

The
Reformed Church
in the
United States

Abstract of the Minutes
262nd Synod

May 19-22, 2008
Hope Reformed Church
Sutton, Nebraska

This Abstract of the 262nd Synod
of the Reformed Church in the United States
is hereby affectionately dedicated to the memory of

Rev. Aaron R. Kayayan

January 24, 1928 – May 12, 2008

a faithful and zealous servant of God, who boldly proclaimed the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, declaring the sovereign grace of God in the cross of Christ, by his words and writings, to nations around the world, with a conviction and compassion that stands out in the 20th Century as an example and encouragement to all Christians. Through radio broadcasts and personal visits, many thousands have come to know Jesus Christ as their Redeemer and Lord – setting them free forever from poverty and bondage. His labors are ended here on earth, but the fruits of his labors will continue for generations in many lands. “Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me.”

Matthew 25:34, 40

— The 262nd Synod of the RCUS

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Directory of Congregations

2008

ARKANSAS

Bentonville, AR - 72714 (479) 876-1064

Grace Chapel, La Quinta Inn, 1001 SE Walton Blvd, Bentonville
 Mail: 15 Kensington Dr., Bella Vista, AR 72714
 Service Times: Worship 9:30 AM; S. School 11:00 AM Bible Study 6:00 PM
 Pastor/Wife: Wesley Brice / Ginger
 Church Web Page: www.gracereformednwa.org

CALIFORNIA

Anderson, CA - 96007. (530) 365-6874

Faith RCUS, 3291 Rupert Rd. (off Stingy Lane)
 Mail: P.O. Box 902 Anderson, CA 96007
 Service Times: S. School 9:30 am; Worship 10:30 am
 Pastor/Wife: Hank Bowen/ Patty
 E-Mail: rcushank@sbcglobal.net
 Church Web Page: www.faithrcus.org

Bakersfield, CA - 93305 (661) 325-0165

Grace RCUS, 420 Columbus Street, Bakersfield (north on Union Ave. to Columbus St., east on Columbus to the church)
 Mail: 420 Columbus St., Bakersfield, CA 93305
 Service Times: S. School 9:15 AM; Worship 10:30 AM and 3rd Sunday at 6:30 PM
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Tracy Gruggett / Michelle
 E-Mail: Tmgruggett@att.net
 Church Web Page: bakersfieldreformed.org

Chico, CA - 95927 (530) 345-2732

Covenant RCUS, 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)
 Mail: P.O. Box 1612, Chico, CA 95927-1612
 Service Times: Sunday School 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM
 Mission Pastor/Wife: Gary Mancilas / Gloria
 E-Mail: gmancilas@sbcglobal.net
 Church Web Page Address: www.crcchico.com

Grass Valley, CA - 95945 (530) 273-4673

Covenant RCUS, 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA
 Mail: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA 95945
 Service Times: Sunday: 9:45 AM - Bible Classes for all ages; Worship 11:00 AM.
 Pastor/Wife: Dennis E. Roe / Julie
 E-Mail: pastor@crcgv.org; Fax: (530) 273-6280
 Assoc. Pastor/Wife: Eric Bristley / Kathleen
 E-Mail: eric.rcus@cebridge.net
 Assoc. Pastor: Jonathan Merica (See Stockton - Calvary)
 Church Web Page: www.crcgv.org

La Habra, CA - 90604 (562) 947-4837

Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, 501 S. Idaho, Suite 120, La Habra (Between La Habra Blvd., & Lambert Rd.)
 Mail: 11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
 Service Times: Worship 10:00 AM; S. School 11:30 AM
 Mission Pastor/Wife: Jay E. Fluck / Loretta
 E-Mail: jefluck@msn.com
 Church Web Page: www.RehobothReformedChurch.com

Lancaster, CA - 93539 (661) 940-4669

Grace RCUS, 211 E. Ave. K-6 Ste. C, Lancaster
 Mail: P.O. Box 2331, Lancaster, CA 93539
 Service Times: S. School 9:45 AM; Worship 10:45 AM
 Pastor/Wife: Jay Nelken / Mandy
 E-Mail: nelken@jslink.net
 Church Web Page: gracereformedchurch.net

Lodi, CA - 95240 (209) 367-0552

Providence RCUS, Church Location: 245 E. Vine Street, Lodi
 Mail: 245 E. Vine St. Lodi, CA 95240
 Service Times: S. School 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm.
 Pastor/Wife: Michael Voytek / Rebecca
 E-Mail: prclodi@softcom.net
 Church Web Page: www.prclodi.com

Modesto, CA - 95350 (209) 523-3220

Trinity RCUS, Church Location: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto (Briggsmore east; right on Coffee, right on E. Fairmont 2 blocks.)
 Mail: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto, CA 95350
 Service Times: S. School 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM & 5:30 PM
 Pastor/Wife: Paul Treick / Karen
 E-mail: triwheeler@aol.com

Sacramento, CA - 95822 (916) 451-1190

Covenant RCUS, 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.)
 Mail: 2020 16th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822
 Service Times: S. School 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM & 6:00 PM
 Pastor/ Wife: Jim West / Elaine
 E-Mail: jimwest3253@hotmail.com
 Assoc. Pastor/Wife: Frank Walker / Christine
 E-Mail: drfhwalker@gamail.com
 Assoc. Pastor: Gil Baloy (See SAN DIEGO - Covenant)
 Church Web Page: www.covenantreformedchurch.org

San Diego, CA - 91977 (619) 460-1321
 Covenant Reformed Chapel, 49 3rd Ave., Chula Vista, CA (Take I-805 South. Go west on Hwy. 54. Get off at Highland Ave. Turn left at light on Highland Ave. Turn left on 3rd Ave. We meet at the CVPOA Building on the left hand side.)
 Church Mailing Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977
 Service Times: S. School 10 AM; Worship 11 AM; Lunch 12:30 PM; Catechism Class and Prayer Meeting: 6:30 PM Wednesday.
 Mission Pastor/Wife: Gil Baloy / Maricar
 E-mail: g_baloy@yahoo.com
 Church Web Page: www.covenantreformedchurchSD.org

Shafter, CA - 93263 (661) 746-6907
 Ebenezer RCUS, 235 James Street, Shafter (next door to the City Library, Fire, and Police Depts.)
 Mail: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263
 Service Times: S. School 9:15 AM; Worship 10:30 AM & (6:00 PM on 4th Sunday); Bible Study 6:00 PM (1st & 3rd Sundays)
 Pastor/Wife: Vernon Pollema / Betty
 E-Mail: vpollema@sbcglobal.net
 Assoc. Pastor: Jay Fluck (See LA HABRA - Rehoboth)

Stockton, CA – 95269 (209) 470-7174
 Calvary Reformed Chapel, 2323 Grand Canal Blvd., Stockton
 Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 692426, Stockton, CA 95269
 Service Times: S. School 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM
 Mission Pastor/Wife: Jonathan Merica / Marsha
 E-Mail: jonmerica@sbcglobal.net
 Church Web Page Address: www.calvaryreformedchapel.com

Willows, CA - 95988..... (530) 934-2732
 Grace RCUS, 148 W. Sycamore St. (corner: Butte & Sycamore – Exit Hwy 162; head east, right on Butte to Sycamore).
 Mail: P.O. Box 225, Willows, CA 95988
 Service Times: S. School 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
 E-Mail: thomasreformed@gmail.com

Yuba City, CA - 95991..... (530) 755-2272
 First RCUS, 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
 Service Times: S. School 9:30 AM; Worship 11:00 AM
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Sam Powell / Susan
 E-Mail: sampowell365@yahoo.com

COLORADO

Colorado Springs, CO - 80918 (719) 590-1477
 Trinity RCUS, meeting at Grace PCA, 2511 N. Logan Ave., Colorado Springs, CO
 Mail: 6050 Del Paz Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80918
 Service Times: Worship: 11:30AM. S. School: 1:00PM.
 Pastor/Wife: C.W. “Bud” Powell, Jr. / Penny
 Church Web Page: (www.trinityrcus.com)

Greeley, CO - 80631 (970) 336-9927
 Grace RCUS, 1501 10th Ave. Greeley, CO 80631 (mail: 1505 10th Ave)
 Worship 11:00 AM
 Pastor/Wife: Jon Blair / Wendy
 Church Web Page: www.reformedgreeley.org

Karval, CO - 80828 (719) 775-8842 or 446-5225.
 Blue Cliff Community RCUS.
 Mail: 490 G. Ave., Limon, CO 80828
 Worship: 12:00PM
 Pastor/Wife: Matthew Powell / Andrea

Limon, CO - 80828..... (719) 775-8842
 Providence RCUS
 Mail: P.O. Box 848, Limon, CO 80828
 Worship: 9:00AM
 Pastor/Wife: Matthew Powell / Andrea

IOWA

Garner, IA - 50438 (641) 923-3060
 Peace RCUS, 1905 200th St., (3 mi. south of Garner)
 Mail: 1905 200th St., Garner, IA 50438
 Worship: 10:30 AM; S. School 9:30 AM
 Pastor/Wife: Harvey Opp / Carol
 Church Web Page: www.peacereformedchurch.com

MINNESOTA

Golden Valley, MN - 55427 (763) 417-9835
 Redeemer RCUS, 1300 Lilac Drive North in Golden Valley, MN
 Mail: 3101 Virginia Ave. North, Crystal, MN 55427
 Worship: 10:15 AM and 5:00 PM; S. School 9:00 AM (Sept-May)
 Pastor/Wife: James Sawtelle / Thelma
 Church Web Page: www.redeemerrcus.org

Hamburg, MN - 55339 (952) 467-3878
 St. Paul’s Evangelical RCUS, 15470 Co. Road 31, Hamburg, MN
 Mail: 15470 Co. Road 31, Hamburg, MN 55339
 Worship: 9:30 AM; S. School 8:30 AM
 Pastor/Wife: Dan Schnabel / Marie
 Church Web Page: www.stpaulsrcus.org

MISSOURI

Kansas City, MO - 64164 (816) 420-9700
 Northland RCUS, 2901 NW Cookingham, Kansas City, MO (Exit 40, I435, North one mile)
 Mail: 2901 NW Cookingham, Kansas City, MO 64164
 Worship: 9:30 AM and 5:00 PM; S. School 11:00 AM
 Pastor/Wife: George Syms / Debbie
 Church Web Page: www.northlandreformed.org

NEBRASKA

Lincoln, NE - 68521 (402) 477-7289St. John's RCUS, 1101 South 26th St. Lincoln, NE 68502

Mail: 3930 Mason Dr. 68521

Worship: 10:30 AM; S. School 9:30 AM. June – August Worship: 10AM. No SS.

Pastor/Wife: Maynard Koerner / Marcia

Church Web Page: www.stjohnrcus.inetnebr.com

Sutton, NE - 68979 (402) 773-4218

Emmanuel RCUS. 110 South Way Ave.

Mail: PO Box 362 Sutton, NE 68979

Worship: 10:30 AM; Sunday School 9:30 AM

Pastor/Wife: Dan Rogers / Kelani

Sutton, NE - 68979 (402) 773-4330

Hope RCUS, 311 E. Hickory

Mail: PO Box 372, Sutton, NE 68979

Worship: 10:30 AM; S. School 9:00 AM; Family Bible Study 6:30 PM (2nd & 4th Sun.)

Pastor/Wife: Darrell Kingswood / Lori

NORTH DAKOTA

Ashley, ND - 58413 (701) 288-3265Salem RCUS, 209 1st Ave. SW

Mail: PO Box 345

Worship: 9:00 AM

Supply Pastor/Wife: Lic. James Grossmann / Michelle

Denhoff, ND - 58723 (701) 626-7655

Denhoff, ND (701) 839-9778

Kassel RCUS, rural Denhoff

Mail: PO Box 121, Butte, ND 58723

Worship: 10:00 AM; S. School 11:30 AM

Pastor/Wife: Dale Clark / Sandra

Minot, ND - 58701 (701) 838-0605

Harvest RCUS, 1.5 miles west of the junction of Hwy 83 Bypass on Hwy 2 & 52

Mail: 5200 7th Ave. SW, Minot, ND 58701

Worship: 10:30 AM; S. School 9:15 AM; Sun. Eve. Bible Study 6:30 PM

Pastor: Vacant

Church Web Page: www.harvestreformedchurch.org

OHIO

Napoleon, OH 43545 (419) 599-3106

Peace RCUS, 638 Huddle Rd., Napoleon, OH

Mail: 638 Huddle Rd., Napoleon, OH 43545

Worship: 10:00 AM; S. School 9:00 AM (one half hour earlier June-August)

Pastor/Wife: Vacant

PENNSYLVANIA

Honesdale, PA - 18421 (570) 785-4012

Heritage Reformed Chapel, 335 Beach Lake Highway, Honesdale, PA

Mail: 136 Grand Ave., Forest City, PA 18421

Worship: 10:30 AM; Bible Classes 9:30 AM

Pastor/Wife: Ron Potter / Sharon

Church Web Page: www.heritagercus.org

SOUTH DAKOTA

Aberdeen, SD - SD 57401 605-225-6120First RCUS, 9th Ave. & Dakota S. St.

Mail: 1002 Diamond St., Aberdeen, SD 57401

Worship: 9 AM; S. School 10 AM

Pastor/Wife: David Dawn / Colleen

Eureka, SD - 57437 (605) 284-2396

Eureka RCUS, 310 F. Ave.

Mail: PO Box 456

Worship: 9:00 AM; S. School 10:15 AM

Pastor/Wife: Richard Stetler / Heidi

Fax: (605) 284-2396

Herried, SD - 57632 (605) 437-2414

First RCUS, 601 Main St. North

Mail: PO Box 316, Herried, SD 57632

Worship: 10:00 AM; S. School 11:00 AM

Pastor/Wife: Lee Johnson / Jenny Jo

Church Web Page: www.firstrcus.org

Hosmer, SD - 57448 (701) 288-3265

Hosmer RCUS: 2 blocks south of the water tower

Mail: 11704 343rd Ave., Hosmer, SD 57448

Worship: 11:00 AM

Supply Pastor/Wife: James Grossmann / Michelle

Menno, SD - 57045 (605) 387-2816

Zion RCUS. 220 South Pine

Mail: P.O. Box 387, Menno, SD 57045

Worship: 10:30 AM; S. School 9:30 AM

Pastor/Wife: Scott Henry / Maria

Mitchell, SD - 57301 (605) 996-7439

Grace RCUS. 1021 South Davison

Mail: PO Box 252, Mitchell, SD 57301

Worship: 10:00 AM; S. School 9:00 AM

Pastor/Wife: Ron Morris / Sheri

Church Web Page: www.gracereformed.com

Pierre, SD - 57501 (605) 945-1070

Hope RCUS, 317 S. Garfield

Mail: 105 Lakeview Dr., Pierre, SD 57501

Worship: 9:30 AM; S. School 10:45 AM

Pastor/Wife: William Haddock / Ferne

Church Web Page: www.hopercus.com

Rapid City, SD - 57701 (605) 399-1711

Grace RCUS, 5626 North Haines Ave. Rapid City, SD 57701

Mail: 5626 North Haines Ave. Rapid City, SD 57701

Worship: 10:30 AM; Sunday School 9:00 AM; Bible Study Sunday 6:00 PM

Pastor/Wife: David Fagrey / Bonnie

Church Web Page: www.rcusrapidcity.com

Sioux Falls, SD - 57106 (605) 339-3887

Trinity RCUS, 7301 S. Louise Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Mail: 3309 E. 31st St. 57703

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor/Wife: Herman Van Stedum / Phyllis

Church Web Page: www.trinityrcus.org

Vermillion, SD - (605) 624-4337

Providence RCUS, 830 E. Madison. Vermillion, SD 57069

Mail: 830 E. Madison. Vermillion, SD 57069

Worship: 10:30 AM, Sunday School 9:30 AM, Wed. Bible: 7:30 PM

Pastor/Wife: Robert Grossmann / Polly

Church Web Page: www.providencereformed.com

Watertown, SD - 57201 (605) 882-9704Covenant RCUS, 907 7th Ave. NEMail: 434 30th St., NW, Watertown, SD 57201

Worship: 10:00 AM; S. School 11:20 AM

Pastor/Wife: Michael McGee / Jenny

Church Web Page: www.watertownrcus.org

WISCONSIN**Manitowoc, WI - 54220** (920) 726-4940

Salem Ebenezer RCUS, 6524 County Trunk C, Manitowoc, WI

Mail: 6524 County Trunk C, Manitowoc, WI 54220

Worship: 10:00 AM; S. School 8:45 AM

Pastor/Wife: Kyle Sorensen / Donielle

Church Web Page: www.salemebenezer.org

WYOMING**Rock Springs, WY - 82901** (307) 362-5107Providence RCUS, 9th and Pearl

Mail: 1007 Ninth St.), Rock Springs, WY 82901

Worship: 10AM, Sunday School 11:30AM

Pastor/Wife: Paul Henderson / Tina

Directory of Delegates**262nd Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States****MINISTERS**

- Baloy, Gil** **Home (619) 697-0272**
757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977 Church (619) 460-1321
Email: gilbaloy@sbcglobal.net
- Blair, Jon** (970) 336-9927
1505 10th Ave, Greeley, CO 80631
Email: jwblair83@msn.com
- Bowen, Hank** **Home (530) 549-5704**
22452 Meadow Crest Lane, Palo Cedro, CA 96073 Church (530) 365-6874
Email: rcushank@sbcglobal.net
- Brice, Wesley** (479) 876-1064
15 Kensington Dr., Bella Vista, AR 72714
Email: wesbrice@yahoo.com
- Bristley, Eric** **Home (530) 272-8792**
15287 Brewer Rd., Grass Valley, CA 95949
Email: ericrcus@cebridge.net
- Clark, L. Dale** (701) 839-9778
1915 1st Ave. SW, Minot, ND 58701
Email: L.Dale.Clark@gmail.com
- Dawn, David A.** (605) 229-5953
1002 Diamond St., Aberdeen, SD 57401
Email: aberdeensd@gmail.com
- DeBoer, Jeffrey** (319) 351-2133
2238 Taylor Dr., Iowa City, IA 52240
Email: jffdb@gmail.com
- Embree, Warren** (402) 474-9129
3410 Gregory Court, Lincoln, NE 68521
Email: wembree@neb.rr.com
- Fagrey, David** **Home (605) 399-1716**
5626 N. Haines Ave. Rapid City, SD 57701 Church (605) 399-1711
Email: dfagrey@juno.com
- Fluck, Jay E.** **Home (562) 947-4837**
11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
Email: jeffluck@msn.com
- Gross, Lloyd** **Home (480) 854-3701**
215 N. Power Rd. #453, Mesa, AZ 85205
Email: rcuslloyd@cox.net
- Grossmann, Robert** (605) 624-4337
818 Madison, Vermillion, SD 57069 Fax: same as phone
Email: rcusbob@juno.com
- Gruggett, Tracy** **Home (661) 837-1472**
6407 Brooklawn Way, Bakersfield, CA 93309 Church (661) 325-0165
Email: tmgruggett@att.net
- Haddock, William** (605) 945-1070
105 Lakeview Dr., Pierre, SD 57501
Email: whaddock@pie.midco.net
- Hart, Howard** (605) 995-1964
1705 N. Minnesota, Mitchell, SD 57301
Email: howardehart@juno.com

Henderson, Paul **Home: (307) 382-6696**
1007 Ninth Street, Rock Springs, WY 82901 Church (307) 362-5107
Email: hendorcus@yahoo.com

Henry, Scott **(605) 387-2816.**
P.O. Box 387, Menno, SD 57045
Email: shenry3@goldenwest.net

Horner, George **(303) 304-9301**
4673 S. Mariposa Dr., Englewood, CO 80110
Email: george.horner@comcast.net

Johnson, Lee **(605) 437-2739**
PO Box 316, Herried, SD 57632
Email: ljohnson@valleytel.net

Kingswood, Darrell **(402) 773-4330**
P.O. Box 372, Sutton, NE 68979
Email: dlkingswood@alltel.net

Koerner, Maynard **(402) 477-7289**
3930 Mason Dr., Lincoln, NE 68521
Email: maykoerner@alltel.net

Mancilas, Gary **Home (530) 345-2732**
#2 Woodminster Ct., Chico, CA 95926
Email: gmancilas@sbcglobal.net

Mayville, Thomas **cell 0752-391-278**
PO Box 1307, Mbale, Uganda, East Africa
(or) PO Box P, Willow Grove, PA 19090
Country Code 256 Landline 454-431-057
Skype: pastortbm1 (#1)
Email: thomasreformed@gmail.com

McGee, Michael **(605) 882-9704**
434 30th St. NW, Watertown, SD 57201
Email: mcgeenme@wat.midco.net

Merica, Jonathan **Home (209) 472-7941**
9311 Snow Creek Circle, Stockton, CA 95212
Email: jonmerica@sbcglobal.net

Morris, Ron **(605) 996-7439**
505 S. Davison, Mitchell, SD 57301
Email: ronm@mitchelltelecom.net

Nelken, Jay **Home (661) 943-9695**
4237 Jonathon St., Lancaster, CA 93536
Email: nelken@jslink.net

Opp, Harvey **(641) 923-3060**
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SUMMARY INFORMATION

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Permanent & Special Synodical Committees

Archives

J. Fluck, Greg Van Holland, Robert Wegis

Board of Trustees

D. Clark, K. Lorenzen, Tim Rott

Christian Education

L. Johnson, R. Stetler, R. Abbink (3 yr.); J. West, D. Helseth, J. Rydell (2 yr.); W. Embree, P. Henderson, D. Sawtelle (1 yr.)

(Sub) Confer with Dordt

S. Henry, R. Morris, D. Van Peurseem, E. Broers

(Sub) SS Curriculum

K. Sorensen, T. Gruggett, S. Henry, M. Reyna

Diaconal Ministries

T. Savage*, B. Davis (3 yr.); A. Gilman*, G. Mancilas, (2 yr.); D. Dawn, H. Hart, F. Hoffmann (1 yr.)

Editorial Advice

J. Connelly, R. Morris, (3 yr.); R. Stetler, D. Kingswood (2 yr.); C. W. Powell, J. Bender (1 yr.)

Executive

V. Pollema, J. Sawtelle, P. Treick, T. Griess, R. Kusler

Foreign Ministries

M. Voytek, W. Lingenfelter, T. Schieffelin (3 yr.); D. Schnabel, R. Grossmann, D. Kroells (2 yr.); G. Baloy, J. Jones, B. Borgwardt (1 yr.)

(Sub) Radio Liaisons

P. Treick, N. Riffert, K. Armbruster, D. Schnabel

Home Missions

D. Rogers (SC), J. Nelken (W), H. Opp (CE) (3 yr.); J. Gross (W), J. Bruckschen (CE), L. Goehring (NP) (2 yr.); M. McGee (NP), L. Huber (SC) (1 yr.)

Interchurch Relations:

R. Potter, J. Merica, J. Heerema, (3 yr.); G. Syms, M. McGee, V. Ochsner, J. Snyder (2 yr.); J. Sawtelle, Rev. M. Koerner, W. Johnson (1 yr.)

Ministerial Relief

J. Blair, C. Fellersen (3 yr.); D. Fagrey, S. Gross, G. Maassen (2 yr.); R. Grossmann, T. Griess, E. Shriver
M. Fisher, S. Gross, D. McPherson, R. Schnabel (1 yr.)
J. Johnson, B. Tjeerdsma, S. Powell (3 yr.); F. Walker, T. Lagomarsino, S. Wilbur (2 yr.); H. Bowen, W. Brice, E. Starks (1yr)

(Sub) Website Develop eBooks

M. Powell, F. Walker, J. Kroese
G. Mancilas, J. Fluck, J. Jones, E. Bristley

Special Committee on Church Visitation

W. Embree, J. Fluck, P. Henderson, B. Borgwardt, S. Wilbur, R. Kusler

Special Committee for Studying Support of Colleges:

L. Johnson, K. Sorensen, M. Voytek, H. Hart, C. W. Powell, G. Stewart, J. Kroese

[*Underlined=Chairman; *=Deacon*]

SYNODICAL GUIDELINES	
Synodical Dues	\$18.00
Home Missions	38.00
Foreign Ministries	36.00
Ministerial Relief	65.00
Diaconal Ministries	3.00
General Publications	7.00
Student Aid	2.00
General Benevolence	17.00
Ministerial Aid Fund	15.00
Building Fund	1.00
Dordt College	2.25
Hope Haven	2.00
Greenville Seminary	1.00
Heidelberg Seminary	2.00
Mid-America Seminary	2.00
New Geneva Seminary	2.00
MERF	2.00
Total Per Communicant Member	\$215.25
<i>Reformed Herald (per subscription)</i>	\$13.00

Abstract of the Minutes of the 262nd Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States

*"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life,
and this is life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life;
he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."*

I John 5:11, 12

I. Services

The 262nd Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States was hosted by Hope Reformed Church of Sutton, Nebraska. The Hope congregation was also celebrating its 110th Anniversary as a Reformed congregation.

The Synod convened on Monday, May 19, 2008, with a 7:00 pm worship service conducted by Rev. Paul H. Treick (Trinity RCUS, Modesto, CA). Rev. Vernon Pollema (Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter, CA) preached a sermon entitled, "*Ask for the Old Paths*" from Jeremiah 6:16.

On Wednesday, May 21, a 7 pm worship service was conducted by Rev. Neale Riffert (retired, Sherman, TX). Rev. Herman Van Stedum (Trinity RCUS, Sioux Falls, SD) preached a sermon entitled "*Small Beginnings*" from I John 1:1.

Morning devotions were held at 10:00 am. On Tuesday, Rev. Paul Henderson addressed the body from Luke 11:1-13, on "*The Necessity of Constant Prayer*." On Wednesday, Rev. David Fagrey (Grace RCUS, Rapid City, SD) addressed the body from Romans 5:1, 2, on "*The Benefits of Justification by Faith*." On Thursday, Rev. Tracy Gruggett (Grace RCUS, Bakersfield, CA) addressed the body from II Corinthians 1:1-11, on "*Pastoral Suffering and Comfort*." The closing devotion was conducted by Elder Loren Huber (Hope RCUS, Sutton, NE) who read Philippians 1:4 - 2:16, and led in prayer.

Prayers before and after each session, as well as the after-meal devotions were assigned by the President. Various times for prayers were also held for specific matters during the sessions.

II. Organization

Following the opening worship service, the President, Rev. Vernon Pollema, called the meeting to order on May 19, 2008. The Stated Clerk, Rev. Paul Treick, called the roll which showed 36 pastors and 27 elders present. The roll was called each morning and the closing roll call showed 37 pastors and 29 elders present.

The Bar of the House was declared to be the first ten rows on either side of the aisle.

The President appointed Elder Ron Abbink, Elder Mark Reyna, Rev. Jay Nelken, and Elder Jay Kroese as tellers.

Rev. Frank Walker was appointed as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

Elections by ballot were held for men to serve in the following capacities:

President:	Rev. Vernon Pollema
Vice President	Rev. James Sawtelle
Stated Clerk	Rev. Paul Treick
Treasurer	Elder Ted Griess
Editor of the <i>Reformed Herald</i>	Rev. Paul Treick

The President read the Standing Rules of the Synod to the body.

III. Adoption of the Agenda, Order of the Day, and Special Orders

The Agenda, and the Order of the Day was adopted, with the following Special Orders: that Fraternal Delegates, observers, and representatives from institutions would address the body after the morning devotion on Wednesday, and that Rev. Thomas Mayville be allowed to show a video on Uganda and Kenya on Wednesday after the lunch hour.

IV. Announcement of Standing Committees

The President announced the appointments to Standing Committees for this Synod. Their names appear after their respective reports in this Abstract.

V. Presentation and Referral of Overtures, Permanent Committee Reports and Communications

The Permanent Reports were forwarded to their respective Standing Committees. Overtures and communications previously sent to the Stated Clerk were given to the Overtures Committee who referred most of them to their appropriate committees during the course of the meeting. Following this, according to the Agenda, a recess was taken for the Overtures Committee to bring its initial report. The Permanent Committee Reports are printed below.

A. Archives Committee

The Archives committee received only the official copies of the minutes of the 261st Synod.

The chairman responded to four requests for information, three of which came as forwarded messages from the web servant.

The committee neither met, nor conducted any business.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jay Fluck, Elder D. Mettler, Elder J. Stuebbe

B. Board of Trustees

Your committee makes the following report of their activities this past year. Your committee did not meet, conducted no business, and makes no recommendations.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. L. Dale Clark, Elder J. Stuebbe, Elder J. Snyder

C. Christian Education Committee (and Sub-Committees)

Dear Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ:

For your information, we as a committee corresponded via the Internet, telephone, U.S.P.O., and with a meeting held in Sacramento, CA in Oct/Nov of 2007.

But first, the Sub-committee reports which were sent via the Electronic Mail Service.

I. Sub-Committee: Sunday-School Curriculum

In regards to the work already accomplished or completed by the Rev. Jon Blair and the sub-committee members, and in light of further discussions among the sub-committee and with Rev. Neale Riffert, the sub-committee makes the following two recommendations to be presented to the 262nd Synod:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That, under oversight of the Sunday School Curriculum Revision Committee, Rev. Neale Riffert be appointed to review, revise, and enhance the Promise and Deliverance Sunday School Curriculum, with special regard to the mandate of the 260th Synod as follows:

- That a teacher's handbook be drafted for each quarter of the curriculum lessons.
- That a quarterly review lesson and corresponding quiz be written and incorporated into each of the quarters for each year of the curriculum.
- That the 'Discuss and Decide' sections of the Curriculum be reviewed and revised by the Sunday School Committee for improved teachability and historical relevance and these revisions be submitted to the 261st Synod.
- That the K-1 Grades of the Curriculum be revised to make it age-appropriate.

2. That Rev. Neale Riffert be paid an honorarium for his work, to be determined by the 262nd Synod.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jon Blair, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, Rev. Scott Henry,

Elder Walt Van Heest, Elder Mark Reyna

II. Sub-Committee to Confer with Dordt College

In response to Recommendation # 9, of the 261st RCUS Synod Abstract [page 69] “ That the Committee to Confer with Dordt College investigate concerns regarding the Gen 100 courses and address them with the college.” Your Sub-committee reports it's findings:

Dear Brothers,

On Thursday, January 24, 2008, your committee met with Dordt College President Dr. Carl Zylstra, and several professors from the Theology Department, on the Dordt College campus. Committee members present were Rev. Scott Henry, Rev. Herman Van Stedum, Rev. Ron Morris and Elder Dan Van Peurse. Rev. Matt Powell was unable to attend due to his wife giving childbirth. Also present from the RCUS were Rev. Robert Grossmann, Rev. Maynard Koerner & Mr. Ray Schnabel. Your committee was cordially received by Dr. Zylstra & the theology department professors, and was served a wonderful Chinese supper at the conclusion of our meeting.

The main purpose for our visit this year was to inquire about several issues that arose on the floor of Synod last year concerning the ability & commitment of Dordt College to adequately provide RCUS students with a truly Reformed world & life view. The meeting was structured in the following way:

- Rev. Robert Grossmann gave a lecture on the New Perspective on Paul, along with several comments on the Federal Vision. Dordt professors responded to Rev. Grossmann's lecture.
- Dr. Zylstra then spoke on the place of theology in the Dordt College Curriculum & commented on the relationship between Dordt College & the RCUS.

3. The remainder of the meeting was occupied by an open discussion. Prior to the meeting, your committee members discussed certain areas in which to concentrate our questions to the professors of the theology department. We then submitted the areas in question to Dr. Zylstra a few weeks before our meeting and asked that the theology department be prepared to give their position on each of the areas. The areas discussed at our meeting are as follows:
- a. Hermeneutics
 - b. View of the TNIV
 - c. Emergent Church Movement
 - d. Postmodern Christianity
 - e. Federal Vision
 - f. New Perspective on Paul
 - g. Confessional subscription: What creed or standard are theology department faculty members required to subscribe to, and what is the nature of that subscription?
 - h. Questions pertaining to the curriculum used by the theology department (certain books)
 - i. Whether the following beliefs are conditions of employment in the theology department?
 - i. Belief in a literal hell
 - ii. Belief in a physical resurrection
 - iii. Belief in the virgin birth of Christ
 - iv. Belief in justification by faith alone (Follow-up: can someone be justified on the basis of a response to common grace, that is, without knowledge of Jesus?)
 - v. Belief in the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture

The discussion on the areas listed above lasted for approximately three hours. Your committee was very pleased with the answers given by the Dordt College Theology Department professors. We concluded that all their responses were orthodox and consistent with the Three Forms of Unity. However, we did encourage the professors to implement the Three Forms of Unity more frequently in their class lessons. Dr. Zylstra & the Dordt professors concurred, and also stated that if it was demonstrated that any of their teaching was found contrary to the TFU that they would immediately change their position and align with the TFU. Your committee believes that the response of the professors was sincere & genuine.

Your committee was encouraged with the continual effort & desire of Dordt College to provide a Reformed world & life view for its students. However, the number of RCUS students currently attending Dordt College is down from previous years. Your committee would urge RCUS pastors to encourage high school students in their congregation to seriously consider attending an institution, such as Dordt College, where Biblical instruction is faithfully implemented in the curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION: That the RCUS Guideline for Giving to Dordt College be continued at \$2.25 per communicant member for the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Scott Henry, Rev. Herman Van Stedum, Rev. Ron Morris,

Rev. Matt Powell & Elder Dan Van Peurse

The regular work of the Permanent Christian Education Committee is as follows:

All recommendations were agreed upon by a majority of the present committee members. Present were: Rev. Jim West/Rev. Lee Johnson/ Rev. Paul Henderson/Elder David Helseth/ Elder Joe Gross [*Rev. Haddock and Elder Rydell's concerns were considered*]

III. Institutional Visits

Seminary Visits: Sacramento City Seminary was scheduled for a visit in 2007. Elders David Helseth & Joe Gross volunteered to visit City Seminary. At the time of 'mailing', the report and recommendation had not reached your committee's hands. We will send it out when we receive it.

Take Note: Recommendations #2 of the 260th Synod Abstract was not fulfilled. Recommendation # 6 of the 261st Synod Abstract – p. 69 was not fulfilled.

A discussion on Synod's continued involvement of investigating colleges was done and resulted in this motion.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Synod discontinues its endeavors to investigate colleges that might be worthy of Synodical financial support, or to seek membership on their boards.

Our Grounds: It is neither the primary task nor the responsibility of the Church officers to investigate or search out colleges that might be worthy of support.

Rather, it is primarily the responsibility of parents to oversee and investigate the worthiness of particular educational institutions for the education of their covenant children.

We as a committee also recognize that although **Resolution # 3 of the RCUS Christian Education Resolutions** calls upon pastors and elders to assist parents in the carrying out their educational responsibilities by encouraging and supporting educational endeavors that are in line with the Reformed faith, we believe that the officers of the church need not be sent to investigate institutions of higher learning nor is it necessary that we seek a place on their boards.

Moreover, the RCUS Synod in its Abstracts already provides the necessary information to parents that they might investigate many of these colleges. See Abstracts 258th & 259th p. 33 & 23 respectively. See also the RCUS Christian Education Resolutions adopted at the 2003 Synod meeting, along with the following supplementary work supporting our grounds.

Supplementary grounds: The view of your Christian Education Committee is that Christian education in the broad, Liberal Arts' sense, is a responsibility primarily of parents, and not the Church. Defined that way, Christian education is the mission of the Church only insofar as it concerns the edification of the Church through the preaching and teaching of God's word, and especially the instruction of God's people in the congregation by her chosen officers. In this narrow sense, the concern of Christian education is the instruction and training of men for the Gospel ministry (albeit, seminary education). In contrast, the scope of a Liberal Arts' Institution is much broader; we might say that the purpose of a college is to express the kingdom of God in the broad sense, since Scripture teaches that Christ is both the Head of creation and redemption (Colossians 1:15ff).

The realm of education can be expressed by the well-known term, *sphere-sovereignty*. There are responsibilities peculiar to the State, to the family, to the Church, and to the individual. The State is not to be controlled by the Church, nor vice versa. Likewise, the education of our youth is best pursued and supported by the covenant family, not by the Church (or by the State). This is probably why the RCUS does not govern or promote parochial schools. The Church has an interest in Liberal Arts, but the Church does not operate Liberal Arts' institutions. Of course, Christian people *do* and *should* operate Christian colleges; but Christian people are not acting as agents sent out by the Church when they do so. As for public schools, they are both for the State and by the State. They are primarily intended to enhance "the great [State] society." The goal is the training of citizens.

Of course, the Church does have vital interest in a Child's education. The parents are Church members; they present their covenant children to be baptized and vow before God to raise them covenantally. The child is a member, too. So, the Church is also a child nurturer. The parental oversight is all-inclusive and the Church shares with the parents the covenant nurture of the child. Yet, God's covenant was made *with the parents* and their seed (Genesis 17:7; Genesis 18:19). For us, this means that the Christian school is a parental school. That is its sole basis.

The proper educators and financiers of a child's education are his parents. We learn this even from the animal world, too, where animals protect and nurture their young (Lamentations 4:3). There should be no one more interested in the educational welfare of children than their parents. This means that parents alone are the responsible educators. If they call upon others to assist, these others stand in *loco parentis*.

When the Bible speaks of the education of children it is not Church or State that is commanded to educate, but parents (Genesis 18:19; Psalm 78:2-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

The matter of governing and financing a child's education might be different if the Christian College or University was directly preparing men for the Gospel-ministry. For example, Heidelberg University during the days of Frederick III and Zacharias Ursinus contained a divinity school that trained men for the Reformed ministry. While many colleges today contain theology departments where one might even major in Theology, such colleges by and large do not train men for the ministry. Upon graduation, most men will then pursue a Master's Degree in a seminary, where in earnest they are trained for the ministry. In fact, such colleges that offer majors in Theology recognize the limited nature of their programs; they will even declare that a major in Theology is only preparatory for a three-year seminary education.

We also believe that a denominationally-financed Liberal Art's College is no more valid than a denominationally-financed Christian high school or (Christian) technical school. In fact, Christian high schools offer many courses that are very similar to Christian colleges. The major difference is most often depth of instruction and a broader curriculum.

In our view the enactment of a financial guideline laid on each communicant member of our Denomination to support a Liberal Arts college not only exceeds the Church's calling in the narrow sense, but is also difficult to justify from a statement of "taxing" our people to pay for a young man's or woman's college education. For example, it is argued that by requiring a guideline for every communicant member of the RCUS, that we ourselves are directly benefitted because of the discount our students receive from the said institution. The effect of this argument is that the members of the RCUS are being asked to pay the College tuition for someone else's Liberal Arts education. While it is true that education is a parental responsibility, the monies spent on the child's education should come from the families whose sons and daughters attend such schools. Our conviction is that just as it is irregular for the School to support the Church, and irregular for the State to support the school, so it is irregular for the Church to finance the school. The one exception might be the diaconal support of individual families or teachers who because of some extremity, need financial support.

Another problem regarding Christian education in the broad sense is the lack of expertise to check-out each department of a Liberal Arts' institution. While courses relating to Theology are more easily evaluated, other courses that cover the Liberal Arts spectrum are much less so. Certainly, the RCUS recognizes the difference between an education in which Christian devotional services are added, and an education where the Bible is the matrix of the entire educational program. To our credit, we have tried to support schools with a total Reformed world and life view. However, does the RCUS have the time and the expertise to investigate the total curriculum of any said institution? To us it seems a near impossible assignment.

It is sometimes argued that the Heidelberg Catechism teaches that the "support of schools" is a mandate of the "ministry," and that having a Christian college meshes well with the creedal standards of the Reformed Church. Others have taken this statement to justify Sunday (Sabbath) schools and other forms of Lord's Day education, both within and outside the church. Indeed, Ursinus' explanation of Lord's Day 103 clearly speaks of the necessity of maintaining the "arts and sciences..." But this statement is best understood as signifying the religious instruction of the covenant youth on Lord's Day afternoons so that God's people might be equipped to master "arts and the sciences" once they have moved on from their foundational, catechetical training. Certainly, religious instruction is in view, but

the issue as to whether the Catechism endorses the denominational support of a Liberal Arts' institution is unproved.

The Committee also brings this recommendation in light of the following discussion:
RECOMMENDATION 2: That Dorcht College be removed from the Synodical Guidelines For Giving [See grounds above under the previous motion]

IV. Other Matters:

The Judicial Committee's recommendation #4, 261st Synod Abstract – p. 69: "That item 2b, 260th Abstract, p. 72, be referred to the Christian Education Committee to be reworked."

This Recommendation was 'referred' to our committee on the floor of Synod. Following the admonition that was given to our committee on the floor of Synod to be aware of this 'referral', and to deal with it this year, we humbly submit our labors.

Much discussion resulted. Many items were considered and these are the final recommendations of the committee. We divided item 2b into two separate parts: 2b & 2c.

Item 2b presently reads: [b.] "When an already established seminary desires to serve as a Theological Seminary of the Church (RCUS), an overture requesting such status shall be submitted to the Classis in whose geographical area the seminary is located.

Upon Classis approval, the overture will be submitted to Synod. Upon Synod approval, the following constitutional requirements will apply: ... etc."

RECOMMENDATION 3: That item 2b be divided into two parts – 2b and c., and that 'c' contain the following addition:

Part 'b' will read the same: "When an already established seminary desires to serve as a Theological Seminary of the Church (RCUS), an overture requesting such status shall be submitted to the Classis in whose geographical area the seminary is located."

Part 'c' with the addition, will now read: "Upon Classis approval "that the seminary is Reformed in doctrine and practice; that its curriculum is complete and balanced; its faculty qualified and its petition in order. The overture will be submitted to Synod. Upon Synod approval, the following constitutional requirements will apply: ... etc."

Extra Notes & Grounds:

1. The *committee that met, as a whole reasoned that the word 'approval', in item 2b, meant that the Classis was responsible for more than just 'rubber-stamping' an overture.

2. In other words the committee reasoned that a Classis had to approve not only the petition, itself, that it was in order, **but also that the seminary itself** was in order according to the RCUS Standards as approved by the RCUS Synod in 2006 and 2007. [See page 71 & 72 of the 260th Synod: "Procedures for the Establishment of a Denominational Seminary and the recommendations 1,2,3 all of which were passed by the Synod body - page 81: See note.]

*There was only one committee member who disagreed – Elder Jim Rydell of Vermilion, SD, who was not able to be in attendance. He submitted his thoughts via the e-mail, and he thought that Original Jurisdiction lay with the Synod, in regards to a denominational seminary.

3. We also understood that the term, "original jurisdiction" as used in the RCUS Constitution, and as used in regards to the training up of young men for the Gospel ministry begins originally with the Classis and then proceeds onto the Synod. The Spiritual Council also has interest in men who desire to pursue the Gospel ministry.

All of these articles show the working relationship of mutual accountability and submission between the RCUS Judicatories. [RCUS Constitution – Articles 17 - 26; 36, 41, 49, 50, 70, 82, 84, 87, 89, 101]

4. Thus, the re-worked part or addition, [2c] takes the *middle of the road approach* and covers both the concerns of those who interpret the RCUS constitution to give “original jurisdiction” to the delegated Synod body, as well as to the Classis and the Spiritual Council as a delegated body responsible for the training up of men for the Gospel ministry. This addition also comports with the procedures for establishing a denominational seminary if we should have one.

5. It is also our understanding that the need and warrant of a denominational seminary has never been adopted, ratified or approved by the RCUS Synod body.

We have approved the ‘concept’ of a Denominational Seminary. And we have approved the “Procedures for the Establishment of a Denominational Seminary”, but we can find no action whereby the Synod has determined the need and warrant for a denominational seminary.

As far as we can determine, the issue is still open for debate. We indeed may be wrong.

Therefore we make this recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 4: We request that the Executive Committee of the RCUS Synod clarify and determine where we stand in regards to Synod’s approval as to whether or not it has been determined that there is warrant and a need for a denominational seminary at this present time.

Dear brothers, mutual submission and mutual accountability have always been the hallmark of a godly deliberating body, for which the RCUS has been known.

Take Note: Therefore we urge all RCUS ministers and elders to continue to pursue this issue in a godly and forthright manner.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Paul H. Henderson, Rev. Jim West, Rev. Lee Johnson, Elder David Helseth,
Elder Joe Gross; Rev. William Haddock & Elder Jim Rydell (in absentia)*

D. Diaconal Ministries Committee

Esteemed brothers and fathers,

Your committee was charged with the oversight of the diaconal aid granted to Rev. Jonathan Merica by the 2007 Synod. Rev. Merica was very helpful in providing updates to the committee when requested, and expresses his gratitude for the diaconal aid. No action on this matter was ever required.

The diaconal committee was also charged with setting “criteria for how and under what circumstances benevolent aid is granted.” (Synod 2007 Abstract, p. 67) We discussed this matter via email, and came to the conclusions that follow. Some committee members felt that further time for deliberation was warranted. The committee decided to present our work thus far to the Synod with the full awareness that further work may be needed.

We recommend that the following guidelines be adopted:

Guidelines for Benevolent Aid from Synod

Benevolent aid exists for the purpose of meeting extraordinary needs from either individuals or churches in the denomination. Needs that arise from outside the denomination can also be met when the body deems the need worthy of Synodical support.

Benevolent aid should not be requested for any need which has been presented to and denied by a lower judicatory. The proper procedure would be to either file a complaint against the decision of the lower judicatory, or for the lower judicatory to refer the matter to a higher judicatory. Under normal circumstances, benevolent aid overtures should come to Synod from a Classis. Exceptions can be granted if reason can be shown why the need is urgent and could not be presented through the normal chain.

Benevolent aid should not be granted for any purpose which legitimately belongs to the jurisdiction of some other function of Classis or Synod such as Student Aid, Missions or Ministerial Relief. Benevolent aid should not be granted for needs which arise as a normal part of the business of the church, such as travel expenses for committee work or missed work for attending Classis or Synod meetings. Those needs should be handled by the local church or appropriate committee.

Benevolent aid from Synod to churches should only be temporary. If benevolent aid is requested for a church, the church should submit a three year budget and a report outlining the church's plan for getting off such aid.

Purpose of the Diaconal Committee

The Diaconal Committee exists for the purpose of overseeing the status of those requesting benevolent aid, and receiving reports on that status. Individuals receiving aid while looking for work or seeking a call should regularly report on their attempts to find work or to receive a call to the Diaconal Committee. Any conditions or requirements imposed by Synod on the granting of benevolent aid either to individuals or churches should be overseen by the Diaconal Committee, and a report should be made to Synod regarding the fulfillment of such conditions or requirements.

The Diaconal Committee does not make decisions regarding the support of a particular cause, but only decisions to recommend support of a cause. The final decision to support a particular cause always lies with Synod.

Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Matt Powell, Rev. Gary Mancilas, Rev. David Dawn, Rev. Howard Hart,
Elder Rod DeJong, Deacon Ben Stewart, Deacon Andy Gilman, Deacon Jason Neff*

E. Editorial Advice Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

The Permanent Editorial Advice Committee was established by the 78th Eureka Classis in 1988 as editorial advisors to the Editor of the Reformed Herald. The adopted motion reads, “That an Editorial Advisory Committee of three members be established as editorial advisors. These the editor of the Reformed Herald may call upon for counsel with regards to publishing articles which are submitted and which he feels are of such controversial nature as to bring forth criticism of his judgment as to whether to publish or not to publish them.” (1988 Abstract of the Minutes of the RCUS, Eureka Classis, p. 97) Your committee brings to the attention of the 262nd RCUS Synod that the above motion limited the Editorial Advisory Committee to three members. In 1988 three members were placed on the Permanent Editorial Advice Committee. Beginning with the 1989 RCUS Synod the number of committee members increased from three to six members without any official action by the RCUS Synod.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Permanent Editorial Advice Committee continue with the number of six members serving three-year staggered terms.

Grounds: 1) This is a precedent set by the RCUS Synod since the 1989 RCUS Synod. 2) “. . . in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14b)

Your committee was not presented with any other matters regarding editorial advice for the Reformed Herald, and did not convene for any other business matters. Our committee commends the labors of the Reformed Herald Editor in making significant improvements of the quality of the Reformed Herald.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Jonathan Merica, Rev. Richard Stetler, Rev. Darrell Kingswood,
Elder John Bender, Elder Albert Haller*

F. Executive Committee

Esteemed brothers in Christ,

During the course of this synodical year, your committee conferred by telephone and email and sent out two Executive Circulars with recommendations which were approved without dissent. Those actions are as follows:

1. That Mr. Jimmy Hall, a student under care of Covenant East Classis, be granted student aid in the amount of \$4500 for tuition and \$250 per semester for books for the school year 2007-2008, that he may begin his studies at Mid-America Reformed Seminary in the fall of 2007.
2. That Rev. Dale Clark serve as a member of the Synodical Board of Trustees until the 262nd Synod of the RCUS, when annual committee nominations will be approved.
3. That Synod approve of the following schedule for services for the 262nd Synod of the RCUS:

Worship Services:

Monday, May 19, 2008 at 7:00 pm

Presiding: Rev. Paul Trieck; preaching: Rev. Vernon Pollema

Wednesday, May 21, 2008 at 7:00 pm

Presiding: Rev. Neale Riffert; preaching: Rev. Herman Van Stedum

Devotions (10:00 am each day)

Tuesday, May 20, 2008 - Rev. Paul Henderson

Wednesday, May 21, 2008 - Rev. David Fagrey

Thursday, May 22, 2008 - Rev. Tracy Gruggett

Closing Devotion - Elder from Hope RCUS, Sutton, NE

Your committee was contacted by Mr. George Mall, of the former Covenant Reformed Church in Carbondale, PA, as to whether we had any objections to their affiliating with the United Reformed Churches in North America. We responded by saying that we no longer had jurisdiction over their actions, but that they should have the URCNA contact us to be apprised of the history of their congregation's departure from the RCUS. We have since been in touch with Rev. Paul Murphy (URCNA) and have recently sent him all the Classical and Synodical actions as printed in our Abstracts so they may see the series of events that were dealt with on that level. We feel that this congregation left without submitting to the decisions of the Classis or Synod. That being the case they would be violating the ecclesiastical mark of Christian discipline – a mark necessary to be considered a true church. If the URCNA, a body in fraternal relationship with us, accepted them as a congregation, that would place us in the awkward situation of having fraternal relations with this congregation which to date has not repented of its action nor sought reconciliation with the RCUS. To date we have not heard a response to the information we sent.

In keeping with Standing Rule #20, the Executive Committee corresponded with and provided information to the following congregations expressing interest in the RCUS: Two independent Reformed congregations in Vancouver, BC and Lynden, WA, both formerly members of the federation of Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches who separated from that federation over the error of Federal Vision; Immanuel Chapel, Upton, MA, "a Reformed and Congregational Church established in 1975, consisting of approximately 50 members, who have voted to pursue the possibility of embracing a Presbyterian form of church government by associating with a confessionally Reformed and Presbyterian denomination." To date there have been no further developments.

There was no other business that came before the committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Vernon Pollema, Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Paul Trieck,

Elder Myron Koerner, Elder Ted Griess

G. Foreign Ministries Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Your committee met in Sacramento on March 31st to discuss the work of the RCUS in foreign missions, review the previous year as well as plan for the upcoming year. As always your committee continues to thank God for the prayers and support of the congregations and individuals of the RCUS. Your prayers and support enable us as a denomination to obey Christ's command making disciples of all nations for His glory.

Your committee continues to operate through the year with subcommittees for the Congo (ERCC and the partnership with the Dutch GKN Liberated missionaries) headed by Rev. Robert Grossmann, for Kenya (FRCK) headed by Rev. Michael Voytek and for the Philippines headed by Rev. Gil Baloy (UCRCP). Other committees, which report to the FMC, include the Reformed Radio Administration Committee (with Rev. Neil Riffert, Rev. Paul Treick and Rev. Dan Schnabel) and the Congo Economic Development Committee (The officers of the consistory of Providence RCUS, Lodi California).

Kenya & Uganda:

We thank God for His gracious watch care over Rev. Thomas Mayville and his wife Carolyn as they now have been in Mbale, Uganda for one year. This year has been a full year for them with their move as well as getting acclimated culturally. Throughout this time they have continually expressed their appreciation for the prayers and support of the congregations of the RCUS. This includes the graciousness of many who gave to assist with Rev. Mayville's travel back stateside after his mom's death. Please continue to keep the Mayvilles in your prayers since there have been a variety of incidents which have made this an interesting year. We are also thankful to God for this opportunity to work with the OPC (Orthodox Presbyterian Church). Their counsel and support has been indispensable for the Mayvilles and for your committee.

Rev. Mayville, as a part of the cooperative agreement with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, has been teaching at Knox Theological College. Rev. Mayville arrived at the college as Rev. Proctor went on furlough making Rev. Mayville the temporary principal. A variety of missionaries of the OPC have come to assist Rev. Mayville during this time. Many of the days are filled not only with teaching and overseeing the schools building project, but fixing things and meeting the never ending and emotionally draining diaconal needs. Concerning this Rev. Mayville commented "the needs of the OPCU church officers, widows and orphans are so many that it would be impossible for all the Reformed denominations in Southeast Africa to meet them." Besides teaching students from the OPCU, Rev. Mayville is currently teaching three students from the FRCK (Free Reformed Church of Kenya). There are also three other students from Kenya waiting to start at Knox.

During this first year Rev. Mayville also traveled into Kenya to visit with the pastors. and the churches of the FRCK. Other visits have been hindered due to the unrest in Kenya. Rev. Mayville has been interviewing candidates for Knox Theological College. He has also been instructing and assisting to help the transition from our total support of the churches in the FRCK towards a self sustaining, self replicating, self governing church. To this end there has been a focused biblical instruction on tithing which they have not previously practiced. In response to this they have concluded that they now see that the Lord has not blessed them because they have not been tithing. Things in the FRCK are pretty stable with 12 churches, 3 pastors and 6 pastor elders. When Rev. Mayville visited the high school, he saw things had been well maintained and the teachers were paid.

As a denomination we have been working with our brothers in the FRCK to shift our financial support in Kenya. Currently our support is gradually switching away from pastor/elders receiving direct support and more into diaconal and other projects with the FRCK, including preparing for micro enterprise. The FRCK is working on guidelines for the oversight of any micro enterprises. The guidelines will include having a committee comprised of people who do not benefit financially. Elder Doug Schlegel of Sacramento Covenant RCUS is the contact for those interested in helping in the economic development within the FRCK.

Congo:

With the ERCC (Evangelical Reformed Confessing Church) there have been some very disappointing developments. The issue centers on the self appointed ERCC government representatives for life Rev. Kishimba and Rev. Illunga. This year they unilaterally, without consulting their Synod and without its support, demanded that the Dutch brothers of the GKN Liberated leave the country effectively shutting down the seminary and other work they were doing. Not only in their self appointment for life, but in this action they have violated the articles of church order for the ERCC. Your committee has cut off all prior support of Rev. Kishimba and called for his repentance. We are joining in with other churches in South Africa to call for the ERCC Synod to depose Rev. Kishimba and Illunga and cut off all support until repentance is made. Rev. Bob Grossmann has been in communication with the rest of the brothers in the Congo as well as the Dutch. Rev. Dan Schnabel has been in contact with our brothers in the South African churches.

In communications with Rev. Kabongo and Abel Ntita the other elders and pastors were not in agreement with what Rev. Kishimba and Illunga did. Apart from this situation the other churches and pastors and responsible elders are doing well. Currently we support 10 churches in Kinshasa and another 10 churches in Mbuji-Mayi area. Although we have cut off support for Rev. Kishimba (Rev. Illunga we already did not support) we will be adding three other responsible elders and pastors.

The Congo Economic Development Committee continues under the guidance of Mr. Jerry DeYoung and the consistory at Providence RCUS in Lodi. The focus of this group continues to work on developing the economics in six areas within the Congo. The main projects supported include agriculture, sewing, pig breeding, small personal loans for capital and the purchase of land. They state “we are very aware of our situation of poverty in which we proclaim God’s peace and providence.” The churches in the ERCC are very grateful for the support of all the RCUS congregations and particularly the Lodi Congregation.

Philippines:

This year, many congregations are much more familiar with what is happening now with the United Covenant Reformed Churches in the Philippines (UCRCP) after Rev. Edwin Puzon’s visit last year. We thank all the churches which extended a gracious welcome to Rev. Puzon and heard many very good reports. The UCRCP also thanks the RCUS for the contributions which were given on their behalf this year as well as supporting the conference this past year. For details on the conference trip please see attached report by Rev. Gil Baloy and Rev. Michael Voytek. Your gracious donations have been used to help support the ministers as well as firmly establish the UCRCP in San Carlos as the parent church.

Currently the UCRCP is composed of three pastors (Rev. Napoleon Narag, Rey Domingo, Edwin Puzon) and one established congregation in San Carlos which adopted the constitution of Covenant RCUS in Sacramento. Currently Rev. Rey Domingo has been called as the senior pastor at San Carlos while the other two will be associate pastors. Rev. Puzon is serving a body of believers which gathers in Las Pinas while Rev. Narag is serving a body of believers which meets in Laguna. As a group they are organizing very quickly and have a great deal of spiritual maturity among the pastors and elders.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the budget be adopted as follows:

Congo:

Elder-pastor support \$14,400 (down \$1,800 from \$16,200)
Kinshasa aid \$11,600 (same as last year)
Building and Diaconal aid \$2,000 (same)

Kenya:

Church Support \$11,000 (down \$1,000)
Economic Development for Pastor/elders \$2,000 (same)
Travel for students to Knox \$3,000
Reformed Faith and Life (French): \$17,000 (same)
Committee Expenses:

Travel to Africa \$2,000 (same)
Travel to Europe \$1,000 (same)
Travel in USA \$ 3,000 (same)
Travel to or from the Philippines \$1,000 (previously \$6,000 for travel & conference)

2. That \$34,000 be budgeted for 2009 to support Rev. Tom Mayville teaching at Knox Theological College in Mbale, Uganda (last year it was \$25,000, this new amount represents the 50/50 agreement of support with the OPC).

3. That the FMC be allowed to continue promoting interest in and support for the work of the UCRCP to its brethren and those of other sister Reformed churches.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dan Schnabel (Chrmn), Jim Borgwardt, Gil Baloy (Philippines Subcommittee),
Robert Grossman (Congo Subcommittee), Jeff Jones, Tom Mayville,
Doug Schlegel, and Michael Voytek (Kenya Subcommittee)*

Third RCUS Mission Visit to the Philippines

December 2007

Greetings in the name of our faithful Savior Jesus Christ. The following is the report of the visit of Reverends Gil Baloy, Michael Voytek and Vern Pollema to the Philippines from November 27th to December 21st in 2007. We traveled there at the invitation of the United Covenant Reformed Churches in the Philippines (UCRCP) to provide further instruction and guidance for the church leaders through a conference dealing with key distinctives of the Reformed Ministry. Other interested parties were also invited who were not part of the UCRCP. Our report is divided into four parts: first, a brief account of a “good-will visit” to Mindanao by Rev. Gil Baloy, accompanied by Rev. Edwin Puzon of the UCRCP; second, a short overview of the five-day “Reformed Ministry Conference” sponsored by the UCRCP in the resort city of Baguio in northern Luzon; third, another short account of meetings we had with members of the UCRCP after the Baguio City conference; and lastly, an overall summary of what we accomplished along with our recommendations.

A Brief Account of a Good-Will Visit to Mindanao

In the previous RCUS trip to the Philippines (April 25th through May 8th, 2007), Revs. Michael Voytek and Gil Baloy met Pastor Remegio Lapiz and his wife Elizabeth from the city of Cagayan de Oro, which is located on the second biggest island of the Philippines called Mindanao. Rev. Lapiz first came in contact with the RCUS through Rev. Wesley Brice a few years ago. The couple personally invited us to visit their church in Cagayan de Oro. Lapiz showed a genuine interest in becoming part of the UCRCP. The Lord has used Lapiz to teach others the Reformed doctrines, including five other pastors. In addition, a CRCP-ordained elder, by the name of Rodrigo “Ojie” Bicaldo, supplies the pulpit of the Covenant Reformed Church in Davao City, which is located on the southwest coast of Mindanao. It seemed as though a “good-will” visit to Mindanao would be in order.

It made sense to make the “down-under” trip to Mindanao a joint-team effort between the RCUS and UCRCP. Rev. Baloy was joined by Rev. Edwin Puzon and left Manila for Davao City on Saturday December 1st. Now, prior to their departure, they first met in Manila with Nollie Malabuyo, the one who originally introduced Baloy to Puzon about five years ago. Mr. Malabuyo provided us with helpful information on the church we were about to visit in Davao City. He also reported to us the good news about a particular United Reformed Church (URCNA) church which is willing to send and support him as a missionary to the Philippines. His goal is to plant a church in the Metro Manila area which would later be part of the UCRCP.

At this point a short history lesson about the influence and presence of Islam in Mindanao would be useful. Contrary to common belief, only a portion of Mindanao was inhabited by Muslims after the arrival of Islam in the 13th century AD. In fact, most of the

people in the northern and eastern part of the island practiced native religions before they were converted to Roman Catholicism. Nonetheless, a bitter struggle for independence had been waged by various Muslim factions for five centuries against successive occupiers, such as the Spanish, Americans, Japanese, and later Philippine government and military forces. Due to an influx of migration, as well as evangelization, the majority of Mindanao's population is now predominantly Roman Catholic, with a few Protestant groups and native cults. This has caused some resentment among the poor and seemingly displaced Muslims, which has in turn fueled the more violent and radical separatist movements that have been occurring recently. Mindanao is a staging ground for groups branded as terrorists, such as Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah, that undermine moderate organizations like the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). By the way, we did not notice many Muslims where we traveled. More Muslims inhabit the western provinces especially Zamboanga and Basilan.

Elder Rodrigo Bicaldo met us at the airport in Davao City. The Consistory of the Covenant Reformed Church of Davao City invited Rev. Puzon to preach God's Word. It is a small congregation of between 20-25 members. A URCNA church in California regularly provides for the rent of the building where they meet. Elder Bicaldo continues to supply the pulpit in the absence of its pastor Vic Bernales, who is finishing his studies at Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS). Some express concern that Bernales may not return to the church after graduation. Bicaldo, on the other hand, made it plain that he is willing to continue working in the church. He knows that he needs to be licensed and ordained to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Puzon and Baloy conducted a "preliminary" interview of Mr. Bicaldo at a beachfront restaurant, where they also enjoyed a main course of barbeque squid. It turns out that Bicaldo is a good friend of the three UCRCP ministers Narag, Domingo and Puzon, from their CRCP days. Ojie has a wide vision to see the Reformed faith spread in a triangular corridor from Davao in the south to Cagayan de Oro City and Butuan City located on the northern coastal shore.

The next day, the three of us visited a former elder of the church, who is a lawyer named Pete Demaya. It was our desire to meet him and to encourage him to eventually return to the church. Also on the Lord's Day, Rev. Baloy contacted a gentleman name Roy Madrid, who is a relative of his wife. He responded immediately by showing up at the worship service. Two days later, we visited Roy at his home an hour up the coast in Panabo City, surrounded by sprawling banana plantations. What a refreshing and picturesque part of the country! We met Roy's family and had further opportunity to minister to him personally. Roy lost his wife just last summer. Mr. Bicaldo has since revisited Roy in Panabo City with the hope of seeing a future outreach of his church established there.

On Thursday December 6th, we left Davao City waving good-bye to our friend Ojie Bicaldo thorough the window of the bus. Our next destination was Cagayan de Oro. Lush and green flora surrounded the main highway traveling northward through the belly of Mindanao Island. Finally, after 4-5 hours, we could see a beautiful city nestled between tall mountains and a pristine blue ocean. Remegio and Elizabeth Lapiz met us at the bus station in one of their church service vans. They own a very nice home complete with their own well just outside the city. They are blessed with three children in their twenties, Kit, Kim and Kay, who were not timid to testify of their faith in Jesus Christ. They graciously lodged us in their home during the entirety of our stay.

We eventually met four of the pastors associated with Remegio Lapiz. A fifth pastor, Luciano Bandigan, lives with his family in the vicinity of Davao City. Rev. Lapiz and the other pastors started out in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, which, we are told, has been in the Philippines since 1907. One pastor Abelardo Antonio, and Kit Lapiz, the younger son of Remegio, conduct a mission work each Lord's Day approximately two hours away in Malitbog, Bukidnon. It is called the Tagmaray Christian Fellowship. Another minister, Antonio Decena, has a church in Sorigao City, called Nickel Reformed Church (Independent). It has survived 13 years in a Roman Catholic stronghold. From Tuesday to Saturday Pastor Decena actively ministers to two other groups in Gingoog City, which is located between Sorigao City and Cagayan de Oro City. Adolpho Lapiz (a translator for the Wycliff Bible Translators) and Anselmo Laid attend church with their families at Jireh Reformed Church. The four pastors need "tent-making" income while they continue to

develop their ministries and become self-supporting. This is a particular burden of Remegio Lapiz for those pastors which he is making effort to remedy.

The church, called Jireh Reformed (Congregational) Church, is located a short five minutes away from the Lapiz's home and about the same proximity to the town. The church building was newly dedicated in the previous month of November. The minister who preached at the dedication, Brian Bradley, and his wife Sheila, came from Wales. Perhaps the Congregational influence, evident in the name on the signboard in front of the church building, comes from Wales. The congregation invited Baloy to preach at the morning and afternoon worship services which were well attended both times. The preached Word was likewise well received.

The Reformed Ministry Conference in Baguio City

We sent out a personal invitation to the conference, along with a schedule of events, to more than twenty men. The "attendees" were encouraged to bring a Berean-like mind ready to study the Scriptures (Acts 17:11), and to prepare to ask questions. Besides the main lecture topics, they were solicited for other topics of importance to them. We brought with us a sufficient number of copies of *The RCUS Constitution, Three Forms of Unity, Synod Abstracts*, other pertinent literature, and songbooks made up of hymns from our Trinity Hymnal. We also took with us a few copies of the *Directory of Worship of the RCUS*. Transportation, food and lodging were offered to the attendees through the generosity of the RCUS, including airfare for those flying from Mindanao. If any of the attendees were able to pay for any of their own expenses that was appreciated.

We thank the brothers in the Philippines who assisted in preparing for the conference. They picked Pine Breeze Cottages which turned out to be a rather pleasant facility nestled among pine trees within the city limits. The place was sufficiently roomy for a group our size. The weather in December was mildly cool requiring a light jacket or sweater at night. It was not uncommon to take strolls or just "hang out" in the out of doors. Elder Boy Cabugao hired Jing David, a professing Christian and personal friend, who lives in Baguio City with his family. He shopped for the ingredients in the market and prepared all of our meals. He also acted as our sight-seeing guide on the last day of our stay.

The conference took place from Monday December 10th to Friday December 14th. The following men participated from the island of Luzon: Pastors Nap Narag, Edwin Puzon, and Rey Domingo; Elders Alfred Santiago, Boy Cabugao, and Rafael Martinez; and other interested brothers Arthur Manlicmot, August Rosario, Joey Paras, and Albren Lomibao (Boy's Brother-In-Law); Nollie Malabuyo (URCNA) and his two seminary students Jerry Beltran and Paulo Vasquez. These brothers also came up from the island of Mindanao: Elder Rodrigo Bicaldo (Covenant Reformed Church in Davao City) and Pastor Lucinao Bandingan (Davao City); Pastors Remegio Lapiz, Anselmo Laid, Abelardo Antonio, and Adolfo Lapiz (Cagayan de Oro); and Pastor Antonio Decena (Sorigao City). All stayed for the entire conference with few exceptions owing to work or a previous engagement.

The main topics covered by Revs. Voytek, Baloy and Pollema respectively were Reformed Worship, Covenant Theology, and Reformed or Presbyterian Government. Voytek arrived with the Luzon contingency on Monday December 10th, to start the conference with a worship service and a sermon entitled "On Being Reformed." He lectured on "Reformed Worship" the next morning. Tuesday afternoon was taken up with a discussion on "Para-Church Groups" and "Signs, Wonders and Miracles." Both are widespread phenomena in the Philippines as they also are in the U.S. Pollema, Baloy and Puzon arrived later that night after a six-hour van ride from Manila. In addition, the Mindanao contingency arrived separately on the same day.

On Wednesday morning, Baloy gave the second lecture on "Covenant Theology" with the use of a handout so they could follow along and fill in the blanks. The afternoon was devoted to a lecture/discussion group led by Pollema on two topics: "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage" and "Homosexuality." On Thursday morning, Pollema tackled the third main lecture on Presbyterian Government with his typical gusto. That afternoon followed with a discussion on economic development. We were not as prepared for this as we were for the

theological lectures. Some of the Filipino brothers and churches are actively pursuing a “tent-making” business, such as a Christian school, farming and water allocation. Much more needs to be done to make the Philippine Church self-supporting. We leave the matter to those with technical know-how working in conjunction with the consistories.

Friday morning should have been taken up demonstrating the study of the previous day on Reformed Government with a “mock classis.” Given the diversity of the attendees and our lack of preparation, Pollema instead walked us through a typical classis meeting. We followed along with the Agenda of the previous 22nd Annual Western Classis Spring Meeting (March 6-8, 2007). Pollema provided us with copies of the Agenda as well as information on the topics of the discussion groups which he led. He offered to email his lecture notes to those who were interested. The Filipino brothers noted how kind Providence was to bring “the right man” to lecture on church polity.

We tried to give some allowance for Christian fellowship. It was important for those from the different regions (including the U.S.) to get to know each other. Our fellowship included small groups going out on the town shopping and sightseeing. The U.S. built Baguio City during American occupation particularly as an “R&R” (rest and recreation) resort for our soldiers. On the last day, a group of us visited Camp John Hay, which is an historical site presently operated by the Philippine government. Some did their share of souvenir hunting. For example, Rev. Pollema brought home several nice “bolo” knives (machetes), not to mention medallions of ginkgo lizards for his grandsons, which are found everywhere climbing on walls and ceilings in homes and churches.

Other Post- Baguio City Meetings with the UCRCP

On Saturday December 15th, we held a “Mini-Conference” at the United Covenant Reformed Church of San Carlos. The members of the congregation were the ones who primarily attended. First, Voytek taught on the two sacraments of the church. He followed that with a study on Church membership. Baloy answered the question “May Women Speak in the Church?” based upon 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and 1 Timothy 2:9-15. On the Lord’s Day, Voytek preached from Rom. 11.33-34 about the “Five Solas of the Reformed Faith.”

After lunch, the American pastors held a meeting with Elders Boy Cabugao, Raffy Martinez and Alfred Santiago. The elders presented to the RCUS pastors a tentative plan to make San Carlos church the mother church, and Las Pinas City and Laguna the daughter mission churches. San Carlos Church has elders, though it presently does not have a pastor. They are considering calling Rey Domingo to be their pastor. It may be on a trial basis with his commuting there from Manila each Lord’s Day on a six-month trial basis. After the first six months, Rev. Domingo and his wife Joy will decide whether he will stay on, and then they will move to San Carlos. So far, the congregation is able to provide only part of the pastor’s income, and would need help with the rest of the amount. The church has an established membership which is growing in number as more people show an interest and go through the membership course. God’s people are instructed from the Word to support the ministry of the church.

After the elders’ meeting, and after bidding each other a final farewell, the three U.S. pastors returned to Manila. We spent the night at the home of Raul Enriquez, the brother of Maricar Baloy. The next day we enjoyed lunch with the UCRCP pastors and their families in a shopping mall in Alabang, which is not far from Las Pinas City. It was a good opportunity for Pollema and even Voytek to meet some of the family members for the first time. On the final day of Pollema’s stay we attended a Bible study in the Trinidad Subdivision which was conducted by Rev. Puzon. Many of the members of the Las Pinas church live in this village.

A Summary of Our Trip

The Lord gave us a tremendous opportunity and liberty to teach on foundational doctrines of the Reformed Faith to our Filipino brothers: the five “Solas” of the Reformation, the Reformed view of Worship and Covenant Theology. What a benefit for all to hear, particularly for newcomers to the truth. The highlight of the conference came

appropriately toward the end with solid teaching by Rev. Pollema on Christ’s glorious headship manifested in the Presbyterian Government of the Church. It was our mutual love for the true gospel, as embodied in our Reformed creeds, which served as the primary motivation for our coming together. We enjoyed a wonderful opportunity to get acquainted with other men of like-precious faith, and to have good and relaxing fellowship together in a beautiful place with cool mild weather. Not only did Americans and Filipinos meet. But also at least two radically different language groups, Tagalog and Cebuano, from two separate islands, were brought together for the conference. Could the Lord have ordered this conference to break the barrier of cultural and linguistic “regionalism” in His Church? Rev. Puzon expressed the UCRCP’s Vision: “Together Let’s Establish the Reformed Faith in the Philippines.” Since the end of the conference, the UCRCP men expressed a desire to visit their Cebuano brothers (not to mention Brother Bicaldo in Davao City), and one day to hold a conference of their own in Mindanao.

We discussed with the elders of the UCRCP about their plans for the future. They determine to make San Carlos Church the mother church, and Las Pinas and Laguna the daughter mission congregations. The three pastors, with the help of the elders, are working to build up the membership of their churches. We did request the elders to come up with a 3-year budget to present to us. The purpose of this is to enable the RCUS to assist the UCRCP to “strategically” use the gifts of the RCUS garnered from the visit of Rev. Puzon to the U.S. in order to strengthen the mother church in San Carlos. Its consistory will be accountable for the wise distribution of those funds. Of course, it is our hope that the Lord will provide future revenue for diaconal aid to the Philippines. For your information, as of the return and reporting of Rev. Pollema, the Consistory of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter has pledged \$200.00 per month for 2008 in diaconal support for the Philippines. It is our mutual understanding that whatever financial assistance the RCUS provides is to help to “jumpstart” the UCRCP into forward motion. Dr. John L. Nevius, in his classic book *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company), rightly taught that the greatest good a Church like the RCUS may do for the work of foreign missions is to assist foreign churches to become *self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating* from the start. The Bible makes it plain that the particular church which benefits from the labors of a faithful pastor ought to provide the main source of his support (1 Corinthians 9:7-14). To interfere in that, by infusing regular outside financial assistance that replaces or significantly displaces the giving of the church, will lead to a “welfare mentality” that will tend to weaken and even destroy the church.

H. Home Missions Committee

Dear Brothers:

The Synod Home Missions Committee met at Vermillion, SD on April 3-4, 2008. Committee members present were: Revs. Harvey Opp, Dan Rogers, Mike McGee; Elders Jim Bruckschen, Lynn Goehring, Loren Huber, and Wayne Lingenfelter. Rev. Dennis Roe was unable to attend the meeting. Home Missionaries present were Revs. Wesley Brice, Robert Grossmann, Gary Mancilas, Jon Blair, and Jay Fluck.

Mission Reports

Grace Reformed Chapel, Northwest AR

Rev. Wesley Brice reports that they have good attendance at their morning worship service and evening Bible Study, with 25-30 people in attendance in the morning and 20 people in the evening. They currently have 14 communicant members, with the likelihood of 6 more joining later this year. They are also in the process of updating their website and continue to advertise in the phone book and local paper. Rev. Brice is preparing for training in an evangelism program, so that the congregation can join him in going door to door in the community. Overall, the work in Bentonville is going well. They have had slow growth, but the current families show much commitment to the work. The people are vibrant and fervent for the Lord and His Church, with a love for the reformed faith.

Providence RCUS, Vermillion, SD

Rev. Robert Grossmann reported that he and the congregation continue in the church's central task, which is to promote the Word of God. This promotion takes place through preaching, and with teaching by means of their radio broadcast, VBS, Sunday School, Christmas programs, and monthly Bible studies. All these things help to promote the reputation of Providence Reformed Church in the community, that "they are serious about the Bible." The congregation is also serious about giving, which is demonstrated in their yearly budget, as well as the \$6,000 they spent in 2007 to make some improvements on the facility. They also enjoy good fellowship, as with church meals. The congregation grew with three families joining in the last year.

Grace RCUS, Greeley, CO

Rev. Jon Blair continues to maintain a busy schedule, which is a reflection of the active church life that exists in Greeley, including adult Sunday school, youth Sunday school classes led by various church members, weekly catechism classes, mid-week prayer and Bible study, a Women's Fellowship ministry which meets every other month, a men's summer reading program through Calvin's Institutes, monthly covenant youth fellowship, and monthly college and career meetings. One family was received into membership in the past year, although one family was erased. Rev. Blair is thankful for the faithful and diligent officers that are at the work in Greeley, as well as the way in which the members have been proactive in their dealings with visitors. The congregation was blessed by the generous debt reduction offering received from the Home Missions Day of Prayer. Combined with their own giving, their building debt is currently around \$50,000, down from \$300,000 a few years ago.

High Plains RCUS, Calhan, CO

In the past year, contact with High Plains Reformed Church included a special committee of Classis meeting the congregation on April 15th, 2007, and other occasions in which members of the classis missions committee filled the pulpit for them. As the missions committee reported: "During this entire time, there was never any discussion or mention of the possibility of High Plains Reformed Church leaving the RCUS, yet on January 6th they voted to do just that". Yet, the officers stated they have no doctrinal disagreements with the RCUS or any of her ministers, but they reached a point they no longer wanted to remain with a vacant pulpit, and believed the way this problem could be solved was through joining the OPC, after one of their ministers began to preach there. As a result of their decision to leave, financial support from Synod and Classis has ceased, as the congregation expected. The matter was discussed at Classis, which removed Calhan from the church roll, and it is to be considered by the OPC. With a loss of nearly \$200,000 invested in Calhan by Synod and South Central Classis, your committee notes that Calhan was rarely represented at Classis or Synod, except by its pastor. Therefore, we propose a change in the manual regarding attendance at meetings. We would require an elder delegate or representative from each work to attend Classis and Synod at least every other year. If all meetings are missed for two consecutive years, the Synod Home Missions Committee will investigate and make a recommendation whether Synod funding of the work should continue.

Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA

Rev. Jay Fluck reports that attendance continues to be about 50. However, the Lord has blessed the work, in that some regular visitors have joined, and others are "in the process of being added to the roll". Two families joined in the last year, and 5 adults and 2 children are in that process. Currently, they have 28 communicants and 12 non-communicants. Giving is markedly up – by \$21,000 from 2006. The congregation gave over \$93,000 in 2007. The attendance on Sunday and Wednesday evenings was up considerably since an exhortation to that end was presented to the congregation by the classis sub-committee in January. The Consistory is working on securing a deacon in order to become an organized congregation. After serving there for 10 years, Rev. Fluck is seeking to minister elsewhere since he is concerned about the congregation's commitment to him personally rather than to Rehoboth Chapel.

Covenant RCUS, Chico, CA

Rev. Gary Mancilas presented a report detailing the history of the Chico work and the Consistory's views on the viability of such. The same report was presented to four members of the Western Classis Missions Committee, meeting with the Consistory at Chico, on Jan. 22, 2008. There are currently 19 communicants and 2 unconfirmed members in the congregation. A positive aspect is that the 15 people that have joined in the past 7 years are much more committed to the reformed faith, than others who left the work. Both committees note this in regard to the direction of the 2007 Synod "to justify and explain the current level of support of the Chico mission." Classis approved continued funding of the work with a 10% reduction from both Classis and Synod, and with the commitment to the same reductions of \$1,860, each year after 2009. Rev. Mancilas believes that the congregation is mature enough to handle the reductions. Evidence of this is a willingness to do more and submit to the will of the classis and synod. He was asked some pointed questions as to the make up of the membership in Chico, as well as the ways in which they are targeting Chico. His response was that the group is split 50/50 between young and old. As to advertising in the Chico area, their primary approach has been to the town of Chico, with the hopes that this outreach will trickle down to the surrounding area.

Committee Work:

1. The Classes Missions Committee Reports were reviewed and questions about such were raised before meeting with the missionaries. Although Northern Plains Classis does not have a Synod work, an assessment was done regarding Jamestown, ND. The situation was not found to warrant a new mission work at this time. The Classis continues to provide support for Covenant RCUS, Watertown, SD. Their Missions Committee continues to seek places for a mission work in NPC.
2. A profitable discussion involving the committee members and the home missionaries took place concerning the paper "Rethinking Home Missions", that had been submitted by the Covenant East Home Missions Committee.

The first item discussed was the collection model approach to home missions. This approach involves trying to start a work by appealing to those who already claim to be reformed. The consensus was that this approach has been our primary method for starting home mission works, although some exceptions could be cited. This appeal to the community is very narrow, is generally only done to reaction to our being contacted by someone interested in an RCUS work, may blunt some of the enthusiasm we should have for being proactive in missions, and the need for taking the gospel to a world of unbelievers.

Another item discussed was the approach that the denomination should take in starting new mission works. In addition to the contact approach, the denomination could send out a regional missionary or two to an area where we currently do not have a work, to see if one could take off. Or we could try to start a mission work near an already established church, which could perhaps provide a solid core group from their own members. Overall, this approach was considered the best because of the numerical, spiritual, and financial support that could be given by the established church. Other benefits are the connections that already exist with the population of the area, and the low risk for the core group, especially if the 'mother church' is located in the same metropolitan area. Considering our financial and manpower resources, this seems the best option for the RCUS.

3. The Committee discussed an overture from South Central Classis for support of Providence RCUS, Limon, CO in the amount of "\$750/month from Synod Home Missions for 2008". It was noted that a 25% drop in income had occurred recently between the offerings for Limon and Blue Cliff, which constitute a joint charge, thus raising the need for funds greater than the benevolent aid, which had been received from Classis. This discussion occurred after the consensus above was determined – to concentrate our mission efforts generally in larger areas with a mother church situation. Limon, CO, with a population of under 2,500 would not fit that model. We believe it is more appropriate for a classis to take on and fund such a mission setting, as is done with other such works in the RCUS. We are therefore recommending that South Central Classis consider fully funding Limon, which has been designated a mission work of Classis.

Annual Day of Prayer and Debt Reduction Offering

As a reminder, the Annual Day of Prayer for Missions is the second Sunday of September. The 2007 debt reduction offering was for Grace RCUS, Greeley, CO. Rev. Jon Blair expressed appreciation on behalf of the church for all the support of the RCUS congregations. Your committee recommends that the 2008 offering again be designated for Grace RCUS, Greeley, CO, since no other Synod work has building debt.

Recommendations - The SHMC recommends the following to the 262nd Synod of the RCUS:

1. That our primary approach for Synod missions should be to start mission works, beginning with a core group from our established RCUS congregations, which are located in or near metropolitan areas.
2. That Synod provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas with \$7,200 in fiscal year 2009. [A reduction of 10% from original support]
3. That Synod provide Providence RCUS, Vermillion, SD with \$5,720 in fiscal year 2009. [This is the same as in 2008, after taking a 35% reduction in 2008.]
4. That Synod provide Grace RCUS, Greeley, CO with at \$11,000 in fiscal year 2009. [A reduction of 10%]
5. That South Central Classis consider fully funding Limon, CO, since it has been designated a mission work of Classis.
6. That Synod provide Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA with \$12,500 in fiscal year 2009. [A reduction of 7%]
7. That the Western Classis Missions Committee be hereby asked to conduct a visitation to evaluate the Chico, CA work in September 2008.
8. That a visitation to Chico, CA be conducted 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.
9. That Synod provide Covenant RCUS, Chico, CA with \$16,740 in fiscal year 2009. [A reduction of 10%] (Grounds: Your committee takes note of the changes in the congregation and the enthusiasm expressed by the 15 people who are new to the work in the last 7 years. Also the congregation, under the direction of Western Classis, is committed to a 10% decrease in funding each year, starting in 2009.)
10. That the Synod Home Missions Manual require the following: “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.”
11. That visitations be specified in the Synod Home Missions Manual to involve at least two committee members “meeting with the steering committee or consistory of the work, and with a majority of the members of the work.”
12. That the Synod Home Missions Manual require the following: “An annual written report, on the progress of each unorganized work, shall be sent from the overseeing consistory to the Synod Home Missions Committee at least two (2) weeks prior to the annual meeting of the Synod Home Missions Committee.”
13. That the Synod Home Missions Manual state the following: “An elder delegate or representative from each work is required to attend Classis and Synod, at least every other year. If all meetings are missed for two consecutive years, the Synod Home Missions Committee will investigate and make a recommendation whether Synod funding of the work should continue.”
14. Classis and Synod nominations should take care not to overload missionaries with placement on various committees. Take Note.

15. That the 2008 Day of Prayer debt reduction offering be designated for Grace RCUS, Greeley, CO.

16. That each RCUS congregation is hereby urged to pray for at least one Synod Mission Work each Lord’s Day.

17. That the Classes be encouraged to set aside money for future mission works in their guidelines.

18. That Synod budget \$40,000 for future mission works.

19. That \$7,000 be budgeted for committee expenses.

20. The 2009 Home Missions budget, if approved as recommended, would be \$100,160, a reduction from \$109,087 for 2008. Take Note.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Harvey Opp, Rev. Mike McGee, Rev. Dan Rogers, Rev. Dennis Roe, Elder Lynn Goehring,
Elder Jim Bruckschen, Elder Wayne Lingenfelter, Elder Loren Huber*

I. Interchurch Relations Committee

Esteemed Brethren:

Your Committee did the principle body of its work via e-mail and telephone contact though there was some face to face meetings conducted at the sub-committee level as will become apparent below.

Business from the 2007 Synod of the RCUS

Your committee received the following assignments from the 261st Synod of the RCUS in 2007 (Abstract p. 68)

1. That the proposed changes to the paper on Biblical Church Unity be given more work, and that the IRC report to the next Synod.
2. That the IRC be mandated to gather information on the Reformed Churches in South Africa (hereafter RCSA), so that a recommendation for a response to their invitation may be made at the next Synod.

3. . . . that we not vote this year (on the reception of the Heritage Reformed Congregations into membership of NAPARC) and that the matter be referred to the permanent Interchurch Relations committee (sic) to gather more information from the Heritage Reformed Congregations to be brought before the Synod next year.

With regard to #1 above, the Church Unity Report, together with its recommendations appears as a separate document submitted with this IRC report.

With regard to #2 above, gathering information on the RCSA, your committee established a sub-committee to meet with representatives of the GCSA June 1 9th, 2007 in Sioux City, IA. The report of the chair of this sub committee to the IRC, Rev. George Syms, is as follows:

July 9th, 2007

After many contacts with Prof. Dr. Douw Breed of the RCSA, which had begun in November, 2006, we were able to finally meet on the 19th of June, 2007, in Sioux City, Iowa. Due to a lack of available committee members in this locale and on this date, and after consulting with Chairman Ron Potter, I invited Dr. Robert Grossmann to be an adjunct member of the sub-committee for this occasion. Br. Grossmann had met representatives of these churches in years past and so was somewhat familiar with their history. What occasioned this meeting is the action of the RCSA at their Synod meeting of January 2006, which was to invite the RCUS into ecclesiastical fellowship, or as we say, fraternal relations.

We had a cordial meeting with Dr. Breed, who communicated to us the strong desire of the RCSA to enter into relations with us. Some of the reasoning included the common interest in the work of Rev. Eric Kayayan, who is a minister in the Rietvallei Reformed Church in Pretoria. He is under the oversight of the Rietvallei Consistory with respect to his labors in the French Broadcast of Reformed Faith and Life.

From our side we discussed the expansion of contacts in that part of Africa; especially since the RCSA have an interest in the brothers laboring in the Congo, in the ERCC.

Dr. Breed assured us that more materials will be sent to us about the Reformed Churches in South Africa. In our discussions, Dr. Grossmann pointed out the RCUS' concern for the Biblical and Confessional integrity of the church. Dr. Breed also mentioned the rescinding at the RCSA Synod in 2006 of a recent vote permitting women into the office of deacon. The contacts with the ICRC and the churches gathered in Pretoria in late 2005 strengthened their hand in this positive change.

Dr. Breed placed in my hand a letter of invitation from the RCSA regarding ecclesiastical fellowship. This letter should probably be forwarded to the executive committee of Synod. I will forward it per the instructions of our Chairman. In the meantime we will be gathering materials on the history of the RCSA, as well as on its confessions and polity.

Your committee observes that we have not received the requested documents from the RCSA and therefore at present can bring no studied recommendation before the Synod for its consideration regarding this invitation. Your committee recommends the following.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the IRC continue to seek to gather information from the RCSA in order to bring a recommendation regarding the RCSA invitation into ecclesiastical fellowship before the RCUS Synod at its 2009 meeting.

Regarding #3 above, the gathering of information regarding the Heritage Reformed Congregations. Your Committee established a sub-committee consisting of Elder Wayne Johnson as Chair and Rev. Robert Grossmann to attend a Classis meeting of the HRC, meet with the brethren of the HRC, and to report their findings. Their report is as follows:

October 24, 2007

Rev. Robert Grossman and Elder Wayne Johnson, a member of the Interchurch Relations Committee, had the opportunity to visit the Classis meeting of the Heritage Reformed Congregations in Chilliwack, B.C. and believe that we have gathered sufficient information for the ICR to make a recommendation regarding their NAPARC application.

We arrived with a measure of misgivings, but the reception and the answers we received largely dispelled concerns that had been expressed to us. It was readily apparent that these brethren are quite distinct from the Netherlands Reformed Church, from which most of them came. While the latter have, in the opinion of many, an inordinately introspective view of the Christian life that prevents most of their members from partaking of the Lord's Supper, the Heritage Reformed brethren are, on the other hand, self-consciously attempting to reverse that in their own churches with a good deal of success.

It would be accurate to say that vestiges of the old ways linger, particularly among the elderly members, but that the overwhelming majority of new members come to the table. One pastor told me, "Before, we might receive 10 catechists and only 1 would commune. Today, it is the reverse."

They realize that they continue to be in transition on these issues and are currently working through the practical issues. One area in which we would take exception to their current practice is sanctioning marriage and/or baptism of a son or daughter when neither parent is attending the Lord's Supper. In our own denomination, continued abstention from the table results in exhortation, admonition and formal discipline, so we do not have this problem, but in their case, it leaves them open to the charge of practicing a half-way covenant.

While we found this practice to be problematic, what we did not find was a hardened defense of their current practice. Rather, they seemed much more open to discuss it than we might have imagined. What is important is that they appear to be seeking a confessionally sound answer, while showing loving regard for their elderly members.

There is a move underway to study the Westminster Standards with the end in mind of adopting them along with the Three Forms. We privately discouraged that, but since it was not part of our mission, did not spend a great deal of time on the issue. The reason stated in their classical documents is that they are seeking more definitive creedal statements with which to oppose the New Perspective and Federal Vision theologies.

We enquired about their use of the term 'Puritan' and were told that they appreciate the Puritans' emphasis on the necessity of repentance and godly living. While this emphasis is shared by all of the elders and ministers with whom we spoke, the linkage to Puritanism, per se, was referred primarily by Dr. Beeke. When discussing doctrinal issues, virtually all references went back to the confessions or such theologians as Hodge, rather than the Puritans. Incidentally, the report that their publishing company, magazine and seminary all bore the name 'Puritan' is inaccurate. Their Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary is the only institution that includes the word 'Puritan.' At the same time the use of the Puritan terminology, experiential with respect to preaching and religion, especially by HRC leader, Dr. Beeke, places a certain slant on how biblical preaching is viewed, mainly by viewing the experiences of the Bible's believers as normative for all Christians.

Both of us had the privilege of staying in the homes of local members and found the families with which we stayed truly delightful. They were gracious, warm and deeply committed to the Reformed faith. We felt very much at home.

We enquired as to why the Heritage Reformed Churches cooperated with the Free Reformed in training ministers, but stopped short of union. The answer is two-fold. On the one hand, there is simply the history of the Free Reformed's 'liberalism' that holds over from the Netherlander days. For example, though it is not confessional to either group, the Free Reformed might have a television set while the Heritage Reformed tend not to. The major reason, however, has to do with a slightly different view of the covenant. We cannot say with certainty that the specifics of what follows accurately describe the nuanced positions, but it seems the Free Reformed strongly hold to the position that the covenant of Redemption is made by the Father with the Son, while the Heritage Reformed are less precise, with some saying the same thing while others might say it is a covenant with the elect mediated by the Son, etc. The Heritage brethren suggested it was semantics, but since the Free Reformed make it a distinctive, they resolve the issue by each having the doctrine of the covenant taught by their own professors to their own students. It would not be surprising if they continue to move closer to union in the years ahead.

We were also asked to investigate the cause and circumstances of their separation from the NRC. It appears that the issue was, first of all, the movement among the men who eventually separated to make the Gospel much more central in their ministries. More and more of their members were coming to the Lord's Table and there was clearly a difference in perspective manifesting itself. Also, it is clear that Dr. Joel Beeke was a lightning rod in the dispute.

Beeke had been granted an ecclesiastical divorce a number of years earlier, had remarried and had several children. An overture was introduced to ban any office bearer from serving who had been divorced. This would have affected only Beeke and, we believe, one deacon in another church. The synod meeting was being held at the church pastored by Beeke in Grand Rapids.

Those pursuing the ordinance had the local consistory questioned who indicated that they would honor the action of synod as long as it was in keeping with the confessions and the Word of God. The synod threatened that they would depose not only Beeke, but all nineteen members of the consistory, if they did not agree to honor the rule. The consistory refused and its members were deposed along with Rev. Beeke. When the synod leaders suggested the building then was owned by the synod, the consistory succeeded in their

efforts to get the synod to move to another facility and were able to maintain possession. Two or three of the deposed consistory members subsequently went with the synod and a new church was formed. The congregation voted 78% to withdraw, resulting in the loss of more than 200 members (leaving over 700 members). Thus while the occasion for this separation from the NRC was Rev. Beeke's status, there were clearly theological issues that would eventually have caused the separation in any case.

While it was obviously painful to rehearse the events of those days, those we spoke with did so calmly and without acrimony.

It is our belief that the Heritage Reformed Churches are well within the mainstream of orthodox Reformed churches and are, in fact, quite close to us in many ways. They hold unreservedly to six-day creation and are adamantly opposed to New Perspective and Federal Vision theology. The licentiate who stayed at the same home with Elder Johnson was enthusiastically Van Tillian, which spoke well of his training at PRTS. Culturally, they are more outwardly conservative than we might find typical in RCUS churches, and there is a difference of emphasis on experience.

In conclusion, it was abundantly clear that the Heritage Reformed Congregations are evidently and self-consciously distinct from the NRC. We have fraternal relations with a number of church bodies because we are different from them. Were we the same, there would be no reason for separate existence. In like manner, we would note differences with the brethren of the Heritage Reformed churches, but those differences are in many cases less important than those which separate us from the OPC and the RPCNA (exclusive psalmsody).

It is our belief that these brethren represent a genuine expression of the historic confessional Reformed faith and are our fellow-laborers for the kingdom. They would greatly benefit from more contact with the conservative Reformed community, particularly those of us who share the Three Forms as standards. Your committee, after considering the above report, recommends the following:

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the Synod of the RCUS affirm the reception of the Heritage Reformed Congregations into the membership of NAPARC.

Relations with Churches in North America Canadian Reformed Churches

Your Committee was unable to secure a delegate to attend the General Synod of the CanRef Churches held at Smithers, BC, Canada May 9-22, 2007. A letter of fraternal greeting was sent by the IRC. Synod Chatham in 2004 had mandated their Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA) to discuss with the IRC of the RCUS the topics of Lord's Day observance, fencing of the Lord's Table, the Lord's Supper to shut-ins, the RCUS Church Unity Paper and the promotion of their Theological College.

Prior to General Synod Smithers representatives of the RCUS Interchurch Relations Committee attending NAPARC 2004, met with representatives of the CCCA observing NAPARC, to discuss these issues and to explain in particular our observance of the Lord's Day (not all our churches have two Lord's Day services); our practice of fencing the Lord's Table and our practice of providing the Lord's Supper to shut ins. This latter topic was spoken of in the light of Belgic Confession Article 35, para. 5 where it is stated of the sacrament . . . we receive this sacrament in the assembly of the people of God.

General Synod Smithers ruled, in light of considering their CCCA report, that these matters have . . . *been addressed sufficiently* (Acts of General Synod Smithers 2007 p. 101).

General Synod Smithers also noted your committee's inquiry of the CCCA as to their position re: Norman Shepherd in light of our firm stand rejecting this teaching. Synod also noted the CCCA's response to Synod Smithers: *The CCCA comments that we need simply to keep to the confessions and make no statements beyond them.* (Acts p. 101).

A, Interchurch Relations Committee sub-committee consisting of Rev. George Syms, Rev. Maynard Koerner and Rev. Ron Potter met with the CCCA in November 13th, 2007 in conjunction with NAPARC. Present from the CanRC were Rev. Eric Kampen, Mr. Jacob

Kuik, Rev. R. Pot and Rev. Holtvluwer. The CCCA reiterated the actions of their Synod with respect to the RCUS, and advised us that the Synod voted to continue their relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCUS under the adopted rules. They will await the outcome of our Church Unity Paper. Their Committee also provided copies of the *Acts of Synod* Smithers to your committee and as well as the reports to General Synod Smithers from The Committee on Relations With Churches Abroad (CRCA) which included their reports on matters germane to the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated).

Mutual encouragement was given for pulpit exchanges and the exchange of delegates at Classis assemblies of our respective denominations. It was agreed that our delegations would endeavor to meet with one another once a year either at our Synod meeting or in conjunction with NAPARC.

An e-mail communication was received from the CCCA February 28th, 2008 expression their continued interest in our Church Unity Paper. The following comment from that email illustrated the continuing interest of the CanRef Churches with respect to the unity paper:

. . . We would like to say that this paper is not to be adopted by us but by you, of course. We have tried to encourage you to use the language of the Three Forms of Unity which you have in common with us. Some of your ministers and membership maybe more familiar with the Westminster Confession and may even prefer it. We do not wish to make a judgment about that. Neither do we wish to give the impression that the wording must be to our satisfaction. The point is to assist one another for our mutual benefit and to the glory of our Lord. It is our desire to assist you in choosing a formulation that reflects the content and wording of the Three Forms of Unity as that has been used in the continental Reformed tradition.

This e-mail also advised your committee that because of limited resources they will be unable to send a delegation to our 2008 Synod. Your Committee herein expresses its appreciation for the fraternal relationship we have with the CanRC and for the openness of our communication.

The next General Synod meeting of the CanRef churches will be in Burlington, On, Can. in 2010.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church

The following is the report of Rev. Tracy Gruggett, fraternal delegate to the 2007 General Assembly of the OPC.

March 28, 2008

It was my privilege to represent the Reformed Church in the United States at the 74th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. I went there as member of Interchurch Relations Committee (RCUS). G.A. 2007 was held in Sioux Center, Iowa from June 13-20. I attended proceedings for only two days, June 18-19. I was allowed to bring greetings and address the body the morning of the 19th, relating to the body our appreciation and respect of the OPC as well as giving a brief history of our denomination for the newer members.

Items of note: Statistically the OPC by the end of 2006 had 28,486 members, an all time high. At the time of G.A. there were 255 congregations (with an average size of 112 members), not including 57 active mission works. The collective giving is up 12.6% from 2005.

On the foreign missions front, the OPC is presently working in 10 fields, including Ethiopia, Haiti, Japan, Korea, Canada (Quebec), Suriname, Uganda, and Ukraine.

G.A. has for 18 years now been in the process of revising its Directory for Public worship. This work has been carried out by the Committee on Revision to the Directory of Public Worship. This year was a big year for G.A. for the committee would be presenting its work for approval. This work is titled Amended Proposed Revised Version of the Directory for Public Worship (APRV). A procedure was adopted at the outset that require that the APRV be consider *seriatim*. The body worked its way through five of 18 sections.

The remaining sections have been referred to 75thG.A. for its consideration.

G.A. considered a committee report concerning the propriety of receiving illegal aliens into church membership. The committee advised that each session should determine the credibility of person's faith on a case by case basis, and "not, determine in advance that a person's illegal status automatically disqualifies him from membership in the church, [nor] would it be appropriate to determine in advance that an illegal status is on no consequence to a session's determination as to whether one has made a credible profession of faith." This report is very thorough and would prove helpful to RCUS consistories having to deal with this issue.

Several judicial cases came before G.A. I sat in one of these involving an excommunication that was in the end upheld by G.A. Though the case was emotional and stressful to all, it was nevertheless, a joy to see these brothers take seriously the call to church discipline.

I would also mention that they OPC has made available a short book called, *The God-Breathed Scriptures*, by E J Young, in celebration of the centennial of his birth. Apparently the book is comprised of four recently rediscovered lectures on the subject of Scripture.

I was treated well by the brethren, seeing many familiar faces, and it was good especially to spend with a few brothers from my seminary days. Some of the brothers expressed their appreciation of the RCUS.

The next General Assembly of the OPC will be held June 9-16, 2008 at Tacoma, Washington. Your committee plans to have a delegate present.

Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America

The report of the Rev. Hank Bowen, delegate to the RPCNA Synod 2007 follows

After some adventurous routing around the country to get to Pittsburgh I was able to arrive in time for the opening morning session on Tuesday. I observed the general business and order customary to the RPCNA. On Wednesday I was allowed to address the body for five minutes along with delegates from other fraternal bodies.

My comments focused upon similarities of our two bodies that form the basis for our fraternal relations in a real sense. As such my report on my visit is perhaps best made by the report I made to the RPCNA body which I include here for your consideration.

Dear brothers in the RPCNA,

It is a great joy to be in your midst this day and bring you fraternal greetings from the Reformed Church in the United States. Because the time is short I want to give you a brief update on where we, as your sister church, find ourselves by God's divine providence so that you may, not only see that we have many things in common, but so that you might also pray for us as we pray for you.

The Reformed churches find themselves confronted on two sides by challenges that we must rise to the occasion in being faithful stewards in God's Kingdom. From your deliberations I sense that you too understand and are seeking to address these challenges.

The first challenge is well set forth for us in the Epistle of Jude verse 5 when he addresses the people of God, – *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

You have formed a study committee to address the attack on the historic understanding of the foundational Christian doctrine of justification by faith alone through grace alone. The RCUS has been addressing the rise of theological aberrations concerning the doctrine of justification for the past several years. It began with a paper discussing the teachings of N.T.

Wright in his new perspectives on Paul. This year we concluded a study on the key figures of the Federal Vision controversy and passed recommendations regarding the aberrant views of baptism, the covenant, and justification being promoted by these men.

This is the first challenge, but the reformed and presbyterian churches have always been diligent in guarding the orthodoxy of the doctrines of the Christian faith. To this challenge I am confident that you will make a significant contribution in speaking out against these errors.

There is another point, however, that I believe is fundamental to the fraternity that we share and that is that we both share a united belief in our common salvation. Often we think of what is unique to each of our bodies, but I will leave here this week convinced even more of just how much we hold dear in common concerning our catholic faith.

The other challenge that we both seem to be facing seems to be a little more difficult for us to find the solution to. It is the need to become fruitful in the area of evangelism of the lost. The Great Commission is our calling. And while we seem to be good at the discipling part of those who are comfortable with the reformed faith, how to effectively compel the unchurched to come in out of the hi-ways and bi-ways seems to elude us. In fact to some degree it seems as though for some time this really was not a high priority for our existence – after all we are the guardians of orthodoxy!

Thus, a challenge has become very apparent to us. Since 1986 we have understood the need to grow as a denomination. We became very aggressive in the area of mission so that having only 26 congregations in 1986 we today stand at over 50 even though several of our old country churches have closed their doors during this span of time. New mission works are being started primarily targeting population areas changing the character of the RCUS from a primarily mid-west agricultural denomination to one far more urban in make up. But as we focused on starting new mission works and become somewhat effective in doing so we seemed to have miscalculated somewhat.

The RCUS seemed to have fallen into the dreamy concept that with home mission fields white and ripe to be harvested that if we simply built churches the people would come. In a kind of field of dreams motto - if you build it they will come we have continued to start new works – but surprisingly 20 years later and twice the congregations we have the same communicant membership. Year after year our statistics total for adult baptisms can be added on one hand.

This year the area of outreach through evangelism seemed to be the driving theme in the reports of pastor after pastor and classis after classis. But while everyone senses the need to do evangelism there is also the question of how to do evangelism. This is the great challenge before us. We must gain the boldness in every church, by every member to be willing to win the lost with a bold witness for Christ by both our good words and our good works. We need to teach our people how to evangelize. The mission of the church will only bear fruit when we who have been given as gifts to the church teach our members how to engage in the work of the ministry of Christ.

Recognizing that the time is upon us to evaluate how to reach this current wicked and perverse generation with the gospel new avenues, new ways of thinking are being considered – not at the expense of the reformed faith – but in terms of the new forms of communication. It is time to replace the archaic approach of yellow page ads and come into the computer generation of websites and modern technologies. To that end the Permanent Publications committee, so named in the day of the mimeograph machine, has been renamed the Publications and Promotions Committee with a focus on developing outreach materials for the local congregations and integrating an effective use of website ministry. The older generation effectively contended for the faith in defending her from modernism and liberalism, but it may well be the calling of this present generation to become the aggressors in pursuing revival and reformation of the community and the church.

However, there is another challenge confronting the RCUS. The first generation of reformed warriors that came out of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and in many ways are responsible for the good things in the RCUS are beginning to retire. To

date we have five vacant pulpits and another soon to open up as our long-standing Synod president Rev. Vern Pollema intends to retire before the end of the year. But we have no ministers to take these calls. We have no students coming out of seminary to fill these pulpits. While these are matters of great concern, we can take great confidence that our God will provide for His church.

What lies ahead for the RCUS? A new generation must now rise up and begin to fill the shoes of these great men of the faith. Will the new generation be up to the task? By God's grace - yes!

Brothers, thank you for the opportunity to represent the RCUS to this body. I enjoyed myself and was delighted that there were several old friends who were there either as delegates or fraternal representatives. I sensed from my interactions that we are much closer in our perspectives and the work of the ministry of Christ than before I attended this Synod.

The next Synod meeting of the RPCNA will be held June 23-27, 2008 at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA. Your committee plans to have a delegate present.

United Reformed Churches of North America

The Rev. Herman Van Stedum's was delegated to the 2007 meeting of the Synod of the URCNA. His report follows.

April 1st, 2008

Esteemed Brothers:

I had the honor and privilege of being the Fraternal Delegate to the URC which met at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Ill. I had the added pleasure of riding with URC delegates to and from Holland Michigan to the Synod meeting. I arrived on Tuesday July 10 and was able to attend all the sessions.

Our esteemed brothers in the URC attended to the business of Christ's Church with dignity and submission to the word of God, and extended true hospitality to me as delegate of the RCUS and co-worker with them in Christ's kingdom. The facilities at Trinity and the hospitality were also exemplary.

On Wednesday, they got down to the business before them. They dealt with the reception of members from other denominations and extent to which they must be in conformity to the teachings and practices of the URC and if members coming from other denominations in close ecclesiastical fellowship needed to be examined by the elders. They adopted a position looser than ours on this matter. It now needs to be ratified by two thirds of the consistories.

As relates to the military chaplaincy they are voted to see associate membership in the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel.

They also approved the forming of a new Classis to be called Pacific Northwest Classis.

I was able to address them on behalf of the RCUS, and extended our greeting to them urging them to faithful unto God and fervent in mission work. I reported on the work of our committees on Federal Vision and on Justification by faith alone.

On Thursday they dealt with these matters with an overture which they had received which really was an overture that they adopt the stance the RCUS has taken. This matter involved considerable discussion. While they did their own work on the subject I rejoiced that their statements clearly and firmly upheld the Biblical position as we hold to it rightly in the RCUS. It was also very clear that they are committed to Ecumenical Relations. Their goal however is always structural unity.

While there are evident differences between our denominations, it is wonderfully evident that they are laboring with us in the furtherance of God's kingdom in submission to Christ and the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

The next Synod meeting of the URCNA will be held in 2010

North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council

NAPARC met for its 33rd annual meeting at the Ramada Inn in Newark NJ, November 13th-14th, 2007.

The meeting was hosted by the Korean American Presbyterian Church which also hosted the NAPARC delegates and observers at a Korean Restaurant in Palisades, on the evening of the 13th, and who provided for the breakfast on the 14th. The Rev. Steve Park, a minister in the KAPC and an instructor at Westminster Theological Seminary presented a lecture on the evening of the 13th entitled *Understanding Korean Presbyterian Distinctives: Marking the Centenary of the Great Revival of 1907*. This lecture was very well received by delegates and observers.

The Nine member churches of NAPARC were all represented by their delegations. The RCUS was represented by Rev. George Syms, Rev. Maynard Koerner and Rev. Ron Potter. Six of the nine member churches reported affirmatively the results of their Synod/Assembly vote regarding the reception of the Heritage Reformed Congregations into NAPARC membership. Three have yet to report (the NAPARC constitutional window is three year, the HRC was therefore received making the number of churches in NAPARC to be ten.

Present also were three observer churches, the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRef), the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) and the Presbyterian Reformed Church). There were a total of 39 delegates and observers present.

The Rev. George Knight III (OPC) was elected Chairman with Rev. Maynard Koerner being re-elected Treasurer and the Rev. Ron Potter re-elected secretary.

Reports were read from all the delegate and observer churches with prayer offered for each church after its report was discussed by the members of the Council.

Old Business:

1. The Council took definitive steps to deal with a perennial problem and that is the properly designed and run Web site. A Web Site Committee of three was established to oversee the site (www.naparc.org) and appoint a Web master. The Council also instructed the secretary to be the recipient of church announcements and to forward these to the Web site Committee for inclusion on the site.

2. After several years of work and discussion the following statement was adopted relative to Women in the Military: *That NA PARC respond to inquiries regarding NA PARC's position on the matter by listing the relevant adopted statements of member churches including their grounds.*

New Business:

1. An application for NAPARC membership from the Canadian Reformed Churches was discussed and accepted. This will be sent to the member churches for ratification. Documents germane to this application are appended to this IRC report under appendix #1.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the application for NAPARC membership by the Canadian Reformed Churches be approved.

2. An application for NAPARC membership from the Presbyterian Reformed Church was discussed and accepted. This will be sent to the member churches for ratification. Documents germane to this application are appended to this IRC report under appendix #2.

Recommendation #4: That the application for NAPARC membership by the Presbyterian Reformed Church be approved.

3. A communication was received from Rev. David Hall regarding celebration of the Calvin Quincentenary. The event will take place in Europe beginning in Paris July 1, 2009 and ending in Geneva Friday July 10th, 2009. There will be numerous lectures and sermons by prominent Reformed ministers in various historical settings. NAPARC agreed to pass information concerning this event on to its member churches. Further information can be accessed through the link on the NAPARC web site or on the Calvin500 web site which is

www.calvin500.org. A multi volume publication of the messages of the Calvin500 is planned by P & R.

4. A communication was also received from an individual offering to develop and publicize both in electronic and print form the location of NAPARC churches together with information on each of the churches. NAPARC declined this offer with thanks citing in its discussion security reasons as well as the presence of NAPARC's own web site with links to member churches.

5. A communication from St Marc's church of the ERQ regarding their involvement in the promotion of the Huguenot History of Quebec during the 400th anniversary of Quebec City in 2008 was presented by the ERQ delegation and discussed by the Council. The Council voted \$6,000 out of its funds to help finance this project. Information on this project is available at www.naparc.org.

The next meeting of NAPARC will be held at Greenville Theological Seminary in Taylors, SC November 1st-12th, 2008. The OPC will be the host. NAPARC also voted to extend its adjournment time from noon on the second day to 3:00 PM to accommodate the business before it in the light of the increasing number of member churches.

Relations With Churches Abroad Reformed Church in the Netherlands (Liberated)

Your committee had no direct contact with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Lib) (GKN-Lib). The GKN-Lib has dealt with several issues over the last years including the relationship between the proportion of psalms and hymns in their songbook as well as the content of the hymns; a re-formulation of the form for marriage; the application of the fourth commandment regarding divorce and remarriage and the Sabbath observance. Your committee, a few years ago, in response to a request from the GKNLib did begin some preliminary work on one of these issues, that of marriage and divorce, translated some documents, but found that before its work was completed the GKN-Lib had already moved on at the synodical level so our work was abandoned.

In discussion with the CCCA of the Can Ref churches your committee notes that these brethren have stayed right on top of issues in the GKN-Lib and have responded to each of them coming to the conclusion that in spite of some lingering questions and the need for ongoing monitoring *The GKN have not deviated from the scriptures or confessions. (Acts of General Synod Smithers p. 135)*. Their view is that if there are deviations in the GKN-Lib these will become manifest in due time.

One major development in the GKN-Lib in the few last years is a division within its ranks and the establishment of a new federation of churches called The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands-Restored. An appeal has been made by the GKN-Lib to these brethren to re-unite with their brothers and sisters. As it presently stands your committee understands from our Canadian brethren that this overture has been rejected.

Your committee notes that since the Synod of the GKN-Lib, which meets every three years, meets a day or two a week over several months, this makes us dependent on official publications which are often in Dutch requiring translation which is problematic. Coupled with this is the perennial man power problem of getting a delegation to the GKN-Lib synod (since their time to meet delegates from churches abroad and hear their reports is in an around our own Synod meeting) and arranging for Interchurch Relations Committees from both our denominations to meet. Our limited resources in terms of men and money hinder us. We are having difficulty at present in securing a delegate to attend the 2008 Synod of the GKN-Lib. If no delegate is available your committee will send a letter of greeting.

Your committee notes that the Dutch brethren are more and more making English translations of their synodical decisions available on the Web. We are therefore hopeful that at the very least we can monitor the GKN-Lib through these official documents and report more fully to the 2009 synod of the RCUS.

Churches in the Congo and Kenya

Interaction with these brethren is done through the Permanent Foreign Missions Committee and not through Interchurch Relations.

International Conference of Reformed Churches

The next ICRC conference will be held October 15-22 at Christchurch, New Zealand, hosted by the Reformed churches of NZ. The theme for the conference is *The Vitality of the Reformed Faith*. Among papers to be presented are the following:

1. Facing the Challenge of the Charismatic Movement (Rev. Dr. George Knight III OPC).
2. Facing the Challenge of Individualism in Church Life (Rev. Dr. Nelson D. Kloosterman (URCNA)
3. Facing the Challenge from Islam (Dr. Frank van Dalen (ARPC)

Your Committee notes that it reported to you in 2002 a proposed constitutional change for the ICRC regarding requirements for membership that was instigated by the RCUS, (2002 Abstract of the RCUS p. 42-43). This change was designed to make the requirements for membership in the ICRC more definitive. This change was to be voted on by ICRC member churches and reported to the ICRC in 2005. Apparently only one church reported its vote and it was not the RCUS. We didn't vote. Our understanding as a committee (and apparently that of other churches) was that this matter was to be referred to the 2005 ICRC meeting and then come to the churches for action. This was reflected in our 2002 report. We were wrong. It should have come before our Synod in 2002 for a vote and a report on the vote sent to ICRC 2005.

Therefore before us presently is the proposed 2001 constitutional change to be voted on and submitted to the ICRC 2009.

The original (and present) article regarding requirement for ICRC membership is: Article IV- Membership.

1. Those churches shall be admitted as members which:

a. Faithfully adhere to the Reformed Faith stated in the confessional documents listed in the Basis, and whose confessional standards agree with said Reformed Faith.

The proposed change is as follows:

Article IV- Membership.

1. Those churches shall be admitted as members which:

a. Adhere and are faithful to one or more of the confessional standards stated in the Basis, as each church has adopted one or more of these as its own standards, or adhere and are faithful to Reformed Confessions which are equivalent in content to the Confessions listed in the Basis (Art. 2), and which Confession (or Confessions) shall be proposed to be added to Article II of the Constitution.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That the proposed ICRC Constitutional change regarding membership admission be approved and that the Stated Clerk of the RCUS advise the Corresponding Secretary of the ICRC of the results of the vote.

The proceedings of the ICRC, inclusive of the papers presented, are available from Inheritance Publications. The Minutes of the ICRC are available online along with other information regarding the ICRC at www.icrconline.org.

Your committee plans to have a delegation of two ministers present for the 2009 ICRC

Proposed Budget

1. Delegation to NAPARC 2008, Taylors, SC	\$2,500
2. Delegate to the OPC GA June 2007, Tacoma WA	600
3. Delegate to the RPCNA Synod June, 2007 Beaver Falls, PA	600
4. Delegate to the GKN-Lib May 2008 (\$1,000 allocated in 2007)	500
5. Delegation to the ICRC October 2008 (\$2,000 allocated in 2007)	1,000
6. Interchurch Relations Committee Meeting (if needed, none in 2007)	3,000

7. Interchurch Relations Committee expenses	500
Total	8,700

This is a reduction of \$1,700 from the approved budget of 2007.

Respectfully Submitted

Rev. Ron Potter, Rev. Maynard Koerner, Rev. Tracy Gruggett, Rev. George Horner, Rev. George Syms, Elder Wayne Johnson, Elder Vern Ochsner, Elder Jim Snyder, Elder Jim Connelly

Biblical Principles of Church Unity

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

Your Committee was mandated by the Synod of the RCUS in 2003 as follows: *That the IRC make revisions in the RCUS paper on church unity to bring the language of the paper more in line with the language of the Three Forms of Unity.* (Abstract, 257th Synod, 2003, Standing Ecumenical Report, recommendation #5, p.72).

Your Committee presented proposals for changes in 2006. The Synod at that time sent it back to the Committee to do further work. Your Committee once again is proposing changes to the RCUS paper on Church Unity as per the mandate received in 2003. Our approach in this report is to meet the mandate of Synod, but not to go beyond it. What follows is a brief sketch of the reason for this change, the fulfillment of the mandate reflected in the paper following and two recommendations concerning it.

In 1998 the Synod of the RCUS affirmed the 5 Principles contained in the paper presented by the Special Committee to study the *Biblical Principles of Church Unity* (Abstract, 253rd, Synod, 1998, p.49). Your committee has operated in terms of these principles but has found that without the body of the paper as grounds, the principles have no synodically approved support. It would greatly facilitate the work of the Interchurch relations Committee to be able to use the *whole paper* as the RCUS position.

The Committee is well aware that there are different terms used by churches with whom we have Fraternal Relations, such as denomination vs. federation or Classis & Synod vs. Presbytery and General Assembly. We believe it is best for us to use our language in our position paper.

As to the changes proposed, four observations need to be made. First, the original paper *Biblical Principles of Church Unity* appears below with portions proposed for change or deletion are identified with an overstrike and any additions immediately following in {brackets}. Second, in the changes we are presenting there is a more complete reference to the special study committee to study and defend RCUS polity, referred to in the commentary on *Principle #1*. Third, a definition of organic union as adopted by NAPARC which was not available to the original study committee has been added under *Principle #4*. Fourth, under *Principle #3* we have added a paragraph acknowledging that in their practice of the three marks faithful churches are more or less pure.

[The paper below is as the Synod adopted it, with all committee changes incorporated into the text. – clerk]

Biblical Principles of Church Unity

The attribute of unity in the church is a necessary doctrine because God has constituted the church to be the undivided body of our Lord Jesus Christ. The necessary unity of the body of Christ is analogous to the union of the members of the human body. In describing that analogy, the Apostle Paul declares, “As the body is one, and has many members; and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many” (1 Cor. 12:12-14). It is the will of God “that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffers all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the

members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Cor. 12:25-27).

Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for the unity of the church in His intercessory prayer when He petitioned His heavenly Father, saying, “Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me” (John 17:20-21).

Therefore, it is the duty of the individual church members as well as congregations and denominations to strive for unity in the body of Christ, based upon Biblical principles, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:3-6).

It is the desire of the Reformed Church in the United States to endeavor “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” so that unity of the church may become a reality in the church today. The 251st Synod of the RCUS resolved, “That a special study committee be formed by Synod to study the Biblical doctrine of the unity of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and to formulate a statement of principles on the unity of the church to be used by the Reformed Church in the United States to govern the establishment of relationships with other churches and that this completed work be presented to the 252nd Synod of the RCUS” (1997 Abstract, p. 57).

The task of the special committee as mandated by the RCUS Synod is twofold: (1) to study the Biblical doctrine for church unity as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, and (2) to formulate a statement of Biblical principles to govern the establishment of relationships with other churches.

Upon studying the doctrine of church unity, your committee has formulated five biblical principles to govern the establishment of relationships with other churches. The first principle of church unity requires an understanding of the nature of the church as set forth in the Scriptures. There are many societies in the world that assume to themselves the name of the church, but have become the very synagogues of Satan.

PRINCIPLE 1: In establishing relationships with other churches, there must be a mutual agreement regarding the fundamental nature of the church, including the three marks of the church as set forth in the Word of God.

In defining the fundamental nature of the church the Belgic Confession states, “We believe and profess one catholic or universal church, which is a holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit...”

“Furthermore, this holy church is not confined, bound or limited to a certain place or to certain persons but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same Spirit” (Art. 27).

“We believe that we ought diligently and circumspectly to discern from the Word of God which is the true church since all sects which are in the world assume to themselves the name of the church. But we speak not here of hypocrites, who are mixed in the church with the good, yet are not of the church, though externally in it; but we say that the body and communion of the true church must be distinguished from all sects that call themselves the church.”

“The marks by which the true church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if it maintains the administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ: if church discipline is exercised in punishing sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the church. Hereby the true church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself” (Art. 29).

“We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and outside of it there is no salvation, that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may

be, ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself; but that all men are in duty-bound to join and unite themselves with it; maintaining the unity of the Church; submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore all those who separate themselves from the same or do not join themselves to it act contrary to the ordinance of God.” (Art. 28)]

The Heidelberg Catechism also speaks of the nature of the church when in speaking of the Holy Catholic Church it says, “the Son of God out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life a chosen communion in the unity of the true faith.” (Q/A54)

Also in speaking of the baptism of infants the Heidelberg Catechism says, “they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God, . . . they are also by Baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be ingrafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers, . . .” (Q/A74)

The Canons of Dort also speak of the church when they say, “. . . so that the elect in due time may be gathered together into one, and that there never may be wanting a Church composed of believers. . . .” (Second Head, Article 9)

The Church is an assembly of God’s people who look to Jesus alone for salvation. This assembly consists of believers from the beginning to the end of the world, and are not limited to race or nation or locale. True believers must also be members of a local, organized gathering of God’s people. Thus the Church is also a local congregation in a particular place and time.

In his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, Ursinus describes these two manifestations of the Church in the following way. “The true church is either triumphant, which even now triumphs with the blessed angels in heaven, and which will at length obtain a complete triumph after the resurrection; or militant, which in this world fights under the banner of Christ against the devil, the flesh and this world. The church militant is either visible, or invisible. When spoken of as visible, it means an assembly of persons, who embrace and profess the entire and uncorrupted doctrine of the law and gospel, and who use the sacraments according to the appointment of Christ, and profess obedience to the teachings of God’s word. . . . The invisible church consists of those who are chosen unto eternal life, who are also regenerated, and belong to the visible church.” (Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism by Zacharias Ursinus, p. 286-287)

While the distinction of visible and invisible must be used very carefully, we believe it is a helpful distinction. The Reformed Church in the United States has stated its agreement with the use of this distinction in a study report adopted by the Synod in 1995. (Synod Abstract, 1995 p. 117.) . . . it is neither necessary nor proper to deny or obscure the distinctions made between multiformity and uniformity, visible and invisible, and catholicity and unity, where these are properly understood. . . . It is best simply to define the church as the ‘holy catholic church,’ which is exactly what the early church fathers did in the Apostles’ Creed. The Belgic Confession is properly only giving further definition to this term and applying it to the visible church on earth as the body of Christ in light of the fact that there were many sects and denominations at that time. As Paul said, “There is one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. . . .” (Eph. 4:4-5).}

“The visible manifestation of the church is, a covenant society consisting of professing believers and their children organized into particular congregations and groups of congregations (denominations). For this earthly organizational form of the church there is a divinely ordained government consisting of scripturally chosen officers (elders and deacons) who represent Christ, the King of the church. These officers rule over the local congregations and the denomination by administering the Word of God authoritatively. We believe there is to be a plurality of elders and deacons in each congregation who constitute the governing council. See Eph. 4:4; 5:23; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 5:17; 3:8-13.”

“Several congregations are bound together through their elder-representatives in a broader organization called a classis (1 Tim. 4:14). Several classes are in turn bound together in a still higher government called a synod. The book of Acts, chapter fifteen,

records the gathering of the council or synod at Jerusalem, which proves that church government extends beyond the local congregational level.”

“To the visible, organized church are committed the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The former signifies and seals entrance into covenant relationship with God and is therefore administered only once. The infant children of believers, being partakers of the covenant blessings are also given this sign of church membership (1 Cor. 1:16). The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, which signifies conscious fellowship with the Christ of the covenant and seals the benefits of His death to the participants, is observed repeatedly by the self-conscious, confessing members of the church. See Gen. 17:7; Matt. 19:14; Ps. 22:10; Acts 2:49; 1 Cor. 11:23-25.”

“We believe that it is the duty of every Christian to join and support that denomination of the visible church which maintains the purest preaching of the Word of God; which properly administers the sacraments and which practices discipline by faithfully overseeing the doctrine and practice of its members, and eliminating from its membership by excommunicating those members who refuse to be corrected in either doctrine or life. See Titus 3:10 - 11:1 Cor. 5:12-13” (study paper adopted by the Synod of the RCUS in 1995, Abstract p. 117.)

In working toward the reality of a Biblical church unity with other denominations it must be remembered that the words of our Lord Jesus in John 17:21, “. . . that they all may be one . . .” refer to both the invisible church and the visible church. Our Lord’s desire for the unity of all the elect in the invisible church is evident from these His words, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word” (John 17:21). The invisible, not the visible church is composed of all those that “shall believe.” However, our Lord did not exclude the visible church in His petition for church unity, because He also prayed for the church that visibly exists in the world today when He requested of the Father, “that the world may believe that thou has sent me” (John 17:21).

John 17 is the *premiere* passage enlisted to prove organizational unity among all believers. The issue in John 17:21 concerns whether the oneness of the invisible and visible church is horizontal or vertical. Is this a command for all Christians to be so united that they strive to create one worldwide church (i.e., the Reformed Catholic Church!), or is the unity primarily with the Triune God? Three significant features emerge: (1) The unity of John 17 is not organizational unity since the unity envisioned is compared to the union of God the Father and God the Son (vv. 11, 21, 22). John 17 is not teaching organizational unity between the Father and the Son. (2) Christ is clearly not praying for horizontal unity but the vertical. The thrust is not that believers may be one with one another. Rather, it is that they may be “kept” (vv. 12, 21). John 17 is fundamentally a prayer for the preservation and thus perseverance of the saints by virtue of their unity with God. (3) It is impossible to consign all Christians in every era into the same visible organizational body. If this is what “all may be one” really means, then Christ’s high priestly prayer will never be answered. However, if it means that believers are “kept” by God the Father and God the Son, it is beautifully answered time and time again and in every generation. In every generation of Christians those “kept” are kept because of their union and communion with God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. *Thus, the high priestly prayer of Christ is not a prayer for organizational unity.* The world will believe that God has sent Christ not because of a horizontal unity among churches but because of the church’s union with the Triune God.

R. B. Kuiper concurs: “Glibly they quote the Savior’s prayer for the unity of believers in support of the wholesale wiping out of denominational boundaries. But even he who runs may see that Jesus was thinking primarily of the *spiritual* unity of believers. He prayed that they might be one as *he and the Father are one*. No doubt, He also desired that this unity might become manifest, for He added: “That the world may believe that thou has sent me”; but that in no way alters the fact that the unity for which He prayed was specifically spiritual” (*The Glorious Body of Christ*, p. 42).

The second passage that is cited to prove organizational unity between denominations is Ephesians 4:3-6. This passage reads: “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the

bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all, and in you all.” Is this a command for organizational unity? Again, Paul’s premise is that the church is already one. Thus, on the basis of this oneness he exhorts the church to cultivate peace. Also, what is clearly in view is that the *present unity* of the church is based squarely on the fact that we worship one God. Again, organizational unity does not seem to be in the picture here.

Within the church on earth today there is great diversity. One Reformed writer states that diversity “. . . is the inevitable and designed result partly of the separation of the human race by seas, continents, civil governments and diversity of languages, partly of the excusable limitations of the human understanding, and partly of the sinful prejudices of the heart; prejudices which although not justifiable, will assuredly continue to operate as long as man’s nature is only partially sanctified” (Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, Vol. 2, p. 437). There is also diversity of gifts in the church without disunity. The important thing is the “same Lord” and the “same God who works all in all” (1 Cor. 12:4-6). However according to the commandment of Scripture the church is now no longer to be divided according to the diversity of race, culture, or gender. Every member of the church has been baptized into Christ, and “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

In a special committee report to study and defend RCUS polity, the RCUS views diversity in the church as multiformity with a true uniformity. The report states, “For any church or group of churches on earth, or in a nation, or in a locality to say that they alone may be called ‘the true church’ fails to understand the fallibility of human beings or even their churchly organizations. No visible church can claim to exhibit the marks of the church perfectly. Therefore, there are levels of purity in earthly churches (See Rev. 2, 3; 1 Cor., and the Westminster Confession, Article 25, Section 4). This means that the church on earth is multiform. However, within this multiformity there is a true uniformity among true believers and their churches (study paper adopted by the Synod of the RCUS in 1995, Abstract p. 120). Because of the church’s multiformity, denominations are not (necessarily) abominations.

PRINCIPLE 2: In pursuing the unity of the visible Church it must be remembered by all faithful denominations that Within the multiformity of the visible church there is a true uniformity, and that multiformity does not *per se* obscure the unity of Christ’s church. Therefore, it is not absolutely necessary to unite the visible church on earth into a single church government by merging all faithful denominations churches into an organic union.

As the individual parts of one entity do not destroy the whole, so also we may correctly view denominations as the several parts of the whole visible church without destroying its unity (See 1 Cor. 12, esp. v. 13). R. L. Dabney writes, “Under the old dispensation, the candlestick or lamp which symbolized the church as one. In Revelation there are seven (1:20), ‘And the seven candlesticks which you saw are seven churches.’ The nomenclature of the New Testament is significant of the same truth. So long as the word ‘church’ is employed as the name of the spiritual body of the redeemed, it is always in the singular number; and when applied to a visible society of Christians living in one city, and capable of having actual communion with each other in public worship, the word is also in the singular number. But the moment it is used to denote a wider aggregation of Christians in organized bodies, it always, save Acts 9:31, becomes plural. We read of the seven *churches* of Asia, not of the church of Asia; of the *churches* of Galatia, the *churches* of Macedonia, the *churches* of Judea; but the New Testament says nothing of any visible national *church*” (Dabney, pp. 437-38).

An instructive example of *necessary* multiformity in our own history occurred in 1792 when the German Reformed Coetus separated from Holland and organized a Synod in 1793. There were four reasons: (1) Geography: the Coetus was so far away from the mother church that communication was difficult. Letters were lost in transmission and the Coetus had to wait for months, sometimes years, for important decisions to be made. This caused

inconvenience and confusion. (2) A constitutional reason: the Coetus had not been given the right of ordination by the Dutch fathers. Sometimes, in extreme cases, they took it upon themselves to ordain men to the ministry without waiting for the permission of the Dutch church. (3) A national reason: the Coetus felt the effects of the War of Independence. Americans were uneasy about any foreign control. This affected the church, too. Plus, the Coetus was feeling its own inherent strength, deducing that she did not need any foreign help, even including financial aid. (4) Education: the Coetus had prayed for many years for an educational institution where their own young men could be trained for the ministry. The Dutch Reformed of New York and New Jersey had founded Queens College for this end. Also, some of the men that the Dutch in Holland sent over proved to be scandalous in life. The Coetus felt it could raise up better men at home. When Franklin College was raised up in 1787, there was great rejoicing. Furthermore, it seems that because the Dutch church paid no attention to their requests, the Coetus became dissatisfied.

Thus the Coetus acted in 1792, declaring its independence, saying “inasmuch as we have not yet received a reply to our last letters and proceedings, it was resolved by a majority of votes that for the present we will transmit to our fathers in Holland only a letter and not our proceedings.” Thus, despite the fact that there was complete creedal harmony between the Coetus and the Dutch mother church, the Coetus was motivated to separate from the Dutch in order to do the work of the Lord more effectively.

One of the problems with the multiformity paradigm is that it has been used to justify schism. But schism is sinful and can never be justified. To leave a denomination in order to start another is a very serious matter. It must not be shrugged off cavalierly. Yet, it must be admitted that there are creedal and practical differences between even Reformed and Presbyterian churches. Are these differences due to sin or to some other factor such as spiritual immaturity? To declare that every creedal difference between Reformed denominations is always caused by sin is brash and harsh. The reason is that the church of Christ must “grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15). The church is always growing up! This means that not every creedal statement of a church always reflects maturity. There is a difference between doctrinal poison and Gerber’s Baby Food! For example, the Second Helvetic Confession (1566) seems to teach the perpetual virginity of the virgin Mary (ch. 11). The Westminster Standards teach that on the Lord’s Day “the whole time” should be taken up “in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy,” forbidding all needless “works, words and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations” (21:8 and LC 119). The Westminster divines no doubt perceived that their Lord’s Day theology was an improvement over Calvin’s and sought to creedalize it. Others on the continent may argue that the Westminster’s sabbatarianism was a retreat from the momentous changes that accrued in the New Covenant and which was articulated by the Second Helvetic Confession’s declaration that “we celebrate the Lord’s Day and not the Sabbath as a free observance” (ch. 24). Also, the Westminster’s sabbatarianism might lead a church into making the Sabbath a “religious workday.” Do we brand these differences as heresy, or do we explain them in terms of differences of sanctification and spiritual maturity? The latter of these, and not willful rebellion against God, is the occasion for creedal multiformity among Reformed churches. Yet, such differences must not be swept under the proverbial carpet either. Reformed denominations should not pretend that no differences exist. On the other hand a spirit of love must also prevail among Reformed Christians. It is especially by love that the world will know that we are the *united* disciples of Christ (John 13:34-35). Paul’s statement to the Philippians (often quoted by Augustine) is always worth citing: “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you” (Phil. 3:15). Thus even creedal multiformity does not necessarily reflect division; it may reflect differences of sanctification and maturity.

Again, the prayer of our Lord Jesus in John 17 was more for a spiritual unity by confessing and believing the true faith. That our Lord’s prayer was for a unity of confessing and believing the true faith, He prays “for them also which shall believe on me through their word” (John 17:20). Also, when Peter confessed that Jesus is the Son of God, our Lord

said to Peter, “Upon this rock (the confessions of the confessing Peter) I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18). Clearly, the unity of the body of Christ is a unity in confessing the true faith.

PRINCIPLE 3: When establishing an ecclesiastical relationship with another denomination, the primary consideration is the other church’s faithfulness to the doctrines of Scripture and practice of the true Christian faith. Ecclesiastical fellowship must never be established with an unfaithful church.

We note that the distinguishing traits of a faithful church are as follows:

1. The faithful church believes the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired and inerrant Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice for the lives of individual church members, as well as the corporate body of Christ (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:21).

2. The faithful church possesses the governmental marks of the true church which are: first, the faithful preaching of the pure gospel; second, the faithful administration of the sacraments as instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ; and third, church discipline that is faithfully exercised according to the Word of God (Gal. 1:6-9; Matt. 18:15-20; 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-8; 11:23-29).

3. The members of the faithful church embrace with a believing heart all the articles of the Christian faith as revealed in God’s Word and expressed in the orthodox Protestant confessions of faith such as the Three Forms of Unity, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Standards, etc. (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Thess. 3:14; Phil. 1:27; 2 John 10).

4. The essential parts of public worship in the faithful church are regulated by the Word of God alone, so that all things not commanded as well as all things contrary to the Holy Scripture are rejected (Deut. 4:2; Acts 2:42; Matt. 28:20).

5. The government of the faithful church is a spiritual polity established by our Lord Jesus Christ in His Word: „Namely that there must be ministers or pastors who meet the Biblical qualifications to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the church; that by these means the true religion may be preserved and the true doctrine everywhere propagated” (Belgic Confession, Art. 30; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:4-11; Heb. 13:17).

Nevertheless, even the most faithful churches will fall short of these outward marks. In this regard we recognize that faithful churches are more or less pure. We must, therefore, bear patiently with the infirmities of one another, avoid a censorious spirit, and pray that these outward marks will more and more characterize the visible Church in our age. }

PRINCIPLE 4: Ecclesiastical unity with other churches may be achieved by entering into a corresponding or fraternal relationship where Biblical counsel may be given and received by an exchange of delegates at Classis meetings, as well as at the Synod meetings.

Since there is widespread multiformity and diversity in churches in historical circumstances, usages, practices, languages, culture, etc., organic union may not be advisable with some denominations, although they may confess the same articles of the true Christian faith. In such circumstances unity may be achieved by entering into a corresponding or fraternal relationship where Biblical counsel may be given and received by an exchange of delegates at Classis meetings, as well as at the Synod meetings. By entering into fraternal relations, faithful denominations may achieve the spiritual unity expressed by our Lord Jesus in John 17. However, when denominations enter into fraternal relations it is important that certain rules be agreed upon to solidify the relationship. At the 246th Synod of the RCUS (1992), the Synod adopted the following five rules that must be agreed upon before the RCUS will establish fraternal relations with another denomination:

1. Agree to take heed to one another’s doctrine, liturgy and church government, that there be no deviations from the Holy Scriptures or from the Reformed confessions.

2. Will exchange delegates at one another’s assemblies or general synods and invite

them to participate as advisors.

3. Will inform one another of the decisions taken at their assemblies or general synods by exchanging minutes or at least by forwarding decisions which are relevant to the churches concerned.

4. Will inform one another in case of changes in or additions to confessions, church order or liturgical forms, if these are of a doctrinal nature. The denomination concerned will notify the other denomination of these changes so that consultations can take place if considered necessary.

5. Will inform one another regarding new relationships with third parties and membership in ecumenical organizations.

The spiritual unity expressed by our Lord Jesus in John 17 may also be achieved by entering into Reformed and Presbyterian councils. The RCUS is a member of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), which is comprised of six other member churches. The unifying basis of the council is stated in the NAPARC Constitution as follows:

“Confessing Jesus Christ as only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, we affirm the basis of the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed churches to be full commitment to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms. That the adopted basis of fellowship be regarded as warrant for the establishment of a formal relationship of the nature of a council, that is, a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, counsel, and cooperate in various matters with one another and hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice.”

“The purpose and function of NAPARC is to:

1. Facilitate discussion and consultation between bodies on those issues and problems which divide them as well as on those which they face in common and by the sharing of insights communicate advantages to one another (Institutes IV, 2, 1).

2. Promote the appointment of joint committees to study matters of common interest and concern.

3. Exercise mutual concern in the perpetuation, retention and propagation of the Reformed faith.

4. Promote cooperation wherever possible and feasible on the local and denominational level in such areas as missions, relief efforts, Christian schools, and church education.”

Together with NAPARC churches we understand organic union as follows:

Organic union is defined as two or more NAPARC Churches joining their diverse gifts, heritage and calling on the basis of the Scriptural mandate (Ephesians 4:1-16; Acts 15:1-16:5; John 17; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31) to form one church by uniting together in theology, polity and ministry. This would require the eventual integration of church courts and administrative and legal structures. (NAPARC Minutes 2003, XII, B, recommendation #2, page 5.)

PRINCIPLE 5: Organic union with other denominations is desirable if the denominations are separated by unessential differences, and when unity may be accomplished without surrendering Biblical and creedal convictions.

When denominations are in agreement regarding their confessions of faith, discipline, government and worship, and are divided only on unessential differences of usage, it may be advisable to organize under one government in one denomination. When this can be done peaceably, without surrendering Biblical convictions, it will greatly strengthen the testimony of the Reformed faith in the world. However, before that organic unity becomes

a reality, honest and sincere consultations between the denominations on the issues that divide them must be resolved to the complete satisfaction of each denomination.

Whether denominations move toward unity through fraternal relations, membership in church councils, or organic union, it must always be unity in the true faith, because the church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Unity for unity’s sake, or unity at all costs is certainly not what our Lord meant when He prayed, “that they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” The Word of God declares, “Whosoever transgresses and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (2 John 9-11). Therefore, the fundamental principle that governs church unity with other denominations must be a unity in the true faith so that the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in all things.

Recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the proposed changes to the paper on *Biblical principles of Church Unity* be adopted.

Grounds: The above changes bring the paper on *Biblical Principles of Church Unity* in line with the language of the Three Forms of Unity as mandated by Synod.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the commentary on each of the five principles of the *Biblical Principles of Church Unity* be affirmed.

Grounds: The commentary explains why each of the five principles was originally affirmed and will facilitate the work of the Interchurch Relations Committee.

Respectfully Submitted, Interchurch Relations Committee

J. Ministerial Relief

The committee established to oversee funds for provision of financial aid for retired ministers met twice this past year. Some members of the committee, while desiring to be at the meetings, were unable to be present.

The committee heard presentations from two representatives of major financial institutions, The Principal Financial Group and A.G. Edwards; both representatives indicated interest in making proposals to the body of Synod. Given the amount of available funds, we believe as a good business practice, proposals from three fund management organizations should be evaluated for the eventual investment of the accrued funds.

Efforts were made to bring all of the proper signatories for existing fund accounts into compliance with sound fiduciary responsibility. This has been accomplished.

The MAF committee recommends the following actions be approved by Synod members:

1. That a subcommittee be appointed for the express purpose of managing the funds. This committee would report to the MAF committee with a recommended investment proposal. Based on approval of the proposal by MAF, this committee would have full responsibility for fund management, allocation of funds, placement and servicing of funds of a selected financial institution. Sub committee members would be appointed and approved by MAF and Synod members and are to serve as long as they wish or found wanting in any way. The time should be a minimum of 5 years and consist of men that have experience and expertise in money management and are committed to serving on the sub committee for this period of time.

2. That the following be appointed and approved to serve on the sub committee: David McPherson, Mark Fisher, Raymond Schnabel, Spencer Gross, Current Treasurer to serve as an ad hoc member (non voting)

3. That the current 50% requirement for allocation of monies to be placed in CD’s be

removed to allow fund growth at a moderate risk rate in keeping up with inflation as opposed to the current no risk approach.

4. That a resolution be passed by Synod members requiring fund principal to not be used for any reason but to remain in perpetuity for fund security. Money in excess of one million dollars can be used at an 80% rate in any Synodical year with 20% going into the principal fund portfolio for continued fund growth.

Respectfully submitted

Mark B. Fisher, Ed Shriver, Spencer Gross, Gary Maassen, David McPherson,

Brian Driesen, Rev. Robert Grossmann, Ted Griess, Rev. David Fagrey

K. Publications and Promotions Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Permanent Publications Committee conducted business throughout the year by email focusing primarily on two projects. First was a review of the Modern Version of the Three Forms of Unity to remove archaic language (particularly in Lord’s Days 47-52) and unify scripture references using the NKJV. The second project was work on a revision of the Norm Jones’ Heidelberg Catechism Workbook integrating the Modern Version of the Heidelberg and the NKJV along with some other proposed changes. The Committee met in Sacramento April 3, 2008 in an attempt to finalize this work. We hope to send the recommended changes for the workbook to the churches before Synod for review. The proposed changes to the Heidelberg Catechism Modern Version are included with this report.

The Committee has received a few questions about differences between the two current translations that some perceive as theological differences (e.g. HC #9 “of those divine gifts” vs. “of this power”). The Committee does not see the resolution of these questions as part of its responsibility, and would recommend that such questions be handled by Synod for clarification. The focus on the TFU was limited to updating archaic language, changing Bible translations to the NKJV and a couple of other proposed changes that will be specified, for example, the NKJV exclusively uses Holy Spirit. The Committee is also proposing the inclusion of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds after the Apostles’ Creed in TFU.

The work of the revision of the Jones’ Workbook sought to fulfill two goals. The first was to utilize the Modern Version of the Catechism and the NKJV throughout. The second was to make corrections where needed and to make changes where it would help to clarify or make the material more current. There was a discussion in committee concerning the content on question 52. Some on the committee wanted to make major changes to, in their words, present the A-millennial view more fairly. However, some argued that what was being proposed would present the material in a way that Rev. Jones might not agree with. So in such cases the committee felt the most that could be done would be the addition of a footnote or addendum to what the chapter presented. As such the committee is open to guidance from the Synod on those sections where clarification would help.

For the Synod’s information, the depository’s supply of Norm Jones’ Heidelberg Catechism Workbook is almost depleted. The committee is investigating changing the next printing of the Workbook to an 8 ½ x 11 book form with perfect binding. We believe this will be more economical.

The supply of the Modern Version of the TFU is also in steady demand so that the consideration to reprint more will need to be investigated for next Synod. There is also the question of whether the Bible verses should be printed in the TFU version which at this point only includes the references. Lastly, the committee would like feedback from Synod as to whether there is a desire to print more of the hardback MV Heidelberg Catechisms which are no longer available.

A third area the committee is in an initial stage of development with is a three tier work of printed material entitled, *The Glory of God* that can be used for evangelism, beginning discipleship and more extensive training toward church membership. Each of the three pieces would be a more extensive version of the previous.

Other matters considered by the Committee this year included the following: Rev. George Syms reports that his work on the Three Forms of Unity audio is at a point of being sent to Rev. Bristley for editing into an MP3 format to be integrated into the RCUS website for downloading. Rev. Syms has been remunerated \$500 for his work. Rev. Grossmann continues to have difficulties getting the RCUS version of the *New Trinity Hymnal* printed and will bring a progress report at Synod. Lastly, there is still a need for each congregation to buy one of the E-certs packages.

The committee continues to address ways to better enhance the appearance of the Reformed Herald as well as the possible benefit of balancing the Herald content with doctrinal and practical articles. It should be noted that the number of subscriptions have been declining for several years, so that the current \$13.00 subscription rate is sufficient to cover the costs. Some of the decline in subscriptions is attributed to congregations no longer paying for the subscriptions of their members but leaving the matter in the hands of the individual family. There is a small problem with the Herald running about a month behind as far as the publication date. The committee proposes to resolve this by publishing a one time two month issue to catch the date up. The problem seems to stem from articles not being submitted in a timely manner. The time line is such that submissions need to be received by the editor three months prior to publication to stay on time. The Herald editor reports that his expense account can be reduced this year. Rev. Bristley's work on the Herald has gone beyond the initial scope of enhancing the appearance so that he is functioning more as an assistant to the Herald editor.

The committee also discussed matters pertaining to the Website with Rev. Bristley who will report on that committee's work in a separate report. With regards to Rev. Bristley's work this past year it breaks down as follows: Reformed Herald (11 issues) 130 hours; Publications 27.5 hours; Website 110.15 hours; E-books 13 hours for a total cost at \$30.00 per hour of \$8,419.50, well within the budget of \$3,600 for Website plus \$11,520 for Publications, a total budget of \$15,120.

Due to a very busy year for most of the members on the committee we were limited in the work we were able to get done. As such, there are several items that will need to continue to be worked on in the coming year. For the most part, the committee focused its time and efforts on the two time sensitive areas of work on the catechism which the committee believes will need to go through a ratification process.

Unfortunately, the committee does not feel that it has been able to adequately reflect on all of the proposed changes in the areas of introductory sections and the forms of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. As such, we believe there maybe wisdom in the committee continuing this work one more year with input from the members of Synod on what we have done so far.

Your committee brings the following recommendations:

1. That Rev. Paul Treick be nominated to serve as editor of the *Reformed Herald*.
2. That the editor of the *Reformed Herald* be given an expense account of \$500.00 for the next Synodical year.
3. That Rev. Eric Bristley assist the *Reformed Herald* editor in its publication.
4. That the Reformed Herald editor consider placing a questionnaire in one edition of the Herald asking for suggestions on how to improve the usefulness of the Herald. Take note.
5. That the work of Rev. George Syms in producing the audio version of the Heidelberg Catechism be made available in an MP3 form through the RCUS website.
6. That Rev. Eric Bristley be compensated for his work for the Publications and Promotions Committee and the Reformed Herald publication at the rate of \$35.00 per hour

(\$5.00 increase) up to a maximum of 32 hours per month, a maximum budget of \$1,120.00 per month (\$13,440 total).

7. That the proposed changes to the Modern Version of the Three Forms of Unity be voted upon by the Synod in the following areas: [see recommendation 11].

1. That all references to scripture utilize the NKJV.
2. That all uses of Holy Ghost be changed to Holy Spirit.
3. That all uses of archaic language (as proposed) be changed to modern language.
4. That the form of the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments come from the NKJV.
5. That the Nicene and Athanasian Creed be included after the Apostles' Creed in the front of the TFU booklet.

8. That the proposed changes to the Norm Jones' Heidelberg Catechism Workbook be approved as follows: [see recommendation 12]

1. That all references to the Heidelberg Catechism use the modern version translation.
2. That all references to scripture utilize the NKJV.
3. That the corrections and changes to the content of the Workbook be approved.

9. That the Publications Committee gather estimates for the printing of the Jones' Workbook upon completion of the approval process in an 8 ½ x 11 perfect binding format. (Should there be changes to the modern version of the catechism the printing of Jones' Workbook would be postponed to that time).

10. That the Publications Committee prepare to publish a minimum of 1,000 copies of the revised edition of the Heidelberg Catechism in hardback upon completion of the ratification process including use of the NKJV in the Bible verses below each question.

11. That the Publications Committee continue its work of revision on the Modern Version of the TFU with a particular focus on the development and refinement of the Introductory sections, and the forms of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds to be included.

12. That the Publications Committee continue its work on the revision of the Norm Jones' Heidelberg Catechism Workbook to focus on corrections and refinement of the content.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Hank Bowen Rev. Frank Walker, Rev. Wes Brice, Rev. Eric Bristley, Elder Tom Lagomarsino, Elder Steve Wilbur, Elder Earl Starks, Elder Jess Johnson, Elder Charlie Henson

Website Committee (sub-committee)

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

This year was marked by the transition from Rev. Dennis Roe to Rev. Eric Bristley to serve as webmaster of the RCUS web sites.

Changes to the RCUS website (www.rcus.org)

After consultation and planning, a number of changes have been made to the denominational site:

Design. While maintaining continuity with the previous design, a number of enhancements have been made to make the site more appealing and easy to access: RCUS seal/logo added to top of each page, background color changed, new photos added, and styles, color, and typography made consistent. The top menu system has remained the same, while the left menus have been modified for ease of use.

Content. All site text has been edited for readability and clarity. Information about synod and classis committees are in the process of being updated. Much new content has

been added in various areas as follows:

Home page. Text rewritten to define the RCUS and photo added in order to provide a warm welcome and draw the reader to the rest of the site.

Introduction. Existing text used and divided up into smaller sections to explain the RCUS to newcomers. A page added on "Distinctives."

Publications. Substantial changes were made to this section, and it was divided into three main areas. The *RCUS Books a eBooks* section provides a page about each publication and a short description of its contents, along with an image of the book cover. The *Reformed Herald* has a page providing information about it. *Online Resources* provides access to various HTML resources, such as position papers.

Audio. Links have been made to Sermon Audio sites by four RCUS pastors.

Government. New sections have been made stating our position on church government. The *Constitution* has been broken into separate sections for easier access. A new subsection, "Synod Directories," has been added. Abstracts, when provided, were made available for download.

Congregations. This has been substantially enhanced by updated pages for each congregation in an easy to-read style, added photos, and added Google maps. Readers can access the congregation directory through multiple paths: alphabetically, by Classis, or by State. Classes or States have separate Google maps with location markers identifying all congregations within that region.

Standards. New introductory pages have been added as follow: Importance of Standards, Primary and Secondary Standards, and the Necessity of Creeds. Formatting has been standardized and a table of contents added for the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort.

Discussion Group. Pages remains the same. The email discussion group at theRCUS@YahooGroups.com was maintained by Rev. Roe.

Promotion of the RCUS website was made through updating information on Wikipedia about our denomination.

Plans for the coming year focus on transferring site content to the new Joomla! 1.5 content management system (free open-source software) to provide enhanced functionality for communication and collaboration by committees, churches, pastors, and members.

We again ask Synod to encourage the members of the RCUS to use and promote the RCUS e-mail discussion group for e-mail discussions. We welcome the comments and suggestions submitted by the members of our church.

Reformed Herald Website (www.reformedherald.org)

This site is in the process of undergoing renovation with the free Joomla! 1.5 content management system to provide not only archived copies of the *Herald*, but online access to articles by title, subject, and author.

RCUS Youth Website (www.rcusyouth.org)

This new website was made live in August 2007. Designed for the youth of the Reformed Church in the U.S.—for teenagers and those in their younger 20s—it's a place to share ideas and interests in a secure environment. ICY is the popular name of the site, which stands for International Covenant Youth. We hope that this site will assist in helping the youth of the RCUS to develop relationships rooted in the Word of God. Since it is a secure web site, only those who register will be able to access Forums, Galleries, Prayer Center, Shoutbox, Personal Messaging, Profiles, Personal Blogs, Events Organization, Devotions, and much more.

Expenditures

This past year your Web Site Committee expended \$3304.50 for services rendered by

Rev. Eric Bristley.

Recommendations:

We recommend the following actions to Synod:

1. That a budget of \$4040 to maintain the denomination's web site be approved for the next synodical year. This budget consists of \$3600 for web development, \$240 for web hosting, and \$200 for software maintenance.

2. That Synod continues to contract with Rev. Eric Bristley as webmaster to maintain and develop its web site with a budget of \$300 month or \$3600 per year.

3. That the Synod authorize the webmaster to implement the Joomla content management system for its denomination website to provide enhanced features for denominational communication and collaboration.

4. That the Synod authorize the webmaster to develop, in coordination with the officers of each Classis, sections or sub-sites on the denominational website dedicated to the work of each Classis.

5. That the Stated Clerks of each Classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring meeting of Classis.

6. That the Clerk of each Consistory notify the webmaster of any changes in the information listed on the website for their particular charge.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dennis E. Roe, Elder Jeff Mills, Elder Michael Peery, Rev. Matt Powell,
Elder Eric Rynders, Rev. Frank Walker*

L. Develop eBooks

Esteemed Brethren:

The Permanent Committee to Develop eBooks submits this report of its labors to the 262nd Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States.

The committee conducted its business by telephone, Email, and meetings. Your Chairman met with Rev. Eric Bristley, eBooks committee member and developer and producer of electronic eBooks, to review the progress and development of the approved Synodical projects. The 261st Synod commissioned the eBooks committee to develop the published *Reformed Heralds* into electronic format and to research the development of the Abstracts of the Eureka Classis and the Abstracts of the Minutes of the RCUS Synod into electronic format.

In compliance with Recommendation 15, printed in the Abstract of the Minutes of the 261st Synod, page 70, which reads, "That the Reformed Herald be produced in PDF Format, be developed into a complete collection of searchable text, and be made available on CD-ROM, with an index of all articles by title, author, and date (issue) at the cost of production for RCUS members," Rev. Bristley has informed the committee that by the 262nd Synodical session, the *RCUS Reformed Herald Collection* of electronic issues dated from 1956 to 2007 should be completed.

When completed, the production of the *RCUS Reformed Herald Collection* will be made available on CD-ROM and designed for browsing in Acrobat PDF format with the capability of searching globally across all the electronic issues, with an index featuring all articles by title, author, and date of each issue. Copies of the *RCUS Reformed Herald Collection* CD-ROMs will be inventoried at the RCUS Book Depository for sale at the estimated cost of production (\$20.00), as approved by Synod. Should the project be completed by the 262nd Session of Synod, copies will be made available for sale to the delegates.

In compliance with Recommendation 17, printed in the Abstract of the Minutes of the 261st Synod, page 70, which reads, “That the eBook’s Committee research and bring its findings to the 262nd Synod, information about taking all of the available Abstracts of the Eureka Classis and RCUS Abstracts of the Minutes of Synod to be produced in PDF Format and be developed into a complete collection of searchable text and be made available on CD-ROM, at the cost of production for RCUS members,” the committee commissioned Rev. Bristley to provide for the delegates of the 262nd Synod a demonstration of the proposed functionality and design built into the electronic issues of the abstracts.

Should the project for the development of the abstracts be approved, future editions of the printed Synodical abstracts and the *Reformed Herald*s should be included annually as an upgrade to the CDROM electronic collections. In order to take advantage of the built-in features and functionalities of searching globally across all the indexed issues of the electronic collections of the future editions of the *Reformed Herald* and printed abstracts, it will be necessary to upgrade these collections. As advised by the developer, by merely downloading the issues from the RCUS Web Site, the end-user would lose the capabilities and features provided on CD-ROM collection versions. Without the integration of the electronic features, the capabilities of electronically searching globally across all the issues and indexes would be lost.

Therefore, the Committee to Develop eBooks brings to the 262nd Synod the following three recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1. That all of the available printed Abstracts of the Eureka Classis and the printed RCUS Abstracts of the Minutes of the Synod be produced on CD-ROM and be designed for browsing in Acrobat PDF format, with the capability of searching globally across all the electronic issues.

RECOMMENDATION 2. That the annual publication of the *Reformed Herald* and printed RCUS Abstracts of the Minutes of the Synod be electronically upgraded annually and be developed with the built-in features and functionalities of searching globally across all the indexed issues.

RECOMMENDATION 3. That the Committee to Develop eBooks maintain, at its discretion, an RCUS Book Depository inventory of copies of CD-ROMs of *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library* and of the *RCUS Reformed Herald Collection*.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Gary Mancilas, Rev. Eric Bristley, Rev. Jay Fluck, Elder Jeff Jones

VI. Welcome and Seating of Fraternal Delegates; Welcome of Visitors

The President welcomed fraternal delegates, observers, and representatives of institutions, visiting elders, and others as they arrived. Fraternal delegates and visiting elders were seated within the Bar of the House and given privilege of the floor. Delegate elders who were attending their first meeting were introduced and welcomed.

Fraternal Delegates included: Rev. Tom Tyson, fraternal delegate from the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; Rev. John McFarland, fraternal delegate from the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America; and Rev. Doug Barnes, fraternal delegated from the United Reformed Churches in North America. Fraternal delegates from the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Liberated, and the Reformed Confessing Church in the Congo were not able to be present at this meeting, but written greetings were read.

Representatives who addressed the body from institutions included: Dr. Carl Zylstra (Dordt College), Mr. Marlow Van Ginkel (Hope Haven), Dr. Cornelis Venema (Mid-America Reformed Seminary), Mr. Luis Viega (Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary), Rev. Frank Walker (City Seminary of Sacramento), and Elder Ray Schnabel (Heidelberg Theological Seminary).

New elder delegates attending this meeting were: Mr. Greg Van Holland (Vermillion, SD), Mr. Bruce Gruenhagen (Hamburg, MN), and Mr. Robert Davis (Lincoln, NE).

VII. Reception of New Ministers

Rev. Jay Nelken was received as a new minister serving in the Western Classis. Prayer was offered for him and the right hand of fellowship was extended by delegates.

VIII. Reception of New Churches

There were no new congregations received over the past year.

IX. Reports of Officers

A. President’s Report on the State of the Church

Esteemed Brethren:

The parochial reports of the ministers are to “contain a full account of the spiritual and temporal condition of the charge and of the labors of the pastor.” The Presidents of the Executive Committees of the Classes are to annually submit a report to their Classis on “the state of the church, making use of the parochial reports.” The President of the Executive Committee of Synod “shall annually submit a report to the Synod on the state of the Church, making use of the reports of the Presidents of the Executive Committees of the Classes” (cf. Articles 81 & 111, The Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States). Following this process, the following excerpts give a current, overall view of the state of the denomination, her blessings and trials, her hopes and disappointments, her challenges and struggles, her victories and defeats, her successes and failures, her concerns and needs, etc.

Covenant East Classis: “After reading your parochial reports, I was struck by some tremendous blessings the Lord continues to give us: endurance and constancy in faithful worship, in preaching the gospel, in propagating the Reformed faith. There is nothing more hopeful to me for the future of the churches than this continuation in the truth because it is in and through the truth that Christ’s kingdom comes. Let us be reminded of this and encouraged in it: the kingdom of Christ comes *in no other way* than through the proclamation of and embrace of the truth. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. The church cannot be the mother of the faithful if the Everlasting Father, who is the truth, is absent. Without the truth, our churches would be candlesticks without a flame. In a day in which theological diversity and fragmentation of worship principles is the air we breathe, the oneness we enjoy in these areas is nothing short of a mark of divine mercy and care.”

“Another blessing the churches enjoy is relative peace internally. Last year we were called upon to give counsel to one of our congregations regarding some internal struggles. All indications from the report of the church in question . . . indicate that the elders and pastor implemented the advice of Classis and it was received fruitfully.”

“In numerous Presidents’ Reports over the past six years I have made reference to the fact that our Classis has had no student studying for the ministry. It is therefore with much gratitude to God that we can note . . . a student under care of Classis . . . [a] junior at Mid America Reformed Seminary.”

“. . . we could benefit by more fellowship. We are so spread out geographically, that from July to March we see and hear little of one another. With only one Classis meeting a year, it is difficult to maintain the interaction with fellow ministers and elders that would be healthy and of mutual encouragement. My concern here would be that a new minister or a new congregation might not be able to weather such isolation. We could all benefit from a fall Classis session dedicated to mutual encouragement, prayer, and discussion about pastoral work; perhaps we could even invite a special speaker to address us on a topic. I

would also offer the suggestion that such a session might be held in conjunction with one of our fraternal churches' classis or presbytery meetings, thus building our fraternal relationships."

Northern Plains Classis: "As I read the parochial reports of our ministers, I was very heartened to see signs of optimism. The Lord has been moving in our churches this past year, causing us to be thankful and expectant as we look to the future."

"On the Classical level, there are issues to be decided. Has the time come to ask the Synod to redraw the classical boundaries in order to inject new blood into our Classis? This is an issue that has been tossed around for some time, but will soon have to be addressed."

"Missions is another important issue, and one addressed very comprehensively in the Permanent Home Missions Report [as indicated in the requested] investigation of Jamestown, ND, as a mission work. The committee was thorough and thoughtful. The fact that they said, "No, not now," was a mature decision [and] shows the need to be very careful with the resources God has given us. . . . Our people can only give so much, and we must work within the means available to us."

" . . . We may not be able to start a new mission work. We may be confined to what we already have. However, every church is really a mission church. Several churches have radio ministries, with at least one more being considered. There are other forms of outreach going on. Not one of our churches can say that their area is so thoroughly evangelized that there is no further need to reach the lost with the Gospel.

If we are providentially hindered from starting new works, let us be aggressive where the Lord has placed us. We are all missionaries."

South Central Classis: "'[The parochial] reports are to be a reflection of what exactly is going on in the various congregations. Since we don't view ourselves as a collection of independent congregations but rather as one Church, we have concerns for our brothers and sisters in each and every congregation. We want to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and weep with those who weep. Therefore, the parochial reports are not intended to be sermons or devotionals but rather a report of the activities of the congregation. If Classis does not know what is happening in a certain congregation, Classis cannot help that congregation."

" . . . I would like to address two issues that I believe are real problems facing us. The first one is the continual seepage of people from many of our congregations. This is especially true of many of our young people. In the past, many of our congregations were made up of rural, ethnically German people with a strong and long Reformed heritage. These three things—demographics, ethnicity and theological heritage—helped to foster a cohesion and continuity."

"This, however, is changing, . . . or has changed. Young people are leaving the rural areas in droves. In some of our communities, entire graduating high school classes leave their hometowns to go to school or find jobs and they never return except for brief visits. This loss of people is felt in the communities at large as schools are forced to either consolidate or even close down and the average attendance of churches continually shrinks."

"In addition to this demographic fact, our young people do not consider themselves ethnically German in any way, shape or form. Whereas their grandparents may have grown up speaking German and hearing it spoken often, the young people often could not identify one single German word. They have been incorporated into the mainstream of American life and don't think in ethnic terms. Therefore, when they do leave a town, they don't try to find other rural, German type people to associate with or attend church with."

" . . . [The] third thing is more troubling. This is the fact that many of our young people are leaving behind their Reformed heritage. It is a fact that many of our young people move to places where there are no RCUS congregations and are forced to change churches for that reason. Still more troubling is the fact that when our young people do move to places where there are RCUS congregations, they choose not to remain in the RCUS. Why is this? Why are they forsaking the Church that their parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and

even great, great grandparents helped to build? I don't have an answer for this but I believe it is a question that we must answer."

"The second issue that I want to address is [the inordinate number of times Special Committees had] to deal with a pastor who was having problems in his congregation or a congregation which was having a problem with their pastor. What is interesting . . . is that in not one of these cases was it necessarily an issue of a man's theology. Rather, it was usually a matter of a man's temperament or ability to work with people. . . . We do a good job of screening men in their theology during their licensure and ordination exams. Therefore we are pretty unified in our doctrine. But we must do a better job in screening a man's temperament. There are cases where a man simply should never become a pastor. But there are other instances where a man should not be the pastor of a particular congregation. It's like fire ad gunpowder. There's going to be an explosion! Therefore, Classis must not only determine if a man is fit to be a pastor, but Classis must also try to determine if a man is going to be a good fit for a particular congregation."

Western Classis: "It is edifying to read [the parochial] reports which record your victories and defeats, your rejoicings and sorrows, your Mount Carmels and your valleys of the shadow of death. When I study your reports, I am really reading Church history, which Luke defines as the continuation of "all that Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). The good things that occur in our churches are nothing less than the activity of God the Spirit."

"After reading (and studying) your reports, your Presidents makes the following conclusions. First, with regard to *morale*—your President believes that the *esprit de corps* in the Western Classis remains high, with one or two exceptions. The Scriptures teach that "the joy of the Lord is our strength," and this joy can either be expressed exuberantly or quietly. The lion's share of high-voltage-joy comes from our two new ministers and one licentiate. Sometimes when your President asks a minister at Classis or at Synod "how things are going," it is not uncommon to hear the depressing answer, "Well, they're *going!*" Your President did not hear any gloomy echoes of that one-liner; even if the reports spelled out the tribulational side of things, there was still the attitude of enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

"With regard to *missions*, your President did not hear about pulling back or retreating. We seem to be holding our own in the existing mission works On the other hand, there was no report or expectation of launching new mission works. Usually, there are real expectations or at least rumors about starting an entirely new work or about an existing work or Bible study that hopes to mutate into a church. So, with regard to new mission works, "it is all quiet on the Western Front." Depending upon one's perspective, this may be interpreted as stagnation or as shoring up our gains. Yet, there was no dramatic expression of "home mission's fever" in 2007."

"With regard to the *marks* of the church, your President was pleased with all that he heard. The faithful preaching of God's Word, the lawful administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline was very prominent in all your reports. There are no signs of "stealth Christianity" in our congregations. None of our churches are toying with innovations; we continue to see ourselves as trustees of the historic Christian faith instead of innovators. This is not a sign of being "stuck in the mud," but of stability, of being firmly entrenched in God's Word, in the "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Because of this stability, I believe that we can only expect good things to come. This is not Brigadoon (imaginary) but true because God has assured us that His Word is so powerful that it is impossible for it to return to Him void."

"With regard to the broader work of the Western Classis, your President has been in contact with two or three churches who are seeking a denominational affiliation. Two of the churches are congregations . . . in or near Washington State that have recently left the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church. Another congregation is stationed in the Sacramento area. The reason these churches have not been more aggressive in pursuing membership in the RCUS vary, stemming from fear of the unknown, different Sabbath practices, two worship services each Lord's Day, and to the Western Classis position of men-only-voting

during congregational meetings. On the one hand, he believes that our position is biblical; on the other hand, the fact that Synod does not have an official, *doctrinal* position on this matter indicates that we have shied away from making it a kind of litmus test of orthodoxy. With regard to men-only-voting, if congregations outside the RCUS desire to align with the RCUS, but are prohibited from doing so by our Classis, it would seem that Classis has stymied a qualified church from joining the denomination on grounds *entirely peculiar* to Classis. Additionally, your President is not aware of a Classis position paper on this topic that could reinforce our own people's theology, or convince skeptical enquirers looking for a denominational home. For these reasons, I would like the Judicial Committee of Classis to review the constitutionality and wisdom of Classis Standing Rule #19* and to report back at this meeting."

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

From the above overall view of the Classes, what do we see and what may we conclude? There are a number of issues on which I would offer my comments and musings:

Home Missions continues to be a concern, as it should. Our Membership Statistics show a decline in almost every category. Surely we long to see our denomination grow. Why isn't it? When we first divided into separate Classes, the thinking was that Home Missions would become more properly the domain of each Classis, and Synod would focus on Foreign Missions as its proper domain. It was understood that this would be a gradual, but definite development. It appears that this has not developed as thought. There continues to be an inordinate dependency upon Synod for both finances and oversight. Home Missions is among the highest of the Synodical guidelines for giving. Would it not be more advantageous and in keeping with the original intent for Synod to discontinue this guideline, thereby allowing each Classis to add it to its own Home Missions guideline? Should Synod begin a more aggressive process of disengagement? Would this not provide more incentive and ignite more effort among the individual Classes?

What accounts for the "seepage" of our young people from many of our congregations? Certainly demographics plays a significant part as we change or have changed from a rural to an urban based denomination. But this should only underscore the importance of locating or establishing churches in more of our population centers.

However, there must also be more discernment and prioritizing on the part of our young people. How often is the existence of a Reformed church at the place of employment or higher education given first consideration before a decision to locate there is made?

What is more troubling is why our young people would fail to attend a RCUS when there is one in the area. I submit the following answers: Such have simply not been trained (indoctrinated) to the point of being convinced of and committed to the Reformed faith so as not to forsake it. Sadly, in too many cases this has not been enforced by a commitment and loyalty to the Reformed faith in the home. Until there is the conviction that the RCUS is one of the purest expressions of the Reformed faith and Church Militant, there will continue to be "seepage." There must to be some serious self-examination on the part of parents as well as the church as to how well we are preparing the next generation which will also say something about our zeal for and support of home missions.

New and exciting things are happening in Foreign Missions, chief among which is the completion of the first year in Uganda by our missionary, Tom Mayville. As a member of the Western Classis, Rev. Mayville submitted a 19-page Parochial Report. Beginning with the preparation for his move to Uganda, it gives a month by month account of his labors (which are extensive) and experiences. It is a most informative report and one that keeps your attention. If not already so, it should be made available to all of our congregations.

Another exciting area in Foreign Missions is the Philippines. Your President was privileged to be a part of the third RCUS mission visit to the Philippines this past December and participate in the Reformed Ministry Conference in Baguio City, sponsored by the United Covenant Reformed Churches in the Philippines (UCRCP). I believe there is real potential there and that we may be seeing the development of a truly Reformed

denomination. May God give us the will and wisdom to provide the proper guidance and support.

The one discouraging thing in the Foreign Ministries Report is what has happened in the Congo, particularly with respect to the actions of Rev. Kishimba and Rev. Illunga, men who have long been associated with this work. We are thankful for the Committee's actions with regard to this matter, and pray that it will lead to repentance and restoration. If that does not happen, may God raise up others in their place.

In response to the concern raised in the Western Classis President's State of the Church Report as to the constitutionality of *men-only-voting during congregational meetings*, the lack of an *official, doctrinal position on this matter*, and the *wisdom of Classis Standing Rule #19*, it was pointed out that although the matter lacks constitutional standing, it does not lack official, Synodical standing. The following information was presented: "According to a Special Order from the 67th Session, the first item of business on Wednesday morning was that of considering the three Classis Reports (1964, 1965, 1968) on Women Voting in the Congregational Meeting. On vote of Classis the three reports on women voting were adopted without recommendation as the position of Classis. That position essentially is that the exercise of the vote in the congregational meeting is an exercise of authority in the Church of Jesus Christ and is therefore properly the province of the male head of the household. Recommendation 1 of Report #2 was adopted. That recommendation reads: "That the local congregations of Eureka Classis be overtured to examine their constitutions in the light of the Scriptural principles explained in this report." The clerk was subsequently called upon to write an official letter to the congregations of Classis explaining that the position of the reports on women voting is the official position of Classis" (Abstract 78:28). A copy of this letter is on record. (For the authority of position papers and which ones, see Abstract 2000:48)

From the report of the Special Committee on Constitutional Revision to the 242nd Synod the following recommendation (#2) was adopted: "Forms, including changes, were recommended and printed in the Appendix of the 1987 Abstract of the Minutes of Synod. These are to be approved at this meeting of Synod for inclusion in the bound volume of the Constitution" (Abstract 88:71). Among those forms is the "*Constitution of a Congregation*," of which Article 17 states: "Every male communicant member of the congregation, having attained the age of majority, in good and regular standing, shall be entitled to vote at all elections for pastor and officers, and on any question submitted to the congregation for action."

At the 249th Synod, the Judicial Committee recommended the following: "That the sentence—'Only male members who have reached the age of 21, or who are heads of a household shall constitute the voting membership of the church'—be placed as the final statement in Article 2 of the RCUS Constitution" (Abstract 95:135). This was adopted by a two-thirds vote and submitted to the Classes for ratification. The 250th Synod was informed that more than one-third of the Classes had rejected the proposed amendment, two of the four Classes having voted in the negative. (cf. Abstract 96:41; Constitution of the RCUS, Article 104)

As the matter now stands, *men-only-voting during congregational meetings*, remains the official position of Synod, but without constitutional standing.

From the Permanent Christian Education Report, it appears that the need and warrant for establishing a denominational seminary remains illusive in spite of the fact that this question has been asked and answered. (cf. Abstracts '03:69; 04:64-80; "Why a RCUS Seminary?" —*Reformed Herald*, April, '04)

As to the meaning of *original jurisdiction*, which also remains confused, please indulge me the following explanation: at the 261st Synod, with regard to a denominational seminary and the original jurisdiction for such, the Judicial Committee stated in its first recommendation that "a Classis cannot [may not?] deny Synod its original jurisdiction." It did so because the Constitution of the RCUS clearly defines the authority that resides with the various judicatories of the Church. The term, *original jurisdiction*, appears in

Articles 50 & 70. Article 82 uses something similar, i.e., “is vested the power.”

Clearly then, we see a “separation of powers.” In Section V of the Constitution we have the original jurisdiction of the Synod delineated. Article 101 gives Synod jurisdiction in the matter of training men for the Gospel ministry. This is further confirmed by Section III, Articles 36ff, where Teachers of Theology at a Theological Seminary of the Church are to be elected and inaugurated by the Synod. While it is true that the same wording of Article 101 appears in Article 82 with regard to a Classis; there, I believe, it must be understood to refer to a Classis taking under its care a student for the ministry and all that that entails. In addition, there is good reason to believe that the wording of Article 82 was a provision for the former Eureka Classis, as it does not appear in the old black book Constitution.

The second recommendation from the Judicial Committee stated: “That item 2b, 260th Abstract, p. 72, be referred to the CEC to be reworked” (261st Abstract, p. 69). 2b states: “When an already established seminary desires to serve as a Theological Seminary of the Church, an overture requesting such status shall be submitted to the Classis in whose geographical area the seminary is located. Upon Classis approval, the overture will be submitted to Synod. Upon Synod approval, the following constitutional requirements will apply: etc.” While the South Central Classis was following the procedure as outlined by 2b and approved by Synod, I believe that the Judicial Committee understood that the procedure and Synod were in error when this was adopted. This procedure was presented to Synod by the Special Committee On Procedures for the Establishment of a Denominational Seminary. Speaking on behalf of the Committee, of which I was a member, I believe that their reasoning with regard to an existing seminary submitting an overture to become a denominational seminary to the local Classis was a normal way to proceed, and that Classis approval was an acknowledgment that said overture was in order, and not that a Classis could or would prohibit Synod its due process to consider such an overture. Furthermore, recommendation 2a clearly provides another process that bypasses any Classis approval.

In fact, the petition of Heidelberg Theological Seminary to become a denominational seminary did come to Synod apart from any Classis approval in 2004 (cf. Abstract ’04:80). At that time it was postponed indefinitely in order for a Special Committee to “put into place procedures for oversight, operation and financing of a denominational seminary,” which was later adopted by the 260th Synod. According to our rules (and parliamentary procedure), the petition of HTS still exists, and there is nothing that would prohibit it from being taken up by a later Synod (Session) by a motion from the floor.

Notwithstanding the length of this report, for which I beg your pardon, I do believe that it does give some indication of the present state of affairs within the RCUS.

I trust that what was written to the church in Philadelphia may also be said to us: “*I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name*” (Rev. 3:8).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Vernon Pollema

B. Stated Clerk’s Report on the Minutes (and Necrologies)

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

In accordance with the requirements of this office, your clerk has preserved the minutes of the 261st Synod with all supporting documents. An Abstract of the actions of Synod, dedicated to the memory of Rev. Norman Jones, including reports was prepared and published in accord with Standing Rule 10. Copies of this Abstract and a Directory of Congregations (1827 Abstracts and 1349 Directories) were distributed to all ministers and congregations of Synod, as well as to all churches with which we maintain fraternal relations. The Index of Positions and Resolutions included in the Abstract was updated.

I would encourage all churches to look at the number of Abstracts and Directories that are actually needed for their congregations and inform me if there is a change needed for this year’s Abstract. It becomes costly to print and mail, if they are not all needed. In some cases more may be needed.

The minutes and all supporting documents were scanned and saved on CD in Adobe pdf format. A CD with all records from 2003 through 2007 has been made for the Archives.

The report on Federal Vision was sent to all churches in fraternal relationship, NAPARC churches, and ICRC churches. I put this report, along with the two others previously passed on Justification and the New Perspective on Paul together in a pdf format and sent them to these respective bodies. They were also encouraged to stand with us in these studies and decisions.

A letter was sent to the Deaf Reformed Churches informing them of our disappointment and regret for the actions they have taken to leave the RCUS over what they described as doctrinal and personal conflicts. I also encouraged them to reconsider this action and reestablish contact with us. To date there has been no response from any of the congregations or pastors.

Churches in fraternal relationship and institutions supported by the RCUS were invited to attend this 262nd Synod meeting.

I did not see a list of email addresses published or made available by the Classes right after the Classes meetings were held to aid in the sending of reports for Synod. As I recall, a few years ago this decision was made, but maybe should be revisited. I sent out informational materials and reports to the delegates via email attachments. In some cases, where delegates have no email, I have asked their pastors or others to print these up for the delegates. This method is much cheaper and certainly takes less time than sending hard copies out to about 100 people. I trust that this method has worked and if there are improvements to be made, let the clerk know.

The various Classes clerks sent their material to me in a timely manner and with few problems. It is very helpful if all committees and others making reports could send me these in digital format, so I would not have to retype or scan them. The preferred format for reports is in a popular word-processing format rather than only in pdf.

I have not received any Necrologies for this year.

Thank you all for your cooperation during the past year.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Paul H. Treick

Note: The following Necrologies were read:

Elmer Neuharth (1924-2007), was born to Philip and Katharina (Mehlhaf) Neuharth at Menno, SD. He attended rural school and was confirmed by Rev. Bodenman. His confirmation verse was Psalm 143:10. Elmer had basic training at Camp Fanin, Texas. He married Alice Knittel on April 30, 1948 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Freeman, SD, celebrating 59 years together. They had two children, Joyce and Earl. Elmer enjoyed farming and after retirement he continued to help his son on the farm. He enjoyed the fellowship of his family and reading. Elmer served Zion Reformed Church, Menno, SD, as a Deacon & an Elder, and was also a lifetime member of Zion RCUS. The Lord called Elmer into His glorious presence on Friday, December 7, 2007, where he awaits the resurrection of his body. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” (1 Corinthians 15:53-54)

Gideon Mettler, the son of Henry and Pauline (Bertsch) Mettler, was born September 29, 1910 in rural Upham, North Dakota. He died at the age of 97 years on Wednesday, March 26, 2008 at the Heart of America Long Term Care Center in Rugby.

Gideon was raised in the rural Upham farm home of his parents, the oldest of four children, and received his education at the Little Deep School District, McHenry County. On September 17, 1933, Gideon married Frieda Eugenia Mehlhaff at the Peace Reformed Church in Upham. The couple farmed southwest of Upham in Deep River Township until retirement in 1972 when they moved to Upham. Gideon served on the Upham City Council and was an elder of the Peace Reformed Church for 14 years. Gideon and Frieda moved to the Harold S. Haaland Retirement Home in Rugby in 1997. In 2006, the couple transferred to the Heart of America Long Term Care Center in Rugby.

Survivors include Frieda, his loving wife of 74 years; daughters, Allene Lamoureux of Cupertino, CA; Ione (John) Carlson, Poulsbo, WA; Marie (Elroy) Alderink, Chelmsford, MA; sons, Art (Carol) of Phoenix, AZ; Merle (Esther) of Otsego, MN; Albert (Kathryn) of Wing, ND and Milo (Mary Ann) of Ridgeway, IA; son-in-law; Bob Hunskor, Newburg, ND; 30 grandchildren; 45 great-grandchildren, and 4 great-great grandchildren; several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Irma Hunskor; one brother, Reuben, two sisters, Anetha Serr and Lily Scheep; his stepmother, Bertha; a son-in-law, Vincent Lamoureux and his parents.

C. Treasurer's Report and Auditor's Opinion

Esteemed Brothers:

The fiscal year 2007-2008 shows significant changes in the financial condition of the RCUS. Our cash balance increased by \$121,682.51 to \$421,462.68 as of January 31, 2008. As of that same date our outstanding notes decreased by \$2,487.62 to \$71,206.41.

The Building Fund is one of the areas that showed a significant increase. Shortly after the end of the 2006-2007 fiscal year the church in Danville, Kentucky paid off its outstanding building loan, which increased the Building Fund. Much of the balance of the increase relates to amounts received from the Van Doom Revocable Living Trust. The church in Modesto, California borrowed funds from the Van Doods, and following the death of the last of the two of them the Trust provided that any remaining debt of the Modesto church was to be paid to the RCUS. During this fiscal year we received an assignment of the balance of the debt of \$38,398.85, and received \$13,000 in payments, reducing the balance remaining to \$25,398.85.

All of the churches with outstanding building loans are current on their loan payments, and after the end of the fiscal year St. John's in Lincoln, Nebraska paid off its loan. This will be reflected in next year's report.

This year the special missions offering went to Grace RCUS in Greeley, Colorado. The offerings which went through Synod amounted to \$14,055.69.

The amount paid to the Ministerial Aid Fund to be invested was \$47,860.22. \$42,804.58 was received through guideline payments, which was a significant increase over the prior year. The Ministerial Aid Fund increased by \$111,625.67 to \$909,945.28. We are approaching the one million dollar goal, and it is time that Synod decide how these funds are going to be handled.

Former student Andrew McIntyre has repaid \$2,000 of amounts paid to him by the RCUS for student aid, and I have been in communication with him recently in which he indicated that he will be able to repay the balance. These funds, \$2,100 in private donations and the guideline amounts caused the increase in the ending balance of the Student Aid fund.

I would remind everyone that Standing Rule #8 requires that any monies sent to the Synod Treasurer include a designation as to what funds it is to be used for. With the appointment of a number of new church treasurers this rule was not always followed.

It is my hope that before this meeting of Synod is complete to have new Remittance forms for each church. Please give them to your treasurer as soon as possible. A number of churches have begun sending funds based upon last year's guideline amounts, and

changes are going to have to be made.

Finally, I want to again publicly thank Reverend Pollema and Clayton Greiman for continuing to review my monthly reports throughout the year and for their input.

Recommendations:

1. That church treasurers be reminded to follow Standing Rule #8 when sending funds to the Synod Treasurer. *[Take Note.]*
2. That the Treasurer be directed to transfer \$1,186.50 from Unallocated Income to Diaconal. *[Adopted]*

Respectfully submitted,
Elder Ted S. Griess

	1-31-2008	1-31-2007
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash	00.00	00.00
Checking #2	299,780.17	256,480.23
Total Current Assets	299,780.17	256,480.23
Other Assets		
Notes Receivable Unsec.	71,206.41	73,694.03
Total Assets	492,669.09	373,474.20
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES		
Liabilities	00.00	00.00
Fund Balances	492,669.09	373,474.20
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	492,669.09	373,474.20

The following notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis for accounting: The Reformed Church in the United States prepares its financial statements on the cash basis method of accounting.

Fund Accounting: Fund accounting, which consists of a self-balancing group of accounts and in which is recorded cash received and expenditures paid, is used by this synod. In addition, revenue and the related assets are recognized when received rather than when the obligation is incurred. Accordingly, the accompanying financial statements are not intended to present financial position and results of operations in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Note 2: Notes Receivable

Notes receivable are recorded as an asset at the time funds are advanced.

	FUND BALANCES			
	Beginning Balance	Income	Expenses	Ending Balance
Building Fund	\$51,330.84	\$53,247.96	\$10,000.00	\$94,578.80
Checking Transfers	-	-	-	-
Deficit Reduction	11,250.91	426.92	11,250.91	426.92
Diaconal	4,042.51	18,823.85	21,600.00	1,266.36
Dordt College	-	5,149.40	5,149.40	-
Foreign Ministries	62,556.86	126,351.69	103,822.25	85,086.30
General Benevolence	(9,325.53)	52,390.41	42,570.00	494.88
Reformed Herald	(16,666.08)	19,924.25	12,642.00	(9,383.83)
General Publishing	86,549.35	24,507.82	16,906.95	94,150.22
Home Missions	72,769.23	121,159.11	92,896.24	101,032.10

Hope Haven	-	7,462.76	7,462.76	-
MERF	-	7,324.38	7,324.38	-
Ministerial Aid	-	48,385.22	47,860.22	525.00
Ministerial Relief	3,478.39	165,263.40	164,900.00	3,841.79
Seminaries	-	17,307.45	17,307.45	-
Student Aid	8,607.93	13,450.00	11,465.18	10,592.75
Synod Dues	23,999.26	58,159.61	44,493.98	37,664.89
Other Assets	73,694.03	-	2,487.62	71,206.41
Unallocated Income	1,186.50	-	-	1,186.50
Total	\$373,474.20	\$739,334.23	\$620,139.34	\$492,669.09

LOANS RECEIVABLE

	Beginning Bal.	New Note	Principal	Interest	Ending Bal.
Grass Valley (3%)	\$15,371.53		\$3,056.83	\$419.34	\$12,314.70
Rock Springs (3%)	23,322.50		2,886.67	660.17	20,435.83
Danville, KY (3%)	30,000.00		30,000.00	821.11	-
Lincoln (3%)	5,000.00		-	-	5,000.00
Limon (3%)		10,000.00	1,942.97	157.03	8,057.03
Modesto (0%)	-	38,398.85	13,000.00	-	25,398.85
Int. earned on Cash Balance (credited to Synod Dues)				1,422.31	
Total	\$73,694.03	\$48,398.85	\$50,886.47	\$3,479.96	\$71,206.41

STATEMENT OF EXPENSES

BUILDING FUND	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
DEBT REDUCTION	11,250.91	11,250.91
DIACONAL	21,600.00	11,250.91
DORDT COLLEGE	5,149.40	5,149.40
FOREIGN MISSIONS		
Congo Account	28,030.00	
Congo Econ. Devel.	500.00	
International Radio	17,861.09	
Kenya Account	10,700.00	
Kinshasa Account	8,240.00	
Kishimba Kasantika	5,400.00	
Mbayo Masangu	1,800.00	
Philippines	12,625.63	
SFMC Committee	5,121.11	
Uganda	13,544.42	
Total Foreign Missions		103,822.25
GENERAL BENEVOLENCE		
Amy Stevens	12,000.00	
Faith, Anderson, CA	7,200.00	
Grace, Lancaster, CA	5,100.00	
Kevin Hamilton	470.00	
Rev. Riffert (moving)	3,700.00	
Rev. Potter	5,400.00	
Trinity, Colorado Sp., CO	8,700.00	
Total Benevolence		42,570.00
REFORMED HERALD	12,642.00	12,642.00
GENERAL PUBLISHING		
D. McPherson, Honorarium	300.00	
Herald Editor, Honorarium	1,500.00	
Olive Tree	9,168.55	
Postage	927.81	

Publications Committee	2,246.56	
Royalties	706.28	
SS Curriculum Expense	1,500.00	
Subscription Manager	557.75	
Total General Publishing		16,906.95
HOME MISSIONS		
Bldg Debt, Greeley, CO	14,055.69	
Chicago, IL	1,433.33	
Covenant, Chico, CA	15,210.00	
Grace Chapel, Arkansas	10,080.00	
Grace, Greeley, CO	13,586.04	
High Plains, Calhan, CO	14,400.00	
LA Basin Mission	14,000.04	
Providence, Vermillion, SD	8,720.04	
Rev. Saavalainen	1,000.00	
SHMC Expenses	411.10	
Total Home Missions		92,896.24
HOPE HAVEN	7,462.76	7,462.76
MERF	7,324.38	7,324.38
MINISTERIAL AID	47,860.22	47,860.22
MINISTERIAL RELIEF		
Mrs. Joan Vance	12,000.00	
Mrs. Marie Stuebbe	12,000.00	
Mrs. Marjorie Duckett	12,000.00	
Mrs. Phyllis Grossmann	12,000.00	
Mrs. Virginia Hoeflinger	12,000.00	
Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe	12,000.00	
Mrs. Kay Savage	12,000.00	
Rev. Chester Ploeger	14,400.00	
Rev. Howard Hart	16,200.00	
Rev. Norman Jones	13,400.00	
Mrs. Betty Sander	12,000.00	
Rev. Gene Sawtelle	14,400.00	
Rev. Neale Riffert	10,500.00	
Total Ministerial Relief		164,900.00
SEMINARIES		
Greenville	2,390.75	
Heidelberg	5,316.10	
Mid America	4,816.10	
New Geneva	4,784.50	
Total Seminaries		17,307.45
STUDENT AID		
Jim Connelly	4,800.00	
Jimmy Hall	4,500.00	
Samuel Powell	2,165.18	
Total Student Aid		11,465.18
SYNODICAL DUES		
Abstracts	5,338.07	
Annual Meeting	22,066.57	
Christian Education	592.99	
Clerk Assistants	100.00	
Dordt College Committee	317.75	
Executive Committee	692.70	
Federal Vision Committee	160.27	

Financial Audit	505.00	
Greenville Committee	3,001.33	
Home Missions Committee	3,916.10	
Interchurch Relations	5,083.64	
Officer Remuneration	2,450.00	
Postage	195.00	
Website Committee	74.56	
Total Synodical Dues		44,493.98
Total Expenditures		\$617,651.72

MINISTERIAL AID FUND

Bank Accounts		
Checking: Wells Fargo	\$18,062.96	
Subtotal		\$18,062.96
Bank CDs		
Dacotah Bank	173,300.47	
Wells Fargo	221,361.47	
Subtotal		394,661.94
Mutual Fund Accounts		
American Funds	333,724.42	
Vanguard Funds	163,495.96	
Subtotal		497,220.38
Total Ministerial Aid Fund Balance		\$909,945.28

Elder Ted S. Griess, Treasurer

X. Membership and Financial Statistics

The report of the Membership and Financial Statistics for 2007 was adopted and is printed in the Appendix of this Abstract.

XI. Reports from RCUS Fraternal Delegates

All reports are published as a part of the Interchurch Relations Committee Report and can be found there. Rev. Tracy Gruggett reported as a fraternal delegate to the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church held in Sioux Center, IA, June 13-20, 2007. Rev. Hank Bowen reported as a fraternal delegate to the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church meeting in Pittsburgh, PA. Rev. Herman Van Stedum reported as a fraternal delegate to the Synod of the United Reformed Church meeting in Palos Heights, IL.

XII. Addresses by Delegates from other Reformed Churches, Representatives, and Institutions

Rev. Tom Tyson brought fraternal greetings from the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Rev. John McFarland brought fraternal greetings from the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America. Rev. Doug Barnes brought fraternal greetings from the United Reformed Churches in North America. Fraternal delegates from the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Liberated, and the Reformed Confessing Church in the Congo were not able to be present at this meeting, but written greetings were read.

Dr. Carl Zylstra, President of Dordt College, addressed the body on behalf of Dordt College. Mr. Marlow Van Ginkel addressed the body on behalf of Hope Haven. Dr. Cornelis Venema, President of Mid-America Theological Seminary, addressed the body on behalf of the Seminary. Mr. Luis Viega addressed the body on behalf of Greenville Presbyterian

Theological Seminary. Rev. Frank Walker addressed the body on behalf of City Seminary of Sacramento. Mr. Ray Schnabel presented a video and addressed the body on behalf of Heidelberg Theological Seminary.

XIII. Reports of Board Members and Liaisons

Rev. Jim Sawtelle reported as a member of the Board of Trustees of Mid-America Reformed Seminary. Rev. Herman Van Stedum reported as a member of the Board of Trustees of Dordt College. Rev. Ron Potter reported as a member of the Board of Trustees of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Rev. Paul Treick reported as a liaison to the Radio Administration Committee for Reformed Faith and Life, French. Rev. Paul Treick reported as the editor of the *Reformed Herald*.

XIV. Special Committee Reports

There were no special committees to report this year.

XV. Standing Committee Reports

[The recommendations for the Standing Committees appear in their adopted form.]

A. Missions Committee

1. That our primary approach for Synod missions should be to start mission works, beginning with a core group from our established RCUS congregations which are located in or near metropolitan areas. Take Note.
2. That Synod provide Grace Reformed Chapel of Northwest Arkansas with \$7,200 in fiscal year 2009 [a reduction of 10% from original support].
3. That Synod provide Providence RCUS, Vermillion, SD, with \$5,720 in fiscal year 2009 [this is the same amount as in 2008, after taking a 35% reduction in 2008].
4. That Synod provide Grace RCUS, Greeley, CO, with \$11,000 in fiscal year 2009 [a reduction of 10%].
5. That South Central Classis consider fully funding Limon, CO, since it has been designated a mission work of Classis. Take Note.
6. That Synod provide Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, LaHabra, CA, with \$12,500 in fiscal year 2009 [a reduction of 7%].
7. That the Western Classis Missions Committee be hereby asked to conduct its annual visitation of the Chico, CA, work in September 2008." Take Note.
8. That a visitation to Chico, CA, be conducted in January 2009, by three Synod Home Missions Committee members, one from each Classis, along with Western Classis Committee members, to assess whether Synod funding of the work should continue beyond January 2010.
9. That Synod provide Covenant RCUS, Chico, CA, with \$16,740 in fiscal year 2009 [a reduction of 10%].
10. That the following be added to the Synod Home Missions Manual: "Each Classis Home Missions Committee shall be encouraged to develop a 3-5 year strategic plan for their missions endeavors, and annually update and report on its progress to the Synod Home Missions Committee."
11. That visitations be specified in the Synod Home Missions Manual to involve at least two committee members 'meeting with the steering committee or consistory of the work, and with a majority of the members of the work.
12. That the Synod Home Missions Manual include the following: "An annual written report, on the progress of each unorganized work, shall be sent from the overseeing

consistency to the Classis Missions Committee.”

13. That the Classes and Synod nominations should take care not to overload missionaries with placement on various committees. Take Note.

14. That the 2008 Day of Prayer debt reduction offering be designated for Grace RCUS, Greeley, CO.

15. That each RCUS congregation is hereby urged to pray for at least one Synod Mission work each Lord’s Day. Take Note.

16. That the Classes be encouraged to set aside money for future mission works in their guidelines. Take Note.

17. That Synod budget \$40,000 for future mission works.

18. That \$7,000 be budgeted for committee expenses.

19. That the 2009 Home Missions budget, if approved as recommended, would be \$100,160 [a reduction from \$109,087 for 2008]. Take Note.

20. That the Foreign Missions budget be adopted as follows:

Congo:

Elder/Pastor support	\$14,400 (down \$1,800 from \$16,200)
Kinshasa Aid	\$11,600 (same as last year)
Building and Diaconal Aid	\$ 2,000 (same as last year)

Kenya:

Church Support	\$11,000 (down \$1,000)
Economic Development for Pastors/Elders	\$ 2,000 (same as last year)
Travel for Students to Knox	\$ 3,000

Reformed Faith and Life (French) \$17,000 (same as last year)

Committee Expenses:

Travel to Africa	\$ 2,000
Travel to Europe	\$ 1,000
Travel in USA	\$ 3,000
Travel to/from Philippines	\$ 1,000 (previously \$6,000 for travel and conference)

21. That \$34,000 be budgeted for 2009 to support Rev. Tom Mayville teaching at Knox Theological College in Mbale, Uganda [Last year it was \$25,000, this new amount represents the 50/50 agreement of support with the OPC].

22. That the FMC be allowed to continue promoting interest in and support for the work of the UCRCP to its brethren and those of other sister Reformed churches.

23. That the FMC develop and implement a strategy on behalf of the RCUS Synod to support the action of the ERCC Synod to replace Reverends Kishimba and Illunga as legal representatives to the Congo government and encourage the Dutch and South Africa churches to do the same.

24. That the RCUS Synod provide emergency funds up to \$5,000 to help the ERCC hold a Synod to resolve the current controversy.

25. That the FMC, at their discretion, consider sending up to two men to the ERCC Synod to support them in resolving this controversy.

Rev. H. Bowen, Rev. H. Opp, Rev. G. Baloy, Rev. T. Mayville, Elder B. Williams,
Elder M. Koerner, Elder W. Lingenfelter, Elder F. Hofmann*

B. Benevolence Committee

1. That the following Guidelines for Benevolent Aid and Diaconal Aid be adopted:

Guidelines for Benevolent and Diaconal Aid from Synod

“Benevolent aid exists for the purpose of meeting extraordinary needs from either

individuals or churches especially within the denomination (Gal. 6:10).

Benevolent aid should not be requested for any need with has been presented to and denied by a lower judicatory. Benevolent aid requests should come to Synod only from a Classis. Exceptions can be granted if reason can be shown why the need is urgent and could not be presented through the normal chain. Requests for short-term emergency aid can come directly to the diaconal committee for consideration.

Benevolent aid should not be granted for any purpose which legitimately belongs to the jurisdiction of some other function of Classis or Synod such as Student Aid, Missions, or Ministerial Relief.

Benevolent aid from Synod to churches should normally be temporary. When benevolent aid is requested for a church, the church shall also submit a three-year budget and a report outlining the church’s plan for getting off such aid. When a church is requesting long-term benevolent aid, the Diaconal Committee shall consult with the church annually to determine the continuing appropriateness of the aid and to advise the church in becoming self-sufficient.

Any conditions or requirements imposed by Synod on the granting of benevolent aid either to individuals or churches shall be overseen by the Diaconal Committee, and a report shall be made to Synod regarding the fulfillment of such conditions and requirements.”

2. That Mrs. Amy Stevens be granted benevolent aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the next Synodical year. A note of thanks from Mrs. Stevens was read.

3. That Grace RCUS, Lancaster, be granted benevolent aid in the amount of \$425 per month for the next synodical year.

4. That Faith RCUS, Anderson, be granted benevolent aid in the amount of \$500 per month for the next synodical year.

5. That Trinity Covenant RCUS, Colorado Springs, be granted benevolent aid in the amount of \$725 per month for the next synodical year.

6. That Ron Potter be granted benevolent aid in the amount of \$450 per month for the next synodical year to assist with life insurance, medical insurance, and medical costs.

7. That Jonathan Merica be granted benevolent aid in the amount of \$1800 per month through September 2008, unless he finds adequate employment beforehand. A note of thanks from Rev. Merica was read.

8. That the Permanent Diaconal Committee report be adopted.

9. That the Diaconal Committee draft a letter to be sent to each of the churches receiving benevolent aid to inform them of the new guidelines for Benevolent and Diaconal Aid.

Rev. T. Gruggett, Rev. M. Powell, Rev. H. Van Stedum, Elder J. Connelly,*

Elder J. Rydell, Elder D. Helseth

C. Ministerial Aid

1. That the following requests for ministerial aid be granted: Ministerial aid for Rev. and Mrs. Chester Ploeger in the amount of \$1,200 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Mrs. Betty Sander in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Rev. & Mrs. Gene Sawtelle in the amount of \$1,500 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Rev. & Mrs. Neale Riffert in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Rev. and Mrs. Howard Hart in the amount of \$1,350 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Mrs.

Virginia Hoeflinger in the amount of \$1,200 per month for the Synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Mrs. Kay Savage in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the Synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Mrs. Virginia Hoeflinger in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the Synodical year 2008 be granted. Ministerial aid for Rev. & Mrs. Herman Van Stedum in the amount of \$1,500 per month starting in September 2008 for the next Synodical year. Ministerial aid for Mrs. Lena Jones in the amount of \$1,000 per month for the synodical year 2008 be granted.

2. That a reporting be made annually to Synod on the number of consistories that have implemented the RCUS Pension Plan for Ministers which was referred to the consistories by the 259th Synod. Take Note.

3. That a subcommittee be appointed for the express purpose of managing the funds. This committee would report to the MAF committee with a recommended investment proposal. Based on approval of the proposal by MAF, this committee would have full responsibility for fund management, allocation of the funds, placement, and servicing of funds of a selected financial institution. Subcommittee members would be appointed and approved by MAF and Synod members and are to serve as long as they wish or are found wanting in any way. The time should be a minimum of five years and consist of men that have experience and expertise in money management and are committed to serving on the subcommittee for this period of time.

4. That the following be appointed and approved to serve on the subcommittee: Dave McPherson, Mark Fisher, Ray Schnabel, and Spencer Gross. Current Treasurer to serve as an ad hoc member (non-voting).

5. That the current 50% requirement for the allocation of monies to be placed in CD's be removed to allow fund growth at a moderate risk rate in keeping up with inflation as opposed to the current no-risk approach.

6. That a resolution be passed by Synod members requiring fund principal to not be used for any reason but to maintain in perpetuity for fund security. Once the fund exceeds one million dollars, then fund interest and dividends can be used up to 80%, while 20% will go back into the principal fund portfolio for continued growth.

Rev. D. Schnabel, Rev. W. Haddock, Rev. D. Kingswood, Elder M. Fisher,*

Elder D. McPherson, Elder E. Van Houten

D. Ecumenical Committee

1. Regarding communication #4 from the PCA regarding an invitation to their General Assembly. Take Note.

2. A letter of fraternal greeting from the Canadian Reformed Churches was read on the floor of the Synod.

3. The Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship from the Canadian Reformed Church were read on the floor of the Synod.

4. From the Église Réformée St-Marc de Québec requesting financial support and prayers for their Huguenot Exhibit in conjunction with the 400th anniversary of Quebec City, Take Note.

5. That the IRC continue to gather information from the RCSA in order to bring a recommendation regarding the RCSA invitation into ecclesiastical fellowship before the RCUS Synod at its 2009 meeting.

6. That the Synod of the RCUS affirm the reception of the Heritage Reformed Congregations into the membership of NAPARC.

7. That the application for NAPARC membership by the Canadian Reformed Churches be approved.

8. That the application for NAPARC membership by the Presbyterian Reformed Church be approved.

9. That the proposed ICRC Constitutional change regarding membership admission be approved and that the Stated Clerk of the RCUS advise the corresponding Secretary of the ICRC of the results of the vote.”

The proposed change adopted is as follows:

“Article IV. Membership

1. Those churches shall be admitted as members which:

a. Adhere and are faithful to one or more of the confessional standards stated in the Basis, as each church has adopted one or more of these as its own standards, or adhere and are faithful to Reformed Confessions which are equivalent in content to the Confessions listed in the Basis (Art. 2), and which Confession (or Confessions) shall be proposed to be added to Article II of the Constitution.”

10. Regarding the budget of the Permanent Inter-Church Relations Committee Report, that the budget be approved.

11. That the proposed changes to the paper on Biblical Principles of Church Unity be adopted.

Rev. M. McGee, Rev. R. Potter, Rev. D. Dawn, Elder J. Kroese,*

Elder K. Bowen, Elder B. Borgwardt

E. Education and Student Aid

1. That student aid be granted to Mr. Jimmy Hall for the 2008-2009 school year in the amount of \$6,000.00 for tuition and \$250.00 for books.

2. That we suspend the previous policy of limitation for tuition for Students for the Ministry.

3. That, under the oversight of the Sunday School Curriculum Revision Committee, Rev. Neale Riffert be appointed to review, revise, and enhance the Promise and Deliverance Sunday School Curriculum, with special regard to the mandate of the 260th Synod as follows:

A. That a teacher's handbook be drafted for each quarter of the curriculum lessons.

B. That a quarterly review lesson and corresponding quiz be written and incorporated into each of the quarter for each year of the curriculum.

C. That the 'Discuss and Decide' sections of the Curriculum be reviewed and revised by the Sunday School Committee for improved detachability and historical relevance and these revisions be submitted to the 263rd Synod.

D. That the K-1 Grades of the Curriculum be revised to make it age-appropriate.

4. That Rev. Neal Riffert be paid an honorarium for his work with the Promise and Deliverance Sunday School Curriculum in the amount of \$5,000.00 for each grade level as completed.

5. That Synod erect a Special Committee to study the issue of what the appropriate relationship ought to be between the Synod and Liberal Arts Colleges who seek to provide Christian Higher Education from a reformed perspective, and the appropriateness of providing such institutions with monetary support with a guideline amount.

6. That the RCUS Guideline for giving to Dordt College be continued at \$2.25 per communicant member for the coming year.

7. That the procedure for establishing or becoming a RCUS seminary shall be by overtire from a Consistory to Classis and from a Classis or a Committee of Synod to Synod. Upon Synod approval, the following constitutional requirements will apply:

i. Synod shall exercise oversight of the seminary through a Board of Visitors (See Art. VIII).

ii. Nominations shall be submitted by the Classis to Synod for election and

inauguration as Teachers of Theology. [This would replace the procedure which was adopted by the 260th Synod, Abstract page 72.]

Rev. M. Koerner, Rev. P. Henderson, Rev. N. Riffert, Rev. D. Dawn,
Elder R. Abbink, Elder J. Jones*

F. Judicial Committee

1. That the credentials of Peace RCUS, Garner, IA, seating Emil Broers as the Primarius Delegate and Dean Stromer as his Secundus be declared in order.
2. That Overture 15 be referred to a special committee to study the biblical basis, advisability and practical implications of the RCUS Classes implementing a system of church visitation in addition to our current article 81 questions.
3. That Standing Rule #13 be amended as follows: A.) Replace “mailed” in the first sentence with “submitted.” B.) Add the following sentence after the first sentence: “Reports may be emailed to consistories with known Email addresses; otherwise, they must be mailed by regular mail.” C.) Replace “at least two weeks before the meeting of Synod” with “by April 1st”.

Rev. F. Walker, Rev. G. Syms, Rev. W. Embree, Elder S. Gross,
Elder S. Wilbur, Elder E. Starks*

G. Publications Committee

1. That Rev. Paul Treick be nominated to serve as editor of the *Reformed Herald*. No other nominations were submitted and Rev. Treick was elected as editor by ballot vote.
2. That the editor of the *Reformed Herald* be given an expense account of \$500 for the next synodical year.
3. That the *Reformed Herald* editor consider placing a questionnaire in one edition of the Herald asking for suggestions on how to improve the usefulness of the Herald. Take Note.
4. That the work of Rev. George Syms in producing the audio version of the Heidelberg Catechism be made available in an MP3 form through the RCUS website. Take Note.
5. That Rev. Eric Bristley be compensated for his work for the Publications and Promotions Committee and the *Reformed Herald* publication at the rate of \$35 per hour (\$5.00 increase) up to a maximum of 32 hours per month, a maximum budget of \$1,120 per month (\$13,440 total).
6. That the permanent Publications Committee gather estimates for the printing of a higher quality cover for Jones’ workbook, in particular a college text binding.
7. That the Permanent Publications Committee implement the printing of 500 copies of Rev. Jones’ workbook in its present form, but with the modern language version of the Catechism and Bible references in the New King James Version.
8. That the proposed changes by the Permanent Publications Committee to the Three Forms of Unity be recommitted to the permanent committee for the purpose of providing a more finished version, which will be submitted to all consistories by September 1st. Included will be a list of such changes and rationale for making them.
9. That the Permanent Publications Committee also make available to the Consistories the list of unauthorized changes that were made in the most recent version of the Three Forms of Unity (2006).
10. That the Permanent Publications Committee republish the red (1986 approved edition) modern English version of the Heidelberg Catechism, in both hard and soft cover, 1000 each.
11. That all of the available printed Abstracts of the Eureka Classis and the printed Abstracts of the Minutes of Synod, including all position papers, be produced on CDROM and be designed for browsing in Acrobat PDF Format, with the capability of searching

globally across all the electronic issues.

12. That the annual publication of the *Reformed Herald* and printed RCUS Abstracts of the Minutes of Synod be electronically upgraded annually and be developed with the built-in features and functionalities of searching globally across all the indexed issues.
13. That the Committee to Develop eBooks maintain at its discretion, an RCUS Book Depository inventory of copies of CDROMs of the RCUS Electronic Reference Library and of the RCUS *Reformed Herald* collection.
14. That the budget of \$4040 to maintain the denomination’s website be approved for the next synodical year. This budget consists of \$3600 for web development, \$240 for web-hosting, and \$200 for software maintenance.
15. That Synod continue to contract with Rev. Eric Bristley as webmaster to maintain and develop its web-site with a budget of \$300 per month or \$3600 per year.
16. That Synod authorize the webmaster to implement the Joomla content management system for its denomination website to provide enhanced features for denominational communication and collaboration.
17. That Synod authorize the webmaster to develop, in coordination with the officers of each Classis, sections or sub-sites on the denominational website dedicated to the work of each Classis.
18. That the stated clerks of each classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring meeting of Classis.
19. That the clerk of each consistory notify the webmaster of any changes in the information listed on the website for their particular charge.” Take Note.
20. That Rev. Eric Bristley continue in his original mandate, which was to help with layout and design of the *Reformed Herald*.
21. That the *Reformed Herald* report be received.

Rev. D. Fagrey, Rev. S. Henry, Rev. G. Mancilas, Elder J. Honeck,
Elder B. Gruenhagen, Elder D. DeGroot*

H. Finance Committee

1. That Synod pay travel expenses for delegates to the 262nd Synod in the amount of \$17,504.46.
2. That vehicle travel on behalf of Synod be paid at the rate of \$.45 (forty-five cents) per running mile (This is an amendment to Standing Rule 5).
3. That Standing Rule 6 be amended by adding the following sentence: ‘Vehicle mileage for travel to Synod by Pastors and delegate Elders will be paid at the running mile rate per pastoral charge.
4. That \$426.92 be transferred from the Debt Reduction Fund to the Diaconal Fund.
5. That the Synod Guideline be set as follows:

Synod Dues	18.00
Home Missions	38.00
Foreign Missions	36.00
Ministerial Relief	65.00
Diaconal Ministries	3.00
General Publications	7.00
Student Aid	2.00
General Benevolence	17.00
Ministerial Aid	15.00
Building Fund	1.00
Dordt College	2.25

Hope Haven	2.00
Greenville Seminary	1.00
Heidelberg Seminary	2.00
Mid-America Seminary	2.00
New Geneva Seminary	2.00
MERF	2.00
TOTAL	\$215.25
Plus \$13.00 per <i>Reformed Herald</i>	

Rev. R. Grossmann, Rev. W. Brice, Rev. J. Fluck, Elder R. Kusler,
Elder T. Griess, Elder C. Fellersen, Elder M. Peery*

I. Minutes of Classes

1. That the minutes of the South Central Classis for 2007 be approved with the following exceptions.: A). Document #6, the President's Report, is unsigned. B). Document #30, the Publications Report, is unsigned. C). Document numbers are not consecutive and some are unnumbered.
2. That the minutes of the South Central Classis for 2008 be approved with the following exceptions: A). The minutes are not in a side post binder. B). The minutes are unsigned. C). Document 6, the Home Missions Report, is unsigned. D). Document 7, the Candidates and Credentials Report, is unsigned. E). Document 8, the Publications Report, is not signed by a majority. F). Document 9, the Christian Education Report, is unsigned. G). Document 9 also fails to list the members of the committee. H). Document 10, the President's Report, is unsigned. I). George Horner's Parochial Report is unsigned. Jealous). Document 28A, the Heidelberg Youth Camp Report is unsigned. K). Document 28B, a Special Committee Report, is unsigned. L). Overture 3 is unsigned. M). Presidential election is not in accordance with South Central Classis Standing Rule #15. N). No action is taken on the Fraternal Delegate Report.
3. That the minutes of the Northern Plains Classis be approved with the following exceptions: A). The phrase "extremely lengthy devotion" should be deleted on page 8. B). On page 10 in the Candidates and Credentials Committee Report, it states "recommendations 1 and 2 were dealt with during the exam," but they cannot be found.
4. That the minutes of the Western Classis be approved with the following exceptions: A). Documents 4, 7, and 11, Credentials of Delegates, used a 2007 form. B). Minutes of the Special Session of Classis contains two page 5's. C). Minutes of the Special Session page 1 states, "Licentiate Sam Powell wanted the body to know he was present." D). Minutes of the Special Session has greetings given to the body by the Canadian Reformed Churches after adjournment. E). Appendix page 26, the Publications Report, is not signed by a majority.
5. That the minutes of Covenant East Classis be approved with the following exceptions: A). Page 1, delete the word "acting" from "acting President." B). Document 7 contains blanks that make it unclear. C). Document 7 is signed in pencil. D). The credentials for Rev. Brice are missing. E). Item 40, Parochial Report of Jeff DeBoer, is unsigned. F). Item 88, mileage request, is unsigned. G). Presidential Election is not in accordance with Standing Rule 12. H). On page 1, "Revs" is not an acceptable abbreviation. I). In the election of the Treasurer, it is unclear if the two-thirds majority to suspend the Standing Rules was accomplished.
6. Documents sent electronically should be followed with a signed copy (Art. 13 of "Standing Rules"). Take Note.

Rev. H. Hart, Rev. L. Johnson, Rev. R. Stetler, Elder J. Savage,
Elder M. Reyna, Elder K. Lorentzen*

J. Nominations Committee

The Permanent Committee and Special Committee nominations which were adopted are printed in the Summary Information page at the beginning of this Abstract.

Rev. K. Sorensen, Rev. J. Merica, Rev. R. Morris, Elder R. Anderson,*

Elder A. Dockter, Elder L. Huber

K. Excuses Committee

1. That the request from part or all session of Synod be granted for the following members; Rev. Jim West, Rev. William Haddock, Rev. Steven Richert, Rev. Dennis Roe, Rev. Jeff De Boer, Rev. George Horner, elder Keith Lorentzen, Rev. Dale Clark, elder Bob Williams, elder Michael Perry, Rev. C. W. Powell, elder Jean McClay, elder Brian Freeman, elder David Helseth, elder Ruben Beck, elder Glenn Opp, elder Tim Rott, elder Ron Meidinger, elder Raymond Jung, elder Leroy Neifer, elder Ken Armbruster, Rev. Ron Morris, Rev. Dan Rogers, Rev. Frank Walker, elder Roger Gallimore, Rev. David Fagrey, Rev. Warren Embree, and Rev. Tom Mayville.
2. That the Synod clerk be directed to send a letter to each RCUS consistory to remind them that a request for excuse by a delegate must include sufficient information to explain why the situation is extraordinary. Furthermore that the excuse should be signed by each member of the delegating consistory (see Abstract of the Minutes of the 261st Synod, page 73, Recommendation #3).
3. That it should be noted that the following congregations are not represented at the 262nd RCUS Synod by either a delegate elder or a minister: Trinity Covenant RCUS, Colorado Springs, Colorado; Hosmer RCUS, Hosmer, South Dakota; Salem RCUS, Ashley, North Dakota; Harvest RCUS, Minot, North Dakota. Furthermore that it should be noted that the following congregations are not represented at the 262nd RCUS Synod by a delegate elder: Eureka RCUS, Eureka, South Dakota; Faith RCUS, Anderson, California; Covenant RCUS, Chico, California; Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter, California. Take Note.

Rev. M. Voytek, Rev. D. Rogers, Rev. J. Nelken, Elder A. Fickbohm, Elder V. Ochsner, Elder T. Rott*

L. Overtures Committee

1. That the Synod of the RCUS acknowledge with gratitude to God the influence and contributions of John Calvin by commemorating the 500th Anniversary of his birth in 2009 in the following ways:
 - A. That a commemorative issue of the *Reformed Herald* be dedicated to articles on John Calvin and his contribution to the church.
 - B. That the Rev. Eric Kayayan (or a suitable alternative if Rev. Kayayan cannot) be invited to the 263rd Synod to bring an address on a suitable topic (to be determined in consultation with Eric) to the Synod in one or both of our Synod services.
 - C. That Synod appoint the Executive Committee to facilitate and oversee plans adopted in these motions.
2. That Synod accept the invitation from St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church of Hamburg, MN, to host the 263rd Synod.
3. That the Executive Committee Report be Adopted.
4. That an expression of thanks be given to the host congregation (see XVI, A).

Rev. J. Sawtelle, Rev. J. Blair, Rev. E. Bristley, Elder G. Stewart, Elder S. Heinbigner*

XVI. Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

A. Expression of Appreciation to the Host Congregation

That the following expression of gratitude be expressed to Hope Reformed Church, Sutton, NE.

"To the members and consistory of Hope Reformed Church, the 262nd Synod of the RCUS extends our heartfelt appreciation for your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in serving us in this Synod meeting. May our God richly reward you for your generosity. We extend our congratulations to you and rejoice with you in your 100th Anniversary as a congregation. This note of thanks is to be placed in the bulletin on the next

Lord's Day after Synod.”

B. Adoption of the Stated Clerk's Report, Executive Committee Report, and Standing Overtures Committee Report

These reports were all previously adopted.

Rev. Herman Van Stedum was given to floor to address the Synod in light of his retirement from the active ministry on August 31, 2008. He addressed the body with thanksgiving for the years he served congregations in the Reformed Church in the U. S.

XVII. Adjournment

A. Reading of the Minutes (and at the beginning of each day's session)

The minutes were printed, distributed, read, corrected, and approved for each day's proceedings.

B. Roll Call

The final roll call showed 37 ministers and 29 elders present.

C. Motion to Adjourn

The 262nd Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States adjourned to the 263rd Annual Session of Synod to meet at St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church, Hamburg, Minnesota at 7:00 pm on May 11, 2008.

D. Closing Service

1. Devotions

The closing devotion was conducted by Elder Loren Huber (Hope RCUS, Sutton, NE) who read Philippians 1:4-2:16, and led in prayer.

2. Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Benediction, Doxology

The President led the assembly in the recitation of the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. He pronounced the Benediction and led in the singing of the Doxology.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Paul H. Treick, Stated Clerk

APPENDIX

Standing Rules of Synod

Index of Positions and Resolutions

Membership and Financial Statistics

General Information

Standing Rules

[Note: The Standing Rules of Synod were adopted in 1986 and amended in the bracketed years.]

1. The fiscal year of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States shall run from February 1st to January 31st of the following year. The synodical dues shall be due on the first of January and are to be paid not later than the thirty-first of January of the current fiscal year. [1991]
2. The statistics of the Classes shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod two weeks before the session of Synod.
3. The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two weeks before the session of Synod.
4. The Standing Rules shall be read during the second session of the annual Synod meeting. This rule may be suspended by a two-thirds' vote of Synod.
5. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel in behalf of Synod at forty-five cents (\$.45) per running mile per vehicle. When distance and time require delegates to use public transportation to Synod, or in behalf of Synod, they shall be granted full fare. [2005, 2008]
6. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only those delegates to Synod whose congregations have paid the synodical dues in full to the Synod Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Synod or have been properly excused by Synod. Vehicle mileage for travel to Synod by pastors and delegate elders will be paid at the running mile rate per pastoral charge. [2008]
7. The President of Synod shall receive four hundred fifty dollars (\$450), the Stated Clerk shall receive one thousand dollars (\$ 1,000), and the Treasurer one thousand dollars (\$ 1,000) for the synodical year. An amount equal to 10 percent of the Stated Clerk's honorarium will be available for the Stated Clerk to use for secretarial help. The Editor of the Reformed Herald shall receive one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500), the Book Depository Manager shall receive three hundred dollars (\$300), and the Subscription Manager shall receive five hundred dollars (\$500) for the synodical year. [1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2007]
8. The monies sent to the Synod Treasurer shall be made out in check form to the

REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES and shall be designated for which fund and how much. for each fund.

9. The Stated Clerk of Synod shall prepare an abstract of the synodical minutes, including a cumulative index of resolutions and positions taken by Synod, and shall publish the same. Each Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an abstract of classical minutes and shall send one copy to each minister, elder delegate and congregation of Synod. [1987, 1989, 1990]

10. The Synod shall have Permanent Committees as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. Archives | B. Board of Trustees |
| C. Christian Education | D. Home Missions |
| E. Diaconal Ministries | F. Interchurch Relations |
| G. Editorial Advice | H. Ministerial Relief |
| I. Executive | J. Publications & Promotions |
| K. Foreign Ministries | L. Develop eBooks |

and the Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. [1989, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2007]

11. The complete Synod statistics shall be duplicated by the Stated Clerk each year at the Synod's expense.

12. Nominations for all officers of Synod and the editor of the *Reformed Herald* 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 with the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election. [1997]

13. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Synod shall be completed and submitted to the Consistories of all the churches and the Treasurer of Synod no later than April 1st. Reports may be emailed to consistories with known email addresses; otherwise, they must be mailed by regular mail. The only committee exempt from this requirement is Home Missions, which shall submit its report at least three weeks in advance of Synod. Excuses for this requirement are to be made only on written request to the Executive Committee of Synod by the chairman of the committee involved by April 1st. All reports, overtures and correspondence must be submitted on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, and all reports must be signed by a majority of the committee members. [1992, 2000, 2004]

14. The services of Synod shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circularized before Synod.

15. Students for the ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Synod to attend only such seminaries which are listed as institutions worthy of 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. Each student receiving student aid must affirm his commitment to pursuing ordination in the RCUS each year before receiving student aid. *His* affirmation must be signed, dated, witnessed and sent to the Stated Clerk of Synod, who will forward a copy of the same to the chairman of the Candidates and Credentials Committee of the student's Classis. [2001]

16. It shall be the practice of the Reformed Church in the United States to require each candidate for the ministry to complete an eight-month internship before his ordination exam. This internship shall be spent with a pastor who has served at least five years in the Reformed Church in the United States. The pastor shall provide a written evaluation of the candidate to the Candidate and Credentials Committee. During this internship particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the peculiarities 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. [1995]

17. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Synod four weeks in advance of Synod shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Synod at any time. The members of the Overtures Committee of Synod shall meet during a recess on Tuesday morning after V. Presentation and Referral of Overtures, Permanent Committee Reports, and

Communications, until the call of the chair, and shall make the initial distribution of papers upon the resumption of business. [1998, 2004]

18. The spring meeting of the Classes shall be held at least one month before the annual meeting of Synod. [1987]

19. The annual session of Synod shall begin each year on the evening of the third Monday of May unless Ascension Day occurs in that week, in which case it shall begin on the evening of the second Monday in May, and shall meet each day until all business regularly brought before it has been disposed. The Order of the Day of Synod shall provide for a service of worship on Monday evening and for committee work on Tuesday evening. [1992, 1998]

20. The Executive Committee of Synod is charged with overseeing contact with groups expressing interest in the RCUS, and with developing materials that will facilitate uniform presentations to such groups. [1997, 2000]

That Standing Rule #13 be amended as follows: A.) Replace "mailed" in the first sentence with "submitted." B.) Add the following sentence after the first sentence: "Reports may be emailed to consistories with known email addresses; otherwise, they must be mailed by regular mail." C.) Replace "at least two weeks before the meeting of Synod" with "by April 1st"

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COVENANT EAST CLASSIS										
<i>Bentonville, AR</i>	<i>Grace (w/ Garner)</i>	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	9	0
Garner, IA	Peace (incl AR)	3	3	119	0	4	1	5	124	0
Golden Valley, MN	Redeemer	4	4	89	2	10	1	13	102	4
Hamburg, MN	St. Paul's	3	3	223	3	0	2	5	228	8
<i>Honesdale, PA</i>	<i>(w/ Napoleon)</i>	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	11	0
Kansas City, MO	Northland	3	4	52	1	0	0	1	53	1
Manitowoc, WI	Salem Ebenezer	4	3	226	2	0	2	4	230	0
Napoleon, OH	Peace (incl.PA)	3	3	67	4	0	0	4	71	5
Subtotal		20	20	776	12	14	6	32	808	18
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS										
Aberdeen, SD	First	3	3	113	4	2	3	9	122	2
Ashley, ND	Salem	3	3	42	0	4	0	4	46	0
Denhoff, ND	Kassel	1	2	21	0	6	0	6	27	0
Eureka	Eureka	2	3	187	3	0	5	8	195	7
Herried, SD	First	1	2	52	0	0	0	0	52	1
Hosmer, SD	Hosmer	2	2	33	0	0	0	0	33	6
Minot, ND	Harvest	2	1	32	0	4	2	6	38	6
Pierre, SD	Hope	2	1	28	0	2	1	3	31	0
Watertown, SD	Covenant	2	0	21	0	0	0	0	21	2
Subtotal		18	17	529	7	18	11	36	565	24
South Central Classis										
Calhan, CO	High Plains	2	1	19	0	0	0	0	19	3
Col Spr., CO	Trinity Cov.	2	2	40	0	10	0	10	50	3
Greeley, CO	Grace	2	2	40	1	0	2	3	43	0
Karval, CO	Bl Cliff Com.	2	1	21	0	0	1	1	22	0
Limon, CO	Providence	1	1	22	0	0	1	1	23	0
Lincoln, NE	St. John's	4	4	97	2	1	2	5	102	0
Menno, SD	Zion	4	4	175	0	0	1	1	176	3
Mitchell, SD	Grace	3	2	70	5	0	0	5	75	2
Rapid City, SD	Grace	2	2	54	0	3	4	7	61	0
Rock Spr., WY	Providence	3	1	32	0	2	0	2	34	1
Sioux Falls, SD	Trinity	5	5	114	5	8	4	17	131	6
Sutton, NE	Emmanuel	3	3	129	0	1	2	3	132	0
Sutton, NE	Hope	4	4	203	6	2	0	8	211	0
Vermillion, SD	Providence	2	1	22	0	3	1	4	26	0
Subtotal		39	33	1,044	19	30	18	67	1,105	18
WESTERN CLASSIS										
Anderson, CA	Faith	1	2	24	0	0	3	3	27	0
Bakersfield, CA	Grace	4	3	118	4	1	3	8	126	5
Chico, CA	Covenant	1	1	20	0	0	2	2	22	2
Grass Valley, CA	Covenant (Incl Stkn)	2	2	44	0	2	6	8	52	4
<i>La Habra, CA</i>	<i>Rehoboth w/ Shafter</i>	1	0	24	0	0	4	4	28	0
Lancaster, CA	Grace	2	2	38	0	0	0	0	38	2
Lodi, CA	Providence	3	4	50	0	0	4	4	54	0
Modesto, CA	Trinity	4	3	62	4	0	0	4	66	4
Sacramento, CA	Covenant (Incl S.D)	6	7	151	5	2	10	17	168	6
<i>S. Diego, CA</i>	<i>Covenant w/ Sacto</i>	1	1	21	0	0	1	1	22	2
Stockton, CA	<i>Calvary w/ Gr Valley</i>	0	0	9	0	0	5	5	14	0
Shafter, CA	Ebenezer (Incl La	5	5	111	0	0	8	8	119	0
Willows, CA	Grace	2	1	39	3	0	0	3	42	0
Yuba City, CA	First	4	2	44	0	5	0	5	49	0
Subtotal		34	32	701	16	10	36	62	763	23
TOTALS THIS YEAR		111	102	3050	54	72	71	197	3,241	83
TOTALS LAST YEAR		115	106	3168	63	58	48	169	3339	126
PERCENT OF CHANGE		-3	-4	-4	-17	+19	+32	+14	-3	-33

Congregations in italics are included for information for their mission congregations, but are included in their overseeing church's figures.

Lost by Erasure or Discipline	Lost by Death	Total Lost	Comm. Memb. this Yr.	Unconfirm- ed Memb.	Total Baptized Members	No. of Families	No. of Children in S. S.	Adult Baptisms	Infant Baptisms	Total Baptisms	No. Rec'g Lord's Supper	Times Lds Supper Served
0	0	0	9	0	9	4	6	0	0	0	9	4
2	3	5	119	23	142	70	17	0	0	0	110	8
0	0	4	98	73	171	47	63	0	4	4	98	6
0	3	11	217	34	251	137	30	0	2	2	196	9
1	0	1	10	4	14	5	0	0	0	0	10	12
3	0	4	49	31	80	25	27	0	3	3	52	6
10	5	15	215	29	244	127	22	0	2	2	188	4
1	1	7	64	13	77	30	8	0	0	0	64	18
16	12	46	762	203	965	436	167	0	11	11	708	51
0	3	5	117	22	139	63	18	0	0	0	105	4
0	1	1	45	0	45	23	0	0	0	0	40	3
1	1	2	25	1	26	13	0	0	0	0	24	4
15	4	26	169	7	176	99	6	0	0	0	157	4
2	0	3	49	13	62	28	9	0	1	1	42	4
0	0	6	27	0	27	14	0	0	0	0	16	1
1	2	9	29	16	45	17	12	0	4	4	31	12
0	1	1	30	3	33	16	5	0	1	1	30	6
2	0	4	17	3	20	8	3	0	0	0	19	5
21	12	57	508	65	573	281	53	0	6	6	464	43
0	0	3	16	0	16	8	0	0	0	0	16	2
4	0	7	43	20	63	23	26	0	0	0	43	11
2	0	2	41	9	50	22	8	0	2	2	39	4
0	0	0	22	6	28	10	5	1	3	4	22	12
0	0	0	23	14	36	9	12	0	1	1	23	11
2	1	3	99	32	131	54	18	0	2	2	87	6
6	3	12	164	32	196	82	25	0	1	1	157	4
0	2	4	71	25	96	38	22	0	1	1	70	6
0	0	0	61	40	101	34	27	0	5	5	60	7
1	0	2	32	13	45	18	10	0	2	2	30	12
1	0	7	124	59	183	68	43	1	11	12	124	6
2	2	4	128	29	157	66	25	0	2	2	121	6
9	2	11	200	49	249	96	59	0	3	3	175	5
2	0	2	24	12	36	11	9	1	1	2	24	4
29	10	57	1,048	340	1,387	539	289	3	34	37	991	96
1	0	1	26	4	30	15	0	0	0	0	26	12
8	3	16	112	26	138	58	15	0	0	0	100	4
0	1	3	19	2	21	10	0	0	1	1	21	12
8	0	12	40	21	61	21	20	0	1	1	40	15
0	0	0	28	12	40	16	12	0	0	0	26	6
0	0	2	36	15	51	21	11	0	0	0	32	4
5	2	7	47	20	67	28	12	1	4	5	47	12
0	0	4	62	18	80	25	16	0	0	0	60	4
6	1	13	155	65	220	70	54	0	3	3	155	12
1	0	3	19	5	24	11	5	0	0	0	21	12
6	0	6	8	1	9	5	0	0	0	0	8	3
3	1	4	115	39	154	60	37	0	2	2	109	6
3	0	3	39	13	52	16	7	0	0	0	39	11
2	1	3	46	11	58	22	9	0	0	0	46	11
36	9	68	697	234	932	346	181	1	11	12	675	103
102	43	228	3,015	842	3,857	1,602	690	4	62	66	2,838	293
98	45	269	3,070	870	3,940	1,632	717	6	80	86	2,853	299
+4	0	-15	-2	-3	-2	-2	-4	-33	-22	-23	-1	-2

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS - 2007		Receipts from Reg. Offerings	Receipts from Spec. Offerings	Receipts from other Sources	Total Receipts	Giving to Synod Guidelines	Giving to Classis Guidelines	Giving to Non-Guide- line Causes	Giving to Non-RCUS Causes
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS									
<i>Bentonville, AR</i>	<i>Grace (w/ Garner)</i>	50,918	777	21,677	73,372	3,546	540	777	0
Garner, IA	Peace (incl AR)	183,388	7,606	24,396	215,390	30,636	7,140	8,294	600
Golden Valley, MN	Redeemer	223,626	8,214	3,872	235,712	19,109	5,340	3,156	3,151
Hamburg, MN	St. Paul's	133,411	2,420	107,645	243,476	48,023	13,380	437	2,235
<i>Honesdale, PA</i>	<i>(w/ Napoleon)</i>	19,979	0	11,180	31,159	0	0	0	0
Kansas City, MO	Northland	147,031	7,730	1,240	156,001	11,440	3,120	3,962	4,098
Manitowoc, WI	Salem Ebenezer	157,689	628	27,340	185,657	49,910	13,560	270	893
Napoleon, OH	Peace (incl. PA)	108,819	5,812	14,272	128,903	14,743	4,020	398	7,259
Subtotal		953,964	32,410	178,765	1,165,139	173,861	46,560	16,517	18,236
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS									
Aberdeen, SD	First	77,254	7,663	19,888	104,805	24,903	5,255	550	0
Ashley, ND	Salem	21,040	7,846	4,300	33,186	2,876	934	150	0
Denhoff, ND	Kassel	21,366	96	254	21,716	2,101	977	96	100
Eureka, SD	Eureka	104,195	2,691	8,570	115,456	27,200	8,696	423	2,873
Herried, SD	First	39,371	8,505	91	47,967	6,087	2,418	1,302	0
Hosmer, SD	Hosmer	4,896	3,200	118	82,214	0	148	0	0
Minot, ND	Harvest	51,759	168	5,362	57,289	2,112	1,488	168	0
Pierre, SD	Hope	37,981	2,738	0	40,719	5,971	1,302	135	391
Watertown, SD	Covenant	30,906	2,274	16,000	49,180	4,382	884	0	0
Subtotal		388,768	35,181	54,583	552,532	75,632	22,102	2,824	3,364
South Central Classis									
Calhan, CO	High Plains	25,072	546	28,867	54,544	7,718	0	0	0
Col. Spr., CO	Trinity Cov.	69,585	1,430	10,837	81,852	8,317	2,457	930	0
Greeley, CO	Grace	82,319	25,408	27,595	135,322	8,816	2,520	0	0
Karval, CO	Bl Cliff Com.	23,916	655	5,875	30,446	2,132	373	100	240
Limon, CO	Providence	29,474	1,496	14,250	45,220	4,357	1,140	115	410
Lincoln, NE	St. John's	86,114	3,150	0	89,264	21,400	6,111	454	270
Menno, SD	Zion	112,680	30,553	2,762	145,995	37,106	10,964	14,494	0
Mitchell, SD	Grace	92,250	55,969	0	148,219	15,448	4,410	1,069	0
Rapid City, SD	Grace	154,757	0	0	154,757	11,906	3,402	4,368	0
Rock Spr., WY	Providence	76,754	7,345	2,223	86,322	7,058	2,016	0	0
Sioux Falls, SD	Trinity	181,343	16,762	1,381	199,486	24,387	7,183	2,101	4,848
Sutton, NE	Emmanuel	80,826	27,268	3,110	111,204	11,842	8,127	0	3,142
Sutton, NE	Hope	151,070	16,752	5,850	173,572	44,338	12,728	0	4,015
Vermillion, SD	Providence	50,244	4,286	19,767	74,297	4,743	1,370	500	0
Subtotal		1,216,404	191,620	122,517	1,530,500	209,568	62,801	24,131	12,925
WESTERN CLASSIS									
Anderson, CA	Faith	58,534	370	14,400	73,304	5,074	3,600	0	0
Bakersfield, CA	Grace	158,107	9,404	95,747	263,258	25,982	17,700	0	9,900
Chico, CA	Covenant	37,458	2,135	35,980	75,573	1,443	1,193	130	0
Grass Valley, CA	Cov. (Incl. Stkn)	134,850	15,213	2,775	152,838	4,284	2,512	2,775	11,908
<i>La Habra, CA</i>	<i>Rehoboth</i>	93,279	0	73,844	167,123	5,118	3,600	1,285	0
Lancaster, CA	Grace	82,669	420	11,400	94,489	6,816	1,425	0	53
Lodi, CA	Providence	81,854	2,657	323	84,834	4,750	2,950	275	2,583
Modesto, CA	Trinity	100,923	665	417	102,005	13,560	9,280	250	0
*Sacramento, CA	Cov (Incl. S D)	334,683	101,758	137,693	574,134	33,280	22,650	34,583	23,457
San Diego, CA	Covenant w/ Sac	47,767	0	27,989	75,756	4,699	3,150	5,315	2,350
Stockton, CA	Calvary w/Gr. Vly	28,683	1,056	2,775	32,514	2,365	1,650	0	0
Shafter, CA	Ebenezer (Incl La H)	274,890	3,223	60,186	338,299	37,278	16,650	1,285	0
Willows, CA	Grace	78,422	2,082	1,020	81,524	8,824	6,040	0	13
Yuba City, CA	First	79,451	10,958	0	90,499	4,070	2,437	1,797	0
Subtotal		1,421,841	148,885	359,941	1,930,757	145,361	86,437	41,095	47,914
TOTALS THIS YEAR		3,980,977	408,096	715,806	5,178,928	604,422	217,900	84,567	82,439
TOTALS LAST YEAR		3,863,035	494,249	524,154	4,881,492	561,883	224,372	81,091	133,831
PERCENT OF CHANGE		+3	-17	+27	+6	+7	-3	+4	-38

* Includes City Seminary.

Congregations in italics are included for information for their mission congregations, but are included in their overseeing church's figures.

Other Expenses	Total Expenses	Value of Church Building	Value of Church Parsonage	Improvements on church property	Present Property Debts	Debt Payments Past Year	Giving to Synod per Com. Mbr.	Giving to Classis per Com. Mbr.	Giving to RCUS per Com. Mbr.
62,017	66,880	0	0	0	0	0	394	60	540
169,462	216,132	750,000	125,000	25,033	0	0	257	60	387
203,366	234,122	800,000	280,000	15,249	410,403	49,435	215	60	310
164,868	228,943	750,000	250,000	65,180	0	0	215	60	277
33,266	33,266	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
142,795	165,415	1,500,000	200,000	0	400,000	59,000	220	60	356
106,385	171,018	800,000	200,000	18,901	0	0	221	60	282
92,808	119,228	200,000	90,000	0	0	0	220	60	286
879,684	1,134,858	4,800,000	1,145,000	124,363	810,403	108,435	224	60	284
66,432	97,140	150,000	0	2,970	0	0	220	47	272
29,657	33,617	24,900	22,000	5,325	0	0	68	22	94
10,492	13,766	40,000	0	0	0	0	100	47	151
74,620	113,812	250,000	75,000	1,333	0	0	145	47	194
48,507	58,314	40,000	42,000	0	0	0	117	47	189
11,382	11,530	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
59,111	62,879	150,000	85,000	7,262	0	5,527	66	47	118
32,901	40,700	100,000	90,000	0	19,916	5,901	213	47	265
37,174	42,440	0	150,000	0	0	4,095	209	42	251
370,276	474,198	779,900	464,000	16,890	19,916	15,523	143	42	190
43,504	51,220	152,000	165,000	0	104,724	6,419	40	0	40
57,377	69,081	0	0	0	0	0	208	61	293
109,617	120,953	192,000	158,000	4,079	65,318	25,467	220	63	283
24,578	27,423	0	0	0	0	0	101	17	124
23,733	29,755	40,000	0	6,222	8,500	7,163	189	50	255
60,438	88,673	110,000	99,100	0	5,000	5,000	220	63	288
82,779	145,343	500,000	75,000	5,000	0	0	212	63	358
71,620	92,547	275,000	150,000	8,000	38,000	3,843	220	63	299
123,931	143,607	515,000	185,000	5,729	88,282	32,624	220	63	364
71,483	80,557	170,000	Incl.	17,421	0	0	220	63	284
160,112	198,631	490,771	162,068	0	0	67,039	214	63	295
84,630	107,741	522,000	157,000	5,332	0	0	92	63	155
101,528	162,609	400,000	60,000	0	0	0	222	64	286
61,542	68,655	300,000	125,000	5,625	0	0	216	62	301
1,076,872	1,386,795	3,666,771	1,336,168	57,408	309,824	147,555	197	59	279
68,914	77,588	500,000	N/A	2,000	0	0	238	150	361
100,769	154,351	600,000	400,000	0	0	0	220	150	370
71,657	74,423	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	72	60	138
94,910	142,641	439,000	N/A	12,735	68,181	6,967	97	57	218
132,045	142,048	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	213	150	417
77,519	85,813	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	179	38	217
70,458	81,016	242,851	N/A	0	0	0	95	59	160
86,073	109,163	350,000	N/A	646	25,398	17,838	219	150	372
444,751	558,721	297,614	N/A	0	0	0	220	150	599
43,341	58,855	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	224	150	627
26,252	30,267	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	263	183	446
246,879	302,092	1,000,000	250,000	0	0	0	336	150	497
93,517	108,384	550,000	N/A	24,295	0	0	238	155	381
81,164	89,468	276,000	143,000	0	46,000	1,751	93	55	189
1,436,611	1,783,660	4,255,465	793,000	39,676	139,579	26,556	183	107	318
3,763,443	4,779,511	13,502,136	3,738,168	238,337	1,279,722	298,069	Ave. 187	Ave. 67	Ave. 268
3,500,685	4,500,381	12,858,148	3,684,450	268,614	1,562,880	273,165	Ave. 175	Ave. 70	Ave. 270
+7	+6	+5	+1	-11	-18	+8	+6	-4	-1

GENERAL INFORMATION

Internal Revenue Service Number for the RCUS
51-0202914

Publications of the RCUS

RCUS Book Depository
RCUS BOOKS c/o Elder Dave McPherson (605) 347-5666
Box 126, Sturgis, SD 57785 Fax (605) 720-2788
E-Mail: mcpinc@gwtc.net

The Reformed Herald (Monthly magazine)
Rev. Paul Treick (Editor) (209) 551-2407
4005 Masterpiece Dr., Modesto, CA 95357 E-Mail: TriWheeler@aol.com
Rev. Frank Walker (Subscriptions)..... (916) 320-0548
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Churches in Fraternal Relationship

Canadian and American Reformed Churches
Orthodox Presbyterian Church
Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated)
Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
Reformed Confessing Church in the Congo
United Reformed Churches in North America
Member: North American Reformed and Presbyterian Council
Member: International Conference of Reformed Churches

Seminaries Listed as Worthy of Support

Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Dyer, IN
New Geneva Theological Seminary, Colorado Springs, CO
Heidelberg Theological Seminary, Vermillion, SD
Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Greenville, NC
City Seminary of Sacramento, Sacramento, CA

Benevolences Listed as Worthy of Support

Diaconal committee of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
Faith and Word Ministries
Hope Haven, Rock Valley, IA
Radio Administration Committee (French)
Middle East Reformed Fellowship

Reformed Church in the U. S. Website

rcus.org
Reformed Herald Online - reformedherald.org