one way, I have come to appreciate the slowness of discipline, as it gives the family members of offenders time to come to grips with the great war we are engaged in. The church also has a well-developed Sunday school program, a catechism class for the youth, various Bible studies that meet during the month, an evangelistic outreach to the neighborhood and a new weekly prayer gathering at my home on Wednesday evenings. I believe that prayer is one of the greatest needs of the Reformed Church today. We have the doctrine, the preaching and the Bible studies, but none of these things will be effective in building up the body of Christ or reaching the lost without the blessing of heaven. May the Spirit of God ignite a blaze of prayer in each one of us and in our churches!

If there is a weakness in the ministry at Covenant Reformed Church, it is in the area of elder visitation. The elder delegate to this meeting of Classis will tell you that visitation was not performed as faithfully as it should have been. We are, however, working to improve this and hope that we can give you a different answer next year.

As for my work in particular, except as noted above, I continued pretty much as in the past. I preached thirty-seven sermons at Covenant Reformed Church, taught the adult Sunday school class most of the year, and served on the Spiritual Council and Consistory. I also preached in other churches a total of fourteen times (twice in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at Sunnyvale, once in Yuba City for Sam Powell's ordination, twice in Modesto, three times at the Evangelical Reformed Church here in Sacramento, twice in Willows, and four times at the Labor Day conference of the Harbor of Grace Reformed Church in South San Francisco). In the seminary, I taught five classes and oversaw the independent study of several students in various courses.

Last year, I reported that I had been working on a commentary on the book of Revelation. The writing of this commentary is more or less complete; however, there is a lot of editing that needs to be done. I had started to make some significant progress on this before Synod, but had to put it to rest temporarily to deal with family matters. Within the last few weeks, I have resumed work on it once again. I also have a commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism that is about 75 percent completed, and a Greek primer for use in the seminary that should be done within the next few weeks.

It continues to be my constant prayer that God will bless my ministry to His own glory. It is even more now my prayer that He will use my weakness to show forth the greatness of His own strength. May His name be forever praised! Amen.

In the service of Christ,  
*Pastor Frank Walker*

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**Classis Action:** Take note. Rev. Merica led the body in prayer.

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**Rev. Tracy Gruggett read his parochial report.**

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

Greetings in the Lord Jesus, who is the head of the church, which is the fullness of Him who fills all in all. I thank God for calling me to Himself through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Along with you, I am privileged to be both a sheep and an under-shepherd of His flock.

I preached around 52 sermons during the year, administered baptism eight times, and the Lord's Supper four times. I taught the adult Sunday School class around 50 times, as well an evening Deacon's class on three Sundays. I gave one lecture at a conference we held, as well as preached one sermon at the Heidelberg youth camp. I also taught catechism classes throughout the year except for the summer months. With the Elders, I confirmed one youth and conducted one Christian burial. Church discipline was administered in a variety ways from private exhortation and formally in two judicial erasures. I visited many, if not most members in their homes, widows I visited repeatedly. Elder visits were conducted on a case by case basis.

Grace Reformed Church received eleven new members (eight by baptism; three by profession of faith). One member was confirmed. Nine members were lost (one by death; two by erasure; six by dismissal). Our total baptized members total 141 (last year 138). These statistics tell us that we have many babies at Grace Church, girls to be more precise. We praise God for these additions of covenant youth. One family came to GRC from an evangelical background. We saw no growth from conversions. While GRC church saw many visitors during the year, no one has shown interest in staying.

At our annual congregational meeting in January, it was decided to put the church facilities and properties on the market. This was in addition to selling the church property. A committee was set up to look into new property. The idea was to sell all church properties, using the earnings to fund new facilities. Meanwhile the church moved my family and me into a new home in Northwest Bakersfield. The properties have not been sold, no doubt due to the present economic slump. At present, both properties have been taken off the market with the congregation allowing for the empty parsonage to be rented out. These actions are temporary until the market turns around.

About mid year, we decided to convert the old parsonage into our Sunday School Annex. This move created several class rooms and temporarily solved our Sunday School classroom problem. We have created a new up-to-date website. This website is operated by our website committee, at present composed of consistory members, with oversight from the consistory. We held a conference in April, called *Radical Christianity* as an outreach effort. The theme of the conference focused on the Sovereignty of God. Rev. Jon Blair and Rev. Matt Powell were guest speakers. We set up a booth at the annual downtown street fair, where for several nights we were able to hand out literature and talk with people. Through the Consistory's sanctioning, I introduced four or five new hymns or songs. In addition, we started a prayer group that meets each Sunday before worship, and a pre-worship hymn sing each Sunday as well. Giving at GRC remains the same as in recent years. In addition to meeting dues and guidelines, GRC gave special aid towards helping individuals, families, and the Bakersfield Pregnancy Center.

GRC displays many signs of the Spirit's work. I see a strong commitment to God's truth and a hunger for the Word. The preaching is appreciated and the Pastor's Sunday School class is well attended. Fellowship seems to be good as well; the people appear to

love another, with only a modicum of disagreement expressed. This is not to say that strong differences of opinions do not exist; they do. But members seem to handle their differences with maturity.

Our church needs to grow dramatically in the priority of evangelism, not for purposes of numerical growth, but the reason of simple obedience to Christ (Luke 15:7). I see one of my tasks as that of working toward fulfilling a vision of a church which has a zeal for the lost that *at least* matches our zeal to contend for the faith. The need to grow in our love for the lost and be equipped for evangelism is our top need. I am convinced that this will only happen if the shepherd up front leads the way.

On a more personal note, my wife, Michelle, and our four children are doing well. Adjusting to Bakersfield has been relatively easy for me, though the size of the city has changed considerably since I left in 1995. The girls are going to school, Michelle teaches music one day a week. She participates in the choir, leads the women's Bible study, as well as joins in other church functions.

Finally brothers, I thank the Lord for you and your partnership in the gospel. May God bless us as we work together for the faith of the gospel.

Respectfully submitted  
*Rev. Tracy Gruggett*

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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***Rev. Jim West read his parochial report.***

Dear Elders and Ministers,

By the grace of God, I am approaching my 23rd year as pastor of Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento. As the church militant, we continue to fight the good fight of faith and to war a good warfare. I see the work of sanctification continuing, as the Gospel light is shining brighter and brighter until the perfect day (Proverbs 4:18). I heartily give praise to God for ministering God's word to such a congregation of saints, who show their love for the Lord by taking up their cross daily and following him.

This past year I continued preaching through the *Book of Acts* and *Romans*, while finally finishing *Romans* in February of this year. I also started a series on the book of *Proverbs*, which our Church will hear more about throughout 2009. My work at City Seminary included teaching Homiletics, Anthropology, and Pastoral Theology. The back-to-back classes at City Seminary last year on Tuesday night I found to be very taxing, especially in the light that I spent all day Monday and Tuesday preparing lectures. Since I try not to sit upon my oars, I was compelled to read additional material to perfect my notes from previous years. The effect is that I continued to grow spiritually, along with all my students. The students seemed generally pleased with the results and in many cases their grades and encouraging words proved it.

Other activities include serving the Lord's Supper about eleven times, baptizing, teaching the weekly Heidelberg Catechism class, counseling, teaching new membership classes, serving as President of the Western Classis for my ninth year, and a wee little writing. Added to this is the joy of pastoral visitation, a great deal of which this year occurred in my church office. We recently witnessed two beautiful marriages, and expect a third to take place this coming June, too. Besides these ministerial responsibilities was

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the shared oversight of the weekly Sunday School classes, which are designed for all ages.

During the week, the Church also offers two Bible studies and one prayer meeting. The Bible studies include the weekly study at Elder Greg Uttinger's house and the monthly Ladies Bible study at the church. There is also a Wednesday night prayer meeting at the home of Pastor Walker in Elk Grove. There is also the young Men's study (commonly called *Brothers and Books*). So, my assessment is that there is no shortage of opportunity to grow spiritually in the company of God's people. By God's grace, we are practicing "the communion of the saints."

With regard to the work of the Spiritual Council of Elders, our hardest assignment this past year was adjudicating the discipline cases that came before us, which resulted in two excommunications. What is more, there are still some lingering effects of the events that led up to these excommunications, which continue to ripple through the Church. We have a few other internal problems, too, that have the potential to break-out into fire, although hopefully, not a great conflagration.

The heart-wrenching discipline cases should not eclipse the great potential that we have in the congregation, especially among the majority of the young adults who not only aspire to marry in the Lord, but to be productive members of this congregation. I am convinced that the future of our church is golden. I see the fruit of godly fathers who are passing the torch of the Reformed Faith to their sons and daughters. I also see future godly leadership in the Church far more clearly than in previous years.

The Church continues to focus on missions, local, national, and international. One family continues its interest in Bible Couriers and another member serves on the board of the Gefen ministries in Israel, which publishes Reformed books in Hebrew. Recently, the Gefen ministries finished translating the Heidelberg Catechism into Hebrew. We also support Covenant Reformed Chapel in San Diego, where Pastor Gil Baloy continues to spearhead the preaching and teaching ministry. Covenant Reformed Church continues to make attempts to reach our neighbors in the immediate neighborhood with barbecues and ice cream socials, invitations to events such as the Christmas musical, etc. Added to this was our first year of doing Vacation Bible School, which featured daily Bible-teaching, capped off by a lively Gospel-sing on a Friday night. One of our members is keen on foreign missions and will be accompanying Pastor Gil Baloy during his next missionary junket to the Philippines.

We are also looking into the possibility of starting a mission work in some other part of town, possibly the Roseville-Rocklin area of Sacramento. To accomplish this, there especially needs to be people who live in that region who are searching for a Reformed Church home, that is, people who are not organizationally tied to our church here in Sacramento. The bottom line is that we are looking for names and prospects. Any information that you, the members of Western Classis, might supply to achieve this end, would be most appreciated. Sometimes the best way for a church to grow is to try to evangelize itself out of existence. "Evangelize or fossilize" remains an adage which is both a warning and an inspiration to do missions.

The statistics of Covenant Reformed Church are most encouraging. The membership is now about 200 baptized members, with 146 of them communicant members and 54 non-communicant. The tithes and offerings were about \$298,000, plus special offerings which took us up over \$354,000. So, the tithes and offerings were up over 11 per cent. In this economy, when Swiss bankers are jumping out of their windows, this is remarkable.

City Seminary continues to minister to all of God's people in the Sacramento and greater Sacramento area. The Seminary is inching closer and closer to graduating its first students in the four-year program. This includes our own Doug Schlegel, who will be examined by the Western Classis during this session.

During the week and once a month I attend the Sacramento Reformation Society, which is composed of Reformed ministers from all over. We meet at Immanuel Baptist Church in downtown. Usually, one minister will bring forth a paper that will be discussed after it is read. Most of the ministers present are Baptists, with Reddit Andrews of the PCA and myself the alone paedobaptists. It is great fellowship, but thus far I have not presented a paper since the busyness of the weekly schedule makes me shy away from time-consuming projects.

Our Reformation Bible Conference this past year seemed well-attended. The topic was BE YE HOLY: "God's Grace at Work in His People" and featured Dr. Derek Thomas of the Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson Mississippi. You may be interested to know that Dr. Thomas and several others will be returning to Sacramento to preach at the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology. The theme this year is Justification by Faith Alone and will be celebrated at Immanuel Baptist Church in the second week of March. Justification by Faith Alone continues to be the hot button in the Reformed World, as more and more men who claim the Reformed label abandon the doctrine in which the Church stands or falls. I recently attended a meeting of some of the principals, when Dr. Derek Thomas stood up and pointed out that if JESUS IS LORD is all the gospel is, then we are all under God's judgment and wrath. He was speaking against the likes of N.T. Wright and some of his followers who wear the Reformed label. He also challenged us to revisit the question, "What is the Gospel?" This question will be answered at the Conference.

On the home-front, it was a stormy year for yours truly, with my wife undergoing surgery for cancer and our continuing to care for my 94-year old father, who continues to live with us. My wife's health is up and down, but as far as we know, it is not down because of the cancer. She suffers from severe headaches, fibro myalgia, and continuing pain in her side where the surgeon removed the lymph nodes. In addition, I myself was sick some four or five times—a record for me! Yet, this is one record I hope goes unbroken, as it is pretty hard to function effectively when one is taken down by a severe flu or something similar. Of course, even though we are fragile pottery jars, the hope of the resurrection lives on. I am comforted by the poem of George Herbert, who wrote:

O death, thou art an uncouth, hideous thing, Full of bones.  
But since the Savior's death hast put some blood into thy face,  
thou hast grown fair and full of grace.

So, let us not despair, but remember that we should be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). We know that our labor is not in vain because Christ is risen, and the day is coming when He shall judge the living and the dead. This stamps our work with God's imprimatur; if our work will be judged by God, then this means that our work is so very important. If it is important to God, then it should be to us, too.

May our God equip us with His grace and mercy as we continue to serve Him.

In Christian love,  
*Rev. Jim West*

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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***Rev. Gary Mancilas read his parochial report.***

Esteemed Brethren,

In Ephesians 4:1-3, the Apostle Paul instructs the church to submit to one another in love when he writes, "I, therefore, ... beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were 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."

With appreciation for such instruction, I hope to be worthy of the calling of Christ in love and in submission with all lowliness and meekness. It is the Lord and Master who binds His servants in love, with a solemn oath to submit to those who are ordained to oversee the labors of the ministers of His Church. Consequently, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" with those who are invested with authority to require from each of us an answer at our hands, herein, I am pleased to give to the delegates of the 24th Annual Session of the Western Classis an account of my ministerial labors and of the temporal and spiritual condition of my charge at Covenant Reformed Church (CRC).

Labors for the Denomination: As a missionary pastor, I serve the church with accountability to the Home Missions Committees of Classis and Synod. Therefore, I report that in 2006, the Consistory of CRC requested a meeting with the Western Classis HMC, for the purpose of evaluating the viability and financial status of the mission work. In 2007, in order to satisfy the mandate of the 261st Synod, that the Home Missions committees of Synod and Western Classis "justify and explain the current level of support of the Chico Mission," the Chico Consistory prepared a detailed history of the financial support from Classis and Synod, the membership status, and the membership tithing from 2001-2007. In 2008, at the 262nd Synod, the Western Classis Home Missions Committee was requested to conduct a visitation in September to evaluate the Chico work; and a visitation was mandated to be held in "January 2009 by three Synod Home Missions Committee members, one from each Classis, along with Western Classis Missions Committee members, to assess whether Synod funding of the work should continue beyond January 2010." As a result, on September 10, 2008, the Classis Home Missions Committee met with the Consistory and recommended that two members of the committee visit the congregation. On Sunday, October 12, Rev. Sam Powell supplied the pulpit and attended the post-worship fellowship meal, during which time he and Elder Wayne Lingenfelter were given an opportunity to visit and fellowship with the congregation.

In December 2008, the Synod Home Missions Committee received a positive Classis progress report on the Chico work; and the Synod Home Missions Committee chairman concluded that adequate progress was made, and the January 2009 meeting with Classis and Synod was not necessary.

In the broader service of the church, on behalf of the Western Classis, my labors include serving as chairman of the Christian Education in the Church Committee and lecturing at Heidelberg Youth Camp. On behalf of Synod, my labors include serving as chairman of the Permanent Committee to Develop e-Books and working as a member on the Diaconal Committee.

Membership: The 2008 Membership Statistics report 10 families, including nineteen communicant members and three unconfirmed members. At this writing, two families, a number of six, are scheduled to be brought into membership on February 22, 2009.

Labors of the Pastor and Spiritual Condition of the Church: This past classical year marks my seventh year at CRC. Your servant preached the Word of God forty-eight times at CRC in Chico; once at Rehoboth Reformed Chapel in La Habra; and once at First Reformed Church in Yuba City, on behalf of the Classis Home Missions Committee.

The congregation continues to receive the doctrines of the faith each Lord's Day. Beginning January 2008, a series of sermons themed, Public and Private Worship, were provided for the congregation. The worship services were faithfully attended, as well were the post-worship sermon sessions and congregational prayer meetings for the Chico mission work, which the Spiritual Council scheduled and designed for the congregation's edification, and at which time allowed for questions and/or comments on the sermon. In addition, as we were "urged" by Synod, each Lord's Day the congregation prays for a Synod Mission Work.

Moreover, my labors include teaching the adult Sunday school class and instructing one covenant youth in preparation for confirmation, which includes instructing through the Norman Jones Workbook, memorization of the Heidelberg Catechism, and church history. My labors further include providing membership instructions; performing visitation, personal and family counseling sessions; visiting patients and families of patients at the local hospital as a spiritual care provider; and conducting the Ladies' Bible Study, which is held semimonthly.

It is with appreciation that I can report that the Spiritual Council continues in its faithful oversight of the preaching and the teaching of God's Word, and the proper administration of the sacraments. The Lord's Supper is administered on the first Lord's Day of each month, during which time the sermon is focused on the Lord's Table. The Sacrament of Baptism was administered once. This past year, the church evidenced distinctly "the pure doctrine of the gospel, the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ, [and] church discipline," which is administered "according to the pure Word of God." In keeping with the true marks of the church, the Spiritual Council has been working with a family who was placed under spiritual discipline. With the support of the Western Classis Special Investigative Committee, the family returned to the church after over a year's absence.

Together with Elder David Helseth, faithful visitation with the congregation is performed. The Spiritual Council continues to watch faithfully over the spiritual interests of the congregation after the Apostolic example, exercising church discipline as the Scriptures command. Elder Helseth assists and supports his pastor in the general government of the church. He goes before the flock in the way of Christian example, and watches over it in the Lord, taking an active interest in its spiritual welfare, feeling a responsibility for its condition, being at hand in all circumstances with spiritual aid for its necessities. In addition, Elder Helseth aids in supplying the pulpit and teaching the adult Sunday school class.

Temporal Condition of the Church: Deacon Jim Gochnauer has done a commendable job serving as the treasurer of the Consistory, which meets monthly, assisting and supporting the other officers of the congregation, handling the temporal affairs of the church, and promoting its general welfare. Under his care and oversight, the temporal needs of the church are met. Deacon Gochnauer also directs the evangelistic outreach of the church and, by word and example, helps forward the great purpose of the gospel. Under the oversight of the Spiritual Council, our deacon conducts the semimonthly Men's Bible Study on the book, *The Mortification of Sin*, by John Owen. At



this writing, Deacon Gochnauer has been nominated by the Consistory to the office of elder for election at our 6th Annual Congregational Meeting on February 22, 2009.

The congregation has demonstrated a high level of commitment to church growth. Our witness in the community remains to be through personal witnessing, the yellow pages, the Internet via our church website, the sermon and teaching tape ministry, and the local newspaper. Scheduled three days a week on KKXX AM radio station are an advertisement for CRC and a fifteen-minute message excerpted from a collection of sermons preached on the Lord's Day. The radio broadcasts are made possible through financial gifts and anonymous contributions. Currently, Access Cable Television is airing a series of my sermons on "The Hour of Reformation." This past year, our evangelistic endeavors have realized visitors on the Lord's Day.

Financially, the members' giving remains faithful and exemplary, except for two families: one that was having financial problems, and one that was under spiritual discipline. In 2008 the regular tithes and offerings totaled \$36,987. In an effort to pay the Classical and Synodical guidelines, the Consistory continues to receive special offerings from the members quarterly. In 2008, \$2,120 was received. 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 at Sacramento. In efforts of being self-supporting, the overture for Classical and Synodical support for year 2010 reflects a 10% reduction on denominational resources, totaling \$3,720. On behalf of the congregation, we are most grateful to those in our denomination who have offered their support, gifts, love, concern, and prayers for us before God's throne of grace. We request that you continue to pray that the Lord will prosper our souls and the church with finances and use Covenant Reformed for His glory.

As a congregation, we acknowledge, and are thankful for, the blessings of our God. Even during the trials of the church, the members have demonstrated a commitment to the Reformed Faith and rest assured on the promises of our Heavenly Father that, for the sake of Christ, He will work all things according to His own sovereign purposes.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,  
*Rev. Gary Mancilas*

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**Classis Action:** Take note. Elder Alfred White led the body in prayer.

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### ***Congregational report of Grace Reformed Church, Willows.***

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

We praise our Lord and Savior for preserving the congregation of Grace Reformed Church of Willows during this past year. He has graciously met our needs and we trust in His sufficiency as we look to the future.

Our congregation has undergone further numeric changes this past year. Three young adults moved to the Sacramento area and have been dismissed to Covenant Reformed Church. Four adults and two children have been erased from membership. One young married couple recently relocated to Texas and will probably be dismissed to a congregation there this year. At this time our communicant membership stands at 32, with 43 baptized members, including one infant baptized this past year. We pray that the Lord will be pleased to add to our number.

The congregation remains faithful in attendance at worship. We celebrated the Lord's Supper 12 times. We have benefitted much from the faithful preaching and counsel of Rev. Gene Sawtelle, Rev. Frank Walker and Elder Doug Schlegel. Our people have repeatedly expressed their appreciation for the ministry of these men to us and have shown it by providing weekly hospitality. In addition, we were blessed by guest ministers Rev. John Sawtelle (URC), Rev. Jay Fluck and Rev. Al Tricarico (OPC missionary-Uganda). The evening Bible Study has been well attended this past year. We used a study called "Battling Unbelief" by John Piper and have recently been studying the book of Ecclesiastes.

Our Sunday school meets from September through May. We have eight children of elementary grade level, including four non-church children. Our Confirmation Class has three and is taught by Elder Ken Bowen using the Confirmation Handbook. We have a Sunday school class for Young Adults that is doing topical studies from Scripture, and an Adult Class that is presently studying Loraine Boettner's, "The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination."

Our people continue to faithfully support the work of GRC as well as Classis and Synod through tithes and offerings. This past year we were able to install a sound system in our sanctuary that will enable us eventually to reproduce sermons on CD. We are working to have a church website where sermons can be downloaded in the near future.

The Consistory of GRC appreciates your continued prayers for us as we seek to be faithful in the oversight of the Lord's people in Willows. We feel that the Lord has blessed us with real unity of heart and purpose. We desire to see this continue. Pray that the Lord will soon meet our need for a pastor and that He will protect us and provide for us in the mean time.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Elder Joe Gross,*  
 Grace Reformed Church, Willows

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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***Rev. Eric Bristley read his parochial report.***

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

The Lord has provided many opportunities this past year for me to serve in His Kingdom. Variety of labor has characterized my life in the church, in teaching at City Seminary, in publishing, and in website development. As I see His hand of mercy and kindness in my life, I continue to depend on His grace to walk according to His Word.

Due to Pastor Roe's medical condition, I have been serving Covenant Reformed Church regularly in preaching, teaching, and pastoral work. I have typically led the morning worship service and taught a class on the book of Isaiah in adult Sunday school. On Reformation Day I had the challenge of stepping into the boots of one of the Reformers. This year it was John Knox's. Along with the elders, I have had the opportunity to be involved in family visitation, counseling, and other aspects of pastoral ministry. As a ministerial member of the Reformed Church in the U. S., I attended the annual meeting of Synod at Hope Reformed Church, Sutton, Nebraska.

I have been spending a portion of my time working on publication projects for the RCUS. I worked on the text/design for the new RCUS Trinity Hymnal, which resulted in

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a useful resource for our congregations. A new design for the Modern Language Version of the Heidelberg Catechism was completed by the beginning of September. I have spent a good deal of time this past fall working on the revision of the Norman Jones workbook on the Heidelberg Catechism. It is now nearing completion. I continue to labor under the editorial direction of Rev. Treick on the design of the *Reformed Herald* and have contributed a few articles as well. The cover layout now includes a full-page image. I have also been redesigning the RCUS website and it is ready to be made live, but, as of this writing there are some technical problems with the web server, which I am seeking to resolve.

My labors at City Seminary comprised teaching courses on Christian Evidences, Applied Apologetics, and Christian Worldview this past year. I continue to work on the Seminary website and to develop online education resources via videotaped lectures. I have also continued serving Westminster Biblical Missions (WBM), and work with Rev. Victor Atallah in producing the monthly newsletters for Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF), which has expanded into website development as well.

Last September I had the privilege of attending a conference on the work of Dr. Herman Bavinck (1854–1921), which marked the completion of the English translation of his *Reformed Dogmatics*. Bavinck was the son of a German Reformed pastor and one of the most important reformed theologians of the modern period. For this conference, my *Guide to the Writings of Herman Bavinck* was published by Reformation Heritage Books.

It is my continual prayer that the RCUS may advance in love, prayer, sound doctrine, and good works, and may increase in numbers this year through the work of evangelism. I covet your prayers for me as I seek to serve Christ in His kingdom. My desire for the year ahead is that I will become more faithful and effective in serving my Lord in the path that He chooses.

In the name of the Triune God,  
*Eric D. Bristley*

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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***Rev. Jay Nelken read his parochial report.***

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is Good! For His mercy endures forever.* Psalm 107:1

By the Lord's providence, this was my first full year laboring at Grace Reformed. The move down to Lancaster went smoothly and the church has helped to make the transition comfortable. It has been a blessing to serve here.

During this past year, I preached forty-nine Sundays at Grace, completing the Book of Colossians, and conducted three communion services. It has been a continued blessing to see the joyfulness for, and humble reception of, God's Word from the congregation. I am thankful to Jesus for the faithful attendance of members each Sunday. Their commitment to hear God's Word is a commendable sign of Christ's work in their lives.

I continued to teach the Adult Sunday School, using Rev. Treick's workbook on *Christian Living in the Home*, and a Friday evening catechumen's class, using the four year confirmation handbook. Along with catechetical memorization, I am requiring

Scripture memory each week. We finished year one and have embarked on year two. There are presently six catechumens ranging in age from ten to fourteen.

As part of the Consistory, Elder Mark Reyna and Deacons Michael Grimes and Russ Reitz and I met each month. Elder Mark and I also met nine times as the Spiritual Council. Thankfully, by God's grace, we have had no formal discipline cases to report. There is, however, an area of concern that Elder Mark and I have noted and sought to address with teaching, preaching, and private admonition: namely, the fellowship, particularly dating, of singles with unbelievers.

Diaconal activity continued through seeking to meet the needs of members of the church, particularly those who were widowed or elderly. I am thankful to see a spirit of care and compassion in the lives of our deacons.

The Consistory saw that communion was faithfully administered four times last year. Reverend Neale Riffert administered communion once and I administered three times. There were no baptisms performed this past year.

Our membership dropped from 36 to 32. This was because the Spiritual Council removed from the rolls members who had moved out of state more than one year ago. The Spiritual Council transferred by Letter of Dismissal three communicant members; administratively erased three communicant members and two unconfirmed members; and, received by Letter of Dismissal two communicant and four unconfirmed members.

Although we did not receive any new members, I did teach a new members class, which will result, hopefully, in a few new members this year (and two infant and one adult baptism). Also, praise God, some others have begun asking about membership.

Elder Mark Reyna has also started an evangelism class which is a cross between Evangelism Explosion with its "on the job training" and the first 21 questions in the Heidelberg Catechism. In the Spiritual Council's assessment of the church, we found ourselves concerned with whether or not we, as a church, were properly and fully using the talents God has given to each of us for evangelism. We hope that by taking the lead and showing the way by example, we can encourage and stimulate Grace to greater evangelistic efforts. There are currently six people in the class. Please pray for us, that our evangelistic efforts will be blessed by the Lord.

Also during this past year, I visited members both in their homes and mine, many times with Elder Reyna. At these visits, and at other times, I counseled members on spiritual issues such as devotional and family life, finances, character development (anger, fear, resentment, dating, etc.), and learning how to communicate better.

On this latter issue, both the Consistory and the Spiritual Council came to the conclusion that this was an area of work both corporately and individually. Throughout the year, various members expressed a desire to see improved communication in their lives, their families and their church. Consequently, we have sought to both teach and to set a good example of communication to the members of the church.

The Spiritual Council also expressed joy in the demonstrated love the congregation shows. A bright moment came when some visitors enthusiastically observed the loving fellowship and friendliness of the members on Sunday. We have been encouraging this vital grace in the church.

We also observed and heard members express that the church does not seem to have much fellowship with each other during the week. Whether this is due to our busy schedules or the distances between us in this big city or a need for a greater commitment to this means of grace has not been determined. Yet the Council has encouraged members

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to work on this and a number of people are beginning to consciously “pursue hospitality” (Romans 12:13) both in their homes (Acts 2:46 and 5:42) and at the church.

During this last year, we also held bi-monthly prayer meetings. Sadly, they did not begin well. For much of the year, the attendance was typically two or three people. This, in my opinion, is a big area where we need work. While I believe we have some great prayer-warriors at Grace, it is not my impression that Grace Reformed Church is a praying church. The Spiritual Council believes this must change and has challenged the church to repent and spend more time on their knees and in gathered prayer. Thankfully, the last few months have shown improvement.

Consistory also continued their separate collection for dues and guidelines in an effort to be faithful in paying these monies. By God’s grace, we fully paid our Classical dues and guidelines. However, we only met fifty-three percent of our Synodical guideline. This was due partly to an inflated communicant membership roll and partly to simply not being able to pay the amounts required.

We at Grace Reformed Church beg your understanding. Since we are small, and we have a number of fixed income seniors and communicant high school or college students (who either don’t work, or only work part-time), we simply cannot pay all these dues and guidelines. Please understand that it is not because we aren’t committed, do not care, or do not see it as a high priority. We *cannot* take our dues and guidelines out of our tithes and offerings and must rely on the special offerings given *above and beyond the tithe*. If it will help you to understand, please come talk to us and look at our budget.

This brings up the sensitive issue of our finances. They are not great. We are living month to month and would not make it without the continued benevolent support of Classis and Synod. We took a huge loss the last two years when five good tithing families left. These have yet fully to be replaced. In fact, in October, we had to call a special congregational meeting to inform the congregation of the seriousness of our situation. We were literally running out of money. Since then, we have made some very small progress, in part because we have gained some new tithing visitors.

Please let me explain further. With our present tithes and the benevolence of Classis and Synod, we can meet *only* our “fixed” expenses of rent, utilities, insurance, and salary. All other expenses are “discretionary” (including diaconal, building maintenance, and dues and guidelines) and paid by special offerings or else simply eliminated (including all supplies). We covet your prayers in this regard.

A quick note also about what is in store for this next year. The Spiritual Council has decided not only to pursue the theme of evangelism and fellowship this next year, but also to increase the opportunities for teaching and worship. With this in mind, an evening service (preaching out of Proverbs) is starting in April and an evening Bible Study (starting with the book of Jonah) on Wednesday nights.

In conclusion, I believe that we at Grace Reformed Church have great work to do and even some repenting to do as we grow into the image of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I look forward to another year (and more) of service at Grace Reformed Church.

In Christ’s service,  
*Pastor Jay Nelken*

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

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***Rev. Jonathan Merica read his parochial report.***

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

Your servant gives praise to the Lord for His grace in blessing Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton this past year. We are especially thankful to Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley for their loving support and wise oversight of the congregation, faithful prayer support, and in their financial contributions. We are greatly humbled by their gracious spirit in the support of our labors in Stockton. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation for the churches of the Western Classis for their faithful prayers for the labors in the gospel that the Lord would use our witness to bring souls to Christ, and also to bring more visitors and members into the congregation. I would like to extend a special note of gratitude to Virginia Bender of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, CA. She has been our “Anna,” as in the New Testament, giving herself to pray throughout this past year for Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton. I am happy to report that the Lord is answering the prayers of the Western Classis and of our beloved sister in Christ, in a most remarkable way.

On this very day of my writing my parochial report, February 8, 2009, the Lord has given Calvary Reformed Chapel a new meeting place that is twice the size of our former meeting place, at the same monthly rate as the previous location. A number of new families have contacted us in the last two weeks, and several of them have attended the worship service. Counting our members and visitors we had twenty-seven in attendance on February 8, 2009. Several of the visitors indicated they would be returning. God has blessed us with a family of five and one single adult who have completed membership classes. It is hoped that another family of four, who has been with us for nearly a year, will also join in membership.

My ministry of the Word has been from both the Old and New Testaments to edify and strengthen the faith of the saints. I preached 49 Sundays at Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton, having one pulpit exchange with Rev. Michael Voytek to preach at Providence Reformed Church in Lodi. I also filled the pulpit at Covenant Reformed Church in Chico. I had one week off from preaching in May to visit with relatives. Your servant was also privileged to preach at the evening services at Trinity Reformed Church in Modesto and Grace OPC in Modesto. For our Sunday School ministry this year I completed expositional studies through the book of II Timothy and James. I presently am continuing a study in the book of Jude. The Word of God is well received by God’s people.

We are greatly indebted to Elder Frank Krivohlavek and Elder Steve Wilbur in coming to Calvary Reformed Chapel to assist with the Lord’s Supper. We praise God for this means of grace! We thank God our small congregation is blessed with a loving unity and peace. Each Lord’s Day our congregation enjoys a sweet time of Christian fellowship.

Our means of outreach to contact new visitors has been through handing out church brochures, the Yellow Pages, the internet yellow pages, our church website, and Sermonaudio.com on the internet. The total MP3 sermons downloaded on sermonaudio.com since 2002 has now risen to 26,545 sermons (see attached report). This is an increase of 10,279 sermons downloaded since last year. We have 247 sermons posted on sermonaudio.com. In the month of December 2008 a total of 631 sermons were

downloaded. Of the 631 sermons, 186 sermons were downloaded in China and 134 in the state of Illinois.

I have continued my labors in the gospel ministry with Westminster Biblical Missions to Pakistan. Each year the Presbyterian congregations of the Lahore Bible-Believing Church Council, Lahore, Pakistan have a five-day Bible Conference. Approximately 3,000 Reformed Pakistani Christians attend the Worship Services and Bible studies. I was scheduled to preach and teach at the conference last year; however, due to the terrorists' turmoil the conference was canceled.

It was an honor and blessing to serve as the fraternal delegate to the Pacific Classis East of the Canadian Reformed Churches on March 13, 2008. It was also my privilege to serve as the fraternal delegate for the RCUS Synod at the 75<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The meetings convened in Tacoma, Washington on July 9-16, 2008.

This past year I have faithfully sought outside full-time employment to support my family's needs and provide medical insurance, but as of yet I have not been successful in finding another full-time job. I continue doing part-time work for Westminster Biblical Missions to Pakistan. I also have a part-time teaching job at a Christian school called Mokelumne River School. This year I am also serving as a school board member at Mokelumne River School. Added to the duties mentioned above, I am fervently laboring to grow the mission work at Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton. I want to express my gratitude to the Western Classis for the financial assistance given to cover a portion of the health insurance for my family. With my wife's chronic health issues it is imperative to have insurance coverage.

Please remember the following in prayer: 1) Pray that the Lord will direct our paths at Calvary Reformed Chapel to reach many lost sinners by our witness of the gospel. 2) Pray that the Holy Spirit will bless the ministry of the Word to all the hearts of those who attend Calvary Reformed Chapel. 3) Pray that God will grow our congregation by bringing many new families to join Calvary Reformed Chapel in 2009. 4) Pray that your servant will find full-time employment to aid in meeting the financial needs of the congregation.

The verse of Scripture by which we desire to chart our course for the coming year is found in Joshua 1:7, *"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."*

May God bless our labors for His glory, and for the advancement of His eternal kingdom.

Yours in Christ's service,  
*Rev. Jonathan Merica*

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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***Rev. Michael Voytek read his parochial report.***

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

In the third of a series of pilgrim songs or songs of ascent, we find the psalmist singing out with joy and gladness as he focuses upon the goal of his journey, the place where God was pleased to place His name. *"I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go*

*into the house of the LORD." Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together, where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, to the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD. For thrones are set there for judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces." For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, "Peace be within you." Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good (Psalm 122).* How much more should we sing out with joy and gladness for both our final destination, the heavenly Jerusalem, as well as our current ability to enter into God's presence in corporate worship, gathering as the people of God who are called by Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5).

Concerning the report of my labors for Christ and His beloved bride, the church, it has been my privilege and honor to serve the saints here in Lodi for almost seven and a half years. During this time, we have experienced times of discouragement and frustration as well as encouragement and hope. This past year has had its share of both but for the most part it was more of the latter rather than the former. For example, I am currently conducting three new member classes with a total of 15 people in attendance. Lord willing, a majority of these attendees will become members and will contribute to the continued growth and outreach of the church. I have noticed that more often than not it is the new members who exhibit an excitement for the church that result in further contacts and opportunities for ministry. We have also had to deal with some very serious counseling situations that at times have stretched me beyond my abilities. Yet even in these times, the Lord showed Himself to be able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that I could ask or think (Eph. 3:20). Although there are many areas of concern in every church, the one that is on the forefront of my mind and heart as well as the subject of many prayers is the need for the development of godly men in the congregation. The goal that I have placed before each male member of the congregation is godliness as defined by the Apostle Paul in the qualifications for elders (i.e. 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1). We live in a culture where men have opted out of responsibility and maturity, preferring the role of playboy or irresponsible teenager rather than that of husband and father, leader and provider of his family.

Again it is my privilege to report and the elders can confirm that the three marks of the true church as delineated in the Belgic Confession (Article 29) are found in the church here in Lodi. Most importantly, concerning the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel, it has been my desire and goal to be faithful to proclaim the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This has been a year of completions. For example, I completed preaching through Psalm 119 (22 sermons altogether) as well as preaching through the book of Revelation (what a challenging series that was!). It is my hope and prayer that the congregation has found these sermons edifying and useful as I did personally. In the Sunday school, we have continued to use the RCUS Sunday School curriculum (with major modifications) and completed working through the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Luke. On Wednesday nights, we are continuing to explore the riches found in Paul's letter to the Romans. Four of our covenant youth are actively engaged in confirmation preparation. Finally, we began a seminar once a month on Sunday nights on "biblical peacemaking" using material from the Institute for Christian Conciliation and especially the book by elder Ken Sande called appropriately *The Peacemaker*. The elders and I are hoping and praying that through the regular gathering



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together on Sunday evenings that we will ultimately see the establishment of an evening worship service.

I continually give thanks to God for His provision of godly fellow laborers among His flock, namely the elders and deacons of Providence Reformed Church. The elders diligently care for each member and strive to uphold all three marks of the church found in our standards. For example, with heavy hearts and tears, the Spiritual Council pronounced the censure of excommunication upon a brother for unrepentant adultery. Furthermore, they guard the Lord's Table through the interview of those visitors who request to join with us and will follow that up by sending a notice of participation to the visitor's church. They function as shepherds among the flock and guardians of the gospel. The deacons are actively involved not only in the oversight of the resources of the church, but also in the welfare of the members of Providence and beyond (an example that comes to mind is the Congo Economic Development Fund). The deacon's office, which I like to refer to as "the office of tangible love," is especially vital in this time of economic uncertainty. I would ask you to continue to keep these men and their families in prayer as our great adversary hates them and is actively engaged in attempting to destroy them and the church as well.

On a personal note, my wife Becky and I continue to home school two of our children David and Timothy. Our oldest son Joshua is hopefully completing a master's degree in counseling at the University of North Dakota this spring. Our daughter Tabitha is a senior at the University of the Pacific, majoring in Engineering Physics. Our son Abraham had a very difficult year after being hit by a car while riding his bike back to his dorm after his first day of school at the Art Institute of Portland. His kneecap was shattered into six or seven pieces and to make matters more challenging, he was denied medical coverage and must now pay over \$41,000 in medical bills. Needless to say, we would covet your prayers for the Lord's mercy in healing and provision. I am currently serving on the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee and as chairman of the Western Classis Home Missions. Furthermore, I taught four courses the past year at City Seminary in Sacramento. I am currently teaching one course this semester (*Hebrew Poetry and Prophets*) and Lord willing, I am scheduled to teach *Hebrew I* and *Old Testament Survey I* this fall. I am continually humbled and at the same time encouraged in this opportunity to minister the truth of God's Word among the larger body of Christ.

To close, your fellow 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*

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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***Rev. Dennis Roe read his parochial report.***

Dear Mr. President and Beloved Co-laborers in Christ:

I thank God for giving me the privilege to serve Him and you another year in the pastoral ministry. I present the following report regarding my service to Christ and of our congregation:

In 2008 I concluded a series of expository sermons in 2nd Corinthians. I did a series of messages through the Book of the Prophet Habakkuk. I also gave various messages for special occasions and seasons during the year.

Our Sunday morning worship service continues to average sixty to seventy in attendance. I thank God for the few visitors we have seen through the year. I will continue to pray for the Lord to add to His church.

Pastor Bristley took over our adult Bible Classes on Sundays. He is teaching a series on the Book of Isaiah. Our adult classes average twenty to twenty five. Our other Bible classes are for young adults, catechism age young people, third through fifth graders, Kindergarten through 2nd grades and our preschoolers. We are blessed by God to have teachers who faithfully teach and nurture our young people in the things of the Lord.

I continue catechetical instruction for the youth on Thursday afternoons. In May, six students recited questions 1-43 before the elders and then the congregation. I began a new class in September. We are studying the second section, questions 44-85, of the catechism. We are also studying the history of famous hymns and reading through the Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan. This session we have six students enrolled who are all in their second year of instruction.

We held a number of special services throughout the year with guest speakers. However, this year we saw regular pulpit supply by our associate pastor Rev. Eric Bristley due to my undergoing medical treatment for liver disease.

We continue to hold services at a local nursing home in the afternoons on the third and fourth Sunday of each month.

This past year I did not accept any preaching or speaking engagements outside of our congregation. The one exception was when I conducted and preached at the memorial service for the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Association in Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky. I plan to continue to serve as the Association's chaplain. The next memorial service is not scheduled until May of 2010.

I continued as Dean of Students for City Seminary at Sacramento where I help the students develop and map out a program for their studies. I continue to serve in this position.

I also conducted membership classes, personal counseling sessions, and calling upon members and non-members in their homes. I must admit that my visiting among the congregation this year has not been as frequent as I would have liked. I ask your prayers for renewed strength so I can fully resume my responsibilities.

It was my privilege to conduct, in conjunction with Rev. Bristley, the service for the Lord's Supper twelve times and to celebrate the sacrament of Christian baptism for one covenant child, my granddaughter, Sophie Elisabeth Boren.

Our membership saw a few changes in 2008. We lost one communicant member, but gained two by confirmation and one by the sacrament of Baptism. It is a great joy to see our people confirmed in the faith and received as communicant members.

Our Spiritual Council and Consistory continue to assist Pastor Merica's efforts in church planting in the Stockton area. Please pray that the Lord will help Pastor Merica and Mrs. Merica to be provided for materially, for the Lord to add to the membership of Calvary Reformed Chapel at Stockton and for God's blessing on Pastor Merica's labors.

Both Synod and Classis graciously exempted me from serving on any committees this past year due to the difficult nature of my medical treatment. I thank God that the last two blood tests showed me to be in complete remission from the Hepatitis virus. Another 24 months must pass before they declare me cured. I must say that it has been one of the

most difficult years of my life. However, the sweet and precious love of Christ has sustained me.

I continue to serve as General Secretary for Westminster Biblical Missions. In this capacity I work with all the fields. I made no international trips in 2008. I traveled once back east for a board meeting. I did not miss any Sunday services here because of these trips. I also maintain the missions' web site, wbminc.org, post the missionary newsletters online, and work with Rev. Merica in promoting its ministry in Pakistan. The Lord willing, I will continue in this service.

As Paul wrote to the Philippians, so I must write concerning our congregation, “*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.*” This past year, our congregation bore most patiently with me in my infirmities. They touched my heart and spirit time and time again with their love in words and deeds. This is wonderful evidence of their love for Christ. “*No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us*” – 1 John 4:12.

Recently a pastor visited from another denomination for the first time. He commented to me that “though our congregation may be small, the love of Christ was evident to him as a first time visitor when most of the congregation came and welcomed him and his wife following the Sunday service.” It is my assessment that our congregation is doing well spiritually.

Financially, it is another story. At this time four of our sixteen families are in danger of losing their homes and may have to move away. This coming year may very well be a time of great trial for us. Please pray for us that we will “*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong*” – 1 Cor. 16:13.

We are blessed as a church to have our associate Pastor Eric Bristley, our elders Krivohlavek and Wilbur, and deacons Jordan and Neff who so faithfully assist our congregation and me in our worship and service to the Lord Jesus Christ. We also are blessed to have Kathy Bristley who touches our hearts and minds with beautiful music. I am especially grateful for a wonderful wife and family who provide me with unflinching love and support.

Thank you all for your encouragement to me in the ministry of the Word of Christ. Please pray for the Lord to keep me steadfast in proclaiming the whole counsel of God and not to be a man pleaser, but a pleaser of God.

Honored to be your servant in Christ,  
*Dennis E. Roe, Pastor*

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**Classis Action:** Take note. Elder Jeff Jones led the body in prayer.

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### ***Rev. Jay Fluck read his parochial report.***

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:3-6).*

Rehoboth began 2008 with an average attendance of 50 in morning worship and finished the year with the same average. The attendance was not static, some left us others came and our “population” rose to 63, but it seems impossible to get the whole

body together on any given Sunday. Attendance on Wednesday evening has remained steady averaging 14. Sunday evening has varied in attendance and we are currently experimenting with moving our “evening” service to 1:30 pm in order to make travel time and expenses less and encourage more attendance. Currently we alternate weeks between 6:00 pm and 1:30 pm to determine which time is more conducive to larger numbers. It does not appear to make a great deal of difference, most of those who attend do so without respect to time.

The Lord added five to our communicant rolls in 2008, and five to our baptized roll. That made our statistics 36 communicants and 17 baptized members. Since those statistics, four communicants were judicially erased, two communicants added along with two baptized children. There are five “regular” visitors and one child in process of adoption whose status will be regularized as soon as the process is completed. This leaves our statistics at 38 communicants and 19 baptized.

The Lord’s Supper was administered six times (the third Sunday of each even numbered month) and baptism was administered five times as was appropriate. We installed our first Deacon January 25<sup>th</sup> (the election of our first candidate 2 years ago was rescinded on the occasion of his falling back into sins of his past). We had two candidates and were disposed to install both (they are already ordained in other denominations whom we recognize) but one asked to remove his name while he cared for a long term medical need in his own household.

I was privileged to proclaim the Word of God in Grace Reformed Church of Willows and at Ebenezer one Sunday each, and was absent on vacation two Sundays, while the pulpit at Rehoboth was filled by Elder Carl Esparza two Sundays and Elder Clarence Goehring one Sunday. Rev Michael Voytek supplied our pulpit one Sunday morning in 2008 and again this past January. Rev Gary Mancilas supplied the pulpit one Sunday.

Our giving increased by a little more than \$4,000.00 to \$97,252.50. We took responsibility for all of our expenses this year which for the first time made clear all our costs and sources of income giving us a clearer picture of what is necessary for our continuation and organization. Lord willing we will continue to do so even though we initiated a large (\$12,000.00) reduction in classical support. Pray for us, the economy and such a step are frightening. We have supported several diaconal needs in the congregation, one of them substantial. We will need increased giving and dedication on the part of our congregation this year. Our prayer is, and was, that our reduction might make a more equitable division of resources possible for the classis. Our savings account, on Ebenezer’s books, was reduced to \$30,038.25 because of our request that all of our expenses be counted as our responsibility freeing Ebenezer of financial drain for our support. Ebenezer has borne considerable financial drain for our support over the nearly 11 years of our existence, and we wish to publicly thank and honor them for their service to Rehoboth.

We continue to use a Sunday afternoon meal as our principal means of congregational fellowship, although we have just begun the establishment of a monthly men’s fellowship and a monthly women’s fellowship. Our outreach is most successful when it is the membership inviting their family and friends. That is followed by our web site as second most effective outreach. We are planning additional efforts based on those fellowship groups. Elder Esparza and Pastor Fluck continue to use every opportunity available. The usual means of outreach are severely limited by city codes and make it difficult even to preach on the street corners.

This year has been difficult for me personally. I have for several years desired to change the venue in which the Lord uses me for service. He has not granted my prayer. Covenant East Classis has sought to have me go to Gettysburg, PA, but the congregation there is only “considering” whether or not to unite with the RCUS. The prospect was delightful, but our need of pastors for established works coupled with their lack of commitment to the RCUS means that the dream of going home is only a temptation and not a call. Willows may represent a calming lifestyle which after 29 years in Los Angeles, looks wonderful. However, because of the progression of ALS in Elder Goehring’s brother Norman, Rehoboth has functioned without a fully occupied Ruling Elder for the past two years. We have recently installed our first Deacon, and the Lord has called Norman home. It is to be hoped that there will be a return to full activity on the part of a consistory, but that is still very tenuous. Willows has two able and dedicated Elders and three able and dedicated Deacons. Rehoboth is not nearly this strong. I reluctantly conclude that the slower, calmer lifestyle is not the answer to my prayer at this time, because of the seemingly greater need at Rehoboth. Were there a man willing and acceptable to the congregation on the horizon I would not feel that my service would make the “difference” at Rehoboth, but in the absence of anyone, someone is better than no one.

My heart breaks that we have few men on the horizon for any of our pastoral needs. Ebenezer has delegated to me the task of seeking candidates for her pulpit and in doing so I have spoken with some 20 men outside our denomination, six have expressed interest and four have been pursued but all have chosen to accept calls to other denominations. We need to be desperately in prayer for men. We cannot clone the men we have, we do not have enough men, consequently, our hearts weep for those who would be well served by dedicated men but cannot be supplied with them because they are not available. I would love to be able to fill some of these needs, first in our own fellowship, then if all pulpits were supplied, outside to lead into our denomination; but I am constrained, as we all are, to weigh the needs and seek to strengthen the weakest.

Rehoboth continues to be grateful to Classis and Synod for your unflagging support in prayer, time and money; especially Ebenezer and Covenant, Sacramento. The challenge of Covenant made to the classis and their faithful fulfillment of their part made the paying off of the mortgage on our home possible and I am deeply grateful.

Please keep Rehoboth, the RCUS, and myself in your prayers that we may remain faithful to the Word of God in these “hard” times, not becoming desperate enough to abandon the faith of our Fathers. Pray for Rehoboth’s continued faithfulness to each other, need of men to supply the offices of the congregation, and financial needs.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Jay Fluck*

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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***Rev. Vernon Pollema read his parochial report.***

Esteemed Brethren:

When will the final become final? With that question I refer to what, for the last two years, was to have been my final report of the spiritual and temporal condition of the Ebenezer Reformed Church and my labors as the pastor. I continue to work at retirement,

but thus far it has eluded me. I suspect the fact that I am not moving away from the area lessens the urgency of securing a replacement. However, I do not intend this to mean that no effort was made to secure a replacement. As reported last year, the Consistory, out of deference to our associate pastor, the Rev. Jay Fluck, who expressed the desire to resign as missionary pastor at Rehoboth Reformed Chapel in order to accept a pastoral call elsewhere, believed that securing a replacement pastor for Rehoboth was paramount and took priority. Since then, the situation has changed, and Pastor Fluck, with the counsel of the Home Missions Committee, has decided that it is more needful at this time that he remains at Rehoboth. This has allowed the Consistory to focus upon a replacement pastor for Ebenezer.

So what happened in 2008? Statistically, the communicant membership declined by one. The congregation was saddened by the death of a former elder, Bob Baze, but comforted that he belonged to his faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all his sins so that his death was not a satisfaction for his sin, but only a dying to sin and an entering into eternal life (cf. HC #1 & #42). One infant was given the covenant sign and seal of Holy Baptism.

Evangelistic outreach continues in a couple of ways: through the oversight, financial and prayer support of missionary pastor, the Rev. Jay Fluck, and Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA. (Rev. Fluck will report on the progress of the work there.); through the Grace & Truth Radio Broadcast, which coverage and outreach has been greatly reduced by the recent switch between KERI (1180AM) and KERN (1410AM), without any reduction in cost. Because of the switch, the program no longer reaches the Corcoran State Prison (North) or Santa Maria (South), just to cite two examples. Whether the program should continue is currently under consideration.

Another area of outreach is the Shafter Convalescent Hospital where Ebenezer, along with other Shafter churches, takes its turn in conducting an afternoon worship service on assigned Sundays, which is now monthly. The preaching has been well received.

Worship services were held each Sunday morning and an additional evening worship service on every fourth Sunday of the month. I was absent from the pulpit on seven of those Sundays: the Sunday of May 25, when I preached at the Northland RCUS, Kansas City, and attended the 262<sup>nd</sup> Synod at Sutton, NE (elder Carl Esparza supplied the pulpit); the Sunday of August 17, when the congregation heard seminarian (MARS) Chris Moulton; the Sunday of August 24 when the pastor and his wife vacationed with family and seminarian Chris Moulton again exhorted at the morning service, and the Rev. Tracy Gruggett preached at the evening service; the two Mission-fest Sundays: Oct 12, when we joined Grace at Bakersfield and Oct. 19, when Grace joined Ebenezer, sharing the Rev. Scott Henry as guest minister; the Sunday of Nov. 23, when son of the congregation, the Rev. Paul Henderson, filled the pulpit; the Sunday of Dec. 07, when I filled the vacant pulpit of the Northland RCUS, Kansas City, and attended the Heidelberg Theological Seminary board meeting at Lincoln, NE, and the Rev. Jay Fluck supplied the pulpit.

The past year the Consistory, on behalf of the congregation and Rehoboth, continued its pastoral search. Four men were invited to preach: the Rev. John Sawtelle (URCNA), MARS student Chris Moulton (URCNA), Greenville Theological Seminary graduate, Travis Grassmid (URCNA), and the Rev. John Jackson (ARP), Concord, NC. Of the four, the Rev. John Sawtelle was examined by the Candidates & Credentials Committee as to orthodoxy and purity of intent, thus becoming eligible to preach a trial sermon and receive a pastoral call, but he decided to remain with the URCNA. Mr. Travis Grassmid

had agreed to stand for licensure examination at this Classis session but, upon receiving a pastoral call from his home church in Michigan, declined to proceed with the examination. The Rev. John Jackson decided he was not ready to leave NC. The search will continue.

The elders remain vigilant and faithful in their oversight of the preaching & teaching of God's Word, the proper administration of the Sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline.

Visitation of the widows, shut-ins, infirmed, sick and grief-stricken is faithfully attempted. Family visitation by an elder accompanied by a deacon was sporadic at best and largely unsuccessful.

The consistory in general, and the deacons in particular, remain diligent in their concern for the outward needs of the church, locally, at Rehoboth, sister congregations, the United Covenant Reformed Church of the Philippines (UCRCP), Heidelberg Theological Seminary, and meeting and exceeding the classical and synodical guidelines.

A review of the learning activities and organizations of the congregation is as follows:

The Sunday School consists of a Pre-K class and levels I-III classes taught by teachers appointed by the Spiritual Council. These classes are using a two year curriculum (first year-Old Testament & second year-New Testament) for two different age groups (2-5 & 6-9) written by Mrs. Sharon Bratcher, a member of an OPC church in Pennsylvania and former Christian school teacher. Level IV is a catechism class taught by the elders using *Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism* by the late Rev. Norman L. Jones. There is a class for young people (high school & college age) with appointed teachers which use a series for Senior High & College students published by Great Commissions Publications, and a class for adults taught by the pastor, studying selected New Testament epistles.

A confirmation class, consisting of four students is held on the first, third, and fourth Sundays of the month. These students are completing the prescribed four year program, and it is the Spiritual Council's intention for me to complete their confirmation.

The Sunday evening Bible Study meets the first and third Sundays of the month. An adult Bible study, taught by an elder, is held simultaneously with children's Bible studies (taught by parents) and activities in the Fellowship Hall, all preceded by a meal.

The Ladies' Society, although no longer a formal organization with officers and a treasury, continues to meet monthly for Bible study and fellowship. They also continue to volunteer their services on behalf of the congregation.

The Men's Christian Fellowship also meets monthly and is currently studying the Canons of Dort. They engage in diaconal activities and also host a yearly social event or two for the congregation. There are 15 members and an average attendance of eight.

Beyond my pastoral duties, I continue to serve as President of the Executive Committee of Synod and as member of the Board of Trustees of HTS, Vermillion, SD.

This may, or may not, be the final report of my labors as pastor of the Ebenezer Reformed Church, nevertheless, I close with the words of the apostle Paul: *"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now"* (Phil.1:3-5), praying that God will bring the desire "to grow the church in Shafter" to fruition.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vernon Pollema

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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**Rev. Sam Powell read his parochial report.**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

*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). A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones (Proverbs 17:22).*

The sun rises and sets, the seasons change, seedtime and harvest continue, another year has come and gone, and God's covenant faithfulness remains unchanged. Indeed, "Thy mercies are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness!" (Lam. 3:23).

First Reformed Church remains a testimony to the great love of our Father; He has not only cleansed us from our sins and called us from darkness into light, but He has also gathered us into the family of His saints here on earth. He sets the solitary in families and sets free those who are bound (Ps. 68:3). And what a family he has given us! Susan and I find great delight in each of the saints at First Reformed Church.

As to the account of my labors: The Word of God was preached each Sunday, 49 times by me, once by Rev. Gene Sawtelle, once by Rev. Gary Mancilas, and once by Rev. Maynard Koerner. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was served 12 times. There were no baptisms.

I preached a series on the Sermon on the Mount, including a series on the Lord's Prayer. I finished a series on worship and have begun preaching through the book of Romans. Rev. Mancilas and I exchanged pulpits in October on behalf of the Classical Home Missions Committee, and Rev. Koerner preached our mission fest services in October. Each Lord's Day I teach the adult Sunday School Class. We finished Genesis and have almost completed James. Wednesday evening Bible studies continue to be well-attended; we have finished Revelation and are now going through the Minor Prophets.

2008 was a year of celebration! I received my Masters of Divinity from New Geneva in May and was ordained to the gospel ministry on June 8, 2008. I was quite moved at the number of ministers and elders who were in attendance. Rev. Frank Walker gave the charge to the minister and Rev. C.W. Powell gave the charge to the congregation. On August 2, 2008, I had the privilege of conducting my first wedding, which was even more special since it was my own daughter's! Michael Opie and Morgan Powell were wed with nearly 200 people in attendance. Even though the power transformer across the street blew up and we lost all power we still had a great time. The deacons, as usual, were creative and conscientious and produced generators to keep the music going. It was hot, but lively! The next morning (Sunday) I had to reconstruct a sermon by hand since my computer blew with the sermon in it. The summer of 2008 truly was a summer of eating bread with joy and drinking wine with a merry heart.

We received four members: Tom Stricker by profession of faith, Lorri Gunnerson by letter, and Greta Ochsner and Catherine Wilcox by confirmation.

There are four young people in catechism class, held Thursday afternoons. There are three prospective members attending membership classes on Thursday evenings. There are frequent visitors, several of whom have expressed interest in membership classes. We continue to rejoice in our God who is blessing the preaching of the Word.

The elders are steadfast and diligent. They are mature men who love the Lord and the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a great blessing to have such fellow-workers. It is also a blessing and sobering to know that the elders are diligent in the oversight of sermons and



Bible studies. Elder Greg Stewart is finishing his Sunday School class with the Jr. High School age through church history; Elder James Ochsner will continue with the students through Rev. Jones workbook on the catechism. Elder Werner Stricker faithfully prepares the Lord's Table each month.

The deacons, Bud Milam and Steve Moore, are faithful and industrious. Giving in regular offerings was up 29% over budget. God is certainly gracious. These funds have enabled us to plan some building remodeling and upgrading. We laid new carpet in October, and plans are in progress for a new sign and an expanded fellowship hall with ADA approved bathroom facilities. These plans are currently waiting for approval from the county. I thank God for the leadership and abilities of the deacons in the oversight and leadership that they provide. They have been active also in the care of the poor and needy, and have seen to the physical needs of my family, for which I am grateful.

The congregation is active and energetic. I have lost count of the fellowship meals, but have gained 30 pounds. The ladies of First Reformed Church really know how to put on a meal! Our regular fellowship meal is the first Sunday of the month, but we don't like to limit ourselves to that. Every occasion is a call to dinner, and in that I rejoice.

Kadie Milam, Bev Milam and Courtney Stewart finished the first year curriculum with the small children. Morgan Opie is now teaching that class (10 and under) going through 1 and 2 Samuel. The study sheets that she has made under the oversight of the elders are excellent for that age group.

A website was launched in July ([www.reformedyubacity.org](http://www.reformedyubacity.org)). I have uploaded every sermon onto it and have made them available for download. Since July we have had 86 sermons downloaded and 1470 visits. Hits to the site continue, averaging 30 sermon downloads and 350 visits per month. The numbers increase each month.

The congregation, under the capable leadership of the deacons, has generously provided for all of my family's needs. I am overwhelmed by the goodness of God through His people.

My dear wife Susan is a most fitting helper for me. I thank God for her. Truly her price is far above rubies.

Psalm 32:11 - Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Rev. Sam Powell*

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**Classis Action:** Take note. Elder Bob Williams led the body in prayer.

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***Rev. Hank Bowen read his parochial report.***

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

In 1 Corinthians 3:6-9 the apostle Paul pens these words, *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.*

As I write this report it marks my having been in Anderson for over five years and over eighteen years in the ordained ministry. It has been my delight to serve as a minister of the gospel ministry and as a pastor of several wonderful congregations.

However, as I reflect back over the past year, I have questioned myself several times concerning the effectiveness of my ability to be productive in the work I believe God has called me to do as pastor of Faith Reformed Church. I have sought to build upon the work of others who have gone before me. I have labored to implement those things that might lead to the congregation growing in numbers, which is the most pressing issue that has faced this congregation for many years.

Within the first couple of years there was an increase in attendance. At one point the average attendance had grown to 40 to 50 each Lord's day, but over the past few years the numbers have been in decline. In the past year the average attendance has fallen to about 25 with many Sundays the total attendance only in the teens. There are many members who are very faithful and there are others who miss a number of services. The evening prayer time and service continue to be enjoyed by around ten members on a weekly basis.

My pastoral activities this past year included preaching 49 morning services and 45 evening services. The sermons covered series on Isaiah 53, Joshua and Daniel. The Lord's Supper was served 12 times. In the morning Adult Sunday School the subject of the doctrine of God was completed, and a study on the Canons of Dort was started.

Covenant education limped along in the spring with one of the four students completing his catechism instruction and requirements for confirmation. However, even though he has memorized each of the catechism questions during the period of instruction, he has refused to complete the memorization element for confirmation according to Standing Rule 4 which requires that the period of instruction be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire catechism before confirmation. Two of the students dropped out of the classes in the fall and the last student attended only occasionally and did not complete any work over the fall semester. It creates a dilemma as far as how the covenant youth are to be brought into communicant membership when they have failed to meet the standards for confirmation established by the RCUS?

I attended the Northern California hymn sings which are held on a quarterly basis, as well as the Reformation Conference held in Sacramento.

My outside pastoral work included teaching an interim course on Introduction to Apologetics at Heidelberg Theological Seminary during the month of January. This was definitely the highlight of my year and I found the actual teaching of the course invigorating to me. While I was there I had the privilege of preaching twice in the RCUS church in Vermillion, SD.

Work which was done as a minister of the RCUS included the duties involved as clerk of the Western Classis. Besides the work involved with the meetings of Classis, I was a member of a committee appointed by the Executive Committee of Classis to work with a matter in the Chico congregation. There has been a great deal of work this year involved in my role as the chair of the RCUS Publications and Promotions Committee that was engaged in making corrections to the Modern Version Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism for reprinting and then working on suggested revisions for future printings. There was even more work preparing the Jones' Catechism Workbook for reprinting in a modern language edition. One article was written for the Reformed Herald on the Significance of Pentecost.

Other work included involvement on a steering committee for Bethany Christian Services Adoption agency to bring a permanent office to Redding. This included work on a fundraiser where I served as the master of ceremonies. I continue to be involved in

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officiating High School football and baseball games, as well as in the adult hockey league. I view these situations as a way to be out in the community and they do provide continual opportunities for evangelism.

There are a number of serious concerns facing Faith Reformed Church. First and foremost is the reality that the decline in the economy has hit this congregation hard. We do thank the Classis and Synod for their benevolent aid last year. Without it the expenses of the church would not have been covered. This decline is due to the fact that several members lost their jobs this past year and the general giving declined as a result. This led to a greater drain on the church's reserves that, unless something changes positively, will be exhausted in this coming year.

Second, there is a struggle with being a congregation without younger families. Our youngest child is nearing her teens. There are no children currently in Sunday School. There is a saying that children are the future of the church. If that is the case then we must question what the future holds for Faith Reformed Church?

Third, there is pressure for us to become effective at evangelism. It is not that there is a lack of effort to reach out and invite people by the congregation. There is simply a lack of response to those invitations. The Word of God is clear that the growth comes from God, but there is also the sense that as good stewards the Christian is to take the rich salvation God has given and multiply it. The pressure here is magnified by the reality that we have two communicant members who are away at college and will probably not return to us. Furthermore, there are currently no prospective new members and there has been a drought of visitors this past year. We long to add members, and should God bring an increase this could help to resolve the first two problems facing the congregation. So perseverance in evangelism and seeking to be more fruitful in our efforts is the great challenge facing us. If some progress is not made this year then the future viability of the congregation may need to be addressed.

As far as my family, there have also been changes within the family that resulted in adjustments this past year. Our daughter graduated from High School and moved to the Sacramento area to find work and attend college. My son entered High School which has its own set of new issues. My wife lost her job due to down-sizing by the company and has been unable to find a new job in an extremely depressed economic job market. As such there are greater financial pressures on the household budget that was already very tight. Even so, God continues to provide for all of our needs on a daily basis.

My hope in this year to come is to seek out new avenues of outreach in the community and continue to seek to add new families to the congregation. While the reformed church has always sought to resist worldly methodologies of church growth, there is the reality of the need to "market" the church that the field might be harvested. The challenge is to find a biblical approach that will also meet the challenges of reaching this current generation. I believe that computer technologies are still the fastest growing area whereby people may be reached with the gospel. The difficulty is in my lack of ability in utilizing the opportunities here. As such brothers, pray for our efforts and that the Lord would grant wisdom and growth to our congregation in the work of carrying out the mission and ministry of Christ in our community.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Rev. Hank Bowen*

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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**Rev. Gil Baloy read his parochial report.**

What a pleasure to labor for the Master in His Church this past year. To know the One in Whom we have believed, and to be persuaded that He will keep that which we have committed unto Him against the day, gives the workers of Covenant Reformed Chapel and myself hope and expectation of good things to come. For we strive together to lay a foundation which has already been laid before us in the infallible Word of God and by our faithful forefathers, which is Jesus Christ. This, of course, is what sustains our spirits though numerically we are yet in the day of small things.

Your fellow-servant, with the watchful oversight of Elder Alfred White, the Spiritual Counsel of Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church, and the Western Classis of the RCUS, affirm in our congregation the three marks of a true church according to the Belgic Confession of Faith (Article 29). I have preached God's Word each Lord's Day, except the two days which fell on our family vacation. The year 2008 began with a month-long series on the topic of "Biblical Worship." I completed 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy which set forth the necessity of faithful office-bearing in the church of the living God. The Apostle Paul is seen, as it were, hanging a sign outside the Church door, "Truth Assisters Wanted" in 2 Timothy 3. The visible church is full of "Truth Resisters" who are those "ever learning and never able to come to the *full* knowledge of the truth" (verses 7-8). Lastly, I preached one-half dozen messages on the Lord's Supper, which was celebrated eleven times in all. There were no baptisms administered this year. The Spiritual Counsel continues to exercise Christian discipline, though with mix results. Our motivation is one of principle based on God's holy Word and not pragmatism. We are thankful to report one former member has returned to our church after a few years in the wilderness.

Each Sunday morning between 9:30-10:00 am, I give Bible studies to a group ranging in number from 12-20 at the same local convalescent center where we have ministered over ten years. I am always encouraged by the interest shown by the residents, a number of whom are professing Christians. To think that that may be the last Scripture teaching or Bible verse they hear before entering eternity. On Wednesdays we enjoy our midweek Bible study and prayer meeting at various homes of members. This is with the exception of the one Wednesday a month for Spiritual Counsel and Consistory meetings. We covered the book *Christian Living in the Home* by Jay Adams, following the chapter questions found in the workbook written by Paul Treick. Since the conclusion of that study, we have embarked on a review of the doctrines of Scripture using the *Summary of Christian Doctrine* by Louis Berkhof. We will be in that for some time to come. One last item, Alfred White requested a break of about six months, during which time I engaged in a devotional study of Psalm 23.

I rejoice over my faithful fellow laborers and officers Alfred White and Angel Lontoc who are always there when needed. They have grown significantly in their respective offices in knowledge and commitment to the service of Christ. Each of them battles with his share of health issues. God is merciful in preserving them for us. I would like to see more of the men step up to the plate of active duty as there is much work to be done. We are blessed with more-or-less a steady flow of visitors. This is not counting our "regular visitors" who continue to come. O for a heartfelt commitment on their part to come forward in confessing Christ and becoming part of His body the Church.

We are doing more witnessing for Christ these days. It has expanded to include door-to-door evangelism in the surrounding community by myself and one or two other

brothers. If a good contact is made, it will involve more visits with the gospel to that home. For example, Deacon Angel and I have conducted several Bible studies in one home a short drive south. One member of the family regularly attends our Sunday meetings. We are hopeful for the other members of her family and extended family to receive the gospel. Two or three of us join a zealous Calvinistic Baptist brother in “invading” several shopping malls in the greater San Diego area through tract distribution. The management graciously provides us with a table for the tracts. The goal is to engage the passers-by in conversation about the need of their eternal souls. It isn’t easy to secure permission from the management of these malls. But with patient perseverance Jerry Benson is able to accomplish it. We have also gone to parks including our beloved Balboa Park. In fact, Jerry has put together a professional looking presentation of “Evolution and the Gospel” (as I entitle it), to “celebrate” the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Charles Darwin. The plan is to preach this ten-minute message several times each Saturday in February. Our basic gospel message involves giving the Law to convict men of a holy God’s wrath against sin, followed by the gospel of the righteousness and atoning sacrifice of Christ (Galatians 3:22-24). It’s that simple.

On a personal note, 2008 celebrates my first five years as an associate pastor of Sacramento Covenant Church serving in the San Diego mission congregation.

Maricar and I have been preserved so far in relatively good health. We are very thankful to God for working in our children to become communicant members with Ezra coming on board last March 2<sup>nd</sup>. I conduct a weekly telephone Bible study with my dad and mom who are 80 and 83 years old respectively. At one time, my parents were adversaries of my gospel. I thank God for the privilege to serve in the Synod Foreign Ministries Committee and Western Classis Interchurch Relations Committee and Diaconal Committee. What a rich blessing to be used in the lives of Reformed and reforming brethren in the Philippines. Please pray for the upcoming trip next month which I hope to make with Brothers Mike McClara and Eric Lontoc. May our sovereign God grant us safety and good success as well as a time of hearty fellowship with the saints. I close by giving God praise and thanks for His faithfulness to His people purchased by the precious blood of his Son, and for the opportunity to glorify Him by serving them.

Yours in Christ’s service,  
*Pastor Gil Baloy*

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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***Rev. Paul Treick read his parochial report.***

Esteemed brothers in Christ,

Another year has passed in the ministry of the Gospel for this servant of the Lord. In the past I used to think more about the words which Paul addressed to Timothy, “Let no one despise your youth” (I Tim. 4:12). Now, a more fitting exhortation might be, “let no one despise your age.” But in the context that Paul is speaking, he is reminding Timothy, and all of us, young or old, not to forget the essentials: “do not neglect the gift that is in you” by your ordination to office, and “take heed to yourself and to the doctrine.” “Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” (I Tim. 4:14, 16) This text was used 36 years ago when I was installed in my second

charge in Napoleon, Ohio. I have not forgotten that sermon, nor the charge given to me. So, this report is not about great *changes*, but more about *continuity* in the same precious doctrines of our beloved Reformed faith. It is my greatest hope that my love for the faith will also be contagious in the faith and life of all the members.

In the context that the Apostle Paul is writing, he warns in I Timothy 4 about the church falling into legalism. That does not happen unless there is also a falling away from the doctrines of grace, and ultimately away from Jesus Christ Himself. Brothers, it is our calling and purpose to continue to “command and teach” the Truth without regard to the difficulty of the labor or the reproach we may suffer (I Tim. 4:10). We do this because we trust in the living God.

By the grace and strength of God I was able to preach at an even 100 worship services at Trinity Reformed and conduct one of the Sunday School classes each week. I was able to preach and lead devotions at other venues and at the local nursing home. Last year I had a series of sermons on Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, and have begun a series in the Psalms and will be covering the Law for a part of this year. Preaching from the Psalms has the double benefit of being personally uplifting and then providing the joy of bringing that word to the congregation.

Personally I keep pretty busy being a husband, and working in several capacities in the Western Classis and Synod. There is not a lot of time for just musing, but I fear that when that time comes I’ll forget what I was going to muse about. So, I just push on with the anticipation of one day getting time to write some things that have been in planning for years.

The congregation at Trinity was blessed with a number of births this year. Five of these covenant children were baptized and are blessed to have good and faithful homes to grow up in. We served the sacrament of Lord’s Supper four times. One wedding was conducted last year and we had no funerals. One member was dismissed, two were added by confirmation, and two new communicants were instructed and received. One individual is being instructed at this time for church membership. Nine children attend the weekly catechism classes.

The Consistory and Spiritual Council meet monthly or oftener when needed and there is good cooperation among them. They are conscientious about their offices and the work it entails. We have had to deal with some disciplinary matters as a part of this work. That is always something that grieves the whole body, but it is necessary that the household of faith have good order and live for the glory of God. In our day, it is not that unusual, in the world’s climate of what is considered to be church membership, that some will look for membership in other churches, for all the wrong reasons. I am thankful that our elders maintain a strong stand for the Reformed faith and its confessions. This past year, more time than usual has been spent on giving counsel on economic matters that affect our families. Deacons may be more involved than usual in the difficult fiscal responsibilities of the members given the state of the economy.

This year we changed to the New King James Bible in the pews and at the services, and also began using the New Trinity Hymnal (RCUS edition). The new hymnal presents a challenge in the new tunes and learning some new songs. Overall it has been good, and hopefully the benefit will be that people are more focused on the words they are singing than they were before. We also do appreciate having all our creeds in the back of the Hymnal. Our old Bibles were given to the Stockton mission work, but we will probably keep our old hymnals for a while yet.

Financially, we have been able to meet our Synodical and Classical Guidelines and were able to support some other RCUS causes in addition. We did look at the purchase of a different church building, but that did not pan out. We turned our attention to what can be done with the building we have to make it more attractive. We painted and re-carpeted the nursery. Recently we had badly needed new windows installed throughout the church. What remains are roof replacement and painting the outside of the building. We are thankful to one of our Western Classis congregations for contributing toward our roofing fund. We are down to \$14,000 in our mortgage debt, having begun in 1991 with a debt of \$310,000.

Our Youth Group meets once or twice a month for devotions and some outing. We sponsored the Rafting Trip again this year, and a Snow Trip recently. The Women's Fellowship meets monthly in members' homes. Both the Youth and the Women's Group have engaged in some community projects to help others outside of our church. A Men's Prayer Breakfast meets once a month in a member's home on a Saturday morning for Bible study and prayer for matters that affect the church. We have refreshments each month to celebrate that month's birthdays. This year we also have held several "social" events after the morning and evening services just to have people gather around tables for some soup or pie and fellowship. We hold two church picnics each year and were glad to have had some folks from Lodi and Stockton join us.

We are pretty much a church of volunteer help without which we would be less well off. We are thankful for the little, necessary things that people do, that rarely receive official recognition. But, as Christians, we must do all things as unto the Lord.

The spiritual condition of the congregation remains strong and committed to serving the Lord Jesus Christ. We stand in constant need of God's grace and guidance that we might continue to 'take heed to ourselves and to the doctrine.' May God pour His blessing on me, upon us as a congregation, and as a denomination that we may continue to be "an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12). We solicit your prayers to that end.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Rev. Paul H. Treick*

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**Classis Action:** Take note. Elder Mark Reyna led the body in prayer.

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***The Clerk prepared the following summary of Rev. Thomas Mayville's report.***

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Greetings in the name of Him who builds His Church, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. As of February 22, by God's grace we have been serving as Ambassadors of the Western Classis in Uganda for 22 months and have 14 months remaining in our term here.

In 2008, I taught three classes at Knox Theological College (KTC): Pastoral Theology, General Epistles and Revelation, and Old Testament Prophets. I had 23 students the first day in the Pastoral Theology course, including three Kenyan students! Over the course of the three weeks, many in the class came to grips with the fact that too many officers in their churches have been ordained for wrong reasons, or despite the fact that they were biblically unqualified. The classes averaged 12-24 including anywhere from 4-10 officers of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Uganda (OPCU) each day.

We continue to consider the educational standards for admittance and discuss steps necessary to be able to issue diplomas in the future. This is of key importance to the Kenyan students, whose government limits pastoral functions, such as weddings or funerals, to pastors with diplomas.

During my January 2009 trip to Kenya, I acted as financial advisor to the Free Reformed Church of Kenya (FRCK) as they rearrange their budget to fund works of their new Synod and two Classes. The budget we, the Foreign Missions Committee (FMC), are aiming at stresses more congregational support (less RCUS support) of pastors, and no assistance with church construction. It also, for the first time, provided for an FRCK Pastor of Theology to begin training five limited-English speaking FRCK men in Swahili in Rionchogu with similar curriculum to KTC. Their Executive Committee has put together by-laws for a proposed Economic Development program funded by RCUS church members.

God willing, I will take eight trips to Rionchogu, Kenya (Kisii District, Nyanza Province) between April 2008 and April 2010. I have outlined subtopics for discussion and teaching during these eight trips under each of three “selfs” for Christ’s Church: Self-Supporting, Self-Governing, and Self-Propagating or Reproducing.

I made two trips to the Kisii District. On the first trip in September of 2008 the objective was to deal with the defection of two FRCK elders who were students for the ministry. It was agreed to form a semi-Classis consisting of six officers of six of the eight FRCK congregations to hear the complaints of the two elders. This was an historical step toward Reformed Church Government. The case continued all day Wednesday. The vote was unanimous that due process was followed and given to the two complainants. Thursday morning the body debated for hours whether or not to continue hearing complaints. A compromise was reached when the two defendants gave their approval to defer their remaining complaints to the proposed upcoming Synod.

This meeting also laid the foundation for their first Synod by studying Acts 15. Then I gave an Article by Article commentary on the RCUS Constitution regarding the powers, limitations, and organization of a Synod. It was great to hear the men discuss each Article amongst the group and come to agreement line by line. They adopted quite a few articles as *their* By-laws.

Then on the second trip at the end of January 2009, we dealt with numerous items necessary to the establishment of an FRCK Synod for the first time in FRCK history. A list of delegates for the first Synod was compiled, a Southern and Central Classis was established, and Consistories and Spiritual Councils were identified for each charge. Numerous items dealt with the establishment of an educated ministry including the determination that a two year certificate will be granted after which the man can be examined for pastoral eldership. A three year diploma will be granted after which the man can be examined for ordination to the ministry.

During this trip I was able to preach and observe the teaching done in a congregation in Nyansakia which was a true delight, although I ended up sick for ten days as a result of inhaling too much smoke and dust. One of the challenges that I have faced over this past year related to my health. I struggled with asthma related issues and some bouts with digestive problems that weakened and troubled me for many months after the time I had traveled for Synod last May.

On a couple of side notes, I have begun to learn Swahili using Rosetta Stone made available by a gift from our RCUS congregation Rehoboth Reformed Church, La Habra, California—THANKS AGAIN! From another RCUS congregation we received ten



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Reformation Study Bibles that are greatly appreciated by the students of KTC. Without such generosity these students would have to do without these necessary items. In January, with the other two professors, I attended the third OPCU General Assembly (Synod).

In 2008 I continued to oversee construction of Knox Theological College at the Mile 4 campus. We had the library and classroom ready for holding our first class on campus on September 2. Praise the Lord! The kitchen is up and running and the dormitory was completed to a point in August that beds were in for six including the caretaker and an elderly student. I am hopeful that finances will allow for a number of other projects to be completed before I leave the field in May 2010.

We had three crises in the OPCU on our hands: storm damaged homes, a food crisis, and a lack of seeds for planting. At the end of March, there was a discussion about how we might help in these areas with the limited funds available to us, without setting a precedent for dependence in future years. Every Tuesday and Thursday we were getting requests to feed about 300 church members without food, and there were about 15 homes destroyed or badly damaged by high winds. It was agreed to use \$750 for seeds and \$750 for reconstruction of damaged houses as a one time gesture of the OPUM to the OPCU. The Diaconal Committees of the OPCU purchased and distributed seeds, and funds were allocated for reconstruction based on the greatest need.

I had a busy schedule set for me by the FMC during the time I was in the USA to attend our Synod a year ago. I filmed an updated video that was shown at Synod 2008 and in several of our congregations. It was also an important time for my family to visit each other and for us to take care of some medical and dental needs. We are currently busy setting our plans for our trip to the upcoming Synod in May. We plan to take our remaining two weeks vacation in the USA, as well as work for the RCUS there April 27 to May 29.

I co-authored a news article with Rev. Dan Schnabel for the Reformed Herald. In July I wrote an article for the Mid-America Messenger, and one for New Horizons in August. I have also spent a few hours corresponding with the Willows Spiritual Council, as they hope to be able to call a minister soon.

With our daughter Sarah gone from Mbale since May, our nest was empty for the first time and at Thanksgiving and Christmas we were missing our family badly. We took a two week vacation in December to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. When we got back to Kampala we worshiped and had lunch with Kurt and Marlene Schimke, former RCUS members, at their home on the African Bible University Campus.

In conclusion, let me say that my work at Knox Theological College is the most encouraging part of my duties, not only for the present, but for the future of the Reformed faith in both Kenya and Uganda. I believe that within ten years, as these students spread the reformed faith, especially among the young men of their congregations, we will see substantial positive changes in both the FRCK and OPCU. The younger generation in both these denominations seems to be ready and willing to learn how to become self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches for the first time. In those ten years, I am hopeful that the Head of the Church will fill her pulpits with well trained pastors. It is an amazing and wonderful thing to think that the reformed faith is beginning to take root in Uganda and Kenya. It is a privilege and an honor to be a part of it. I can't wait to see what the Lord does over the course of these next ten years.

Your fellow laborer in Christ's kingdom,  
*Rev. Thomas Mayville*

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**Classis Action:** The President summarized Rev. Mayville's lengthy report and then Rev. Pollema led the body in prayer for Rev. Mayville's work. The Clerk was then instructed to summarize the report for the Abstract and have Rev. Mayville review it.

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### CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ELDERS

The President addressed the Questions of Article 81 of the Constitution to the Elder Delegates of each congregation. The answers for Anderson, Grass Valley and Lodi were submitted in writing by their consistories. 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 with the exceptions of Anderson, Sacramento, Shafter and Willows who answered no, and Grass Valley who said needs improvement.
  - 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, Grass Valley, and Lodi who answered no.
  - 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, Grass Valley, Lancaster, and Lodi who answered no.
  - 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 except Sacramento with regards to San Diego who answered no.

### MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

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

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**Classis Action:** The report of Membership and Financial Statistics was adopted.

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## REPORTS FROM CLASSIS' FRATERNAL DELEGATES

1. Rev. Fluck reported on his visit to the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Classis Southwest U.S. of the Federation of United Reformed Churches in North America, meeting in Chino, CA June 30, 2008.
2. Rev. Merica reported on his visit to the 2008 meeting of the Classis Pacific East of the Canadian Reformed Churches in North America convened in Lynden, WA, March 13, 2008.

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

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## ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS

1. Rev. McCracken addressed the body on behalf of the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA. Rev. Pollema responded to Rev. McCracken on behalf of the Western Classis.
2. Rev. Gary Findley addressed the body on behalf of Pacific Northwest Classis, U.S. of the URCNA. Rev. Fluck responded to Rev. Findley on behalf of the Western Classis.
3. Rev. Pollema, a board member of Heidelberg Theological Seminary, addressed the body on behalf of Heidelberg Theological Seminary. Rev. Powell led the body in prayer for God's blessing for the labors of Heidelberg Theological Seminary and that God would provide men to study for the ministry.

## REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

The following committee motions and their dispositions reflect the final form of the motions including all amendments 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. *Benevolences*

1. That the Western Classis petition the 263<sup>rd</sup> RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,500.00 per month for the Rev. and Mrs. Gene Sawtelle.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 263<sup>rd</sup> RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,000.00 per month for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett.
3. That the Western Classis grant the Rev. Jonathan Merica diaconal aid in the amount of \$800.00 per month toward medical insurance until he finds full-time employment, or until the 2010 Western Classis meeting, whichever comes first.
4. That the Western Classis grant Faith Reformed Church, Anderson, CA, benevolent aid in the amount of \$500.00 per month, and that the Western Classis petition the

263rd RCUS Synod for benevolent aid for Faith Reformed Church, Anderson, CA, in the amount of \$500.00 per month along with their three year budget.

5. That the Western Classis petition the 263<sup>rd</sup> RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,150.00 per month each for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe and Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe.
6. That the Western Classis petition the 263<sup>rd</sup> RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,000.00 for Mrs. Betty Sander.
7. That the Western Classis petition the 263<sup>rd</sup> RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,500.00 for Rev. and Mrs. Neale Riffert.
8. That the Western Classis grant to Covenant Reformed Chapel, San Diego, CA, benevolent aid in the amount of \$810.00 per month.
9. That the Western Classis grant to Grace RCUS, Lancaster, CA, benevolent aid in the amount of \$425.00 per month, and that the Western Classis petition the 263<sup>rd</sup> RCUS Synod for benevolent aid for Grace RCUS, Lancaster, CA, in the amount of \$425.00 per month and include their three year budget.

### ***B. Missions***

1. That the Western Classis grant Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, CA, missions support in the amount of \$14,880.00 for the year 2010 (Note that this represents a 10% reduction from the 2008 base year amount of \$1,860.00), and that the congregations of the Western Classis and Chico be strongly encouraged to work together to initiate new activities and interactions to promote greater fellowship with the churches of the Western Classis.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 263rd Synod for mission support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, CA, in the amount of \$14,880 for the year 2010 (Note that this represents a 10% reduction from the 2008 base year amount of \$1,860.00).
3. That the request from Ebenezer Reformed Church consistory, Shafter, CA for classical missions support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA, in the amount of \$20,391.00 for the year 2010 be granted (Note that this represents a 10% reduction from the 2008 base year amount of \$29,310.00).
4. That the Western Classis petition the 263<sup>rd</sup> Synod for mission support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA, in the amount of \$10,116.00 for the year 2010 (Note that this represents a 10% reduction from the 2008 base year amount of \$14,450.00).
5. That the Permanent Home Missions Committee continue to develop a five year strategic plan which shall give attention to the role of existing churches in planting new mission works, as well as the role of the Classis in working with existing churches or groups investigating affiliation with the RCUS.

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### ***C. Examination and Licensure***

1. That the written papers presented by Doug Schlegel in fulfillment of the constitutional requirement for licensure be declared satisfactory.
2. That the partial licensure examination of Doug Schlegel be declared satisfactory [Carried without audible dissent].
3. That the Classis encourage Doug Schlegel to complete his licensure exam as soon as he is ready but no later than the next Classis meeting.

### ***D. Minutes of Synod***

1. That the Classis Diaconal and Benevolent Committees adopt as standard operating procedures those “Guidelines for Benevolent Aid from Synod” as set forth on pages 23 and 24 of the Abstract of Minutes for the 262<sup>nd</sup> Synod.
2. That the Classis Diaconal and Benevolent Committees adopt as standard operating procedures those “Guidelines for Benevolent and Diaconal Aid from Synod” as set forth on pages 75 and 76 on the Abstract of Minutes for the 262<sup>nd</sup> Synod.
3. That the Classis Home Missions Committee adopt standard operating procedures of reporting to Synod’s Home Missions Committee their 3-5 year strategic plan for home missions and its progress in implementation.
4. **[Take note]** That the Classis take note that this plan should appear in your Classis Home Missions Committee Report. Also Classes are encouraged to reflect budget money for future works (Abstract of the 262<sup>nd</sup> Synod, p. 36, #17).
5. **[Take note]** That the Classis take note of the change in Synod Standing Rule #13 (Abstract of the 262<sup>nd</sup> Synod, p. 79, Judicial Committee #3).
6. **[Take note]** That the stated clerk of the Classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring meeting of Classis.
7. **[Take note]** That Classis should note the corrections, etc. to their respective minutes as noted on p. 81 of the Abstract of the 262<sup>nd</sup> Synod.
8. **[Take note]** That the Classis is reminded that the 263<sup>rd</sup> Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS meets May 11-14, 2009 at St. Paul’s Evangelical Reformed Church of Hamburg, MN.

### ***E. Judicial***

1. That the Western Classis take the following position: According to the spirit of Rule of Order # 33, committees shall limit their activity to the work mandated to it by Classis.
2. That it be the normal practice of the Western Classis to require a candidate for licensure to sustain a full exam according to Article 20 of the RCUS Constitution, and that he be prepared to undergo such exam at the time that he applies for licensure.

3. Exceptions to this rule must be evaluated by the Candidates and Credentials Committee before the exam and presented to Classis for approval.
4. That Classis amend standing rule #2 by adding the word “Committee” following the word “Executive” both times in which that word occurs [without audible dissent].

### ***F. Nominations***

1. That the Permanent Committees be as follows (The underlined name indicates the convener).

**Executive Committee:** J. West, H. Bowen, W. Johnson

**Candidates and Credentials:** D. Helseth, E. Van Houten (1 yr); P. Treick; R. Spitzer (2 yrs); J. Fluck, F. Walker (3 yrs)

**Christian Education in the Church:** J. Merica, M. Reyna (1 yr); G. Mancilas, K. Bowen (2 yrs); J. Gochnauer, E. Bristley (3 yrs)

**Missions:** J. Gross, W. Lingenfelter (1 yr); M. Voytek, S. Powell (2 yrs); J. Nelken, B. Williams (3 yrs)

**Interchurch Relations:** R. Wegis, D. Helseth (1 yr); T. Gruggett, J. Jones (2 yrs); D. Roe, J. Merica (3 yrs)

**Publications:** G. Mancilas, A. White (1 yr); S. Wilbur, M. Peery (2 yrs); P. Treick, N. Riffert (3 yrs)

**Diaconal:** V. Pollema, J. Warren (1 yr); G. Baloy, T. Gruggett (2yrs); D. Roe, A. White (3 yrs)

**Heidelberg West Youth Camp:** G. Born, M. Reyna (1 yr); J. Fluck, G. Stewart (2 yrs); G. Baloy, J. Nelken (3 yr.)

### ***G. Finances***

1. That travel expenses be paid for the 24th Annual Session of Western as follows:

Gil Baloy	airfare	142.89
Hank Bowen	920 @ .35	322.00
Chris Fellersen	566 @ .35	198.00
Jay Fluck	317 @ .35	110.95
Jim Gochnauer	736 @ .35	257.60
Joe Gross	700 @ .35	245.00
Lloyd Gross	airfare	169.00
Gary Mancilas	794 @ .35	277.90
Jonathan Merica	500 @ .35	175.00
Jay Nelken	182 @ .35	63.70
Sam Powell	670 @ .35	234.50
Mark Reyna	180 @ .35	63.00
Neale Riffert	airfare	402.00
Dennis Roe	710 @ .35	248.50
Doug Schlegel	570 @ .35	199.50

Greg Stewart	704 @ .35	246.40
Paul Treick	460 @ .35	161.00
Michael Voytek	500 @ .35	175.00
Frank Walker	540 @ .35	189.00
Jim West	586 @ .35	<u>205.10</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$4,086.14</b>

2. That the Treasurer's report for December 31, 2008 be adopted.
3. **[Take note]** That Classis establish a guideline used toward funding internships of seminary students.
4. **[Defeated]** That the Western Classis add a Standing Rule 21 as follows: The total guideline for giving (per communicant member) for the next Classical year will remain at or below the current amount while monies received are less than the total guideline for giving for the current Classical year (starting with year 2010).
5. **[Ruled out of order]** That Classis overture Synod to adopt the following: That Synod add the following Standing rule: The total guideline for giving (per communicant member) for the next Synodical year will remain at or below the current amount while monies received are less than total guideline for giving for the current Synodical year (starting with year 2010).
6. That the Guidelines for Giving for the 2009-2010 Classical Year be as follows:

Classis Dues	\$12.00
Benevolences	48.00
Home Missions	56.00
Publications	-----
Home Missions Building Fund	5.00
Heidelberg West Youth Camp	<u>3.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$124.00</b>

## **H. Excuses**

1. That the excuse requests from part or all of the sessions of Classis be granted to the following delegates: Elder Frank Krivohlavek, Elder Steven Wilbur, Elder Mark Reyna, Elder Michael Peery, Elder Wayne Lingenfelter.
2. **[Take note]** That Classis take note of the request for excuse from all sessions of Classis from Rev. Tom Mayville.
3. That the excuse from all sessions of Classis for Elder Case Van Egmond be granted.

## **I. Overtures**

1. That the overtures 1-17 be referred as specified:
  - 1) Request from Rev. Gene Sawtelle for Ministerial Aid to Benevolence.
  - 2) Request from Mrs. Marjorie Duckett for Ministerial Aid to Benevolence.
  - 3) Request for benevolent aid for Rev. Jonathan Merica to Benevolence.
  - 4) Request for benevolent aid for Faith RCUS, Anderson to Benevolence.

- 5) Request for ministerial aid for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe and Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe to benevolence.
  - 6) Request to establish a Student Internship Guideline to Finances.
  - 7) Request for grounds for partial license exams to Judicial.
  - 8) Request to establish Standing Rule for Guideline increases to Finances.
  - 9) Excuse from Rev. Thomas Mayville to Excuses.
  - 10) Excuse from Elder Steven Wilbur to Excuses.
  - 11) Excuse from Elder Frank Krivohlavek to Excuses.
  - 12) Excuse from Elder Michael Peery to Excuses.
  - 13) Request for ministerial relief for Mrs. Betty Sander to Benevolence.
  - 14) Mission support for Rehoboth Chapel to Missions.
  - 15) Request from Chico on hosting Classis to remain with Overtures.
  - 16) Clarification on wording of Standing Rule 2 to Judicial.
  - 17) Excuse from Elder Wayne Lingenfelter to Excuses.
2. That the overtures 18-20 be referred as follows:
    - 18) Support for Rev. Gil Baloy to Benevolence.
    - 19) Benevolent aid for Grace RCUS, Lancaster to Benevolence.
    - 20) Excuse for Elder Mark Reyna to Excuses.
  3. That overture 21, an excuse for Elder Case Van Egmond, be referred to Excuses.
  4. That the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Western Classis convene at Covenant Reformed Church in Chico, CA on March 2-4, 2010.
  5. **[Take note]** That the Western Classis Consistories consider assuming the motel cost for housing their delegates to the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Western Classis.

## MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

### ***A. Expression of Appreciation to the Host Congregation.***

We, the delegates of the 24<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Western Classis of the Reformed Churches in the United States, extend our whole-hearted appreciation and thankfulness to Grace Reformed Church of Bakersfield for hosting our meeting from March 3, 2009 to March 5, 2009. Your realized pursuit of generous and warm hospitality (Romans 12:13) and other unselfish labors of love for us (1Thessalonians 1:3) including providing us with scrumptious snacks, marvelous meals such as a tremendously tasty tri-tip dinner, and delectable desserts has aided us in our work for our Savior's Church. You have helped make our stay both pleasant and blessed. May the Lord of His Church continue to bless you richly and abundantly above what we can ask or think as a congregation of our precious Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 6:10; Ephesians 3:20).

### ***B. Adoption of Stated Clerk's Report, Executive Committee's Minutes, and Overtures Committee's Report.***

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**Classis Action:** All of the above reports were adopted.

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## 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 12:25 PM the Classis adjourned the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Western Classis Meeting to the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Western Classis to convene at Covenant Reformed Church in Chico, CA at 1:00 PM on Tuesday, March 2, 2010.

- A. **Roll Call** – The roll call was taken at the beginning and end of each business session. The closing roll showed seventeen ministers and eight elders present.
- B. **Devotions** – Elder Jeff Jones led the body in a closing devotion from Acts 8:26-30 and closed in prayer.
- C. **Close** - The President led the delegates in the confession of our catholic faith through the Apostles' Creed and in the Lord's Prayer. He then pronounced the Benediction and all joined in the singing of the Doxology.

*Rev. Henry P. Bowen*  
*Stated Clerk of the Western Classis*

## **NECROLOGIES**

### **Bobby Gene Baze**

Bobby Gene Baze (1930 – 2008) was born August 20, 1930 in Oklahoma City, OK, to Charles and Virgie (Decker) Baze, one of eleven children. The family moved to Shafter and Bob attended the Shafter elementary schools. He graduated from Shafter High School, where he met and married his high school sweetheart and wife of 57 years, Vivian Handel, originally from Menno, SD. Shortly after their marriage, Bob left for the Korean Conflict. He returned to Shafter where they made their home until Bob's job took him to Fresno in 1962. While in Fresno, Bob and Vivian were involved with a Christian Reformed home mission church. In 1969 the family moved back to Shafter. Bob purchased an orchard near Wasco, CA, and engaged in the production of organic almonds.

Bob was a faithful member of the Ebenezer Reformed Church of Shafter, CA, where he was ordained an elder in 1993. Bob went to be with the Lord on February 15, 2008, at the age of 77. His family and church dearly misses him but is comforted by the knowledge that his only comfort both in life and in death, was that he belonged to his faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood, had fully satisfied for all his sins.

### **Rev. Douglas L. Neff**

The Reverend Douglas L. Neff went home to the Lord in Lynden, Washington on Friday, February 13, 2009, at 10:45 a.m., at the age of 89.

Rev. Neff left behind him his wife of nearly 66 years, Frances E. Neff; sons Stanley Neff, David Neff, Robert Neff, Stephen Neff, Jonathan Neff, and Daniel Neff; daughters Sharon (Neff) Reimers, Janis (Neff) Beck, Linda (Neff) Vaugh, and Michele Neff.

Rev. Neff was born in Elkhart, Indiana and moved to San Jose, California when he was young. He ministered in the Burbank Baptist Church in San Jose in the nineteen fifties, which was a member of the Northern Baptist Convention. As the Convention became more theologically liberal, the church became independent. Then as Pastor Neff became more Reformed in doctrine the Church took the name of Bible Chapel and then Grace Community Church and last of all merged with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (becoming the Covenant OPC).

In 1986, Pastor Neff applied for and was received as a minister in the Reformed Church in the United States. He was one of the first members of the Western Classis of that denomination, where he continued to serve until his ministerial credentials were transferred to the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church in 1991, where he ministered God's Word for the remainder of his life.

After 1986 in San Jose, he assisted Pastor Steven Work of the RCUS, who was called to pastor Grace Community Church. After re-locating to Lynden, Washington, he busily preached God's Word and was instrumental in starting new churches that eventually joined the OCRC.

His favorite Bible passage was Psalm 48:14, which reads: "For this God is our God forever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."

APPENDIX

to the

ABSTRACT

of the

MINUTES

MEMBERSHIP

and

FINANCIAL

STATISTICS

STANDING RULES

of the

WESTERN CLASSIS

## MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

2008 Western Classis Statistics	Faith Anderson	Grace Bakersfiel d	Cov't Chico	Cov't Grass Vly Stock	Grace Lancaster	ProvidLo di	Trinity Modesto
1. No. of Elders	1	4	1	2	1	2	3
2. No. of Deacons	2	4	1	2	2	4	3
3. Comm. Last Year	26	112	19	40	36	47	62
4. Rec'd by Confirm	0	1	0	2	0	1	2
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
6. Rec'd by Prof.	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
7. Tot. Received	0	4	0	2	2	4	4
8. Tot Old/New Mbr	26	116	19	42	38	51	66
9. Lost by Dismissal	0	3	0	0	3	0	1
10. Lost Eras/Disc	0	2	0	1	3	1	0
11. Lost by Death	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
12. Total Lost	0	6	0	1	8	1	1
13. Comm. this Yr	26	110	19	41	32	50	65
14. Unconfirm. Mbr.	4	31	3	19	17	19	22
15. Total Bapt. Mbr.	30	141	22	60	49	69	87
16. No. of Families	15	54	10	21	17	29	28
17. No. of S.S. Child.	0	23	0	23	13	7	16
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	8	1	1	0	1	5
20. Total Baptisms	0	8	1	1	0	3	5
21. No. Rec. LS	26	80	17	41	29	48	62
22. Times LS.Served	12	4	11	14	4	12	4
23. Reg. Offerings	51,620	177,036	36,987	124,889	77,378	85,600	117,973
24. Special Offerings	2,442	8,364	2,120	7,470	9,768	2,062	796
25. Other Sources	13,600	5,098	39,467	1,482	11,400	553	11,331
26. Total Receipts	67,662	190,498	78,574	133,841	98,546	88,215	130,100
27. Giv. to Syn Guidl.	5,792	26,933	1,402	2,382	4,116	4,978	13,346
28. Giv. to Clas Guidl	4,082	18,526	1,300	1,676	5,652	3,961	10,478
29. RCUS non-budget	0	847	130	140	0	697	3,406
30. Non-RCUS cause	150	9,717	0	7,066	0	3,567	0
31. Other Expenses	70,233	132,595	73,963	121,435	96,906	69,970	82,527
32. Total Expenses	80,257	188,618	76,795	132,699	106,674	83,173	109,757
33. Val. of Ch. Bldg.	500,000	600,000	N/A	508,100	N/A	247,562	350,000
34. Parsonage	N/A	300,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
35. Impr on Prop'ty	2,000	4,982	0	15,515	840	0	708
36. Pres Prop'ty Deb	0	0	0	59,547	0	0	14,399
37. Debt Pd Last Yr	0	0	0	11,485	0	0	12,000
38. Syn guidl/comm	223	241	74	60	114	106	215
39. Clas guidl/comm	157	165	68	42	157	84	169
40. Tot. RCUS/Com	380	413	149	105	271	205	439

Covenant Sacto S. Diego	Ebenezer Shafter LaHabra	Grace Willows	First Yuba City	2008 Totals	2007 Totals	% Chg	Rehobth Chapel LaHabra	Cov't Chapel S. Dieg	Calvary Chapel Stockton
6	5	2	3	30	34	-12	1	1	0
7	6	3	2	36	32	11	1	1	0
155	115	39	46	697	701	-1	28	19	8
4	1	0	2	13	16	-19	0	0	0
5	0	0	1	10	10	0	0	0	0
9	8	0	1	24	36	-33	8	1	0
18	9	0	4	47	62	-24	8	1	0
173	124	39	50	744	763	-2	36	20	8
4	0	3	0	14	23	-39	0	0	0
4	1	4	0	16	36	-56	0	2	0
1	1	0	0	3	9	-67	0	0	0
9	2	7	0	35	68	-49	0	2	0
164	122	32	50	711	697	2	36	18	8
57	43	11	9	235	234	0	17	4	1
221	165	43	59	946	932	2	53	22	9
76	64	14	23	351	346	1	20	11	5
44	39	11	9	185	181	2	17	4	5
0	0	0	0	2	1	200	0	0	0
4	6	1	0	27	11	59	5	0	0
4	6	1	0	29	12	59	5	0	0
164	117	32	50	666	675	-1	36	18	8
12	6	12	12	103	103	0	6	11	2
349,698	264,398	81,442	105,667	1,472,688	1,421,841	3	97,205	51,739	21,528
88,563	5,465	1,670	23,874	152,594	148,885	2	0	0	404
161,946	60,427	78	0	305,382	359,941	-15	50,213	21,381	0
600,207	330,290	83,190	129,541	1,930,664	1,930,757	0	147,418	73,120	21,932
34,482	25,573	9,525	9,982	138,511	145,361	-5	6,157	4,285	1,752
24,335	18,055	6,045	6,732	100,842	86,437	14	4,396	2,983	1,256
21,387	4,031	0	1,684	32,322	41,095	-21	0	1,145	140
32,530	20,061	2,495	0	75,586	47,914	36	5,748	3,182	19,657
482,809	243,120	29,052	97,262	1,499,872	1,436,611	4	140,541	43,771	0
595,543	310,840	47,117	115,660	1,847,133	1,783,660	3	156,842	55,366	22,805
297,614	1,000,000	550,000	290,000	4,343,276	4,255,465	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	250,000	N/A	165,000	715,000	793,000	-10	N/A	N/A	N/A
0	0	0	5,000	29,045	39,676	-27	0	0	0
0	0	0	35,000	108,946	139,579	-22	0	0	0
0	0	0	10,271	33,756	26,556	21	0	0	0
222	217	244	217	Avg. 175	Avg. 183	-4	199	226	219
157	153	155	146	Avg. 132	Avg. 107	19	142	157	157
517	404	399	400	Avg. 335	Avg. 318	5	340	443	394

## 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 Committee of Classis; the Statistics to the Stated Clerk of the Executive Committee of Classis. The statistics of the home mission congregations are to be included in the overseeing church's statistics when the congregation submits them to the clerk of Classis.('87, '07, '09)
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-five cents (\$.35) per running mile per vehicle." ('07)
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

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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)

## **INDEX OF POSITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS**

### **BENEVOLENT AND DIACONAL AID**

Guidelines: Three Year Budget Required – 09:75

### **CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS**

Memorization of Catechism for Candidates - 08:78

Partial Licensure Exams – 09:76

Theological Training for Ministers - 86:71

### **CONSTITUTION**

Art. 113, 114, 118, 119 - 05:72

Borrowing Elders - 05:74

### **HEIDELBERG WEST YOUTH CAMP**

Camp Policies and Rules - 04:27

Fee Reduction for children of camp staff - 04:26

Insurance Certificate by each congregation - 04:26

### **INTERCHURCH RELATIONS**

Fraternal Delegates to visit once a year - 87:90

Limitation of reports by delegates - 04:80

### **JUDICIAL**

Bar of the House, Who may be seated - 88:124

Current Constitutions to be filed with Clerk - 98:74

Minister's membership in local church - 86:78

Permanent Committee Work by Mandate Only – 09:76

Procedure to Amend Local Constitution - 99:74

KJV or NKJV use in Classis - 87:91, 90:4

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Guidelines for Biblical Reconciliation - 88:122

### **MISSIONS**

Kenya Economic Development Fund Formation - 07:73

New Mission Churches through Existing Churches – 09:74

Strategic Five Year Plan Requirement – 09:74, 75

### **SPECIAL POSITIONS TAKEN**

Hyper-preterism - 97:74

### **PUBLICATIONS**

Pricing Policy - 97:28 (3)

Royalty Policy - 97:28 (2)



SPECIAL STUDIES

Harold Camping - 04:85

View of the Church - 03:75

Return of Christ in 1994 - 93:67

Operation Rescue - 90:28

Paedocommunion - 03:72, 04:83

Survey of Catechism Practice - 99:18