

The
Reformed Church
in the
United States

Abstract of the Minutes
258th Synod

May 10-13, 2004
Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church
Manitowoc, Wisconsin

This Abstract of the 258th Synod is hereby
affectionately dedicated to the memory of

Rev. Dorman Savage
1935 - 2003

a faithful servant of our Lord Jesus,
a beloved friend,
and now in glory with the Lord and Savior
he proclaimed and loved.
May his ministry among the Lord's people
continue to bear fruit for generations to come.

– The 258th Synod of the RCUS

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Directory of Congregations

ARKANSAS

Bentonville, AR 72714 (470) 876-1064
 Grace RCUS Chapel
 Office: 15 Kensington Drive, Bella Vista
 Pastor: Wesley Brice (Ginger)
 Worship: Call Pastor
 Web Page: www.grc-nwa.org

CALIFORNIA

Anderson, CA 96007 (530) 365-6874
 Faith RCUS, 3291 Rupert Rd. (off Stingy Lane)
 Mail: P.O. Box 902 Anderson, CA 96007
 Worship 10:30 AM, SS 9:30 AM
 Pastor: Henry Bowen (Patty)
 E-Mail: rcushank@juno.com

Bakersfield, CA 93305 (661) 325-0165
 Grace RCUS, 420 Columbus St.
 Mail: 6407 Brooklawn Way, Bakersfield, CA 93309
 Worship 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM; SS 9:15 AM
 Pastor: George Horner (Mary Jo)
 E-Mail: ghorner@bak.rr.com

Chico, CA 95927 (530) 345-2732
 Covenant RCUS, 1877 Hooker Oak Ave.
 Mail: P.O. Box 1612, Chico
 Worship 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM
 Pastor: Gary Mancilas (Gloria)
 Web Page: www.crcchico.com E-Mail: gmancilas@sbcglobal.net

Grass Valley, CA 95945 (530) 273-4673
 Covenant RCUS, 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA
 Mail: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley
 Worship 11:00 AM; SS 9:45 AM
 Pastor: Dennis E. Roe (Julie)
 E-Mail: crcgv@nccn.net Fax: (530) 273-6280

Lancaster, CA 93539 (661) 940-4669
 Grace RCUS (Antelope Valley), 551 West Ave. I, Suite F Lancaster
 Mail: 551 West Ave. I, Suite F, Lancaster
 Worship 10:45 AM; SS 9:30 AM
 Pastor: Neale Riffert (Mary Elizebeth)
 E-Mail: nealer@att.net

Lodi, CA 95240 (209) 367-0552
 Providence RCUS, 245 E. Vine Street
 Mail: 245 E. Vine St.
 Worship 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM
 Pastor: Michael Voytek (Rebecca)
 Web Page: www.prclodi.com E-Mail:prclodi@softcom.net

Los Angeles, CA 90604 (562) 947-4837
 Rehoboth RCUS Chapel, Call for location (LaHabre area)
 Mail: 11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
 Worship 10:30 AM; Bible Study 6:00 PM
 Pastor: Jay E. Fluck (Loretta)
 E-Mail: jeffluck@msn.com Fax: (562) 947-5958

Modesto, CA 95350 (209) 523-3220
 Trinity RCUS, 960 El Terino Ave.
 Mail: 960 El Terino Ave.
 Worship 10:30 AM & 6:00 PM; SS. 9:15 AM
 Pastor: Paul Treick (Karen)
 E-mail: triwheeler@aol.com or Triwheeler@sbcglobal.net

Sacramento, CA 95822 (916) 451-1190
 Covenant RCUS, 2020 16th Avenue
 Mail: 2020 16th Ave.
 Worship 11:00 AM & 6:00 PM; SS. 9:45 AM
 Pastor: Jim West (Elaine)
 E-Mail: jimwest@jps.net
 Assoc. Pastor: Frank Walker (Christine)
 E-Mail: walker@cityseminary.org

San Diego, CA 91977 (619) 460-1321
 Covenant RCUS Chapel, 49 3rd Ave., Chula Vista
 Mail: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA
 Worship 11 AM; SS 10 AM
 Pastor: Gil Baloy (Maricar)
 Web Page: www.covenantreformedchurch.org/crcsd E-mail:
 gilbaloy@sbcglobal.net

San Ramon, CA 94583 (925) 918-1422
 Grace RCUS Chapel, 110 Ryan Industrial Ct., San Ramon, CA
 Mail: P.O. Box 2866
 Worship 10:30 AM
 Pastor: Jonathan Merica (Marsha)
 Web Page: www.gracereformedchapel.com E-Mail: jmerica@aol.com
 Fax: (209) 472-7941

Shafter, CA 93263 (661) 746-6907
 Ebenezer RCUS, 235 James Street
 Mail: 235 James St.
 Worship 10:30 AM & 7:00 PM (1st, 2nd, 3rd Sundays); Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM
 Pastor: Vernon Pollema (Betty)
 E-Mail: vpollema@juno.com

Willows, CA 95988 (530) 934-2732
Grace RCUS, 148 W. Sycamore St.
Mail: P.O. Box 225
Worship 10:00 AM; Bible Study 6:30 PM; SS 9:00 AM
Pastor: Thomas Mayville (Carolyn)
E-Mail: thomasmayville@sbcglobal.net

Yuba City, CA 95991 (530) 755-2272
First RCUS, 9882 Highway 99 (South of Yuba City)
Mail: 9882 Garden Hwy.
Worship 11:00 AM; SS 9:30 AM
Pastor: Paul Henderson (Tina)

COLORADO

Calhan, CO 81007 (719) 391-7431
High Plains RCUS Chapel, Corner of 7th and Colorado
Mail: 555 Boulder St., Calhan, CO 80808
Worship 10:00 AM; SS 9:00 AM
Pastor: Stated Supply - Elder Sam Powell (Susan) (719) 347-2881

Colorado Springs, CO 80918 (719) 590-1477
Trinity RCUS, 2511 N. Logan Ave. At Grace PCA
Mail: 6050 Del Paz Dr.
Worship 2:00 PM; SS 1:00 PM
Pastor: C. W. "Bud" Powell, Jr. (Penny)
Web Page: www.trinityrcus.com

Greeley, CO 80631 (970) 336-9927
Grace RCUS, 1505 10th Ave.
Mail: 1505 10th Ave.
Worship 11:00 AM; SS 10:00 AM
Pastor: Gene Sawtelle (Sharon)

Karval, CO 81063 (719) 446-5215
Blue Cliff Community RCUS, Blue Cliff Community Bldg.
Mail: 2600 State Rd. 71, Ordway, CO 81063
Worship 11:00 AM; SS 12 Noon
Pastor: Stated Supply - Lic. Matthew Powell

IOWA

Garner, IA 50438 (641) 923-3060
Peace RCUS, 1905 200th St. (3 miles south of Garner)
Mail: 1905 200th St.
Pastor: Jeff DeBoer (Karen)
Worship: 10:30 AM; SS: 9:30 AM
WebPage: www.peacereformedchurch.org

KENTUCKY

Danville, KY 40422 (859) 236-5189
Deaf RCUS, 3845 Moore Lane, Stanford, KY
Mail: 917 Rosemont Ave.
Pastor: Kevin Hamilton (Robin)
Worship 11:00 AM; Bible Study: 9:30 AM
E-mail: kevinph@tmail.com

MARYLAND

Relay, MD 21113 (410) 674-4854
Deaf RCUS, Contact Pastor for location of church meetings
Office: 115 Langdon Farm Circle, Odenton
Pastor: Jari Saavalainen (Ramona)
Worship: 1:30 PM; Bible Study: 3:00 PM
Email: www.deafreformedchurch.org Fax: 674-4860

MINNESOTA

Golden Valley, MN 55427 (763) 417-9835
Redeemer RCUS, 1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley
Office: 3101 Virginia Ave. N., Crystal
Pastor: James Sawtelle (Wife: Thelma)
Worship: 10:15 AM and 5:00 PM.; SS: 9:00 AM
Email: www.redeemerrcus.org

Hamburg, MN 55339 (952) 467-3878
St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 15470 Co Road 31
Pastor: Dan Schnabel (Marie)
Worship: May - October 9:30 AM; SS 8:25 AM; November - April 10:00 am; SS:
8:55 AM

MISSOURI

Kansas City, MO 64164 (816) 420-9700
Northland RCUS, 2901 NW Cookingham
Pastor: George Syms (Debbie)
Worship: 9:30 AM and 5:00 PM; SS: 11:00 AM
Web Page: www.kcnrc.org

NEBRASKA

Lincoln, NE 68502 (402) 477-7289
St. John's RCUS, 1101 South 26th St.
Worship 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM
Pastor: Maynard Koerner (Marcia)

Sutton, NE 68979 (402) 773-4227
Emmanuel RCUS, 110 South Way Ave.
Mail: PO Box 362
Worship 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM
Pastor: Stated Supply - Lic. Dan Rogers (Kelani)

Sutton, NE 68979 (402) 773-4330
Hope RCUS, 311 E. Hickory
Mail: PO Box 372
Worship 10:30 AM; Family Bible Study 7:00 PM; SS 9:15 AM
Pastor: Darrell Kingswood (Lori)

NORTH DAKOTA

Ashley, ND 58413 (701) 288-3682
Salem RCUS, 209 1st Ave. SW
Mail: PO Box 345
Worship 9:00 AM or 11:00 AM (alternating monthly, please call)
Pastor: Steven Richert (Nancy)
Fax: (419) 732-6319

Lincoln Valley, ND (701) 626-7312
Kassel RCUS, Lincoln Valley - 14 mi. N. and 3½ mi. W. of Denhoff
Mail: 540 20th St. NE, Kief, ND 58747
Worship 10:00 AM (9:00 AM in summer)
Pastor: vacant

Minot, ND 58701 (701) 838-0605
Harvest RCUS, On Highway 2, one mile west of the Highway 83 bypass
Mail: 5200 7th Ave. SW
Worship 10:30 AM; SS 9:15 AM; Bible Study 6:30 PM
Pastor: Michael McGee (Jenny)

OHIO

Napoleon, OH 43545 (419) 599-3106
Peace RCUS, 638 Huddle Rd.
Worship: *10:00 AM; SS: 9:00 AM *(one half hour earlier June - August)
Pastor: Harvey Opp (Carol)

PENNSYLVANIA

Honesdale, PA (570) 785-4012
Heritage RCUS Chapel, Meeting at Lakeside Elementary School, 100
Lakeside Dr.
Worship: 10:30AM; Bible Classes 9:30 AM
Pastor: Ron Potter (Sharon)
Web Page: www.heritagercus.org

SOUTH DAKOTA

Aberdeen, SD 57401 (605) 225-6120
First RCUS, 9th Ave. And Dakota S. St.
Mail: 1214 S. McCoy St.
Worship 9:00 AM; SS 10:00 AM
Pastor: David Dawn (Colleen)

Eureka, SD 57437 (605) 284-2396
Eureka RCUS, 310 F. Ave.
Mail: PO Box 276
Worship 9:00 AM; SS 10:15 AM
Pastor: L. Dale Clark (Sandra)
Fax: (605) 284-2396

Herried, SD 57632 (605) 437-2414
First RCUS, 601 main St. North
Mail: PO Box 316
Worship 11:00 AM; SS 10:00 AM
Pastor: vacant

Hosmer, SD 57448 (605) 283-2222
Hosmer RCUS, 2 blocks S. of water tower
Mail: PO Box 88
Worship 9:00 AM or 11:00 AM (alternating monthly, please call)
Pastor: Steven Richert (Nancy)
Fax: (419) 735-6319

Leola, SD 57457 (605) 439-3537
Oranien RCUS, Hwy 10 and Burtis, Leola
Mail: 1214 S. McCoy St., Aberdeen, SD 57401
Worship 11:00 AM
Pastor: David Dawn (Colleen)

Pierre, SD 57501 (605) 224-7846
Hope RCUS, 317 S. Garfield
Worship 9:00 AM; SS 10:25 AM
Pastor: William Haddock (Ferne)

Menno, SD 57045 (605) 387-2816
Zion RCUS, 220 South Pine
Worship 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM
Pastor: Hans Kalkman (Gerda)

Mitchell, SD 57301 (605) 996-7439
Grace RCUS, 1021 South Davison
Mail: PO Box 252
Worship 10:00 AM; SS 9:00 AM
Pastor: Ron Morris (Sherrie)
Web Page: www.gracereformed.com

- Rapid City, SD 57701** (605) 399-1711
Grace RCUS, 5626 North Hines Ave
Worship 10:30 AM and 6:00 PM; SS 9:15 AM
Pastor: David Fagrey (Bonnie)
- Sioux Falls, SD 57106** (605) 339-3887
Trinity RCUS, 7301 S. Louise Ave.
Mail: 3309 E. 31st St.
Worship 10:00 AM and 6:30 PM; SS 9:00 AM
Pastor: Herman Van Stedum (Phyllis)
- Vermillion, SD 57069** (605) 624-4337
Providence RCUS, 830 E. Madison
Worship 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM
Pastor: Robert Grossmann (Polly)
- Watertown, SD 57201** (605) 882-9704
Covenant RCUS, 907 7th Ave. NE
Mail: 434 30th St. NW
Worship 10:00 AM; SS 11:20 AM
Pastor: Tracy Gruggett (Michelle)
Fax: (605) 882-1042

WISCONSIN

- Manitowoc, WI 54220** (920) 726-4940
Salem Ebenezer RCUS, 6524 County Trunk C
Worship: 10:00 AM; SS 8:45 AM
Pastor: Kyle Sorensen (Donielle)
Web Page: www.salemebenezer.org Email: Salem@lakefield.net
Fax: (920) 726-4164

WYOMING

- Rock Springs, WY 82901** (307) 362-5107
Providence RCUS, 9th and Pearl
Mail: 1007 Ninth St.
Worship 11:00 AM; SS 12:15 AM
Pastor: Jon Blair (Wendy)

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[underline = convener; * = deacon]

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Greenville Seminary	1.00
TOTAL	\$194.25
<i>Reformed Herald</i> (per subscription)	\$10.00

The 258th Synod
of the
Reformed Church in the United States

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou
hast heard of me,
in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.
That good thing which was committed unto thee keep
by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”
II Tim. 1:13, 14

ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES

I. SERVICES

The Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States convened its 258th session at Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, Wisconsin on Monday, May 10, 2004 with a worship service at 7:30 PM. Rev. George Syms (Kansas City, MO) conducted the service in which Rev. Vernon Pollema (Shafter, CA) preached a sermon entitled “*Lest We Forget*” from Joshua 23:1-16 and 24:1, 28-31. The synod meeting was being held following the congregation’s celebration of their 150th Anniversary as a Reformed congregation.

The evening worship service on Wednesday, May 12, 2004 was held at 7:30 PM with Rev. George Horner (Bakersfield, CA) conducting. Rev. Robert Grossmann (Vermillion, SD) preached a sermon entitled “*The Believer’s Headship*” from I Corinthians 11:1-16.

Devotions were held daily at 10:00 AM . On Tuesday, Rev. Frank Walker (Sacramento, CA) addressed delegates on the subject of “*Changing Habits*” from Ephesians 4:17-32. On Wednesday Rev. Gil Baloy (San Diego, CA) addressed delegates on the subject of “*A Service Check*” from I Chronicles 13:1-14. On Thursday Rev. Jon Blair (Rock Springs, WY) addressed delegates on the subject of “*The Sin of Sexual Immorality*” from Matthew 5:17-30. The closing devotions were conducted by Elder Bill Borgwardt who read Romans 12 and led in prayer.

II. ORGANIZATION

The President, Rev. Vernon Pollema, called the meeting to order on May 10, at 8:46 PM. The Stated Clerk, Rev. Paul Trieck, called the roll which showed 33 ministers and 30

elder delegates present., a quorum. The President declared the 258th Synod in session. The roll was called at the beginning of each business day.

The Bar of the House was defined as the first eleven pews on either side of the aisle.

Rev. Gil Baloy, Rev. Michael McGee, Elder Carl Esparza, and Elder Roger Gallimore were appointed as tellers for the meeting.

The following were elected by ballot to serve as officers of Synod:

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

Rev. Jeff DeBoer was appointed as the reporter for the *Reformed Herald* .

The President read the Standing Rules of the Synod.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA, ORDER OF THE DAY, AND SPECIAL ORDERS

The Agenda was approved following an amendment to Standing Rule 18, reflecting a recess following the referral of overtures, permanent committee reports, and communications (see Standing Rules in the Abstract Appendix). Also approved were the Order of the Day and Special Order (for addresses by fraternal delegates and representatives of institutions).

IV. ANNOUNCEMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

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

V. PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF OVERTURES, PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Permanent Committee reports were forwarded to their appropriate Standing Committees. Overtures and communications were given to the Overtures Committee who referred them to their appropriate committees throughout the meeting. The Permanent Committee reports are listed below.

A. Archives (referred to Overtures)

Fathers and Brethren,

The Archive Committee received no material this year and therefore did not meet.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Fluck, D. Mettler, J. Stuebbe

B. Board of Trustees (referred to Overtures)

The Board of Trustees met on April 21, 2004 in Ashley, ND. We discussed the fact that the board owns no property and does not oversee any monies. We make no recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Richert, J. Stuebbe, T. Rott

C. Christian Education (referred to Education and Student Aid Committee)

The labors of this Committee during the past year on behalf of Synod consisted in fulfilling the following mandates:

Sunday School Curriculum

At the 251st Synod of the RCUS, the long -term need and desire for a thoroughly and consistently reformed and integrated Sunday School curriculum was constituted into a mandate for its development. The Permanent Christian Education Committee ' s responsive recommendations for a pedagogical approach (see abstract of the 252nd Synod), S. De Graaf' s *Promise and Deliverance* as the matrix and Howard Hart and Harvey De Groot as the writers of the RCUS Sunday School Curriculum (K-8) were adopted by the 252nd Synod. This major educational publications venture, consisting of 247 lessons, each lesson developed for the four different grade levels (K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-8; a total of 988 lessons), designed as a "flexible" 5 year program, includes not only a teacher training program, but as well a teacher ' s manual with tips for teachers and an answer key.

Each lesson:

Is titled to correspond with the respective lesson in De Graaf

Includes a lesson- appropriate memory verse

Is integrated with the church' s confessions

States the summary lesson truth

Defines the intent of the lesson

Provides a lesson explanation

Asks lesson review questions

Provides a discuss/decide applicatory section

Includes a family section

Includes a glossary of important terms/words

Previews next week ' s lesson

Most of the writing of the lessons for the entire Curriculum having been completed as well as the editing and proofreading of first year ' s material, the 257th Synod authorized the production of the first year of he Curriculum on CD-Rom. The disc was made available by Synod' s Permanent Publications Committee and the Curriculum in now in use by RCUS congregations.

This year the authors completed the writing of all the Curriculum lessons in a very timely manner, saving the Synod a portion of the funds allocated for that work. As Rev. Hart stated: "We came in under budget."

The authors are yet in the process of editing their completed Curriculum writings and are willing to complete that work without additional honorarium.

The proofreading and compilation of the Curriculum is yet ongoing and it appears that the second year of the curriculum might not be available by the fall of 2004. (see

recommendation below).

Recommendations:

That the writers, Howard Hart and Harvey De Groot, compiler Charles Henson, and proof reader Jess Johnson, of the curriculum material be commended for their diligent and laborious work.

1. That Rev. Hart be granted an honorarium for completing the required editing of the Curriculum in the amount of \$1500. (The amount “under budget” allocated for 2003-2004.)
2. That Charles Hensen be paid this Synodical year the \$1500 honorarium per curriculum year of compilation as approved by the 257th Synod. (Take note)
3. That Jess Johnson be paid this Synodical year the honorarium of \$1000 per curriculum year of proofreading as approved by the 257th Synod. (take note)
4. That the Permanent Publications Committee be granted the resources necessary to publish Year 2 of the curriculum no later than Jan 1, 2005, thus insuring continuity for users of Year 1.
5. That any proposed changes to the curriculum be forwarded to the Permanent Christian Education Committee for review and corresponding action.
6. That RCUS congregations be encouraged to use the RCUS Sunday School curriculum.

Seminary Visitations

Your Committee has an ongoing mandate to make evaluative visits of “approved” seminaries per this directive of the 255th Synod: *That each seminary approved by the RCUS be visited and evaluated at least once every three years by the Permanent Christian Education Committee.* The 256th Synod additionally mandated that: *The Permanent Christian Education Committee utilize the Seminary Evaluation Guideline in its mandated investigations of theological seminaries.* Accordingly, your Committee submits the following reports of the seminary visits mandated this year.

A. Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

On March 22-23, 2004 a committee consisting of Rev. Mike McGee, Rev. George Horner and Rev. Hank Bowen visited Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary to perform the three year review required by the Synod of all seminaries approved for RCUS students-under- care.

The delegation was well received and we were able to meet with Seminary President, Dr. Joseph Pipa for over two hours on Tuesday wherein we discussed the status, direction and future of the seminary. He related to us that the seminary had purchased a retired High School a few blocks from their current location and hoped to finish renovation to a point that they could start the 2004-2005 school year in the new location. That facility will well accommodate the seminary’s plans for the future as well as grant them the use of a 500+ seat auditorium. As is common, financial support is always a main concern for any seminary, especially when a capitol expenditures program is added to the solicitation for support.

He spoke passionately about the Seminary’s continuing commitment to the training of men for the Christian ministry, with the emphasis on equipping them with the tools and practicum to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. They continue to seek to add quality professors to the faculty, including the necessary operating funds to add full time faculty positions. They currently have five men on the full time faculty, one part-time and three adjunct professors. One area of concern he sees set before the Reformed community is the rise and intrusion of the errors associated with the New Perspective and Shepherd controversies. Their annual Spring Theology Conference, just completed the week prior to

our visit, sought, among its broader teaching on the historic Reformed understanding of the Covenant, to expose and discuss these errors in contrast to the historical Reformation positions.

We asked Dr. Pipa what areas he would like to discuss concerning the relationship of the RCUS to the seminary. He asked us to consider proposing a one dollar guideline to our current guidelines for the seminary and that candidates for consideration to the Seminary Board of Trustees be proposed from our ministers and elders. Greenville has a self-perpetuating board that considers proposed candidates who are then elected by the current board. They hold meetings twice a year, review the faculty members annually as well as the board to reaffirm their commitment to a strict subscription to the Westminster Standards or the Three Forms of Unity.

Dr. Pipa emphasized that the seminary was committed to a dogmatic six day creation position as well as Van Tillian apologetics. In all of our discussions with faculty, board members, and students, it seemed evident to us that the training at GPS is orthodox both according to the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity, as well as the distinctives of the RCUS.

As we utilized the *Seminary Evaluation Guideline* there were no “red flags” that required further investigation or lead your committee to doubt this Seminary’s “approved” status.

There was a good deal of discussion with Dr. Pipa and the other faculty concerning the curriculum having a Presbyterian focus and how they envisioned developing RCUS students who will have theological affinity toward the continental Reformed tradition. Dr. Pipa expressed a willingness to listen to our suggestions of how to address these issues as they arise while emphasizing his conviction that the current curriculum was well suited to equipping both “Presbyterian” and “Reformed” students for the ministry. Your committee believes continued interaction with the Seminary, especially in the areas of church polity and a more serviceable emphasis on the Three Forms of unity would be beneficial to RCUS students trained at GPS.

We met with two of the Board members, including the Secretary who was a charter member of the board. They confirmed much of what Dr. Pipa had stated including a desire to see a member from the RCUS on the board. They were pleased with the fact we were willing to visit and found this consistent with their desire not to be seen as an institution independent from the church. The idea of accountability to a church judicatory was discussed as proper and beneficial and thus the Boards expressed desire to add an RCUS member.

In the evening we met with Dr. Jerry Crick, professor of apologetics and ethics. GPTS recently changed their apologetics courses by adding an additional hour and splitting the teaching of apologetics into two courses, the first focusing on apologetics and the history of philosophy, and the second seeking to implement a practical apologetics to move from the theoretical to the actual use of apologetics.

The next morning we sat in on courses in worship and Hebrew. The worship course was taught that day by a recent graduate of GPTS who was focusing on family worship as part of covenant-keeping. The Hebrew course was a first semester class wherein the professor was using an inductive approach to introduce Hebrew.

Over lunch the second day we were able to visit for over two hours with other faculty members including Drs. McGoldrick and Willborn, as well as Dr. Morton Smith. All expressed their great commitment to the Seminary’s mission and vision, especially in its

doctrinal unity. They also are excited about the positive direction and growth of the seminary. At the same time, they stated that it was their conviction that the student body should never be allowed to exceed 100 so that proper personal attention could be given to the training of ministers. They believe it is important to nurture a sense of covenant community within the seminary family and that to go over a hundred would detract from the ability to maintain the personal relationships between faculty and students, and students among students.

There was a great deal of discussion in all of our meetings concerning the recent trends, in their various forms, undermining the orthodox doctrine of justification by faith alone that are entering the Reformed churches. But our discussions also included the need to go beyond intramural debates and move out into proclaiming the gospel in a society where the Reformed faith is essentially foreign to the larger Christian community and absent in the discussions of our day.

The delegates were all agreed that Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary is not only a seminary that ought to be on our list of approved seminaries, but that it is so closely committed to the same things we hold dear that it deserves serious consideration by and recommendation to men entering upon training for the ministry in the RCUS.

Recommendations (numbered consecutively with the other recommendations of the broader Christian Education Committee Report):

7. That Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary continue to be listed as an approved seminary of the RCUS.

8. That the RCUS establish a \$1.00 guideline for GPTS.

9. That GPTS be encouraged to approach men from the RCUS to serve on their board and the men who are invited by the seminary seriously consider serving on the board of GPTS.

B. Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia)

Our mandate was to re-evaluate Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia according to the schedule required by Synod in regard to the ongoing status of approved seminaries. Your committee consisted of Rev. Kyle Sorensen, a member of the permanent Christian Education Committee and Rev. Maynard Koerner who graciously agreed to assist. A packet of information given to prospective students was sent to us in advance of our visit. We visited the campus on February 16-17, 2004, and were warmly received. We were even treated to dinner at a German restaurant and to the opportunity to peruse through portions of Rev. William Korn's library which was donated to Westminster long ago. We met with three professors, the Executive Vice President/Academic Dean (President Samuel Logan was on sabbatical), the Dean of Students, and the Dean of Admissions. We were also able to observe portions of four different classes.

In a Pastoral Counseling class on Methods of Biblical Change, the professor stressed that we (counselors) do not offer a system of redemption to people, but a Redeemer. We should not treat the Bible like a mere handbook for ethics, but as Christ's self-revelation. It appears that the pastoral counseling department is thriving, with an affiliated foundation having been formed (Christian Counseling and Education Foundation). The approach remains the use of Scripture in confronting people with the needs of sin and forgiveness, but does not forget to account for the reality of slow and long recovery from addictive behaviors and sinful patterns.

Another class we observed was Methods of Church Growth. The professor was very practical and referred to local churches and mission opportunities. He stressed the need for

growth to be led by officers of the Church, whether elder and/or minister. The point was made that we don't *make* the Church grow, but *remove* hindrances to its growth, tending the garden God has given us. He mentioned our confidence in God's electing purposes. This growth often takes a long time for us to witness. In assessing a congregation's **need for growth, a church was said to be "dysfunctional"** if, over the course of time, it had not experienced both growth in spiritual maturity as well as in numbers of souls.

In conversation with the Systematic Theology Department Chair, Professor Richard Gaffin, aberrant views of justification and the New Perspectives on Paul movement were discussed. Gaffin affirmed the Reformation's assessment of the Pauline epistles and 2nd Temple Judaism. He agreed there were some serious problems with NPP, which view has implications for important areas of theology. When asked to give his appraisal of Norman Shepherd's book *Call of Grace*, Gaffin does not believe that Shepherd is blending his views with NPP. He does agree with us that some of Shepherd's followers are starting to blend their views with NPP. Gaffin maintains, though, that Shepherd has been misunderstood and is basically just making the valid point that justifying faith is never alone, but is accompanied with fruits of obedience. When asked about Christ's active obedience, Gaffin affirmed that it is included in the righteousness imputed in justification and agreed that Shepherd had recently said some incorrect things. Gaffin also affirmed that the ground for justification is always the same: the imputed righteousness of Christ. Gaffin does consider it biblical and confessional to speak of the justification we have "already" in this life as having a "not yet" aspect that occurs on judgment day. Gaffin pointed us to a document which recorded faculty positions on the NPP. Of the members of the faculty, Gaffin reported that he is perhaps the most critical of NPP. The works of N. T. Wright are assigned reading in several classes, although Gaffin's classes and others assign appropriate readings in Vos and Ridderbos, as well as recommend recent articles by Cornelis Venema. Your Committee came away discouraged that Gaffin's perspectives would represent the most critical view of NPP and 'Shepherdism' that is presented to students.

In terms of the doctrine of Creation, a variety of views are represented on the Faculty. Some hold to 6 normal days, while others hold to the Framework Hypothesis or some variety thereof. Nobody in the OT department holds to the 6-day view. The OT Department Chair, Professor Groves, believes an RCUS student could attend and his view would be respected. Unlike in the days of Professor Kline, we were told that the 6-day view was not denigrated. A position statement by the faculty on the Days of Creation has been posted on their website. It states that the Biblical text does not require a literal, 6 normal day reading. To come to such a conclusion is to "disenfranchise" Reformed Orthodoxy from "some who have . . . served as its greatest defenders and pillars."

When discussing the relationship of this independent seminary to the Church, several points of contact with and submission to the Church were highlighted. The Seminary views itself as a servant of the Church, recognizing that it is not itself the Church. M.Div. students are required to have ecclesiastical recommendations to be admitted and then are also expected to be held accountable by local churches during their education. Faculty are also responsible to their local churches, and this submission to the local church as well as to the Confessions via the Board is expected to keep the faculty on the orthodox course. Actions taken with former Professors Shepherd and Conn were cited as evidence of the Church stepping in when they perceived problems. The Board itself is required to be comprised of half ministers and half elders. In an official statement on academic freedom and

confessional commitment the following statement is made: “It is the calling of Christian scholarship . . . to hold the church accountable to the enduring and inerrant truth of the Scriptures. At the same time we desire to be held accountable to the church through its ordained elders on the Board of Trustees for our ongoing interpretation of God’s word.”

The Seminary appears to have made inroads in renewing its emphasis on the M.Div. program. The number of candidates accepted to the Ph. D. program has been limited. Field experience of 400 hours of mentored ministry are required to be completed during the student’s training. Normally this is done in connection with the student’s denominational requirements. A first year course on orientation to the ministry is required, and an administrator (who served several years in the pastorate) has been hired to serve as Dean of Students and Ministerial Formation. For this class students complete a ministerial preparation contract which states that they are attending and involved with a local church (which also signs this contract and agrees to provide pastoral oversight during the student’s seminary training). The total number of M. Div students, including satellite campuses around the country and world, is about 200 of 800 total students, or about 25%. This percentage of M.Div. students is a little higher, though, when considering just those students in Philadelphia. These statistics, despite statements to the contrary by administrators, left our committee wondering whether the name should be changed from “Seminary” to “School” or “University.”

One other statistic which possibly indicates the future of WTS-PA is the decreasing presence of the OPC. 38 of 730 students are from the OPC while 237 of 730 were from the PCA. Faculty representation is about equal between OPC and PCA, with a few other denominations represented. Board representation is not restricted by denominational affiliation. Especially for an independent Seminary, we are concerned when movement is made away from submission to the creeds. Where else might faculty stray besides going beyond the Westminster Confession’s affirmation of creation “in the space of six days”?

We were repeatedly encouraged to send our RCUS students to WTS-PA. As the Synod considers that offer, we want to remind ourselves of the following. According to the approved seminary evaluation guidelines, our primary task is to answer this question: “Will a graduate of this seminary be qualified and equipped to serve as a duly ordained Minister of the Word in the RCUS”? Our answer, in brief, is that yes, a graduate of WTS-PA will be qualified; but no, he will not be fully equipped to serve in the RCUS. If a current minister were considering advanced education, we would recommend WTS-PA as a worthy institution. There are good and godly men who are studying and teaching there. But in light of the foundational theological issues which our Synod has already agreed upon in terms of the Days of Creation and the whole-hearted defense of the doctrine of justification, we cannot in good conscience recommend that the M. Div. Program at WTS-PA is worthy of support.

Recommendations:

10. That Synod remove Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia) from its list of “approved” seminaries.

Grounds:

a. The evaluation committee found cause to question the orthodoxy of certain teachings foundational to equipping an RCUS student under care to serve as a Minister of the Word in the RCUS. In particular, the doctrine of justification is not uniformly held and taught by the faculty as defined by the Confessions of the RCUS. This by itself ought to be

sufficient ground to disqualify WTS from our “approved” list. Also problematic is the diversity of the “days of creation” views presented as within the bounds of the Reformed faith. Doctrinally, a student under care might, at WTS, be trained so as to make him unfit for ordination in the RCUS.

b. WTS, even though it has assured the RCUS visitors three years ago that it was seeking to re-orient its focus to the training of ministers of the gospel, is nevertheless to date an institution that trains only about 25% of its students for the gospel ministry. Your Committee agrees that an “approved” seminary ought to have as its focus the preparing of men for the proclamation of the gospel.

c. The WTS Board of Trustees allowed representation raised the concern that its governance might allow for further deviation in faculty positions from the orthodox understanding of the Reformation Creeds.

d. The “approval” of a seminary concerns itself only with the training of students-under-care for the Ministry of the Word. The training of men who desire to pursue advanced theological degrees is not the issue of the seminary evaluations and the availability of such ought not influence the evaluation of its M.Div program.

11. That synod consider limiting seminary “approval” to those that have representation on their respective governing Board and/or faculty by at least one ordained, active RCUS Minister.

Grounds:

a. The RCUS is best served by seminaries that are accountable to its Synod. Accountability could, at least to some degree, be realized by an RCUS representative’s voice in the seminary’s governance, direction, and teaching.

b. Such accountability might require some financial support of the seminary by the RCUS.

C. Westminster Seminary California

The 254th Synod had voted to remove Westminster Seminary California from the list of approved seminaries. At the invitation of Westminster Seminary California, the 256th Synod established a special Committee to visit that seminary. The majority report of that Committee adopted at the 257th Synod recommended listing Westminster Seminary California as a seminary worthy of receiving support, but Synod referred “the matter of placing Westminster Theological Seminary to the Permanent Christian Education Committee to report to the next (258th) Synod.” (257th Synod Abstract, pg 69). In fulfillment of that mandate, Revs. Hank Bowen and George Homer (Rev. Vern Pollema was part of the visitation team, but circumstances prevented his attendance) visited Westminster Seminary California on April 20-May 1, 2004 in conjunction with the Seminary’s Conference entitled “The Foolishness of the Gospel, Covenant and Justification Under Attack.”

Rev. Homer was a member of the visitation team that recommended to the 254th synod the removal of Westminster California, and this was useful to the 2004 visitation team in providing context for this evaluation.

The primary catalyst for the 2000 visit to Westminster California was the fact that only 1 out of 6 RCUS students-under-care trained there with Synod’s financial support was actually serving the RCUS (in 2000). The removal of Westminster California from the “approved” list of seminaries was not a matter of assigning blame to them for that statistic, nor a matter of “questioning the integrity of the faculty” (2000 Synod Abstract, pg 23).

However, considering the stewardship issue compounded by (primarily) the matter of the Seminary's emphatic "Framework Hypothesis" view on the days of Gen. 1, Synod judged that it was unwise to continue funding new students-under-care at Westminster California and thus its decision to remove this seminary from the list of approved seminaries of the RCUS.

The adopted report of the special visitation Committee (2003) noted that the changes in faculty, particularly the leaving of Professor Kline, had resulted in a lessening of the emphasis on the "Framework" interpretation of the days of Genesis and with the addition of Drs. Ian Duguid and Bryan Estelle to the Old Testament Department; there was now actually a more balanced presentation of the creation day views, including the 24 hour. Also noted by that report were the departures of Professors Dennison and Frame who were likewise involved in theological controversy.

At this time (2004 visit), positive improvement in the faculty (from our perspective) is evident as the younger, and bright additions to the faculty in the last few years mature and are now taking a role of leadership in the Reformed community.

It bears noting that Tracy Gruggett, an RCUS student-under-care who completed His M.Div degree from Westminster CA, after its removal from the "approved" list, was licensed and ordained by the Northern Plains Classis of the RCUS and is now serving as pastor of Covenant RCUS in Watertown, SD, and that other graduates of Westminster Seminary California as well are serving in the RCUS as Ministers of the Word: Gil Baloy (Chula Vista, CA), Steve Richert (Ashley ND), and Michael Voytek (Lodi, CA).

The 2004 visitation team enjoyed formal meetings, respectively, with Drs. R. Godfrey and D. Johnson, Drs. R.S. Clark and S. Baugh, and with Board of Trustee member Rev. D. Poundstone (OPC). All expressed the Seminary's desire to be placed back on the RCUS list of "approved" seminaries, and were most receptive to the idea of accountability to the RCUS via a board member.

In discussing our concern with the faculty concerning the failure to either license or retain the students we had supported at WTS-CA there was a recognition of the pragmatic problem, but a reluctance to see the seminary as responsible in this failure. There was some pointed discussion about the need for the RCUS to be more actively involved with the students while in seminary so as to be more proactive should questions arise concerning a student during the course of his instruction. It was the consistent recommendation that a working relationship between WTS-CA and the RCUS would be enhanced by the RCUS planting a church in proximity to the seminary.

On the basis of our interviews, it is our opinion that the faculty situation is now more stable and its members more of a united body than might have been the case at the time of the 2001 visit. The "tension" due to the presence then of some innovative views, including style of worship and homiletics, is no longer a factor with the present faculty which seems (to us) to exhibit less of a tendency to "push the (reformed) envelope."

It was affirmed to us that Dr. Duguid, Old Testament professor, does hold that the ordinary-day view of Genesis 1 is the best exegetical position and that the "Framework" view is now equally critiqued at the seminary. We do note, however, that Dr. Godfrey's recent book, *God's Pattern for Creation*, states on pg 90: "Third, we see that the days of Genesis are ordinary, twenty-four hour days. But many pointers indicate that these ordinary days are for us a model for our working, not as a time-schedule that God followed. Those pointers include the character of God's rest on the seventh day, the identity of

functions for the light and the lights uniting the first and fourth days, and the various ways in which the word day is used, particularly in Genesis 2:4. The days are actual for us, but figurative for God. They are not a timetable of God's actions, but are a model timetable for us to follow. " We note also this interesting statement on page 105: "The interpretation of Genesis 1 presented in our study does not reach the same conclusion as Calvin on the days of creation but uses precisely his method of literal, historical-grammatical interpretation."

WS-CA promotes "A Testimony to Our Time", a tri-fold pamphlet, as the unanimously adopted understanding of its board and faculty regarding issues now causing controversy among the people of God. We commend them for their Reformed orthodoxy on the issues of the Scripture's inerrancy, the Ordination of Women, Abortion and Homosexuality. Yet we do find that their characterization of the Book of Genesis: "in all its parts is an accurate, historical presentation" to be, in our view, incongruent with other of their writings and teachings that characterize God's historical, chronological record of His creative activity as in some manner figurative.

Our sense, then, is that the "non-ordinary day" view continues to be a major part of their teaching on Genesis 1, but that it is no longer set forth with same intensity and passion in Dr. Kline's absence, and is now better balanced with Dr. Duguid's presence.

We rejoiced that Westminster Seminary CA is a staunch apologete of the biblical doctrine of Justification summarized in the Reformation Creeds. The "Justification" conference, attended by 300+, ably refuted the unorthodox teachings that have already infiltrated the Reformed community: Norman Shepherd's views, the "New Perspective on Paul", and those emanating from the "Auburn Conference" participants.

Your Committee (and our findings were discussed with Rev. Pollema), after evaluating our visit, including the conference, reached the following conclusions: Westminster Seminary CA is more aligned with the RCUS views than it was three years ago. They stand with the RCUS on the vast majority of all the doctrines we hold dear, being polemic in their defense of the Reformed doctrine of justification. The exception, which remains problematic for training RCUS students-under-care, is their allowance of, if not in fact emphasis on, a non-ordinary, non-chronological interpretation of the days of creation. It is our opinion that there is no evidence that WS-CA has gone down the slippery slope that is the danger of the hermeneutic which allows for the "framework". They continue to proclaim an "ex-nihilo" creation by the power of God's spoken Word, assert the historicity of Adam as well as the historic, physical resurrection of Christ Jesus.

And again, we want to emphasize that they stand united with us in the defense of the doctrine whose aberrations by the Medieval Church catalyzed the Reformation, namely justification by grace alone through the imputation of Christ's righteousness alone by faith in Him alone.

We therefore recommend:

12. That Westminster Seminary be placed on the list of approved seminaries with the provision that its Board of Trustees agree to add an RCUS minister to its membership at the next opportunity to do so, and that great care be exercised in the sending and oversight of student-under-care to this seminary due to its problematic view of the days of creation.

D. City Seminary of Sacramento

The Permanent Christian Education Committee, in response to 255th Synod's mandate "that Synod investigate the City Seminary of Sacramento with a view toward listing it as a seminary worthy of support by the RCUS, without a request for Synodical financial aid"

visited City Seminary of Sacramento in 2002. Your Committee then reported this conclusion to the 256th Synod: *“It is our considered opinion that City Seminary could indeed serve as a “handmaiden “ or a subcontractor of the RCUS in terms of its orthodoxy, including also the RCUS distinctives. A student under the care of an RCUS classis, enrolled in the MDiv. program at City Seminary, would, we think, receive the kind of theological education that would equip him to pass the RCUS licensure and ordination exams”* Based on the Committee’s report, the following recommendation was adopted by the 256th Synod: *“That City Seminary be revisited by the Permanent Christian Education Committee upon meeting the following criteria:*

- A. City Seminary acquire an adequate library and,
- B. City Seminary develops an adequate ministerial apprenticeship program.”

At its regular meeting of February 2004, the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento, which oversees the Board of Governors and operations of City Seminary, believing that the above criteria were now met, voted to invite the Permanent Christian Education Committee of Synod to reevaluate the City Seminary program. Due to a communications glitch, an actual visit to City Seminary was not feasible prior to the 258th Synod.

However, your Committee determined that a recommendation to Synod regarding City Seminary was indeed feasible nevertheless due to the following circumstances:

1. Your Committee had already endorsed City Seminary at the first visit, noting that the only deficiencies preventing a recommendation for placing it on the list of “approved seminaries” were the two listed above. Rev. Walker has sent the Committee an affirmation that those deficiencies have now been remedied. (the relevant portions of that letter are included in this report).

2. Faculty of City Seminary, RCUS ministers Revs. Walker, West, Voytek, and Roe, will be present at Synod and the Standing Education and Student Aid Committee will thus have the opportunity to “visit” with them there, having at their disposal this report of the Permanent Christian Education Committee as well as the direct testimony of the faculty and pertinent documents testifying that the criteria determined sufficient for an “approval” recommendation have been met.

3. Since City Seminary’s faculty consists primarily of RCUS ministers (Rev. McIlhenny, OPC being the exception), your Committee has been able to readily receive updates on the work and progress of the seminary through the various fellowships and interactions we RCUS ministers enjoy.

A summary of the progress made by City Seminary is given by the attached excerpt of Dr. Walker’s letter. Even more recently your Committee:

- a. Was informed that the M.Div. program development has progressed to the stage where it is now deemed feasible for a student to complete it in 4 years and
- b. Heard of the Seminary’s latest (and almost fruitful) efforts in seeking a better facility, and
- c. Was provided with sample documents used in implementing the internship program.

The following is the mentioned excerpt of Dr. Walker’s letter: You have no doubt heard about the growth of our library through the seminary’s quarterly newsletter. A little over a year ago, we acquired the John Strugnell library of more than 4000 volumes. This valuable library focuses primarily on studies related to the Dead Sea Scrolls, but also includes many other priceless works, e.g., a sixteenth-century Greek thesaurus. We have also purchased a complete collection of the *Mercersberg Review* (sans one) and are actively seeking other

historical publications related to RCUS history. Two libraries have been donated to the seminary in toto, one of which consisted of several hundred volumes of Puritan and Reformed classics. Altogether, the seminary’s library now contains about 10,000 books, and we continue to acquire additional books at the rate of one hundred per week. These books are currently being catalogued and prepared for use. With this we believe that we have the core of a good theological library. Any books that we do not have are available to students at the library of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, which now has a collection of more than 450,000 volumes. The GTU is a little more than an hour from Sacramento and is easily accessible, especially for our students from the bay area.

City Seminary has also made significant progress in developing an internship program. Our program requires B.D. and M.Div. students to engage in at least 500 hours of supervised field work before graduation. The purpose of the internship program is to do what a seminary by itself cannot do, viz., test and develop a man’s practical gifts for the pastoral ministry within the setting of the local church. Supervision is carried out both by the pastor/church board of the local church and by a faculty advisor. Regular reports are required from the student and the supervising pastor/church board. These are reviewed by the student’s faculty advisor and are preserved in a binder. The full faculty then reviews each student’s binder before assigning a “credit” or “no credit” grade for the course. Each internship must be structured so that it provides the student with maximum exposure to as many of the following areas of ministry as possible: preaching, leading worship, administration, Christian education, visitation, evangelism, diaconal ministry, discipling, counseling, and cross-cultural ministry. A work-product outline of our internship, as well as the necessary forms, will be provided under separate cover.

Permit me also to outline where the seminary is in other areas. Our student body numbers approximately 30. We have several students from the RCUS (4), OPC (5) and PCA (2). The rest come from a variety of backgrounds and are expected to remain under the oversight of the local church. One student will have satisfied the requirements for the Associate of Theological Studies degree by the end of the current semester, and another will have done so by the end of the year. Several students have 20-30 credits. A total of fifteen courses were offered in the 2003 calendar year: one taught by Professor Voytek (Hebrew I), two by Professor West (Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Counseling), three by Dr. McIlhenny (Evidences, Eschatology and Philosophy of Religion) and nine by Dr. Walker (Reformation History, Greek II, Christology, Advanced Study on Reformation and Politics, Advanced Greek Grammar, Ancient Church History, Exegesis of Mark, Ecclesiology and Readings in Ancient and Medieval Church History).

Financially, the seminary is strong. The figures for the 2003 calendar year show an income of \$284,164.17 and expenses of \$213,999.90. Through various fund raisers, etc., City Seminary is able to meet all of its needs and to guarantee that no otherwise qualified student will be denied a theological education simply because of finances.

Recently, the Board of Governors also adopted a resolution granting full tuition to all RCUS students under care of their respective Classes. Thus, the net cost to the RCUS for theological education at City Seminary is \$0.00. Our faculty currently comprises four RCUS ministers (Michael Voytek and Dennis Roe are adjunct professors; Jim West and Frank Walker are full professors), and one OPC minister (Chuck McIlhenny, adjunct). Being

ministers in Reformed/Presbyterian churches, each one is required to subscribe to the confessional standards of his own communion and is subject to its discipline. The Christian Education Committee has already interviewed McIlhenny, West and Walker. Voytek and Roe have been added since the initial evaluation.

The Board of Governors is under the oversight and supervision of the Sacramento Consistory.

At its annual meeting this past January, operational by-laws were adopted. The current members of the Board are all from the RCUS, except for Rev. Reddit Andrews, a local PCA pastor. The Sacramento Consistory reserves the right to approve the election of board members and, when necessary, to remove board members without cause.

At City Seminary we believe that we offer “the kind of theological education that would equip” RCUS students under care “to pass RCUS licensure and ordination exams.” Our Casimir College Curriculum (electives that are required of RCUS students seeking a B.D./M.Div.) guarantees that RCUS students will be well acquainted with the distinctives and practices of our church. Indeed, it is our desire to “serve as a ‘handmaiden’ or a subcontractor of the RCUS” in providing theological education to such students. We pray that our brethren in the Synod will agree.

Therefore, City Seminary requests to be recognized by the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States as an approved seminary.

In the service of the King, Frank Walker, Ph.D. Professor of Historical Theology

Given points 1-3 listed prior to Rev. Walker’s letter, a re-visit to this Seminary’s physical location is thus not essential to the making of a recommendation to Synod and your Committee makes the following recommendation:

12. That the Standing Education and Student Aid Committee meet with the City Seminary faculty members present at Synod, and after affirming that the Seminary has indeed remedied the deficiencies previously noted, make a recommendation that City Seminary be placed on the RCUS list of seminaries worthy of support.

Reformed Colleges

The 257th Synod “took note” of the following recommendation: *That the Permanent Christian Education Committee, making use of the internet resources, provide an updated advisory list of Reformed Colleges to the 258th Synod.*

The following list of web sites may prove useful but the information so provided by the colleges ought be used with discernment. The characterization “reformed” does not insure that the teaching is reformed by RCUS standards. And your Committee realized that, given individual circumstances, non-listed colleges might well serve to provide a fruitful college education. This Committee would advise students and parents to seek input from currently attending students and recent graduates, their parents, pastors, as well initiate personal contacts with school administrators and faculty, and if possible, visit the school.

Inclusion on this list does not indicate a recommendation from the Committee, but merely serves, hopefully, to assist in the search for and evaluation of a Reformed college.

Listing of “Reformed” College Web sites

(alphabetical order)

(this list does not claim to be comprehensive)

Covenant College	www.covenant.edu
Christ College	www.christcollege.org

Dordt College	www.dordt.edu
Geneva College	www.geneva.edu
New St. Andrews College	www.newstandrews.org
Patrick Henry College	www.phc.edu
Providence Christian College	www.providencechristiancollege.org
Reformed Bible College	www.reformed.edu
Trinity Christian College	www.trnty.edu
Whitefield College	www.whitefieldcollege.org

Respectfully submitted

Rev. George Horner, Elder Harvey De Groot, Rev. Michael McGee,
Elder Greg Stewart, Rev. Hank Bowen, Rev. Kyle Sorensen

D. Diaconal (referred to Benevolences)

Your committee did not receive any requests for aid in 2003. We did receive a request for advice on an issue. Other than this your committee had no business last year to report on.

T. Gruggett, R. DeJong, C. Bielby, J. Bender, c. Mehlhaff, R. Reitz

E. Publications (referred to the Standing Publications Committee)

Your Permanent Publications Committee conducted business by telephone, e-mail, correspondence and by one face to face meeting of the Chairman with Sunday School curriculum writers (Hart and DeGroot) and the compiler (Henson) to work on tasks assigned by the 257th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States. For the consideration of the 258th session of Synod, the Committee presents the following reports and corresponding recommendations:

1. Concerning Recommendation 1 (p. 79 of the 2003 Abstract of Synod), which reads: “That the cost of the Reformed Herald subscription continue at \$10.00 per year per family”.

As reported by the RCUS treasurer, the current subscription fee for the Reformed Herald has basically covered its costs: Inflow \$16,860.71, Outflow: \$16,882.00.

Recommendation 1: That the Reformed Herald subscription cost continue at \$10.00 per year per family.

2. Concerning Recommendation 2: That the Rev. Paul Treick be nominated to serve as editor of the Reformed Herald.

Rev. Paul Treick has indicated a willingness to serve again.

Recommendation 2: That the Rev. Paul Treick be nominated to serve as editor of the Reformed Herald.

3. Concerning Recommendation 3: “That the editor of the Reformed Herald be given an expense account of \$500.00.”

Contact with Rev. Treick indicates that a \$500.00 expense account would be adequate for the next Synodical year.

Recommendation 3: That the editor of the Reformed Herald be given an expense account of \$500 for the next Synodical year.

4. Concerning Recommendation 4 & 5: “That Synod approve the production of the certificates in electronic format.” and “That Synod approve the e Certificate Package containing the Adobe Acrobat Reader, the e Certificate CD, 100 sheets of parchment paper and envelopes be made available at the Book Depository at the cost of producing the CD, the cost of the parchment paper and envelopes.

Rev. Gary Mancilas of the Committee is working on this project and will complete it. Recommendation 4: That the Rev. Gary Mancilas be permitted to complete this project.

5. Concerning Recommendations 7-13, concerning the Sunday School Curriculum: The Discuss/Decide section of the 4th quarter, grade levels 1-3 were revised. The CD-Rom disc, containing the notification that the material was not to be copied without Synod approval, was made available in January 2004. As of the date of this writing 17 copies have been sold. Feedback from those using this CD have been minimal. Research of the layout design and cost of printed materials has continued and will be available at Synod.

Recommendation 5: That the Committee be authorized to publish hard copies of the 1st year as soon as practicable and the 2nd year when it is available.

6. Concerning Recommendation 15: “That the Permanent Publications Committee continue to research for opportunities to enhance our ability to promote and sell our RCUS resources.”

Committee member, Rev. Gary Mancilas, has agreed to continue this research.

Recommendation 6: Take note.

7. Concerning Recommendation 17: “That Synod encourage Rev. Syms to continue the development of Three Forms of Unity in audio format and when completed, made available on the RCUS website.”

The Rev. George Syms was contacted by the Committee and reported that he had completed the Heidelberg Catechism and planned to complete the Belgic Confessions and Canons of Dordt by the time Synod meets.

Recommendation 7: Take note.

8. Concerning Recommendation 18: “That the Permanent Publications Committee provide a stick on label to make the change to the model Constitution for Congregations (Article 21) passed by Synod.”

Committee member, Rev. Gary Mancilas, volunteered to design and produce the labels which will be delivered to the Book Depository.

Recommendation 8: Take note.

Respectfully submitted,

Elder Jess D. Johnson, Chairman, Rev. Gary Mancilas, Rev. David Fagrey,
Rev. Wesley Brice, Rev. Howard Hart, Rev. Neal Riffert
Elder Charles Henson, Elder Dave McPherson

F. Executive (referred to Overtures Committee)

Esteemed brothers in Christ,

During the course of this synodical year, your committee sent out two Executive Circulars with recommendations which were approved. They are:

Executive Circular 257:1: (A) That Synod approve an additional \$1,200 in missions

support for the Bentonville, AR, work for the Synod fiscal year 2003; (B) That Synod provide Deaf RCUS, Danville, KY, a loan of \$6,000 at 3% interest for the purchase of a church building; that Synod provide Deaf RCUS, Danville, KY, with \$500 per month in Synod missions funds for mission work in the Chicago area until the 2004 Synod Meeting.

Executive Circular 257:2: (A) that Mr. Sam Powell receive student aid in the amount of \$1080.00 for tuition and \$100 for books for the 2003-2004 school year at New Geneva Theological Seminary.

Your Committee was given the task of contacting Rev. John Sawtelle and Mr. Andrew McIntyre regarding the repayment of their student loans. This contact was made.

Rev. Sawtelle responded that he takes the matter of repayment of the student loan seriously and it he is open to a call to serve in the RCUS. In the last two years he has pursued the opportunity to candidate in three different charges, but was not called to these. For now, he is asking for patience on the part of Synod as he considers the best way to proceed in this matter. It is evident that Rev. Sawtelle is open to consider a call in order to return to the RCUS and thus fulfill his obligation regarding the loan.

Mr. McIntyre wrote back that he is considering a return to the RCUS, in which case he would not be liable for repayment. If he does not, he indicated that he intends to pay this indebtedness.

A letter was also sent to Mr. Chris Caughey reminding him of his obligations for the loans that were given to him. Since he is no longer in the RCUS and has not indicated a desire to return, this loan must be repaid. Synod might want to consider a more structured and timely plan for repayment that is part of each new loan agreement.

Your Committee was also asked to consider a change to the Synod Agenda which would allow for an earlier distribution of overtures to their respective committees. This would also require a change in Standing Rule 18. Your committee proposes the following change to the Agenda: “That, following *III. Adoption of the Agenda and Orders of the Day*, we insert *VII* (which now becomes *IV*) *Announcement of the Standing Committees*, and *VIII* (now *V*) *Presentation and Referral of Overtures, Permanent Committee Reports and Communications* from the old Agenda and the items following be renumbered accordingly.” This change will be incorporated into the Proposed Agenda will be presented to this Synod for adoption as *III. Adoption of Agenda, Order of the Day, and Special Orders*.

Your committee was also asked to meet with a representative of City Seminary of Sacramento in order to discuss RCUS participation in planned giving programs being established by the Seminary. City Seminary is registered with the Christian Community Foundation (CCF) as a recipient of a gift annuity. However, they are making this available so gifts may be given in whole or part to any RCUS fund. What they are asking is that the RCUS agree to participate for two years. If, after two years, the RCUS wants to register its own name, it can decide to do so. Or, they can drop their participation completely. For example a gift of \$100,000 given at age 60 with a 5% annual return would return the entire gift to the donor by age 80. The original \$100,000 is left for the donor’s charity at his death.

Gift Annuities are nothing new, but have been used by churches, colleges, and institutions for many years. Institutions of the RCUS were funded this way since the 1800’s. Most of these have annuity programs already. CCF is one of the larger Christian funds with large accounts (e.g. Covenant College, World Vision, Focus on the Family, etc.). To be eligible, a filing shown non-profit status is required. City Seminary has done this already and is simply offering the possibility of RCUS participation. They would write up an explanation

to all members of how this works and run some ads in the Reformed Herald. They proposed a two-year trial for the RCUS and then the Synod can evaluate whether they wish to continue, drop it, or file under their own name.

What this annuity involves is giving a gift designated to the fund of your choice. After the gift is given, the giver is guaranteed an interest on that gift for the rest of his/her life. The rate of interest depends on the person's age at the time the gift is given (higher rates for older givers). Upon the death of the donor, the amount gifted then goes to the fund that was originally chosen. Advantages to be considered are these: 1. The amount given is immediately tax deductible upon donation; 2. The donor receives a set annual percentage back (5-10% depending on age) until the death of the donor. A portion of this annual payment is tax deductible also. 3. If one chooses, after the donation, a portion of the money is immediately given to the chosen fund, and the remainder is kept in the fund to pay the interest. 4. The choice of where the money goes is up to the individual – 100 might go to the RCUS General Fund or one of the benevolences of the RCUS, or it may be split (e.g. 20% to City Seminary, 20% to Home Missions, and 60% to the Minister's Aid Fund); 5. It provides an option for giving that the RCUS is not presently offering; 6. It may well have a very beneficial effect in building up our Ministerial Aid Fund by offering one other option for this fund; 7. Money given now avoids estate taxes later.

Possible disadvantages are these: 1. Once the money is designated and the tax is deducted by the individual, the fund given to may not be changed. If the RCUS or an institution now approved by the RCUS goes liberal, the original gift still goes to the fund; 2. The amounts required for each donation are rather large – \$25,000 for one fund or \$50,000 if two or more funds are chosen; 3. As far as investments of funds go, one may find a larger income producing fund for the same amount of money. This is not an investment strategy, but a gift which yields returns for the life of the donor.

Your committee thinks that a two-year trial might be good to see if there will be participants. At that time (2006 Synod) it should be evaluated as to whether we continue with this program, drop it completely, or develop a fund that bears the RCUS name exclusively.

Take note also that the Proposed Agenda sent to delegates has been changed: Rev. George Syms is to replace Rev. William Haddock to preside at the May 10 Worship Service. Rev. Haddock will not arrive until Wednesday.

Recommendations:

1. That the Executive Committee continue contact with Mr. Chris Caughey and Rev. John Sawtelle, encouraging them, in concert with the Synod Treasurer, to fulfill their loan obligations to the RCUS.
2. That Standing Rule 18 be amended by replacing the second sentence with the following underlined portion: *18. 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.* [Passed along with the adoption of the Agenda]
3. That Synod participate in the charitable annuity giving as proposed by City Seminary of Sacramento, and that this program be evaluated at the 260th Synod of the RCUS.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Vernon Pollema, Rev. Robert Grossmann, Rev. Paul Treick,
Mr. Greg Born, Mr. Eric Merz

G. Foreign Ministries (referred to the Standing Missions Committee)

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

NOW HEAR THIS: We are actively recruiting men to spend one month in Kenya this year, to do teaching and leadership work there. We would like to send two teams of two men this year for a month each, and another team of two for up to a three months next year. PLEASE let us know if you are able to contemplate doing something like this.

Activities of Your Committee

During the past year the Committee has kept in steady contact by email, and occasionally by telephone, with our brothers in Africa who are leaders of the Reformed Confessing Church of the Congo (ERCC) and the Free Reformed Church of Kenya (FRCK). Regular synodical support funds and funds to cover special needs that have arisen have been sent by Telex (to the FRCK), by check to a bank in Belgium (for Rev. Kabongo and the churches in MbujiMayi, Congo) and by Western Union to Kinshasa, Congo. Funds to Lubumbashi in the South of the Congo are sent by check to the Verre Naaste in the Netherlands. The Committee chairman and several of the members, especially the subcommittee chairmen for Congo and Kenya have kept in touch by email and telephone.

The Committee held an annual meeting in Sacramento to review the past year's work and to agree on the 2004 budget and other recommendations.

Our overall report on our Foreign Ministries work is that we have entered a stable period in the leadership of the churches in Africa, in the Dutch GKN (liberated) Church's conduct of the Seminary in Lubumbashi, and also of good communication with our partners in Africa. We also seem to be entering a better era of communication with the Dutch Committees in dealing with our mutual work. Committee chairman Rev. Kalkman had productive meetings with our Dutch counterparts in the Netherlands this past winter. Volunteer economic development leader, Mr. Jerry De Young, traveled to the Congo and has been able to begin the work there contemplated a year ago. The Committee plans to request more specific information on the various groups we support in both Kenya and the Congo, such as numerical statistics and specific locations.

THE CONGO

Rev. Kabongo Malebongo continues to carry on a vigorous schedule of preaching and church development work in the Mbuji-Mayi area. He also travels regularly to Kinshasa (where his parents live) and Kananga to help with church development and to Lubumbashi to teach in the GKN seminary. He has recommended four other trained ministers for our support in Mbuji-Mayi and Kananga areas, two of whom we already support and two our Committee recommends for beginning support this year. We would like to invite Rev. Kabongo to visit our 2005 RCUS Synod. Rev. Kabongo has a used SUV purchased with RCUS special funds to help him with travel needs.

There are presently six active church groups in Kinshasa, mostly led by elders, that we support at the rate of about \$1000 each per year. This money supplies everything from Bibles to diaconal help for poor members as needs arise. It also allows travel by leaders to meetings and training sessions led by Rev. Kabongo and the Dutch missionaries when they

are on hand. Mr. Abel N’ tita and Mr. Philip N’ gandu from Kinshasa are presently seminary students in Lubumbashi. We help with their travel and give minimal support to their families while they are gone during the six months school session each year. Special funds have helped with medical needs and supplying a church building for one of the groups.

The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) seminary in Lubumbashi has operated steadily the past year with one major problem when the son of one of the missionaries suffered a severe illness that forced the family back to the Netherlands. The two pastors we support in Lubumbashi continued their work as before, with Rev. Kishimba also serving as legal representative for the ERCC. A growing cadre of ministers serve the ERCC.

Mr. Jerry De Young made a successful trip to the Congo and visited all areas of our work except Lubumbashi, which was represented by Rev. Kishimba’s visit to Mbuji-Mayi while Mr. De Young was there. As a result of this trip, six \$1000 economic development projects to provide better food supplies for ERCC folks have been funded and are being carried out.

KENYA

The Free Reformed Church of Kenya continues under the leadership of Pastoral-elder Meshack Nyarango and his partner, James Aunga. Elder Nyarango does most of the administrative work. The FRCK has begun two new church stations, a high school and orphanage. Our regular support has supplied a basic salary (\$40 per month) to the pastoral elders, purchases of literature and some medical needs for FRCK folks. The wives of both pastoral elders suffered debilitating illnesses during the past year, requiring special funds to be sent. Special funds were also sent for education needs, and parts for Elder Nyarnago’s motorbike. Mr. Aunga has well-recovered from life-threatening injuries inflicted by rival tribesmen last year.

Mr. Kurt Schimke was licensed by the South Central Classis in August 2003 but has since resigned his licensure for personal reasons at the request of South Central Classis. Our Committee recommends that the funds collected for his support be used to supply other pastors who will be able to teach among the FRCK leaders and people on short-term trips to Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the monies collected for the support of Mr. Schimke be used to send short-term ministers to Kenya to forward church education.

2. That the Foreign Ministries budget for 2004 be as follows:

Congo:	
Elder/Pastor support	\$13,800 (up \$2400)
Kinshasa Aid	\$ 7,000 (same)
Publishing	\$ 1,000 (same)
Building and diaconal aid	\$ 2,000 (same)
Kenya:	
Church support	\$ 9,000 (same)
Publishing	\$ 2,000 (same)
International Radio	\$14,000 (same)
Committee Expenses:	
Travel to Africa	\$ 4000 (same)
Travel to Europe	\$ 1,000 (same)

Committee expense in US	\$ 3,000 (same)
TOTAL:	\$56,800 (down \$27,600)

H.Kalkman, R.Grossmann, M.Voytek, D.Schlegel, J.Blair, H.Yoder,
P.Henderson, D.Schnabel, K.Hamilton

H. Home Missions (referred to the Standing Missions Committee)

Dear Brethren,

The Synod Home Missions Committee met at Covenant Reformed Church in Chico, California on April 12 - 13, 2004. Committee members present were Rev. Dennis Roe, Rev. Steven Richert, Rev. Jeff DeBoer, Rev. Ron Morris, Elder Wayne Lingenfelter and Elder Jim Bruckschen. Missionary pastors present were Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Jonathan Merica, Rev. Wesley Brice, Rev. Gary Mancilas, Rev. Robert Grossmann, Rev. Gene Sawtelle and Rev. Jay Fluck.

Mission Reports:

Covenant Reformed, Watertown, SD

Rev. Tracy Gruggett was unable to attend the meeting due to the fact that his wife was due to have a baby. The Northern Plains representative reported that the classis missions committee has been quite pleased with the work being carried on by Rev. Gruggett. According to Rev. Gruggett’s parochial report, in addition to the preaching of the Word, the congregation in Watertown has observed the Lord’s Supper six times in the past year and discipline was administered to two members. They received three new members, one through infant baptism. Although membership numbers are down, attendance is actually up with an average attendance of twenty-eight. Rev. Gruggett continues his radio ministry on KWAT. In addition to this, he has written several articles for the local newspaper. It appears that Rev. Gruggett has good rapport with the members and visitors at Watertown. The giving from the congregation has been good. They were able to pay their bills as well as \$15,000 toward debt relief. This leaves them with a debt of about \$17,000 which they hope to have paid off in two more years. This year Watertown is requesting no financial support from synod. The missions committee wants to congratulate the congregation for being diligent and for being able to come off of support.

Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN

Rev. Jim Sawtelle reports that things are going well in our Twin Cities work. Although the congregation is comprised of mostly younger families, these families demonstrate a great deal of spiritual maturity. During 2003, thirteen new members were added and one was lost. There are now sixty-seven communicant members and 113 total baptized members. Although many of the new members have come from a Reformed background, the congregation is seeking ways to reach out to those who do not know Christ. There is a desire on the part of the Redeemer congregation to plant a new work on the east side of the Cities. This work has been somewhat exacerbated by another Reformed denomination that has been trying to start a work in the same area using people who are already in attendance at Redeemer. Rev. Sawtelle plans to protest this to the proper presbytery. Nevertheless, the planting of a new RCUS work on the east side is something the synod missions committee has encouraged the congregation to do. The congregation was able to purchase a meeting place last year which needed some work. They also acquired a \$600,000 debt

which they believe is manageable for them. Not only is the giving enabling them to pay their bills, but they also have taken a significant cut in support from the 2004 synod budget as well as a reduced request for 2005.

Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico, CA

Rev. Gary Mancilas reports that Covenant Reformed Chapel has made great progress in the last year. They are now operating with their own full consistory and spiritual council. They are meeting in a very nice Seventh Day Adventist building which is more than adequate for their needs. They have taken in three new members and their communicant membership stands at twenty-one. The word is faithfully preached, the sacraments have been properly administered and when necessary, discipline has been applied. Although there seems to be a revived spirit among the people, there has been a financial setback with the erasure of one member. For this reason, the congregation is not taking a deduction in support from synod this year.

Rehoboth Chapel, L.A. Basin, CA

Rev. Jay Fluck reports progress in our work in the L.A. Basin. They have been meeting in Rev. Fluck's home, but after a somewhat roller coaster ride of meeting places, they recently have signed a lease on a new and bigger place for worship. This should make things more conducive for growth. The congregation received six new members last year and attendance for worship is up. They now average about forty-one in attendance on the Lord's Day. Rev. Fluck continues to work to supplement his income but due to the increase of the rent for their meeting facility, they are requesting no decrease in their support for 2004 and 2005.

Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, CO

Rev. Gene Sawtelle reports that the congregation in Greeley is growing and in good spirits. They have been averaging forty-six people in worship on the Lord's Day which is up from forty last year. They received six new members last year. The congregation was able to purchase the building they have been meeting in from the RPCNA which should serve the congregation well for some time to come. A couple of significant anonymous gifts of \$20,000 and \$50,000 respectively as well as the Day of Prayer Missions Offering in excess of \$20,000 helped greatly in this purchase. There are a few things they hope to do to the building such as installing an elevator for the elderly as well as a wheelchair ramp at the front door. They now owe about \$200,000 on the property.

Providence Reformed Chapel, Vermillion, SD

Rev. Robert Grossmann reports that there is a good spirit among members of the Vermillion congregation. They are seeing increased attendance on the Lord's Day as well as increased attendance during their mid-week service, mostly coming from local college students. They did see a decline in membership as three communicant members were transferred to other congregations and one member was erased. Rev. Grossmann continues his weekly radio broadcast and has had a good response in the form of letters, phone calls and money given for the program. There is a weekly ad in the news paper for the radio program. Financially, the congregation seems to be relatively strong. They have requested a ten percent decrease in funding. The congregation continues to meet in the facilities which were acquired from the CRC. The church building is debt free and the parsonage is scheduled to be paid off by the first of July, 2004. In addition to the work of the church, the Rev. Grossmann and the facility in Vermillion are integral parts of the new Heidelberg Seminary. The Hoeflinger Memorial Library, consisting of roughly 6000 books and

periodicals, has recently been moved from Lincoln, NE to Vermillion for use in the seminary.

Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, CA

Rev. Jonathan Merica reports that Grace Reformed Chapel has been experiencing some difficulties this past year. There was a controversy among the members of the congregation which resulted in some members leaving. In addition to this, one member has left because of the influence of Harold Camping. This leaves less than twenty people in the congregation apart from Rev. Merica and his wife. The congregation is now faced with a difficult financial position. Because of this, Rev. Merica requested a re-evaluation from Western Classis. The synod committee noticed two "red flags" from the classis re-evaluation report. The first was the fact that at least half of those attending the San Ramon work live nearly 75 miles away. Even Rev. Merica lives about an hour away from the church plant. A second thing the committee noticed was that giving for the month of the evaluation was approximately \$150 per family. The committee believes that this is not a good indication of support from the local congregation. Because of the financial shortfall, Western Classis has overtured synod to amend last year's approved budget to cancel the reduction requested for 2004 and to maintain that same amount for 2005. The committee believes that the Tri-Valley area is a major population area and needs a solid Reformed work there. However, if there is no evidence of growth coming from the actual area in which the church plant exists, a serious re-evaluation needs to be given on whether this is the right allocation of funds for our limited budget.

High Plains Reformed, Calhan, CO

The pulpit at Calhan was technically open after Rev. Maynard Koerner's call to the Lincoln charge. Elder Sam Powell from the sponsoring congregation in Colorado Springs and who has begun taking courses at New Geneva began exhorting in Calhan after Rev. Koerner's departure. Although the congregation sought a pastor, the congregation requested that Elder Powell be given the role as their stated supply. South Central Classis looked into this and decided that Sam Powell could be an "Exhorting Elder" with the following conditions: a) that this arrangement be limited to no more than three years, b) that his exhorting be limited to the congregation at Calhan, c) that he not perform the rites of the Church. In the meantime, the congregation continues to see visitors and new growth. They have recently constituted with their own consistory. After this year, the congregation informs the committee that it intends to start taking a reduction in financial support.

Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, Ark

Rev. Wes Brice serves as our mission pastor in Northwest Arkansas. In October of 2003, Covenant East sent a delegation to Arkansas to re-evaluate the work there. They met with each person and questioned them regarding the spiritual, numerical and material progress of the congregation. They report that the congregation has grown from two members at the start of the year to ten. Three of these members are former OPC officers including two elders and one deacon. Rev. Brice says that they have had as many as twenty-four in attendance for worship. The group continues to meet at a Holiday Inn. They are endeavoring to canvass the area with leaflets and with advertisements. One troubling thing is that another Reformed denomination planted a new work about three miles from our work in Bentonville. This, as well as the issue in the Twin Cities, are issues that need to be addressed with our brethren in NAPARC.

Chicago, IL

Synod was informed of the new work in Chicago with synod circular 257:1 in December of 2003. The consistory of oversight for this work is our Danville, KY work. Mike Bravo, who became familiar to us through his work as a sign-language interpreter at RCUS synods for the past few years, has begun a Bible study in the Chicago area. The work there is hoped to be a place of worship for both the hearing and the hearing impaired. They are seeing about thirty in attendance on the Lord's Day. At this point, they remain under the oversight of the Danville consistory and have not sought oversight of classis or synod and are not yet prepared to be considered an official mission work of the RCUS. However, they have requested aid of \$250 per month from both the Covenant East classis as well as synod.

Committee Work - During our meeting the classis home missions reports were read as well as reports from the mission works. Two issues were taken up by the committee. One was the overall philosophy of missions in the RCUS. For the past several years it seems that the RCUS has adopted a "wait and see" approach. That is, we wait for someone or some group to approach us to begin a work in their area. The committee discussed a more deliberate or "intentional" approach. For example, if we have a work in a larger area, that work should be encouraged to launch out into other areas of that city and intentionally begin a new work with a core group from the supporting congregation. Your committee realizes that this is not a new concept, even for the RCUS. But this has not been happening for a while. With this approach in mind, your committee is proposing to launch an RCUS radio program which will be aired in larger cities where we have or hope to have mission works. This program, which has yet to be named, will have an opening which states that the program is "a radio ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States." We will ask a number of RCUS ministers to provide radio programs to be aired on this program. At the conclusion of the program, an ending will give contact information for listeners in that particular market. The cities we would like to target include Minneapolis, Chicago, Los Angeles, Kansas City and Sioux Falls. Since the committee has historically requested an additional \$18,000 for unforeseen new works in the coming year, this request will remain, but half (\$9,000) will be designated for the radio program.

A second issue taken up by the committee was the inclusion of mission works that are not financially supported by classis or synod onto our Day of Prayer and Missions Offering prayer list. We have a number of works that are not officially mission works of classis or of synod. They are not officially recognized, but are nonetheless legitimate works of RCUS congregations. Because they are not requesting financing and hence not on the list, many of our members are not aware of them. The committee believes that these works should provide reports to the synod committee for the purpose of spreading the information via our annual "Prayer Requests." In addition to this, the committee believes that just because these congregations are not receiving support from synod, they should not be excluded as potential recipients of the Day of Prayer offering.

Annual Day of Prayer and Debt Reduction Offering - Last year's offering went to Grace Reformed Church in Greeley, CO. Rev. Gene Sawtelle reports that the congregation received over \$20,000 from the offering. This was greatly helpful for their new building. Your committee is recommending that the 2004 offering this fall be designated for Covenant Reformed Church, the mission work at Grass Valley, CA.

Recommendations - The SHMC brings the following recommendations to the 258th Synod of the RCUS:

1. Take Note: That Covenant Reformed Church, Watertown, SD be commended for coming off of synod support.
2. That support for Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN be set at \$6,876 for 2005.
3. That support for Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico, CA be set at \$12,496 for 2005.
4. That the budget for 2004 be amended to provide support in 2004 for Rehoboth Chapel in the LA Basin at \$14,473.
5. That support for Rehoboth Chapel in the LA Basin be set at \$14,451 for 2005.
6. That support for Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, CO be set at \$18,580 for 2005.
7. That support for Providence Reformed Church, Vermillion, SD be set at \$11,511 for 2005.
8. That the budget for 2004 be amended to provide support in 2004 for Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, CA in the amount of \$22,180.
9. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, CA be set at \$19,980 for 2005.
10. That support for High Plains Reformed, Calhan, CO be set at \$18,000 for 2005.
11. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, Ark. be set at \$14,400 for 2005.
12. That support of the Bible Study in Chicago be set at \$250 per month or \$3,000 for 2005.
13. That \$9,000 be designated for the start of a new RCUS radio program in targeted areas.
14. That \$9,000 be budgeted for potential new works.
15. That \$3,500 be budgeted for committee expense.
16. That the annual Home Missions Offering on the Day of Prayer in 2004 be designated for Covenant RCUS at Grass Valley, CA.
17. Take Note: The Home Missions budget for 2005, if approved as recommended, would be \$140,794.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Morris, D. Roe, S. Richert, J. DeBoer
T. Ochsner, W. Lingenfelter, J. Bruckschen

I. Interchurch Relations (referred to the Ecumenical Committee)

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

During the past year your committee has maintained contact with those churches with whom we have fraternal relations, and with whom we have correspondence with a view toward establishing such relations. Once again, due to the fact that we have a limited range of ecclesiastical contacts, most of our work was executed via e-mail and telephone.

Churches in Fraternal Relations

Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRef)

Our relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches continues to progress as we have opportunity for discussions and visits with these brothers. We note from CanRef reports that they are desirous of maintaining contact on the Classis level (as well as locally and with Synod). We believe that this is also the desire of RCUS Classes as well. We are aware that the CanRef brothers are diligent to point their members visiting in the US to RCUS churches.

General Synod - Chatham 2004 The Rev. Messers. Mayville and Syms attended Synod Chatham (Ontario) as fraternal delegates of the RCUS. A report by the Rev. Tom Mayville

is appended to this document.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

The Rev. Jeff DeBoer attended the General Assembly of the OPC 2003 on behalf of the RCUS. His report is appended to this document.

Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) (GKN-Lib)

We have had no correspondence with the GKN-Liberated since last synod.

Reformed Confessing Church of the Congo (ERCC)

The IRC chairman has been in contact with the chairman of the Foreign Ministries Committee, Rev. R. Grossmann, who has indicated that committee's desire to bring Rev. Kabongo Malebongo of the ERCC, and Elder James Aunga, of the FRCK, to Synod 2005. This would facilitate good communication and information gathering on these churches in the Congo and Kenya respectively.

Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA)

No delegate or greeting was sent to the RPCNA Synod in 2003. The reason appears to be that after a search of the IRC records there is no record of any invitation actually received. Moreover, the RPCNA does not normally send an abstract of its proceedings and therefore no information is available to your committee on what transpired at its last assembly. The report submitted by the RPCNA to NAPARC did not give sufficient detail for your committee to report on any significant matters.

Relations with Other Churches

United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA):

One of the items that came to our attention during the last year was a request for an explanation of the changes made by the RCVS to the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort. The explanations were ably handled under the leadership of the Rev. Jim Sawtelle. We understand that the Synod of the URCNA will have before it this year the recommendation of its committee to enter into "phase two" ecclesiastical relations with the RCVS. As we have learned more about the URCNA in our contacts and subcommittee meetings, we must continue to evaluate doctrine and practice in these churches before entering into the "phase two" relationship.

Ecumenical Relations

North American Council of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (NAPARC):

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America hosted NAPARC in Pittsburgh, PA, on the dates November 11-12, 2003. The RCUS delegation included the Rev. Messers. Koerner, Morris, Potter and Syms. In early November, 2003, Rev. Bruce Stewart, who had served faithfully for many years, due to health concerns made known his pending resignation as Secretary of NAPARC. The Rev. Ron Potter was elected to succeed br. Stewart. The Rev. Maynard Koerner was re-elected as Treasurer.

1. The member churches unanimously ratified the admission to NAPARC of the Eglise Reformee du Quebec (the Reformed Church of Quebec).
2. Motion for a NAPARC position on Women in the Military: "It is the conviction of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council that the Word of God gives no warrant expressed or implied that women are to be conscripted into or employed for military combat roles but rather they are to be defended by men and kept from harms way that they might fulfill their biblical callings and duties under God." Surprisingly only three of the NAPARC

Churches voted yes on this motion, the RCUS, the PCA, and the RPCNA. The ARPC, the KAPC, and the ERQ abstained. The OPC voted "no."

3. Committee on Collation. This committee has provided a chart for NAPARC member churches as to the theological/practical distinctives of each church. See appendix.
4. The "Basis" of NAPARC speaks about "organic union." A statement was adopted in order to provide a definition. "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." (Minutes NAPARC 2003, p.5)
5. Another item brought to our attention in the context of NAPARC churches was a communication from the Rev. L Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk of the PCA. He writes: "Therefore, in behalf of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, I am informing you that the PCA is desirous of entering into conversations with each member denomination within the National Presbyterian and Reformed Council with a view toward Church union. Our Interchurch Relations Committee is the committee designated to carry on the conversations."

Given the strict subscription of the RCUS to the Three Forms of Unity, and considering the theological broadness of the PCA and the recent adoption of a "good faith" subscription policy, your committee believes that this is not something to pursue at this time. Recommendation: That the Stated Clerk of the RCUS write the PCA Stated Clerk, the Rev. L. Roy Taylor, and inform him that we do not desire to pursue conversations on church union at this time.

The RCUS is scheduled to host NAPARC this year. God willing, the dates are November 9-10, 2004, with the venue being the Clarion Airport Hotel, Kansas City, MO. Your committee is already making arrangements for this event.

International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)

The ICRC is scheduled to meet in Pretoria, South Africa, in October 2005. It would be well for the RCUS to have two representatives at this conference, for which funding has been planned over the past several years. We are presently considering the Rev. V. Pollema and Rev. G. Syms as possible delegates to the 2005 ICRC.

An IRC subcommittee for the development of the Handbook for Interchurch Relations (procedures, etc.) will be established soon.

The IRC Sub-committee on revising the use of confessional language in the paper "Biblical Principles of Church Unity," comprised of Potter and Syms, hopes to complete its work during the summer months of 2004.

Budget Information:

1. Delegation to NAPARC 2004 in Kansas City, MO	\$2,000.00
2. Delegate(s) to the OPC GA (June 2004)	500.00
3. URCNA Synod - Calgary, Alberta	1,500.00
4. Interchurch Relations Committee Meeting	1,500.00
5. Interchurch Relations Committee expenses	500.00
6. Delegate to the RPCNA Synod (June 2004)	500.00
7. OCRC sub-committee meeting	500.00
8. CanRef sub-committee meetings	500.00
9. Budget for ICRC South Africa	1,500.00

TOTAL: \$8,500.00

Respectfully submitted,
G. Syms, J. Sawtelle, T. Mayville, M. Koerner, R. Potter, J. Kroese

J. Ministerial Aid Fund (referred to Ministerial Aid)

Esteemed Brethren:

Your Committee conducted its business via mail, phone, and e-mail. This portion of our report with recommendations, the previously circularized pension plan proposal, and the auditing report constitute our committee report.

A. Retirement Plan Proposal.

You Committee was tasked by the Synod with the following (see recommendation 14, 257th Synod Abstract, page 75): "That a committee be appointed to establish a 'Defined Contribution Pension Plan,' in addition to the Ministerial Aid Fund, to aid our ministers for their retirement, and that, this plan be circularized at least 30 days prior to the meeting of the 258th Session of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States in order that it may be considered for implementation at the 258th Session."

We circulated a plan in early April that is currently being used in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The plan meets the requirements of the Synod's directive. Modifications were also included that enable us to adopt the plan for our use. Should the Synod vote to adopt this plan, the Permanent Ministerial Aid Committee will need to prepare its implementation and administer the plan for participating ministers.

Funding of the plan will depend upon the individual ministers who opt into the plan. Please note that each minister will need to work this out with his consistory, as the consistory will be responsible to contribute the matching funds portion of the contribution.

B. Audit of the Ministerial Aid Fund.

The accounts of the MAF were audited along with the accounts of the Synod Treasurer. That audit was mailed along with the Synod Treasurer's report.

C. Investment Policy.

The Synod has directed your committee to invest the contributions made to the MAF in a 50/50 balance between bond CDs and mutual funds. We are recommending that this balanced approach be continued.

D. Synodical Guideline.

The \$15.00 per communicant guideline for the MAF has been in place a number of years, and has contributed greatly to the Fund's steady increase. Your committee recommends continuing the guideline.

E. Fund Signatories.

Rev. Haddock is expressing a desire to be replaced as a member of the Permanent Ministerial Aid Fund Committee (his three-year appointment expires this Synod). He has served on the committee for many years (including the original committee that proposed the MAF back in 1988) and would like to step aside. The reason that this must be dealt with in this report has to do with the fact that his name appears as a signatory on many of the MAF accounts. Furthermore, many of the accounts have a past Synod Treasurer, Mr. Clayton Greiman, as a signatory. Your committee will make recommendations to remedy this matter.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: That the previously circularized, voluntary, portable pension plan with modifications for use in the RCUS be approved for RCUS ministers who desire to participate in the plan.

Recommendation 2: That, should the Synod adopt this plan, the Permanent Ministerial Aid Fund Committee implement and administer this plan for those RCUS ministers who desire to participate in the plan.

Recommendation 3: That the investment policy of placing the MAF assets into a balance of 50 percent in mutual funds and 50 percent in CDs be continued.

Recommendation 4: The Synod continue the guideline of \$15.00 for the MAF for 2004-2005.

Recommendation 5: That Rev. Haddock, at his request, be removed as a member of the Ministerial Aid Fund Committee.

Recommendation 6: That the 2004-05 Permanent MAF Committee select one of its members to be a signatory along with the Synod Treasurer on future MAF accounts.

Recommendation 7: That Rev. Haddock transfer funds to the new MAF account as follows:

Cash Fund (Bankwest NOW Account): as soon as the new cash account is opened.

Mutual Fund (Vanguard 500): as soon as the shares can be liquidated and the proceeds deposited into the new MAF cash account.

Bank CD's: that these be transferred on a case by case basis as the CD's reach maturity.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Haddock, C. Pennington, D. Dawn, H. Opp, J. Saavalainen,
D. McPherson, F. Krivohlavek, S. Moore

K. Editorial Advice (referred to Publications)

The Synodical Committee on Editorial Advice was not asked for any advice, and did not give any, did not meet, and made no decisions.

C.W. Powell, L. Gross, S. Richert

L. Web Site (referred To Publications)

Dear Brothers,

This past year your Web Site committee was able to stay within our proposed budget of \$1800.00. This budget provided \$1200 for our web engineer, \$360 for web hosting (Earthlink) and domain registration, and \$240.00 for software maintenance (if needed).

Things we were able to accomplish this year were:

1. Posted PDF versions of the "Reformed Herald" as they became available from the editor.
2. Updated the inventory of our Book Depository and added information for purchasing our publications.
3. Maintained the E-mail discussion group at the RCUS@YahooGroups.com.
4. Made updates of church pages for each congregation as information was provided.
5. Made update of members/elders/minister e-mail addresses, change of addresses, etc. when provided.

6. Continued posting online audio sermons and exhortations of our ministers and elders when provided.

7. Secured a separate domain name of “reformedherald.org” for the Reformed Herald and secured free hosting for it at Coptix Inc.

A couple of additional things we hope to accomplish in the coming Synodical year are:

1. The completion of the new “Reformed Herald” web site allowing text search of all published articles (included those previously published).
2. Give the RCUS.ORG web site a face lift with some added features making the information on it more accessible.

As always, we welcome the comments and suggestions submitted by the members of our church.

We recommend the following actions to Synod:

1. That a budget of \$1800.00 to maintain the denomination’s web site be approved for the next Synodical year. This budget consists of \$1200 for web engineering, \$360 for web hosting and \$240.00 for software maintenance (if needed).
2. That the Stated Clerks of each Classis regularly provide to the Web Site Chairman, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring meeting of Classis.
3. That the Clerk of each Consistory notify the Web Site chairman of any changes in the information listed on the Web Site for their particular charge.
4. That Synod encourage ministers to submit both audio tapes and manuscripts of their sermons and articles in electronic form for publication on the RCUS web site.
5. That Synod encourage the members of the RCUS to submit to the Web Site chairman “position papers” or other important historical documents they may have in electronic form and not yet published on the web site.
6. That the members of the RCUS be encouraged to use and promote the RCUS E-mail discussion group for e-mail discussions.

Respectfully submitted,
D. Roe, F. Walker, J. Mills, K. Hoxie, M. Peery

VI. WELCOME AND SEATING OF FRATERNAL DELEGATES; WELCOME OF VISITORS

The President welcomed fraternal delegates, representatives of institutions, visiting elders and other visitors as they arrived. Fraternal delegates and visiting RCUS elders were seated in the Bar of the House and given the privilege of the floor. Delegate elders who were attending their first Synod meeting were also welcomed.

Fraternal delegates included: Rev. Ivan DeMaster representing the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; Elder Art Poppe, representing the Canadian Reformed Churches; and Rev. Bob McFarland, representing the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

Rev. Todd Joling was present as a fraternal observer for the United Reformed Churches in North America.

Representatives from institutions included: Dr. Carl Zylstra, Dordt College; Dr. Cornelis Venema and Keith LeMahieu, Mid America Reformed Seminary; Dr. Joseph Pipa, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary; and Mr. Marlow Van Ginkel, Hope Haven.

Reporters present included Glenda Mathes, a reporter from the Christian Renewal newspaper and Rev. Frank J. Smith representing Presbyterian International News Service.

VII. RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS

The President welcomed Rev. Gil Baloy, Associate Pastor of Covenant RCUS, Sacramento, CA, who is laboring in the mission work in San Diego, CA.

VIII. RECEPTION OF NEW CHURCHES

The President welcomed Covenant RCUS of Chico, CA, organized March 6, 2003 and High Plains RCUS of Calhan, CO, organized May 2, 2004.

IX. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

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

Esteemed Brethren:

The following excerpts, taken from the reports of the Presidents of the Executive Committees of the Classes, give us a view of the state of the church as a denomination. This year we move from the right to the left, *coasts*, that is.

Covenant East Classis: “Last year in my report on the state of the church in Covenant East Classis, I recounted the many ways in which our Lord saw fit to shake us as churches and individuals. This year, it is with much joy and humble gratitude that I think I can say that through the faithfulness of God’s mighty Hand, our previous trials have ‘*yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*’ What strikes me about the parochial reports is the tempered resolve and conviction to minister in such a way that the three marks of the faithful church will be manifest. This despite-or really, I must say, because of-the difficult discipline matters that threatened to overwhelm the ministry of some of our congregations, as well as our Classis. . . . As churches and as a Classis, our faith in God was tested. But, by the grace of God, through the counsel and aid of many of our brothers beyond this Classis, we stuck to God’s Word and the principles of Biblical church government, and the Lord Who is our Light, has blessed us beyond what we could ask or imagine.”

“By this acknowledgement, on behalf of the Covenant East Classis, I want to thank our brothers in Synod for their help and encouragement and patience with us during the many judicial proceedings of the past three years. More than ever we see the wisdom of Biblical church government, and the benefits of our union with a broader church in general and the RCUS in particular.”

“ . . . After twenty-plus years of affiliation with the RCUS, Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale, PA voted unanimously to withdraw from their bond with us. We are sorry these brothers and sisters saw it necessary to withdraw from our fellowship.... Nevertheless, we are thankful for a continuing group of former members of the Carbondale charge that

have elected to remain affiliated with us and carry on the witness of the gospel in the general area of NE Pennsylvania.”

“In the providence of God, there is another work emerging in Pennsylvania, in the Mifflinburg area. This work is forming under the labors of the Reverend Stephen Payson, who was invited to leave the United Church of Christ and the congregation he faithfully served for nine years, because of the decidedly reformed and biblical character of his teaching and preaching.... Yet, God is apparently not done with this area, as He raised up over thirty people who are interested in a continuing of the ministry of the gospel there. They, with an additional couple of families in the community, have prevailed upon Rev. Payson to labor with them in the gospel there. At this time, the group is still working through the process of reformation, with a goal of being organized and affiliating with a reformed church. Rev. Payson has made it clear to the group that he intends to affiliate with the RCUS.”

“We have also seen the emergence of a work among deaf Christians in the Chicago area in recent months. In this case, we must again express thanksgiving to see the willingness of the Danville elders to oversee this work.... We praise God for this opportunity.... the Lord has blessed us beyond what we are able to ask or think.... With this let us be encouraged, and press on.”

Northern Plains Classis: “From the parochial reports of the pastors it is clear that the marks of the church are present. Each congregation has faithful preaching of the Word of God Sunday by Sunday. There are other times of learning the Word and the children are being faithfully catechized. The Sacraments, both Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, are being administered in accordance with the Scriptures and our Creeds. Discipline has been exercised as the occasions have warranted. There have also been efforts to reach out into the society around us.”

“Yet it seems that as salt and light we have not penetrated very far. In storming the “gates of Hades,” it seems that those gates are impervious to our efforts. What we see for the most part is an aging and slow, steady decline in membership. The numbers in catechism are declining with few or none to re-place them. Part of this is due to the declining and aging population in North and South Dakota. But is not a great deal of the problem our own complacency? Do we really see and appreciate the treasure we have been given? Have we lost our first love and allowing the opportunities to slip by?

“So how do we as the servants of the Risen Christ, carry out the task which He has called us to do? The pattern is not a mystery: faith comes by hearing the Word of God and sending men to proclaim that Word. It boils down to us developing a strategy of going where the people are with a message that

thrills us.... Let us by our confession in Jesus Christ confront the evil in our society and expect the church to grow and prosper in this land and throughout the world”

South Central Classis: “Our Covenant God has visited us with His covenant mercies in many different ways this past year. The parochial reports are an encouragement as we see growth among many of our congregations. Many of the various difficulties of the past have been dealt with and things seem more quiet in regard to disciplinary issues. One victory that we had been anticipating for some time was the arrival of our dear brother and friend, Dorman Savage, at his life’s finish line. We say “victory,” for that is what it was. He fought the good fight, finished his race and he kept the faith. We praise God for the time we had with him and for the many years of faithful service to our Church.”

“As we look forward to a new year, we see that we have new men coming into our fold as ministers. ... we will be having examinations of three men at this year’s classis... God has been good to us. He has blessed us as a classis, as local congregations, and also as a nation. But I fear ominous clouds on the horizon.... I firmly believe that we are in an intense culture war in our nation and in our world. The Church of Jesus Christ must stand firm and clearly define what God’s Word says about things such as what a man is, what a woman is, what marriage is, and what life is.... We should be praying diligently for the Mohammedan nations that are in the grip of the false teaching of Islam.... We should be pray-ing for our own nation as we seem to be chasing after Baal. May God have mercy and may He grant a spirit of repentance among our people. And may God’s servants have the grace to stand up to the moral slide and be strong and of good courage as we carry out our Lord’s Great Commission.”

Western Classis: “My experience as your President has been a good education in church government and defining and solving potentially serious problems. As a result of my recent reading of J.I. Good’s *History of the Reformed Church in the United States in the Nineteenth Century*, (a book that I should have read twenty years ago), I now clearly see what happens to a Church when a *laissez-faire* approach is embraced by its elders and ministers.”

“At last year’s Classis meeting your President listed the three greatest needs of the Church as he saw it, listing the need for a pastor at Faith Reformed Church in Anderson as priority number one. By the grace of God, [a pastor] has been called to that ministry this past year. As a result ... the church has grown both in numbers and in attendance. The morale of the congregation has been lifted and the energy of the church has been reinvigorated.”

“The second great need was that our mission works would flourish to the extent that they would be-come self-sufficient churches, together with their own elders and deacons. This has not fully material-ized in 2003, and in some cases there has even been retrenchment. However, the mission work in San Diego now has both a pastor and elder on the field, even a pastor who is now laboring there full-time. ... At Rehoboth Reformed Chapel total communicant membership increased from 18 to 24 last year with 32 baptized members. The regular offerings there were about \$48,000, with an additional \$32,000 streaming in from additional sources. The work there seems to be steadily marching forward.... Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, . . . reports some attrition as a result of church censures respecting two families who have ceased to attend.... Nonetheless, there is not the slightest doubt that the brethren in San Ramon are burning calories getting the Gospel out; we need to continue to pray for the former and latter rains to come.”

“With regard to the stats of our Classis, last year we experienced a five per cent increase in communi-cant membership. Most encouraging, the number of professions of faith went up twenty-six per cent, from 25 to 34. Also, (perhaps reflecting our, increasing non-Christian culture) there were seven adult baptisms versus two in 2002. Total receipts in offerings were up four per cent, to \$1,712,000. However, there were thirty-one erasures, many of which were disciplinary.”

“All in all, your President believes that the morale of our Classis is healthy and that the work of the Church is progressing without insurmountable problems. He does believe that beneath the surface of some of your “two-thirds-above-the-waterline-ice-berg-like” reports there is some unexpressed grief, perhaps even despair. But is this not what our Lord forewarned us about anyway? Even Paul despaired, but also placed his trust in the God Who raises the dead (II Cor. 1:9). Even though we might all have titanic struggles and grief, we

also believe that we can do all things through Christ Jesus Who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13). Because of God's invincible grace, nothing can sink our ship."

In addition to the Classis Presidents' Reports, there are the Permanent and Special Committee Reports that bear on the state of the denomination. I mention the following as particularly relevant:

The 256th Synod erected a Special Committee to study the question of establishing a RCUS seminary, giving particular attention to Heidelberg Theological Seminary, which petitioned the Synod to serve as a seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States. This committee gave a partial report to the 257th Synod in which it requested and was given an expanded mandate *"to study the warrant and need of a denominational seminary,"* and report back to the 258th Synod. The committee was also augmented to include an additional pastor and two elders. The committee was unable to come to a unanimous conclusion and is returning with a Majority and Minority Report. In one way or another, the 258th Synod will decide to proceed, or not, with establishing a RCUS seminary. The training and education of its students for the ministry is of vital importance to a denomination that has great concern for the orthodoxy and purity of intention of its pastors. It is not only Synod's prerogative but duty to determine what is the best way to prepare and train its students for ministry in the RCUS, fully aware that seminaries do and will have a direct bearing on the state of a denomination.

Also, in this regard, the Permanent Christian Education Committee continued its ongoing mandate by the 255th Synod to make evaluative visits of "approved" seminaries. This past year it visited Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, and Westminster Seminary, California. The respective recommendations with regard to each of these seminaries are to remain, be removed, and be restored to the list of "approved" seminaries. Synod will decide.

To guard and alert our church, as well as others, to the growing impact of the unorthodox teachings of Norman Shepherd on justification by faith within our own denomination as well as the broader Reformed community, the 257th Synod erected a special committee *"to study the doctrine of justification by faith in light of the current controversy surrounding the relationship of good works to justification."* The committee has done a thorough and helpful study of the issue which deserves our appreciation as well as dissemination within the Reformed community.

Certainly the RCUS has been in the forefront when it comes to exposing and refuting error, false teaching and heresy, e.g., theonomy, framework theology, the redemptive historical hermeneutic, the heresy of Mr. Harold Camping, that Christ does not impute His active obedience to us and that our obedience or good works is part of the ground or instrument of our justification. At times it becomes wearisome and one wonders if anyone cares or is listening. Do they ever consider how the peace of the church is being disturbed? One can also not help but wonder if these things would have "grown legs" or prospered if the institutions from which most of these teachings emanated would have been under the control of a conservative and orthodox denomination. Surely the warning of the apostle Paul to the Ephesian elders becomes increasingly more impressive and poignant: *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away*

disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

Like seminaries, Sunday School materials also have a bearing on the state of the denomination. The Permanent Publications Committee, as authorized by the 257th Synod, made the first year of the RCUS Sunday School curriculum available on Cd-Rom. To date they report that 17 copies have been sold, and that there has been minimal feedback. The Permanent Christian Education Committee is again encouraging congregations to use this curriculum. This is key. This material needs to be tested, given constructive criticism, and perhaps, in some instances, revised. This can't and won't happen until it is used. This is going to take time. Until then, it appears that the Cd-Rom format is the more practical and economical approach.

There are encouraging reports and exciting proposals coming from the Permanent Foreign Ministries and Home Missions Committees. The FMC is recruiting men to volunteer short intervals of time to do teaching and leadership work in Kenya. While this would certainly entail sacrifice, it also provides some exciting opportunities to our people for mission work. It is encouraging to read, as a result of volunteer efforts and the generous financial support of RCUS congregations, that six \$1000 economic development projects to provide better food supplies for ERCC folks are now being carried out. While there is some discouragement among our home mission works, their overall state is good. There has been, first of all, spiritual growth, but numerical and financial growth as well. The Annual Day of Prayer and Building Debt Reduction Offering continues to be most gratifying. This past year Grace Reformed Church of Greeley, CO received over \$20,000 from the offering. This generosity is also a reflection of the state of the denomination.

There is another area of missions which has long been a concern to this reporter and which also reflects upon the state of the denomination. I am referring to the fact that we have no outreach to the Hispanic community. This may reference more particularly the Western Classis, and yet it should be of concern and a matter of prayer for the entire denomination. The facilities of various congregations are available. The crying need is for qualified, bi-lingual men who can preach and teach the Reformed faith. The field is near and teeming. *"Lord of harvest, send forth reapers! Hear us, Lord, to thee we cry; Send them now the sheaves to gather, Ere the harvest-time pass by."*

Ministerial Relief continues to become a larger part of the denominational budget and, with increasing longevity of life and more retirements, will only continue to do so. There is the possibility of some future "relief" and a long-range solution in the Ministerial Aid Fund Committee Report. The long-range solution may be the Retirement Plan Proposal. This is to be considered for implementation at this 258th Session. Some future "relief" for our present predicament hopefully lies in the growth of the MAF. This year's accounts are considerably more promising than last year's, and with the Lord's blessing, may help to keep this budgeted item manageable.

In conclusion, please indulge me a few personal comments with regard to my position as president. I have served in this office for a goodly number of years. If, at the reading of this report, I have been re-elected to that office, I am honored and will attempt to serve you the best I can. Rest assured that I have no designs or ambition for power and influence. I fully understand that I serve at your pleasure. If I am reading this report as ex-president, I sincerely thank you for your past support and trust, and I will gladly and thankfully take my seat in the body.

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life... Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen “ (Jude 20,21,24,25).

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Vernon Pollema

B. Stated Clerk on the Minutes

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

In accordance with the requirements of this office, your clerk has preserved the minutes of the 257th Synod with all supporting documents. An Abstract of the actions of Synod along with reports was prepared and published in accord with Standing Rule 10. Copies of this Abstract 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 expanded to include recent and some past reports. The minutes and all supporting documents were scanned and saved on CD in Adobe pdf format.

Your clerk was asked to send a letter to the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico, informing them that we are ending our fraternal relationship at this time in light of the impractical situation which prevents fruitful interaction. Our best wishes and prayers were also offered. To date there has been no response.

Your clerk was directed to send a letter of admonition to Mr. Harold Camping of Family Radio Stations, Inc., regarding his teaching that the era of the visible church has ended.. This letter was sent to Mr. Camping. The only response was a free book and being placed on the mailing list for solicitation of funds. There was no message of repentance.

A letter was sent to the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) to inform them of Synod’s ratification of the reception of the Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ).

A letter of support for the war against terrorism and a commitment of our prayerful support was sent to Pres. George W. Bush. Accompanying that letter were copies of a letter and response from Pres. George Washington and the editorial of the April 2003 *Reformed Herald*. To date there has been no response.

There was one request for the report and supplement on Covenant Education. This was printed and mailed.

Churches in fraternal relationship and institutions supported by the RCUS were invited to attend this 258th Synod meeting.

Your clerk would note that there were a number of unsigned reports from permanent committees last year. This is in part due to the digital format of some reports, but Standing Rule 14 requires signatures from the majority of the committee members. Synod has also ruled that, while digital reports are acceptable, they must be followed up with a hard copy which bears a signature (s).

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Paul H. Treick

C. Treasurer’s Report (referred to Finances)

Esteemed Brothers:

I want to thank you for the patience you have shown me this past year. I realize that changing Treasurers after thirteen years had to make things difficult for many of you. Additionally, I want to thank Clayton Greiman, the past Treasurer, for the willingness he has shown in helping me get through the learning process. I don’t know how many hours we have spent on the telephone, but it has been significant and he has always been willing to answer my questions.

Our cash balance decreased by \$8533.42 as of the fiscal year end. In the same time period our outstanding notes increased by \$1659.58. That increase is a result of adding a \$10000 note from Blue Cliff, and offsetting it by the principal reduction received from John Sawtelle, Grass Valley and Rock Springs. The amount received for special mission offerings for the Greeley church was in the amount of \$7177.72. The total received by Greeley is significantly higher, but many of the churches sent their offerings directly to Greeley as opposed to sending them through Synod.

We have two outstanding student loans that remain on the books. One shows no payments received in 2003-2004 and the other has not made a payment since the last Synod meeting. The executive committee is aware of this and may have additional information regarding the status of these loans.

In analyzing the account it would be easy to be misled by the fact that it is relatively the same amount as it was one year prior. Significant amounts of money that had been approved by Synod last year were not spent. Foreign ministries for example was approved for \$84,400.00 in expenditures and actually spent \$50289.56. Additionally, the balance conceals the fact that January 31 of each year appears to be one of the high points for the account. As of the writing of this letter the account has a balance of roughly \$144,000. The computer has memorized checks in it that need to be sent the first of each month of \$30,000+. Some funds will be needed this summer, not just in December and Januarv.

One concern that arose this year was with regard to the time period over which funds are budgeted for. Many times the action taken by Synod makes that obvious, where it is stated that the amount is to be paid until next Synod, or is in an amount certain per month. But when Synod takes action without further description of the time period the Treasurer has made that action fit the fiscal year of Feb. to Jan. For example, if Synod increased ministerial relief for a pastor by \$100/mo, the Treasurer wrote that pastor a check for \$400 after Synod for the months of Feb, Mar, Apr, and May to make that increase fit the entire fiscal year. In order to make sure we have no future problems any items budgeted for a time period other than Feb. to Jan should state what that time period is to be.

In closing, it has been interesting and humbling to obtain an understanding of how the RCVS works from the vantage point of your treasurer. I must say that shock probably best describes my reaction to having been elected to this position. I thank Rev. Hart for bringing me back to my senses by reminding me that in this way one also serves the Lord. I hope and pray that my inexperience has not caused any undue problems. Recommendations:

1. Synod disburse \$11566.06 from the Deficit Reduction Fund to zero that fund.
2. That Clayton Greiman be appointed to the Finance committee.

- 3. That treasurers be reminded to use the Remittance Forms provided by the Treasurer.
- 4. That Synod committees indicate the time period during which the Treasurer is to pay funds.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Ted S. Griess

STATEMENTS OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES - Cash Basis

	1-31-2004	1-31-2003
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Checking #2	<u>211,524.98</u>	<u>220,058.40</u>
Total Current Assets	\$ 211,524.98	\$ 220,058.40
Other Assets		
Notes Receivable Unsec	\$ 121,722.23	\$ 120,062.65
Total Assets	\$ 333,247.21	\$ 340,121.05
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES		
Liabilities	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Fund Balances	\$ 333,247.21	\$ 340,121.05
Total Liabilities and Fund Bal	\$ 333,247.21	\$ 340,121.05

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

Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting: The Reformed Church of 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 the 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	\$3,882.43	\$18,465.81	\$(10,000.00)	\$12,348.24
Checking Transfers	(1.00)	63,626.44	(63,625.44)	--
Deficit Reduction	10,703.77	11,566.06	(10,703.77)	11,566.06
Diaconal	3,595.47	4,114.15	(2,700.00)	5,009.62
Dordt College	-	5,255.56	(5,210.56)	45.00
Foreign Ministries	39,888.83	64,750.24	(50,289.56)	54,349.51
General Benevolence	(4,984.93)	44,754.80	(54,006.00)	(14,236.13)

Reformed Herald	(3,787.30)	16,860.71	(16,882.00)	(3,808.59)
General Publishing	69,795.39	27,221.24	(24,153.84)	72,862.79
Home Missions	54,854.46	136,488.87	(141,024.05)	50,319.28
Hope Haven	-	4,391.67	(4,351.67)	40.00
Ministerial Aid	-	34,779.51	(34,479.51)	300.00
Ministerial Relief	7,747.66	138,511.97	(145,800.00)	459.63
Seminaries	-	9,019.43	(8,939.43)	80.00
Student Aid	8,567.80	10,484.82	(18,834.64)	217.98
Synod Dues	29,795.82	34,939.59	(42,763.82)	21,971.59
Other Assets	120,062.65	9,461.65	(7,802.07)	121,722.23
TOTAL	340,121.05	634,692.52	(641,566.36)	333,247.21

LOANS RECEIVABLE

	Be inning Balance	New Note	Principal	Interest	Ending Balance
Student Loan					
Chris Caughey	\$10,772.50	-	-	-	10,772.50
Student Loan					
John Sawtelle	\$16,180.00		1,805.00		14,375.00
Grass Valley 3.0%	\$26,945.12		2,933.90	775.61	24,011.22
Minneapolis 3.0%	\$21,771.00			626.61	21,771.00
Rock Springs 3.0%	\$24,394.03		3,063.17	701.83	21,330.86
Calhan 3.0%	\$20,000.00			600.00	20,000.00
Blue Cliff 3.0%	\$--	9,461.65		190.00	9,461.65
TOTAL	\$120,062.65	9,461.65	7,802.07	\$2,704.05	\$121,722.23

STATEMENT OF EXPENSES

Building Fund		
Transfer to Other Assets	<u>\$10,000.00</u>	\$10,000.00
Checking Transfers	<u>\$63,625.44</u>	\$63,625.44
Debt Reduction	<u>\$10,703.77</u>	\$ 10,703.77
Diaconal		
Dorman Savage	\$1,200.00	
Kurt Schimke	<u>\$1,500.00</u>	
		\$2,700.00
Dordt College	<u>\$5,210.56</u>	\$ 5,210.56
Foreign Ministries		
Congo Account	\$1,000.00	
International Radio	\$14,550.46	
Kenya Account	\$12,416.50	
Kinshasa Account	\$10,331.00	
Kishimba Kasantika	\$4,950.00	
Mbayo Masangu	\$1,650.00	
Rev Kabango	\$1,800.00	
SFMC Committee	<u>\$3,591.60</u>	
		\$50,289.56

General Benevolence		
Amy Stevens	\$12,000.00	
Blue Cliff, Karval	\$5,000.00	
Deaf Reformed Churches	\$2,000.00	
Faith, Anderson CA	\$9,600.00	
Gary Mancilas	\$3,600.00	
Grace, Lancaster CA	\$5,406.00	
Kevin Hamilton	\$4,000.00	
Ron Potter	\$3,400.00	
Trinity, Colorado Springs	<u>\$9,000.00</u>	
		\$54,006.00
Reformed Herald	<u>\$16,882.00</u>	\$16,882.00
General Publishing		
6 Forms Certificates	\$386.10	
Computer & Accessories	\$500.00	
D McPherson honorarium	\$300.00	
Heidelberg Catechism	\$3,550.30	
Herald Editor honorarium	\$1,000.00	
Postage	\$108.10	
Publications Committee	\$1,390.94	
Royalties	\$284.40	
SS Curriculum Expense	\$1,048.00	
Subscription Manager	\$500.00	
Sun. School Curriculum	<u>\$15,086.00</u>	
		\$24,153.84
Home Missions		
Building Debt, Yuba City	\$7,177.72	
Covenant, Chico CA	\$11,386.08	
Covenant, Watertown SD	\$10,635.00	
Deaf Reformed Churches	\$500.00	
Grace Chapel Arkansas	\$12,000.00	
Grace, Greely CO	\$18,580.08	
Grace, San Ramon CA	\$22,200.00	
High Plains, Calhan CO	\$18,000.00	
LA Basin Mission	\$11,360.04	
Providence, Vermillion SD	\$14,460.00	
Redeemer Chapel, MN	\$12,225.00	
SHMC Committee	<u>\$2,500.13</u>	
		\$141,024.05
Hope Haven	<u>\$4,351.67</u>	\$4,351.67
Ministerial Aid	<u>\$34,479.51</u>	\$34,479.51
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	
Rev Chester Pleoeger	\$12,000.00	
Rev Dorman Savage	\$15,600.00	
Rev Howard E Hart	\$15,000.00	
Rev Norman Jones	\$15,600.00	
Rev Robert Sander	<u>\$15,600.00</u>	
		\$145,800.00
Seminaries		
Mid America Seminary	\$4,946.42	
New Geneva Seminary	\$3,956.68	
WTS Escondido	<u>\$36.33</u>	
		\$8,939.43
Student Aid		
James Grossman	\$4,050.00	
Lee Johnson	\$3,442.96	
Matthew Powell	\$2,100.00	
Richard Stetler	\$3,651.68	
Scott Henry	\$4,750.00	
Ted Schieffelin	<u>\$840.00</u>	
		\$18,834.64
Synodical Dues		
Abstracts	\$5,088.31	
Annual Meeting	\$24,525.79	
Christian Education	\$2,384.28	
Clerk Assistants	\$200.00	
Dordt College Com.	\$179.00	
Executive Committee	\$587.00	
Financial Audit	\$495.00	
Heidelberg Sem.Com.	\$813.10	
Interchurch Relations	\$2,941.27	
Miscellaneous	\$5.31	
Officer Remuneration	\$2,450.00	
Postage	\$195.00	
Special Judicial Com.	\$22.00	
Study RCUS Seminary Com.	\$502.21	
Supplies	\$538.35	
Web Site Committee	\$1,800.00	
Westminster Sem Comm	<u>\$37.20</u>	
		\$42,763.82
Other Assets		
Transfers to Building Fund	<u>\$7,802.07</u>	<u>\$7,802.07</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$641,566.36

T. Griess, Treasurer

X. MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

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

XI. REPORTS FROM RCUS FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS

Rev. Tom Mayville reported on his attendance at the Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Rev. Jeff DeBoer reported on his attendance at the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

XII. ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES, REPRESENTATIVES OF INSTITUTIONS, AND VISITORS

Rev. Ivan DeMaster addressed the assembly as a fraternal delegate from the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Rev. Robert McFarland addressed the assembly as a fraternal delegate from the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Elder Art Poppe addressed the assembly as a fraternal delegate of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Written greetings were received from the GNK Liberated who were unable to send a delegate this year. Following the Synod a letter of greeting was received from Rev. Kishimba Kasantika of the Reformed Confessing Church in the Congo.

Rev. Todd Joling addressed the body as a fraternal observer from the United Reformed Churches in North America.

Dr. Carl Zylstra, representing Dordt College, addressed the body. Dr. Cornelis Venema addressed the body on behalf of Mid America Reformed Seminary. Dr. Joseph Pipa addressed the body on behalf of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Mr. Marlow Van Ginkel addressed the body on behalf of Hope Haven. Elder Wayne Johnson reported on behalf of City Seminary, Sacramento, CA. Rev. C. W. Powell addressed the delegates on behalf of New Geneva Theological Seminary. Rev. Robert Grossmann addressed the delegates on behalf of Heidelberg Theological Seminary.

Elder Wayne Johnson reported on the progress of the RCUS History Recovery Project that is presently centered in Sacramento, CA.

XIII. REPORTS OF BOARD MEMBERS AND LIAISONS

Rev. Herman Van Stedum reported as a member of the Board of Trustees of Dordt College. Rev. Jeff DeBoer reported as a member of the Board of Trustees for Hope Haven. Rev. Paul Treick reported as the liaison to the Reformed Radio Administration Committee of Reformed Faith and Life. Rev. Jim Sawtelle reported as a member of the Board of Trustees for Mid America Reformed Seminary. Rev. Paul Treick read the report of the *Reformed Herald* editor.

XIV. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

[The recommendations of these committees were adopted unless otherwise noted. Recommendations amended are reported here as amended.]

A. The Committee to Confer with Dordt College

Brothers,

Your committee met with Dordt College President Dr. Carl Zylstra, and Director of Church Relations Judy Hagey, on Tuesday, April 27, 2004, on the college campus. Committee members present were Rev. Jeff De Boer, Rev. Robert Grossmann, Rev. Herman Van Stedum and Elder Charles De Boer.

Once again we were warmly received, provided with a meeting room prior to our discussions with the representatives of the college, and served a lunch afterward.

There were three matters which arose in our discussion with Pres. Zylstra and Mrs. Hagey which may be of interest. The first was a continuation of our concern at last year's meeting that student church attendance is not what it should be. The suggestion was made that a form of associate membership in local churches might provide the students with a sense of responsibility not only to their home churches but also a particular local church.

The second matter was a recent board decision to allow faculty and staff to belong to churches other than Christian Reformed Churches (CRC). Since the time of the college's founding it had been a requirement for employees of the college to have their membership in a local CRC church. Now faculty and staff are more generally required to belong to a church which subscribes to the Three Forms of Unity and/or the Westminster Standards as well as is a supporting church of the college. Your committee was very pleased to hear of this development and expressed that sentiment to Pres. Zylstra.

The third matter was the expansion of a grant program available to students which come from supporting churches (i.e. give regular offerings to the college). RCUS students who attend Dordt receive an annual grant of \$500 for nothing more than belonging to a RCUS church.

Your committee was again impressed with the desire of Dordt College to provide a Christian world and life view for its students. Since this is precisely what our churches intend to instill in our young people, the continuation of that instruction at a genuinely Reformed institution of higher learning seems to a logical extension. However the number of students who are currently attending Dordt is down from previous years. Your committee is disappointed with this development and would urge our pastors and churches to encourage high school students to attend an institution with Christian instruction.

Recommendations:

1. That Synod place the task of this committee in the Permanent Christian Education Committee's work and that the Standing Nominations Committee consider adding the names of the Special Committee to the Christian Education Committee. (As amended)
2. That the Guideline for Giving amount for Dordt College be \$2.25 for the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

J. De Boer, R. Grossmann, H. Van Stedum, C. De Boer

B. Research Hymnals

Dear Brethren in Christ,

Your committee was given the task to "research the publication and availability of a new hymnal book that incorporates both singability and theological and confessional accuracy, and that the committee solicit recommended Psalm and hymn selections from congregations." At the last Synod meeting, the report and its recommendations were

recommitted to the committee. As a committee we met during the last Synod, and since then by email.

Your chairman contacted the chairman of the URC Psalter Hymnal Committee and inquired about their work. They were “to explore what is required to produce, reproduce, or obtain a Psalter Hymnal.”¹ in 1997. In 2001 they were also asked, “That the present ‘Psalter Hymnal Committee’ work together with the Canadian Reformed ‘Book of Praise Committee’ to consider for inclusion in this song book the 150 Psalms in metrical settings (one note for each syllable) from an English translation of the Genevan Psalter, as well as other non-Genevan settings for the Psalms, and also hymns that meet the standard of faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Reformed Confessions. The two song books primarily in use need not be included in their totality.”² The chairman, Rev. Derrick Vander Muelen, stated that to date they have finished for adoption at this year’s Synod in Calgary the principles and guidelines for the selection of the Psalms and hymns for new Psalter-Hymnal. They have not decided about the Genevan Psalter and are only just starting to collect possible Psalms and hymns. It will take some time before this project will be finished. They will also have prayers, the confessions and other prose items in the book, and are asking for another committee to handle this part of the task.

Last year we missed our window of opportunity for publishing the *Old Trinity Hymnal* with the Heidelberg Catechism in the back instead of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. It will be some time before Great Commissions Publications will do another run in which we will be able to get some cost reductions. There are copies of the *Old Trinity Hymnal* available (\$13.95) with the Shorter Catechism as well as the *New Trinity Hymnal* (\$14.95). The drawbacks of both of these hymnals is that not all 150 Psalms are included in them, and it is structured on the Westminster Creeds. There is a supplement available from Great Commissions that includes all 150 Psalms, *Trinity Psalter* (\$8.00 for words only, and \$18.00 for music and words), from the RPCNA’s Psalter. The *Old Trinity Hymnal* is the generally used hymnal in the RCUS at present.

In Article 104 of our Constitution we read:

All proposed ordinances of the Church, such as a constitution, a catechism, a hymn book and a liturgy, as well as all amendments of ordinances, must first be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Synod at a stated meeting, and then be submitted to all the Classes for ratification or rejection. If at the next stated meeting of the Synod it shall appear that more than one-third of the Classes have rejected the ordinance or amendment, the same is rejected and shall be so declared by the Synod; otherwise it shall be declared adopted and be binding on the whole Church.

It has been pointed out that we do not need to have an official hymn book, hence making it an ordinance of the RCUS. This is true, because the Constitution does not demand that we have a hymn book. It simply requires us to follow correct procedure when we do make a hymnal. However, until we do produce one or determine that one that has already been published is going to be an official hymnal of the RCUS, we will have to leave each congregation to make its own decisions regarding the hymns they sing. This will to a degree impact the unity of expression within the RCUS.

Our forefathers did take this route more than once in our history. I have a copy of *The Reformed Hymnal* published by the RCUS and the RCA in 1917. In the 1995 Abstract of the Minutes on page 82 states that Rev. Frank Walker had a copy of an RCUS hymnal from the early 1800s.

The question about contemporary songs has been raised. There are some new hymns as well as good spiritual songs. Dr. James Boice wrote a number of new hymns before he died. Rev. Paul Treick has also written one that we are aware of. After a long time of poor hymnody, we are encouraged that this is changing. For spiritual songs, there is the service from Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc. which enables congregations to copy music without worrying about copyright infringement. This is possible only for congregations, not denominations.

In conclusion, the availability of singable, theologically sound, and confessionally accurate hymn books is very limited. Short of publishing our own, there are going to be serious questions about their usefulness. To publish our own would take time (note the URC’s efforts) and will make it an ordinance, as Article 104 of the Constitution makes clear. We need to ask ourselves if we want to expend the effort and resources to do this or to leave the decision to the local congregations.

Your committee brings the following recommendation:

That the congregations of the RCUS, when needing more or new hymnals, be encouraged to purchase the Old Trinity Hymnal or the New Trinity Hymnal from Great Commissions Publications and supplement it with The Three Forms of Unity from the RCUS Book Depository; and that those congregations who wish to sing more Psalms be encouraged to supplement with the Trinity Psalter.

Respectfully submitted,

D. Clark, W. Brice, C.W. Powell, D. Mettler, S. Powell

C. Study RCUS Seminary

[A majority and minority report was presented to the Synod. The recommendations considered were only contained in the majority report.]

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

The Special Seminary Study Committee established by the 256th Synod of the RCUS and continued, with an expanded mandate, by the 257th Synod of the RCUS as follows: “. . .to study the warrant and need of a denominational seminary, and to examine the feasibility, procedures, and criteria necessary to the establishment of a RCUS seminary, giving particular attention to Heidelberg Theological Seminary which petitioned the Synod to serve as a seminary of the Reformed Church in the U.S. (Abstract 2003, p. 69), herein, as a majority, brings before you the result of its labours together with appropriate recommendations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following recommendation (#6) appears under the Standing Overtures Committee report in the 2002 Abstract (p.70): *That Synod form a special committee, which shall report to the 257th Synod, to examine the feasibility, procedures, and criteria necessary to the establishment of a RCUS seminary, giving particular attention to the petition of Heidelberg Theological Seminary to serve as the denomination’s seminary.*

The above committee presented a partial report to the 257th Synod along with the following recommendations: 1. That the mandate given to the Special Seminary Committee be expanded to read as follows: “To form a special committee to study the warrant and need of a denominational seminary and to examine the feasibility, procedures, and criteria, etc.

2. That the Special Seminary Committee be continued and the committee be augmented to include an additional pastor and two elders: specifically, Rev. Vernon Pollema, and Elders Spencer Gross and John Savage.

The subject and desire for our own denominational seminary is not a recent development. In the President's Report On the State of the Church to the 73rd Annual Session of the Eureka Classis, the Rev. Vernon Pollema wrote the following: "As President of the Executive Committee, I have received in the past year a number of complaints or concerns expressed by fellow pastors, elder delegates, and members of the RCUS. . . . The first such complaint concerns a perceived lack of commitment on the part of some pastors to the call of the ministry, to the church, and to its creed and constitution. . . . A second concern, related to the first, was posed in a question: 'Is the seminary properly preparing men for pastoral ministries in Reformed confessional churches?' This question brings to the fore a concern of major proportion within our denomination. It is a grave concern and one not to be taken lightly since our attitudes and conclusions in regard to a theological institution are, by implication, going to effect its reputation. I believe we must proceed with utmost care and propriety. Westminster Seminary, the theological institution we recommend and support, has divided into separate campuses with separate boards and faculties. Do we know enough about these different campuses, boards and faculties to make a valid evaluation as regards our future support? If, after sufficient time, investigation and evaluation, it becomes apparent that we can not in good conscience recommend continued support, I propose that we seriously consider establishing our own denominational seminary" (1983 Abstract, page 14).

At the same 73rd Annual Session of the Eureka Classis, the Standing Committee on Education and Student Aid recommended the following: "That the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee investigate the feasibility of establishing a seminary and draw up possible guidelines should that be determined as a feasible goal" (1983 Abstract, page 78).

From the Report of the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee to the 74th Annual Session of the Eureka Classis, which included a report of a visit to the seminary of the Canadian Reformed Churches, the following recommendation was adopted: "That a special seminary committee be set up to lay the groundwork for forming our own seminary and that they bring preliminary proposals to the attention of Classis as soon as possible" (1984 Abstract, page 42).

In the President's Report On the State of the Church to the 75th Annual Session of the Eureka Classis, Rev. Pollema wrote the following:

As vital as missions is to the life of the church, just as vital is the theological training of its pastors and missionaries. Here, too, we have come to a crucial time in our history, and we must face some hard questions. Does the church direct its seminary or does a seminary direct the church? The Scriptures teach that the church is to be the ground and pillar of the truth (I Tim. 5:15). Do we want or can we be satisfied with a broad evangelicalism or parochialism in the training of our students for the ministry? Has the time come for us to establish a seminary? Is this time in our history significant not just because of an anniversary [75th Annual Session the Eureka Classis], but because of what the RCUS is and can contribute as a Reformed body? Have we come to this moment in order to make a stand for orthodoxy and provide leadership and training to a Reformed community that is to a large extent in disarray? Perhaps we must first ask if we are capable? I believe we are. We have the personnel to either staff our own seminary or to teach at an existing

institution and thereby exert influence. Deciding which would be the most advantageous and best serve the church will greatly effect [sic] our future" (1985 Abstract, page 11).

The Special Committee to Investigate a RCUS Seminary presented several options for the training of men for the ministry, along with pros and cons, to the 75th Annual Session of the Eureka Classis. The following recommendation was adopted: "*That the committee develop detailed plans for the establishment of a seminary according to options 7 and 8 and report next year*" (1885 Abstract, page 70).

In the President's Report On the State of the Church to the 76th Annual Session of the Eureka Classis we read the following: "There is another concern that needs to be addressed, as it, too, greatly effects the future of our denomination and where we are going. We must face the question of the theological education of our students for the ministry. Right now they are hearing uncertain sounds as to where and how they should pursue a seminary education. Such uncertainty on our part is not fair to them. We must take charge of such education and exercise the oversight and control that rightfully belongs to the church. How and by what means must be determined soon. Otherwise, only confusion and disunity will result" (1986 Abstract, page 12).

The Special Committee to Investigate A RCUS Seminary, in fulfilment of the mandate given to it by the 75th Eureka Classis, presented a detailed plan for the establishment of a seminary to the 240th Synod (organised in 1986). The Synod actions were as follows: 1. [Postponed Indefinitely] That the RCUS establish a seminary within the parameters suggested in the body of the report. 2. [Take Note] That a timetable be set for the establishment of this seminary. (1986 Abstract, pages 61-66).

Almost 20 years later the Synod of the RCUS is revisiting and restudying the question of establishing our own denominational seminary. Before proceeding with our study, the question must be asked: Why did it take so long? It appears from the actions of the 1986 Synod that having our own seminary was not that great a concern. Such a conclusion would not be accurate. At that time Mid-America Reformed Seminary was quite new, and having one of our own ministers teaching there was a first. Time was needed to evaluate its effectiveness and whether it would prove to be a satisfactory way to exercise more influence and control in the training and preparation of our students for the ministry. That arrangement has since ceased.

It would also be inaccurate to assume that during the ensuing years there was satisfaction with the current arrangement, i.e., using independent Reformed seminaries. Special committees existed throughout the nineties, which were erected to address problems that were emanating from the seminaries that we were using and supporting, i.e., Doctrine of Scripture at WTS, Philadelphia, Defend the Doctrine of Creation, The View of the Church and Its Form of Government As Held By the RCUS.

In addition, the Permanent Christian Education Committee was given the task of evaluating seminaries for approval and support. They prepared, and had approved, a form for doing so. That form, and the questions asked, clearly indicate the on-going problems and concerns that we have had over the years with independent/non-denominational seminaries.

The study will follow the mandate given to the Committee by Synod, beginning with what it considers of first importance, i.e., *warrant for a denominational seminary* .

Warrant for a Denominational Seminary

To determine warrant, your committee addressed the question Biblically, Confessionally, and Constitutionally. Although neither the Scriptures nor the Confessions

use the word "seminary," that does not mean the question is not addressed. Since the word "seminary" refers to an institution for the training of Ministers, it is the training of Ministers that must be the focus.

A. Biblically

In both the Old and New Testaments we find the pattern of training a Minister of the Word is the duty of those who are experienced and learned Ministers of the Word that the propagation of the true faith may continue from one generation to the next. This Biblical method of training men for the ministry is set forth by the Apostle Paul when he says to Timothy in II Timothy 2:2, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." Paul, an experienced and learned Minister of the Word trained Timothy. Timothy is to train other Ministers of the Word. Those trained by Timothy are to teach others. Thus, the next generation of preachers and teachers were to be taught, not outside the church, but from within, i.e., by the very preachers and teachers they would replace (cf. Acts 2:42). This same pattern of training ministers is suggested to us in the Old Testament by the examples of Samuel and Eli (cf. I Sam. 1-3) as well as by Elisha and the sons of the prophets (cf. II Kgs. 2:3ff.; 4:38; 6:1).

In this regard we would also note I Thessalonians 5:12,13: "And we beseech you brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." This passage speaks of intimacy, respect, oversight and submission that is to exist between church members and students and their pastors and teachers. This is lacking in an independent non-denominational setting.

Now the training and discipline of a student of the Word ought to be under the oversight of the church, since Christ the Head of the church in Ephesians 4:11-12 is said to have given (to the church), "some pastors and teachers; For the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" The scriptural basis for the church having the responsibility of training its ministers is further implied in I Corinthians 12:28 where God is said to have "appointed these in the church, . . . teachers . . ."

Professors as well as students in a seminary ought not to operate independent of church authority. The training of ministers ought to be placed under the oversight and discipline of the church, so that when aberrant teachings occur in the training institution, such deviant doctrines may be adjudicated in a Biblically constituted church judicatory such as Classis or Synod. (I Tim. 6:3-5). The problem with a seminary not being church-governed is that it has no recourse to a biblically constituted church court to remedy discipline cases.

In addition to the clear teaching of Scripture that the offices of pastor and teachers is a gift of Christ to the church and that men must be trained for that office we must note the concern in Scripture for the ongoing struggle to maintain the purity of the Church. In Acts 20:28-32 Paul gives a clear warning to the Church, represented by the Ephesian Elders, to watch for false doctrine. This warning implies that the church must take serious its responsibility in the training of men for the ministry. Being responsible for the proper training of men is an important part of maintaining the purity of the church.

B. Confessionally

The Heidelberg Catechism in dealing with the requirement of the fourth commandment states in Question and Answer 103, "In the first place, God wills that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained . . ."

We are given some insight into what was intended by the catechism's authors when Zacharias Ursinus writes concerning the italicised phrase, "*unless the arts and sciences be taught, men can neither become properly qualified to teach, nor can the purity of doctrine be preserved and defended against the assaults of heretics*" (Commentary p. 570). Along with schools of instruction for children, adults, confirmants, and new members, this must include the training of men for the gospel ministry. Again we see emphasis on the dual purposes of ministerial training: preservation of doctrinal purity and protection against outward assault. It may be safely assumed from the rest of the answer that it will be the Church which provides ministerial instruction (just as it will for all other groups).

Careful consideration must be given to the Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology) as set forth in our confessions. The attributes of unity, holiness, and catholicity belong primarily to the invisible Church, whereas the marks belong to the visible Church (cf. Heidelberg Catechism #54, Belgic Confession, Articles 27-32). The distinction of invisible and visible is not to talk about different Churches, but of different aspects of God's people. However, to talk about any function of the Church is to talk about the visible Church to which the marks of the Church must be applied. The training of men for the ministry properly belongs within the realm and responsibility of the visible Church where the marks of the Church can be exercised. The Belgic Confession, Article 29, specifically applies the marks of the Church to the visible manifestation of the Church. Article 30 goes on to state the importance of the government of the visible Church with respect to the marks. It specifically mentions the importance of ministers and pastors for the ministry of the Word that "true religion may be preserved." The preparation of men for this ministry must be seen as an extension of this government of the Church. Independent, non-denominational seminaries do not operate under such government nor can they properly exercise the marks.

We may decry the present division and multiplicity of Reformed denominations today, nonetheless, the marks of the visible Church exist and are exercised within particular denominations which are singularly responsible for training men for the ministry.

C. Constitutionally

1. The Constitution and students for the Ministry.

In training for the ministry a Student of the Ministry must attend a "*theological institution recommended by the Reformed Church in the United States, unless Classis permits him to study elsewhere,*" as stated in the RCUS Constitution. This implies that the Classis and ultimately the Synod has a responsibility and oversight of the preparation of students for the ministry. Allowing for such instruction to take place in a theological institution outside of the RCUS does not negate any responsibility that the RCUS might have to provide for ministerial training.

ARTICLE 17. A student for the ministry shall request that he be taken under the care of the Classis to which the congregation of which he is a member belongs. When he presents the request to be received, the Classis shall inquire as to his fitness and, if he is found satisfactory, shall take him under its care and exercise supervision over his studies and deportment. *He shall pursue his course of study in a theological institution recommended by the Reformed Church in the United States, unless Classis permits him to study elsewhere.* This permission can be given only if it does not conflict with any previous obligation he may have assumed. (*The Constitution of the RCUS*)

ARTICLE 20. *An applicant for licensure shall present a written application to his Classis, together with his certificate from the Theological Seminary or Institution in which he studied. He shall submit to an examination, which shall be open to all the members of Classis and shall*

embrace at least the main subjects taught in the Theological Seminaries approved by the Reformed Church in the United States. Particular attention shall be paid to his piety, the purity of his intentions in seeking the ministry, his orthodoxy, and his ability to preach the Gospel. The report of such examination shall not enter into particulars, but simply state the result as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. (The Constitution of the RCUS)

ARTICLE 24. A licentiate shall not be ordained before he is twenty-one years of age, and until he has received and accepted a call to a pastoral charge, or has been called to a mission or to be a Teacher of Theology in an authorized theological institution approved by the Reformed Church in the United States. A licentiate who has received and accepted a call from a pastoral charge shall be ordained either by the Classis within whose bounds the charge is located or by the Classis to which he belongs when accepting the call. A licentiate who has received and accepted a call to teach theology or to the presidency of an accredited educational institution approved by the Reformed Church, or to a chaplaincy in the army or navy of the United States of America, shall be ordained by the Classis to which he belongs when he accepts the call. (The Constitution of the RCUS)

2. The Constitution and Teachers of Theology.

The RCUS Constitution in Articles 36-42 does not specifically prescribe a mandate for a RCUS Seminary, but it does envision any training of students for the ministry as the work of the denomination and therefore provides for such training with the establishment of the office of a Teacher of Theology.

ARTICLE 36. A Teacher of Theology is a Minister of the Word who has been elected and inaugurated as a professor in a Theological Seminary of the Church. He shall be chosen in such manner as may be determined by the Synod. (The Constitution of the RCUS)

ARTICLE 37. A person shall not be elected a Teacher of Theology whose views are not in accord with the faith and doctrines of the Reformed Church in the United States and who does not approve of its mode of government, forms of worship and distinctive customs. (The Constitution of the RCUS)

ARTICLE 38. Before a Teacher of Theology enters upon the duties of his office, he shall be inaugurated under the direction of the Synod. At his inauguration he shall solemnly affirm the following declaration in a public assembly:

"You, Professor-elect of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States, at, acknowledge sincerely before God and this assembly that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are called canonical, are divinely inspired Scriptures and therefore credible and authoritative; that they contain all things which relate to the faith, the practice and the hope of the righteous, and are the only rule of faith and practice in the Church of God; that, consequently, traditions, as they are called, and mere conclusions of reason that are contrary to the clear testimony of these Scriptures cannot be received as rules of faith or of life. You acknowledge, further, that the doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession of Faith, and the Canons of Dort is in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. You declare sincerely, that in the office you are about to assume you will make the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures the basis of all your instructions, and faithfully maintain and defend the same. You declare, finally, that according to the ability which God may grant you, you will so labor that, with the divine blessing, the students entrusted to your care may become enlightened, pious, faithful and zealous ministers of the Gospel, who shall be sound in the faith." The Professor-elect shall answer, "I so declare and affirm." (The Constitution of the RCUS)

ARTICLE 39. Teachers of Theology shall explain the Holy Scriptures and defend the pure doctrine of the Gospel against errors. In their instructions to the theological students it shall be their principal aim to make them well acquainted with the true sense of the Holy Scriptures, and prepare them to preach the Gospel with power and effect. In this service they are required to instruct the students in Exegetical, Historical, Systematic and Practical Theology. (The Constitution of the RCUS)

ARTICLE 40. A Teacher of Theology shall continue in office during his life, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified for his duties by heterodoxy or immorality, or by physical or mental infirmities. (The Constitution of the RCUS)

ARTICLE 41. If four ministers and four elders of the Church present to the Board of Visitors of any Theological Seminary a document asserting that, for cause or causes named in Article 40 of this Constitution, a Teacher of Theology is disqualified for his position, said Board shall institute a careful examination, and if the charge is well founded shall refer the matter for final disposition to the Synod. In all things except his position as Teacher of Theology he is amenable to the Classis to which he belongs. (The Constitution of the RCUS)

ARTICLE 42. A Teacher of Theology who has been rendered incapable of further service by infirmities shall not be displaced without having such provision made for his support as his necessities may require and as the Synod may be able to make. After the age of seventy he shall be declared Professor Emeritus. A Teacher of Theology desiring to resign his office shall, at least six months before his resignation is to take effect, give notice in writing of his intention to the proper officers. (The Constitution of the RCUS)

3. The Constitution and the Classes and Synod.

The RCUS Constitution has given each Classis and the Synod the mandate, to give necessary attention to the education of pious men for the Gospel ministry. So then, the responsibility of educating Students for the Ministry is the duty of each Classis and that ultimate responsibility and governance for this training belongs to the Synod.

ARTICLE 82. In every Classis is vested the power to examine and license applicants for the ministry, to ordain licentiates, to constitute or dissolve pastoral relations, to receive and dismiss ministers and licentiates, to depose or otherwise discipline, according to his desert, a member of its own body, and to reinstate a minister whom it has suspended or deposed, when trustworthy evidence of repentance and reformation appears. The Classis shall give necessary attention to the education of pious men for the Gospel ministry, and to the cause of missions; it shall diligently prosecute the work of missions through its Permanent Home Missions Committee, whose rules and procedures shall not conflict with those of Synod. (The Constitution of the RCUS)

ARTICLE 101. The Synod shall give necessary attention to the education of pious men for the Gospel ministry, . . . (The Constitution of the RCUS)

Conclusions:

Since the gift of the pastoral ministry is given to the Church by Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, the training of pious young men for the gospel ministry must belong to the Church. It must be responsible to provide such training and such training must be under its oversight.

a. The Heidelberg Catechism in Question and Answer 103 does require the training of men for the ministry. The responsibility for such training is given to the Church. The Belgic Confession in Art. 30-32 is concerned with the preservation of "true religion". This is a responsibility given to the Church and must include the training of men for the ministry.

b. Although The RCUS Constitution allows for the current situation in which there are no denominational seminaries, it clearly understands that the Church has the responsibility for the training of men for the ministry. It further provides for the governance and means of such training in the establishment of the office Teacher of Theology and the provision of a Board of visitors for a seminary.

II. Need for a Denominational Seminary

In order to guide the Synod in determining the necessity of a denominational seminary, your committee will herein seek to show how the matter of *necessity* led to the formation of several seminaries in the history of the Reformed Faith in this country, including our own first Seminary in the early 1800's. Then, in light of what is discovered, to offer some suggestions to Synod as to how to determine if a denominational seminary is necessary. It will be noted that some of these examples are denominational seminaries and some independent seminaries.

Historical necessity.

1. Princeton Theological Seminary

In May of 1809 an overture from the Presbytery of Philadelphia was introduced into the General Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America requesting that the General Synod establish a theological seminary for the Presbyterian Church. The reason for this overture, which three years later, led to the establishment of what is now known as Princeton Theological Seminary (est. 1812, reorganized 1929). The concern of the Philadelphia Presbytery was to have an educated ministry. In a book published in 1838 entitled: *Brief History of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church* the writer states why.¹

The importance of the union of piety and learning in the holy ministry, is one of those radical principles of ecclesiastical wisdom, which the experience of ages has served more and more to confirm. If the *priest's lips were* of old *to keep knowledge*; if the ministers of the gospel are bound *to feed the people with knowledge and with understanding*; then nothing can be plainer than that ignorance, or small and undigested knowledge is, next to the want of piety, one of the most serious defects in a candidate for the sacred office. It is equally plain, that if this great concern be properly directed, especially if it be directed with order and uniformity, it must be attended to by the Church itself. That which is left to individual enterprise and caprice, may sometimes be well managed, but will seldom be managed in any two cases alike. Besides, unless the Church take this matter into her own hands, she cannot inspect and control the education which her candidates for the holy ministry receive, her most precious fountains may be poisoned without her being able to supply an effective remedy. No church, therefore, which neglects the proper education of her ministers, can be considered as faithful, either to her own vital interest, or to the honour of her divine head and Lord.

Impressed with these solemn convictions, a number of the ministers and other members of the Presbyterian Church, long before the establishment of their seminary, deeply lamented the want of such an institution, and saw with much pain the extreme disadvantages under which their candidates laboured in pursuing their theological studies. They saw young men, with very small previous acquirements in literature and science, after devoting twelve or

¹ *A Brief History of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church*, at Princeton, New Jersey; together with its Constitution, Bye-Laws (sic), &c.; Princeton, Printed by John Bogart 1838; pp. 3-4.

eighteen months, and in some instances much less, almost wholly without suitable helps, taking on themselves the most weighty and responsible of all offices.

The Plan of the Seminary contained in the *Brief History*. . . & c. is more extensive than may be quoted here in full does state that the purpose of the Seminary is to substantially meet the need of the Church for a ministry that believes, is subject to, and desirous of propagating . . . *that system of religious belief and practice which is set forth in the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Plan of Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church*. The seminary also stated that it was its task . . . *to provide for the Church an adequate supply and succession of able and faithful ministers of the New Testament*, to unite piety and learning, to provide defenders of the faith and among other things, to promote the unity of the Church.²

The reason for the formation of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in America, at Princeton, was the need for an educated ministry, that was uniformly and thoroughly taught and who would remain faithful to the confessional standards and discipline of the Church. Without the presence of this Seminary, under the control of the Church, this need was not being met.

2. Harvard Divinity School.

Harvard University existed long before the Divinity School came into formal existence in 1815. In 1811, when President Kirkland took office in the University, it was apparent that “. . . one of the major needs of the University was for the professional training of the clergy. Harvard College had been founded because the thought of an illiterate ministry was abhorrent to the Puritans. But its goals were those of liberal education, rather than vocational training, and there were no formal courses in theology for advanced students preparing for ministry as a career.”³

The need for a Divinity School was twofold. First, prior to the establishment of the Divinity School a student for the ministry might reside with a minister, making use of both the minister's library and the observation of parish life to further his education. But the time a minister could give to the actual instruction of a student was precious little. Or the student might pursue an informal course of study under the oversight of the president of the university or a professor of divinity in a kind of apprenticeship program. But generally, when it came to studying for the ministry, a student had to pretty much, shift for himself.

A second reason for the establishment of a Divinity School at Harvard University was the Unitarian Controversy.⁴ Religious liberals, soon to be known as Unitarians, had since 1805 come into more and more control of Harvard University. Andover Theological Seminary (Congregational, established in 1808, 4 years prior to Princeton) was the response of the orthodox from which the Calvinists rallied against the Unitarians and presented a formidable threat to liberalism. Oddly enough, the establishment of the Divinity School at Harvard was not to combat this liberalism in the University but to ensure its perpetration. The Divinity school was established within the University and as part of the University to meet the impending need that the challenge of Andover represented. Harvard Divinity School was thus contemplated to fill the pulpits with well-educated liberals. In 1815 the

² *Brief History*, pp. 9-12, Plan of the Seminary.

³ George Huntston Williams, *The Harvard Divinity School, Its place in Harvard University and in American Culture*; The Beacon Press, Boston, 1954. Pp. 21-22.

⁴ Williams, pp. 22-23; note p. 23.

Divinity School, as a separate school in Harvard University, came into existence to actually meet this need.

Now, while the goal of the Divinity School was far different from that envisioned by the original Puritan founders of Harvard College, it must be pointed out that the liberals had the same need that the orthodox did in the founding of Princeton. There was inadequate preparation for students for the ministry and there was the need for a liberal educated ministry to defend the (liberal) faith. Therefore, basic to the formation of Harvard Divinity School, under President Kirkland, was the need for proper (liberal/Unitarian) ministerial preparation.

3. Yale Divinity School.

Yale Divinity School was established in 1822. The primary reason for its founding was, not surprisingly, given the state of ministerial education in that era and the reasons for the founding of other Divinity Schools (Bangor 1816; Auburn, 1818; General; 1819), the inadequacy of the apprenticeship system. Though divinity was taught in the University it was not sufficient preparation for ministry and thus the need for supplemental apprenticeship under parish ministers. Roland Bainton, in his book *Yale and the Ministry* writes:⁵

Parish ministers were too busy to conduct schools. Such labors entailed neglect of their flocks, not to mention their wives. Ministerial libraries were inadequate. Hence students found it increasingly expedient to continue for a time in college. The founding of Yale Divinity School came in response to a request from 15 such students that they be recognized as a special group and that they be accorded additional instruction. Funds came from the churches for a new professorship in theology, and some members of the faculty were assigned to divinity. In no sense was this move intended as a withdrawal of theological education from the college. . . . Professors served both the Divinity School and the College. The real meaning of the new step was a closer affiliation of theological education with university instruction. The apprenticeship system had been replaced by a professional school.

There were other factors also involved in the establishment of Yale Divinity School. One was the effects of the Second Great Awakening and the need for ministers west of the Hudson, which Yale supplied rather than Harvard. Another was the New Haven theology, which Yale Divinity School was established to sponsor.⁶

In sum, Yale Divinity School was established to replace the inadequate parish apprenticeship system, to meet the need for ministers created by revival fires, and to sponsor the New Haven theology.

4. Theological Seminary of the RCUS.

The RCUS has had a number of seminaries in its history, including Lancaster Theological Seminary (which continues as a seminary of the UCC), Central of Dayton, Ohio, and Mission House of Plymouth, Wisconsin.

The most relevant example of a denominational seminary in RCUS history was Mercersburg Theological Seminary of Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Although this is not the place to review the entire history of the institution, few who view Mercersburg from the continuing RCUS are enthusiastic about its affects. "There can be no doubt that the liberal and sacramental tendencies introduced into the RCUS by the Mercersburg Theology provided foundations upon which the E&R merger of 1934 could more easily take place" (Grossmann 67).

⁵ Roland H. Bainton, *Yale and the Ministry*, Harper & Brothers, New York, pp. 79-80

⁶ Bainton, pp. 80-81, 96-112.

We will never know what might have happened to the RCUS in the 1930's if Mercersburg Seminary had never begun. But we do know what happened after it did. If nothing else its history warns us about the incredible amount of influence wielded by denominational seminaries and their instructors.

But however much Mercersburg affected the RCUS negatively the fact remains that the RCUS did believe a denominational seminary was necessary. It is this beginning that we highlight here.

In September of 1820 the Synod of Hagerstown, MD received a report from the Committee on the Theological Seminary appointed by Synod in 1819. That Committee brought a report entitled *Plan of a Theological Seminary of the High German Reformed Church in the United States of America* which was adopted by Synod Hagerstown.⁷ This set off a firestorm of controversy and opposition. One of the principle objections to the establishment of a Seminary was that it prohibited private parsonage training of ministers for the ministry. Opposition was on the basis of other factors such as location, the Professor chosen, language (an English professor), the establishment of a seminary without the approval of the classes, preference for a joint seminary with the Lutherans etc. These dissatisfactions resulted in a schism and the formation of the Synod of the Free and Independent German Reformed Church of Pennsylvania in 1822, a breach that was not healed until reunion with the mother church in 1835.

From 1820 to 1824 the controversy over the Plan for Theological Seminary raged until the Synod at Bedford, acting on an invitation from Dickinson College, in Carlisle, PA to establish its seminary there, determined to do so. The necessity for such a Theological Seminary of the RCUS was principally to supply pulpits. George Warren in his 1952 book on the History of the Theological Seminary of the RCUS states: "One of the *prime* motives for immediate action was the report of the Missionary Committee, which proved the necessity of preparing men for the ever-widening task of the Church. The Missionary Committee reported June 15, 1824, seventy-two congregations without ministers in ten different States, south and west."⁸

These states were Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri. The report of the Missionary Committee goes on to state: "All these 4 congregations are without the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. If the Missionary Society, and the Theological School receive the requisite support, there can be no doubt that we shall soon enjoy the pleasing satisfaction of seeing our vacant congregations supplied with faithful ministers and that more congregations will be gathered."⁹

Synod Bedford did respond to the overture from the Trustees of Dickinson College to establish a Seminary there. The response adopted September 29th, 1824 accepting the invitation, said in part:

To establish a theological Seminary has long been the uppermost wish of individual members of the Synod, as well as of the entire body. Besides having been regarded as a necessity, it is entertained as a project highly beneficent to the Reformed Church in this country. All around us

⁷ Richards, George Warren; *History of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States 1825-1934, Evangelical and Reformed Church 1934-1952*; Lancaster, PA 1952, p. 95 ff.

⁸ Richards, p.109-110

⁹ Minutes of Synod, Bedford, Report on The State of Religion, pp.23-25 cited in Richards, p. 109-110.

institutions spring up, which are animated by the spirit and genius of the English tongue. . . . A patriotism (warmth and zeal) reigns in this direction. The zeal, now noted, has become so general and dominant that the Germans in this country are in danger of forgetting their own tongue in thus unconditionally surrendering themselves to the behest's of English literature. German patriotism (love and zeal) seems not only to be on the wane, but we are even becoming ashamed of the German language and are inclined to set it aside as superfluous.¹⁰

It is to be noted from the above quotations that the *prime* reason for the establishment of a Theological Seminary of the RCUS was to fill vacant pulpits and to start new churches. It was not first and foremost the preservation of the German language, though that was clearly a factor. The concern to preserve the German language was *added incentive* but not the principle reason. Principle need was for 72 ministers to fill pulpits. Thus in 1824 the RCUS began the first of its Theological Seminaries.

5. *Columbia Theological Seminary*

Columbia Theological Seminary, originally *The Theological Seminary of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia* was established by resolution of the Synod of the Southern Presbyterian Church, the southern branch of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in December of 1828. Its seminal beginning was from 1817 when the Presbytery of Hopewell, Georgia “. . . declared its obligation and purpose to establish a Theological School in this part of the world for the training of men for the Gospel Ministry.”¹¹ Presbyterians in the Carolinas and in Georgia supported Princeton Theological Seminary, which was started earlier by the General Assembly. At the time of the formation of Princeton, the General Synod had three ideas before it. The first, the establishment of *one great school* near the center of the church bounds, the second the forming of *two such* schools to best accommodate northern and southern needs, the third to establish such a school within the bounds of *each of the synods*.¹² The pros and cons were weighed and the establishment of the *one great school* undertaken, Princeton Theological Seminary. It is not surprising therefore to find, that five years after the formation of Princeton, that the idea of a Theological Seminary in the Southern Presbyterian Church was advanced. In 1826 the project of a Southern Seminary was launched and the Seminary begun in 1828 after the model of Andover and Princeton¹³, the prototypical seminaries of the era.

A *Retrospect*, adopted by the Board of the Seminary in 1841 “. . . declares that the impelling motives in this action, . . . were a desire to raise up a qualified and native ministry to supply the destitute places, and to preside over the extant churches; and to provide an institution free from the skeptical influences which then pervaded the College of the State.¹⁴

The need of the Southern Presbyterian Church was to fill vacant pulpits with sound ministers and to have a place to prepare them for the ministry within its bounds.

6. *Union Theological Seminary in New York*

¹⁰ Richards, p. 111

¹¹ Wm. Childs Robinson, *Columbia Theological Seminary and The Southern Presbyterian Church*, Columbia Theological Seminary, undated, pp. 10, 136-141.

¹² *op cit. Brief History &c* ., p.4. (It is to be noted that by 1835 the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the largest church body in America, harboured 6 seminaries: Princeton in NJ, Auburn in New York State, Western in PA, Lane in Ohio, Columbia in South Carolina and one in Indiana, which upon its move to Chicago became McCormick. [cf. *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York* k, Robert T. Handy, Columbia University Press, 1987, p. 4])

¹³ *op cit.* Robinson, p143.

¹⁴ Robinson, p. 11

In 1835 a group of 9 laymen and Ministers met in a home in New York City and after discussion unanimously resolved: *That it is expedient, depending on the blessing of God, to attempt to establish a Theological Seminary in this City.*¹⁵ The reason for this resolution lay in the increasing population of the nation by immigration and the expanding western frontier, which lacked Christian institutions. The First Great Awakening of the 18th century and the Second Great Awakening of the 19th century provided the motivation to provide for the preaching of the gospel and the work of reformation.

A Plan of Union for working in the territories to the west of New England tentatively begun in 1801 between the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Congregationalists in one State, Connecticut, by 1830 encompassed 5 States. But this working union became torn with the Old School/New School Controversy and came to a head in the 1830's with two heresy trials and later in that decade with division. The task of evangelizing and Christianizing the nation was now shot through with mistrust on both sides of the controversy. Yet there was a keen desire to get on with the task by many ministers and laymen.

The men who met in New York were predominately New School. Several meetings followed and increasing numbers joined the meetings. In January of 1836 a Constitution was adopted and Union Theological Seminary in New York was founded. Originally the Seminary was known as “The New York Theological Seminary.” The name change came during its legal incorporation in 1839 and is believed to be reflective of a working together of both Old School and New School men and as a protest against the rending of the Church in 1837.

The Preamble to the Constitution of this new institution, adopted in 1836 reveals the thinking of the founders as to why this school should exist. The first statement of the preamble reads:

A number of Christians, Clergymen and Laymen, in the cities of New York and Brooklyn, deeply impressed with the claims of the world upon the Church of Christ to furnish a competent supply of well-educated and pious ministers of correct principles to preach the Gospel to every creature; impressed also with the inadequacy of all existing means for this purpose; and believing that large cities furnish many peculiar facilities and advantages for conducting Theological education, after several meetings for consultation and prayer.

Resolved unanimously, in humble dependence on the grace of God, to attempt the establishment of a Theological Seminary in the City of New York.¹⁶

This opening statement to the Preamble to the Constitution points out first the need for a competent supply of ministers, well educated and of correct principles. Second it points out the inadequacy of all existing means for this purpose.

The second statement of the *Preamble* declares:

This institution . . . is principally designed for such young men in the cities of New York and Brooklyn as are, or may be, desirous of pursuing a course of theological study, and whose circumstances render it inconvenient for them to go from home for that purpose.¹⁷

A third reason is given for the formation of Union seminary and that is to facilitate men desirous of the ministry who cannot attend a more distant seminary. In that era it was

¹⁵ Robert T. Handy, *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York* , Columbia University Press, 1887, p.1.

¹⁶ Handy, p.7

¹⁷ Handy, p.8

common to locate a seminary away from the distractions of the cities. Here then is the formation of a city seminary as distinct from a country seminary.

The third statement in the *Preamble* states:

It is the design of the Founders to furnish the means of a full and thorough education, in all the subjects taught in the best Theological seminaries in the United States, and also to embrace therewith a thorough knowledge of the standards of Faith and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church.¹⁸

Here a fourth reason is evident, that of maintaining a high education standard and fidelity to the Confessions and discipline of the Presbyterian Church. The prototype seminaries of the time, were Andover and Princeton. The formation of Union Seminary did not call into question the education these older institutions provided but sought to emulate it in a local setting.

The fourth statement of the *Preamble* is not relevant to our subject but the fifth is.

By the foregoing advantages, The Founders hope and expect, with the blessing of God, to call forth from these two flourishing cities, and to enlist in the service of Christ and in the work of the ministry, genius, talent, enlightened piety, and missionary zeal, and to qualify many for the labours, and management of various institutions, Seminaries of learning, and enterprises of benevolence, which characterize the present times.¹⁹

A fifth reason for the formation of *Union Seminary* is that it may serve as an instrument under God's blessing to call forth well qualified men to serve Christ in a number of different ways. In other words *Union* was seeking men to train in the full range of Christian service, including Seminary instruction and diaconal work, not just preaching.

The sixth statement of the *Preamble* reveals one other purpose for the formation of this seminary given the Old School/New School Controversy.

Finally, it is the design of the Founders to provide a Theological Seminary in the midst of the greatest, and most growing community in America, around which all men, of moderate views and feelings, who desire to live free from party strife, and to stand aloof from all the extremes of doctrinal speculation, practical radicalism, and ecclesiastical domination, may cordially and affectionately rally.²⁰

This statement reflects, As Robert Handy points out, the desire of the New School influence in the founding of *Union* to be an independent seminary free from the control of any Church judicatory and under its own self-perpetrating Board of Directors.²¹ There was therefore a sixth reason for the formation of *Union* a deliberate desire to be an independent seminary.

7. *Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia*

Unlike the formation of many of the seminaries cited above, there are no extant statements in the form of a charter or a Constitution of Minutes of General Assembly or Synod, that definitively state why Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia was formed. This committee member visited the library of WTS attempting to find such documents and was informed by the Librarian, that there are none. The reason given by the Librarian was that WTS, Philadelphia was considered a continuation of Princeton. The only document bearing on the subject of the formation of WTS, Philadelphia is an address given by the Rev. J.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Handy, p 8-9.

²⁰ Handy, p.9

²¹ Ibid.

Gresham Machen entitled *Westminster Theological Seminary: It's Purpose and Plan*, delivered at the opening of Westminster Theological Seminary on the afternoon of September 25th, 1929.

At the conclusion of this speech the following is added separately with no source cited: Westminster Theological Seminary has been founded to teach the Reformed Faith, as set forth in the Westminster Standards, on the basis of the entire trustworthiness of the Scriptures of the Old and New testaments. Its genesis is due to the situation described in the following resolution (no source cited):

"Being convinced that the action of the General Assembly of 1929, establishing a new board of control for Princeton Theological Seminary, will inevitably make the institution conform to the present doctrinal drift of the Church and so desert the distinct doctrinal position which it is bound by the most solemn trust obligations to maintain, we believe that immediate steps should be taken for the establishment of a new theological seminary which shall continue the policy of unwavering loyalty to the Word of God and to the Westminster Standards for which Princeton Seminary has been so long and honorably known."

Machen in his speech, which outlines the work the Seminary will engage in training men for the ministry, refers to a recent article, by Dr. Oswald T. Allis, in a publication called *The Sunday School Times* which he says sets forth the program of Westminster Seminary more fully than he does.²²

Machen does say at one point:

Fifty years ago many colleges and universities and theological seminaries were devoted to the truth of God's Word. But one by one they have drifted away, often will all sorts of professions of orthodoxy on the part of those who were responsible for the change. Until May, 1929, one great seminary, the seminary at Princeton, resisted bravely the current of the age. But now that seminary has been made to conform to the general drift. . . .

Then later he states:

. . . though Princeton Seminary is dead, the noble tradition of Princeton Seminary is alive. Westminster seminary will endeavor by God's grace to continue that tradition unimpaired; it will endeavor, not on a foundation of equivocation and compromise, but on an honest foundation of devotion to God's Word, to maintain the same principles that the old Princeton maintained.

The establishment, of WTS Philadelphia was to continue the legacy of old Princeton and therefore to counter the current drift into liberalism. In a real sense WTS was formed for theological reasons. The task of the seminary was to train scholarly and competent men who were well equipped to further and defend the Christian faith according to the Word of God and the Standards of the Presbyterian Church.

At the time of its formation, WTS Philadelphia was governed by a Temporary Executive consisting of 18 members. It was, and continues to be, an independent seminary.

Summary

From the foregoing historical survey your Committee observes that in the history of reformed seminaries in the United States, the following are reasons for their formation.

a. The inadequacy of the present system of ministerial preparation. (All of the above seminaries)

b. The need for a well educated, pious ministry. (All of the above)

²² The text of this speech is to be found in the Machen archives of WTS, Philadelphia. No library reference number is cited.

- c. The need for a ministry faithful to the orthodoxy of the confessional standards and the discipline of the church. (All of the above, excluding unorthodox Harvard)
- d. The need for the education of men for the ministry to be under the management and subject to the inspection of the church. (Particularly Princeton and Columbia)
- e. The need for the education of men for the ministry to be apart from church control. (Union, NY; Westminster)
- f. The preservation of a theological persuasion. (i.e. Harvard: liberalism/Unitarianism; Andover: Congregational Calvinism; Princeton, Columbia, Westminster: Presbyterian-Reformed; Union: Moderate Presbyterian/Congregational; RCUS: Reformed)
- g. The current need of the churches for ministers due to revival, missionary expansion into new territories, empty pulpits. (All of the above)
- h. Preservation of a language tradition. (RCUS, secondary reason).
- i. More local education facilities (Particularly Columbia and Union).
- j. Preparation for various branches of Christian service. (Particularly Union).
- k. The seminary as an instrument to be used of God to assist men in discerning a call to the ministry. (Particularly Union)

Present necessity.

Independent seminaries expose students to variety of theological positions. Some of these positions may be denominational or personal idiosyncrasies. In the past we have had RCUS students leave the RCUS for other denominations because of exclusive psalmody, framework theology, theonomy, and, what is known by some, as a redemptive historical hermeneutic.

What might be gained by the establishment of a RCUS seminary is relative theological normativity. There will not be a variety of equally valid positions presented, only that which is considered acceptable by our denomination. No longer will we need to worry about our seminarians being instructed in positions that we would not find acceptable, nor confused by what is tolerated. When seminaries do not take clear stands on doctrinal issues and require their professors to do so, the student is left with the impression that such are unimportant.

Having our own seminary will enable us to hold those who teach accountable. Professors should be under the discipline of the denomination for what they teach to its students. It is a matter of protecting the student. We require of each church member subjection to the government of the church, and in case they are found delinquent in doctrine of life, to heed its discipline. Should we be satisfied with anything less from professors teaching and training our students for the ministry?

Additionally, we will expect a RCUS seminary to foster in our students a denominational loyalty and commitment. When seminarians are trained in institutions which involve men from other denominations there is the very real possibility that they may be attracted to those other denominations. Then men in whom we have invested time and money go to serve in another denomination.

Finally, seminary is not the place for ecumenical endeavours or experimentation. Students are neither prepared nor equipped to be engaged in such activities. It is rather the responsibility of the denomination, represented by its duly constituted committees, to be engaged in such activities.

Therefore what may be gained from the establishment of a RCUS seminary may be a great deal.

Conclusion

Your committee, having completed its study of the warrant and need for the establishment of a denominational seminary (Feasibility, Procedures and Criteria are appended), together with particular consideration being given to the petition of Heidelberg Theological Seminary to be the denomination's seminary, makes the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. That the Synod approve the concept of establishing a denominational seminary.
2. That the petition of Heidelberg Theological Seminary to serve as a seminary of the denomination be granted. (Postponed indefinitely)

Grounds:

- a. The positive evaluation of Heidelberg Theological Seminary given by the Permanent Christian Education Committee of Synod (See pages 22 & 23 of the 2003 Abstract).
- b. The desire of Heidelberg Theological Seminary to come under spiritual oversight and supervision of the Synod according to Articles 36, 38, 41 of the RCUS Constitution (see page 67 of the 2003 Abstract).
- c. Synod's adoption of the Permanent Christian Education Committee's recommendation: That Heidelberg Theological Seminary be added to the list of seminaries worthy of receiving benevolent monies from the RCUS (See page 72 of the 2003 Abstract).
3. That Synod erect a special committee to put into place procedures for the oversight, operation and financing of a denominational seminary. That Synod erect a special committee to put into place the procedures for the oversight, operation and financing of a denominational seminary.

Respectfully submitted by the majority,
R. Potter, M. Koerner, J. Merica, V. Pollema, S. Gross

A minority report was submitted by J. De Boer, M. Newman, and J. Savage. It was received and read on the floor, but the recommendations contained therein were not adopted. Due to the length of these reports, it is not printed here, but is contained in the bound minutes.

D. Research eBooks

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

At the 257th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, the report of the Special Committee to Research eBooks was referred back to its committee, with its recommendations, and "The matter of continued funding for eBooks was referred to the Finances Committee" (Page 60 of the Minutes of the 257th Synod).

The committee's work on the recommendation of the 256th Synod, "That Synod approve the production of 500 CDs of the RCUS Electronic Library References at the cost of \$2,240.00 for production, packaging, and shipping," was carried out by contracting with Mr. Eric D. Bristley, of Olive Tree Communications, to produce an initial 200 CDs of *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library* (James Good Collection) for inventory in the RCUS Book Depository; and as needed, Olive Tree Communications will produce an additional 300 CDs in quantities of 50.

Mr. Eric Bristley was unable to complete *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library, First Edition* project by the 257th Synod as scheduled because of illness and other unavoidable circumstances. However, your committee is delighted to announce to the 258th Synod that Mr. Bristley reported that he has completed the project and is ready to move forward and focus on *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library, Second Edition*. The committee has invited Mr. Bristley to address the delegates of the 258th Synod.

In keeping with the recommendation of the 256th Synod, “That the committee continue its work on the RCUS Electronic Library References, Volume II, [second edition] to determine what should be included, and that the committee report to Synod next year [257th Synod] for possible production of the same,” your committee provided to the delegates of the 257th Synod a proposed list of book titles for the production of the second edition, which included 6,091 pages, at \$1.45 per page, at the production cost of \$8,831.95. The consensus of the delegates of the 257th session was to reduce the production of *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library, Second Edition* from 6,091 pages to approximately 3000 pages at the cost of \$3,980.25.

The selection of book titles for *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library, Second Edition* evolved from the committee’s conviction that there is a need for a broader exposure of the teachings of the “Three Forms of Unity,” and that a concentrated resource of commentaries, sermons, and expositional works of the confessions would be beneficial to pastors, elders, seminarians, and RCUS members, as well as to those who are considering the Reformed Faith.

In regard to the recommendation of the 256th Synod, “That Synod approve the sale cost for each RCUS Electronic Reference Library, First Edition CD at \$29.00 for RCUS members and \$49.00 for non-RCUS members,” *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library CD* will be made available for purchase through the RCUS Book Depository.

The eBook Committee brings to the 258th Synod the following recommendations:
Recommendation #1 That Synod approve up to \$3,980.00 to develop approximately 3,000 pages of *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library, Second Edition* for sale and distribution on CD format.

Recommendation #2 That *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library, Second Edition* titles be added to *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library, First Edition*.

Recommendation #3 That the eBook titles from all editions of *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library* may not be published on any website without the written permission of the RCUS Permanent Publications Committee.

Recommendation #4 That a notification be placed on the CD and its cover of all editions of *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library* that the material contained therein may not be copied in any way without the written permission of the RCUS Permanent Publications Committee.

Recommendation #5 That the *Special Committee to Research eBooks* continue.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Mancilas, J. Fluck, D. Roe, J. Jones, C. Esparza

E. Study of Justification

[The complete report is 56 pages and cannot be fully printed in this Abstract. Please see the RCUS Web page (RCUS.org) for the entire report. Below are the Recommendations passed along with the Resolutions and Grounds.]

Recommendation 1. That the following four resolutions and their respective grounds be adopted by synod.

Resolution 1: That we reaffirm the truth of the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone including the necessity of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience as a necessary element of our righteousness before God as it is expressed in the Three Forms of Unity, specifically in those passages that follow: [*Pertinent words are in bold print*]

A. The Heidelberg Catechism

Question 1: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

*Answer 1: That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, **who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil;** and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live unto Him.*

Q11: But is not God also merciful?

*A11: God is indeed merciful, but **He is likewise just; His justice therefore requires that sin, which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be punished with extreme,** that is, with everlasting punishment both of body and soul.*

Q18: But who now is that Mediator, who in one person is true God and also a true and righteous man?

*A18: Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is freely given unto us for **complete redemption and righteousness.***

Q21: What is true faith?

*A21: True faith is not only a sure knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word, but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Ghost works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of **Christ’s merits.***

*Q30: Do those also believe in the only Savior Jesus, who seek their salvation and welfare from “saints,” **themselves**, or anywhere else?*

*A30: No; although they make their boast of Him, yet in their deeds they deny the only Savior Jesus; for either Jesus is not a complete Savior, or they who by true faith receive this Savior, **must have in Him all that is necessary to their salvation.***

Q37: What do you understand by the word “suffered”?

*A37: That **all the time He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, He bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race**; in order that by His suffering, as the only atoning sacrifice, He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness and eternal life.*

Q52: What comfort is it to you that Christ “shall come to judge the living and the dead”?

*A52: That in all my sorrows and persecutions, I, with uplifted head, look for the very One, who **offered Himself for me to the judgment of God, and removed all curse from me**, to come as*

Judge from heaven, who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall take me with all His chosen ones to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.

Q56: What do you believe concerning the “forgiveness of sins”?

A56: That God, for the sake of Christ’s satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, nor the sinful nature with which I have to struggle all my life long; but **graciously imputes to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may nevermore come into condemnation.**

Q60: How are you righteous before God?

A60: Only by true faith in Jesus Christ: that is, although my conscience accuses me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and am still prone always to all evil; yet God, **without any merit of mine**, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the **perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ**, as if I had never committed nor had any sins, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me; if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart.

Q61: Why do you say that you are righteous by faith only?

A61: **Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, but because only the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God; and I can receive the same and make it my own in no other way than by faith only.**

Q62: But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God?

A62: Because the righteousness which can stand before the judgment seat of God must be **perfect throughout and entirely conformable to the divine law**, but even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.

Q63: Do our good works merit nothing, even though it is God’s will to reward them in this life and in that which is to come?

A63: **The reward comes not of merit, but of grace.**

Q64: But does not this doctrine make men careless and profane?

A64: **No, for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.**

Q86: Since, then, we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works?

A86: Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life **we show ourselves thankful to God** for His blessing, and that **He be glorified through us**; then also, that **we ourselves may be assured of our faith** by the fruits thereof; and by our godly walk may **win others** also to Christ.

Q87: Can they, then, be saved who do not turn to God from their unthankful, impenitent life?

A87: By no means, for, as Scripture says, no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Q91: What are good works?

A91: **Those only which proceed from true faith, and are done according to the Law of God, unto His glory, and not such as rest on our own opinion or the commandments of men.**

Q114: Can those who are converted to God keep these Commandments perfectly?

A114: No, but even the holiest men, while in this life, have **only a small beginning** of such obedience, yet so that with earnest purpose they begin to live not only according to some, but according to all the Commandments of God.

Q115: Why then does God so strictly enjoin the Ten Commandments upon us, since in this life no one can keep them?

A115: First, that as long as we live we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and so the more earnestly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ; second, that without ceasing we diligently ask God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we be renewed more and more after the image of God, until we attain the **goal of perfection after this life.**

B. The Belgic Confession

Article XX: God Has Manifested His Justice and Mercy in Christ.

We believe that God, who is perfectly merciful and just, sent His Son to assume that nature in which the disobedience was committed, **to make satisfaction in the same, and to bear the punishment of sin** by His most bitter passion and death. **God therefore manifested His justice against His Son when He laid our iniquities upon Him**, and poured forth His mercy and goodness on us, who were guilty and worthy of damnation, out of mere and perfect love, giving His Son unto death for us, and raising Him for our justification, that through Him we might obtain immortality and life eternal.

Article XXI: The Satisfaction of Christ, Our Only High Priest, for Us.

We believe that Jesus Christ is ordained with an oath to be an everlasting High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek; and that He has presented Himself in our behalf before the Father, to appease His wrath by **His full satisfaction**, by offering Himself on the tree of the cross, and pouring out His precious blood to purge away our sins, as the prophets had foretold. For it is written: He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and numbered with the transgressors; and condemned by Pontius Pilate as a malefactor, though he had first declared Him innocent. Therefore, He restored that which he took not away, and suffered, the righteous for the unrighteous, as well in His body as in His soul, feeling the terrible punishment which our sins had merited; insomuch that his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. He called out: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? and has suffered all this for the remission of our sins.

Wherefore we justly say with the apostle Paul that we know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; we count all things but loss and refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, in whose wounds we find all manner of consolation. **Neither is it necessary to seek or invent any other means of being reconciled to God than this only sacrifice, once offered, by which he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.** This is also the reason why He was called by the angel of God, JESUS, that is to say, SAVIOR, because He would save his people from their sins.

Article XXII: Our Justification Through Faith in Jesus Christ.

We believe that, to attain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts an **upright faith, which embraces Jesus Christ with all His merits, appropriates Him, and seeks nothing more besides Him.** For it must needs follow, either that all things which are requisite to our salvation are not in Jesus Christ, or if all things are in Him, that then those who possess Jesus Christ through faith have complete salvation in Him. Therefore, **for any to assert that Christ is not sufficient, but that something more is required besides Him, would be too gross a blasphemy; for hence it would follow that Christ was but half a Savior.**

Therefore we justly say with Paul, **that we are justified by faith alone, or by faith apart from works.** However, to speak more clearly, **we do not mean that faith itself justifies us, for it is only an instrument with which we embrace Christ our righteousness. But Jesus Christ, imputing to us all His merits, and so many holy works which He has done for us and in our stead, is our**

righteousness. And faith is an instrument that keeps us in communion with Him in all His benefits, which, when they become ours, are more than sufficient to acquit us of our sins.

Article XXIII: Wherein Our Justification Before God Consists

We believe that our salvation consists in the remission of our sins for Jesus Christ's sake, **and that therein our righteousness before God is implied**; as David and Paul teach us, declaring this to be the And the same apostle says that we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

And therefore we always hold fast this foundation, ascribing all the glory to God, humbling ourselves before Him, and acknowledging ourselves to be such as we really are, **without presuming to trust in anything in ourselves, or in any merit of ours, relying and resting upon the obedience of Christ crucified alone, which becomes ours when we believe in Him. This is sufficient to cover all our iniquities,** and to give us confidence in approaching to God; freeing the conscience of fear, terror, and dread, without following the example of our first father, Adam, who, trembling, attempted to cover himself with fig-leaves. And, verily, if we should appear before God, relying on ourselves or on any other creature, though ever so little, we should, alas! be consumed. And therefore every one must pray with David: O Jehovah, enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight no man living is righteous.

Article XXIV: Man's Sanctification and Good Works.

We believe that this true faith, being wrought in man by the hearing of the Word of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit, sanctifies [1] him and makes him a new man, causing him to live a new life, and freeing him from the bondage of sin. Therefore it is so far from being true that this justifying faith makes men remiss in a pious and holy life, that on the contrary without it they would never do anything out of love to God, but only out of self-love or fear of damnation.

Therefore it is impossible that this holy faith can be unfruitful in man; for we do not speak of a vain faith, but of such a faith which is called in Scripture a faith working through love, which excites man to the practice of those works which God has commanded in His Word.

These works, as they proceed from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable in the sight of God, forasmuch as they are all sanctified by His grace. **Nevertheless they are of no account towards our justification,** for it is by faith in Christ that we are justified, even before we do good works; otherwise they could not be good works, any more than the fruit of a tree can be good before the tree itself is good.

Therefore we do good works, **but not to merit by them (for what can we merit?); nay, we are indebted to God for the good works we do, and not He to us, since it is He who worketh in us both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.** Let us therefore attend to what is written: When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do. In the meantime we do not deny that God rewards good works, but it is through His grace that He crowns His gifts.

Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we can do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus, then, we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences would be continually vexed if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior.

C. The Canons of Dort

Second Head of Doctrine

Article 1: God is not only supremely merciful, but also supremely just. And His justice requires (as He has revealed Himself in His Word) that our sins committed against His infinite majesty should be punished, not only with temporal but with eternal punishments, both in body and soul; which we cannot escape, unless satisfaction be made to the justice of God.

Article 2: Since, therefore, we are unable to make that satisfaction in our own persons, or to deliver ourselves from the wrath of God, He has been pleased of His infinite mercy to give His only begotten Son for our Surety, who was made sin, and became a curse for us and in our stead, that He might make satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf.

Second Head of Doctrine: Rejection of Errors

Paragraph 3: **Who teach: That Christ by His satisfaction merited neither salvation itself for anyone, nor faith, whereby this satisfaction of Christ unto salvation is effectually appropriated;** but that He merited for the Father only the authority or the perfect will to deal again with man, and to prescribe new conditions as He might desire, obedience to which, however, depended on the free will of man, so that it therefore might have come to pass that either none or all should fulfill these conditions.

Paragraph 4: **Who teach: That the new covenant of grace, which God the Father, through the mediation of the death of Christ, made with man, does not herein consist that we by faith, inasmuch as it accepts the merits of Christ, are justified before God and saved, but in the fact that God, having revoked the demand of perfect obedience of faith, regards faith itself and the obedience of faith, although imperfect, as the perfect obedience of the law, and does esteem it worthy of the reward of eternal life through grace.**

For these contradict the Scriptures: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood (Rom. 3:24, 25). And these proclaim, as did the wicked Socinus, a new and strange justification of man before God, against the consensus of the whole Church.

Third and Fourth Head of Doctrine

Article 5: Neither can the decalogue delivered by God to His peculiar people, the Jews, by the hands of Moses, save men.[1] **For though it reveals the greatness of sin, and more and more convinces man thereof, yet, as it neither points out a remedy nor imparts strength to extricate him from this misery, but, being weak through the flesh, leaves the transgressor under the curse, man cannot by this law obtain saving grace.**

Fifth Head of Doctrine

Article 6: But God, who is rich in mercy, according to His unchangeable purpose of election, **does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit from His own people even in their grievous falls; nor suffers them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of adoption and forfeit the state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death or against the Holy Spirit; nor does He permit them to be totally deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction.**

Article 8: **Thus it is not in consequence of their own merits or strength, but of God's free mercy, that they neither totally fall from faith and grace nor continue and perish finally in their backslidings; which, with respect to themselves is not only possible, but would undoubtedly happen; but with respect to God, it is utterly impossible, since His counsel cannot be changed nor His promise fail; neither can the call according to His purpose be revoked, nor the merit, intercession, and preservation of Christ be rendered ineffectual, nor the sealing of the Holy Spirit be frustrated or obliterated.**

Article 11: The Scripture moreover testifies that believers in this life have to struggle with various carnal doubts, and that under grievous temptations they do not always feel this full assurance of

faith and certainty of persevering. But God, who is the Father of all consolation, does not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that they may be able to endure it (1 Cor. 10:13), and by the Holy Spirit again inspires them with the comfortable assurance of persevering.

Article 12: This certainty of perseverance, however, is so far from exciting in believers a spirit of pride, or of rendering them carnally secure, that on the contrary it is the real source of humility, filial reverence, true piety, patience in every tribulation, fervent prayers, constancy in suffering and in confessing the truth, and of solid rejoicing in God; so that the consideration of this benefit should serve as an incentive to the serious and constant practice of gratitude and good works, as appears from the testimonies of Scripture and the examples of the saints.

Resolution 2: That we find that Rev. Norman Shepherd for many years has taught a confused doctrine of justification, contrary to the Heidelberg Catechism, The Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordt. The specifics are as follows.

- a. That in his failure to distinguish between faith and works he has undermined this essential doctrine of the Christian faith. It is false doctrine to say that works of love are another way of looking at faith, for true faith is occupied with Gospel and the fullness of Christ's redemption, while a work of love is occupied with the law and with showing gratitude to God for this redemption. It is false to teach that "Believing" in Jesus is the same as "Obeying" Jesus as it regards justification, for they are occupied with different things.
- b. In failing to distinguish between faith and works, he has mixed justification and sanctification, reviving the Romish doctrine of justification by infused righteousness, which is rightly abominated by all the people of faith.
- c. He compounds his error by teaching that when the beloved Apostle Paul speaks of the "works of the law" that Paul means those which are done for the purpose of meriting justification, and not works that are done in faith. In this Shepherd also shows confusion of mind, for if works done in faith are done with the idea that they are justifying, then those very works become "works of the law," even though Shepherd denies it. He may say that my works as a Christian are not meritorious, but if he says that they are necessary for salvation and that I am cursed if I do not do them, then he has made them meritorious no matter how much he protests that he hasn't. To keep works in their proper place, no room must be given for them in the act of justification in any way, as the Apostle Paul and our creeds so clearly state.
- d. His error is grievous when he affirms that every covenant consists of promise and punishment, and that Christians are not "off the hook," if they do not obey just as Israel was not "off the hook" when they disobeyed. This is contrary to the Gospel and to the creeds and confessions that teach that Christ was made a curse for us so that the blessings of Abraham could come upon us. We are therefore blessed of the Lord, although Gentile churches may be cut off if the reprobate in them corrupt their faith in the fullness of Christ's redemption and teach them to trust in their own righteousness.
- e. He misinterprets Romans 2:6-13, in support of his heresy. We affirm that Paul does not here teach that one could be justified by works. Rather he is refuting the madness of those who boast in the law but do not do the law, and condemn others. Those who boast in the law must do the law if they trust in the law. To be justified by works, it is not enough for men to glory in works, but they must actually perform all that the law demands. Thus, none can be justified by works, a conclusion that Paul makes in Romans 3.
- f. He misinterprets the beloved apostle James in James 2. We reject a dialectical interpretation of Paul and James, which would require a synthesis of opposites. James is not speaking of forensic

justification before God as does Paul, but of a demonstration of faith: "Show me your faith," which can only be done by good works.

- g. He errs in confusion again in affirming that the "idea of merit is foreign to the way in which God our Father relates to his children," as if God has not required perfect obedience to His law as a condition for life, overthrowing the perfect justice of God and corrupting the perfect obedience of Christ, both active and passive, that is the complete and perfect righteousness of the believer. God does not owe His creatures anything, but in conditioning Adam's life upon obedience, God affirmed that life would be the reward of obedience, and a curse would come for disobedience.
- h. He errs in denying that the active obedience of Christ has any part in justification. The result is to revive the old Romish, Socinian, and Arminian error that justification is forgiveness only, and that future justification depends upon works done in faith.
- i. That his inclusion of works as necessary for some future justification is contrary to our confessions, which teach that faith is a gift of God which gives us access to the righteousness of God, even the perfect passive and active obedience of Christ which alone is all our righteousness, for we are complete in Him.
- j. That he slanderously reports that the Reformed teach that "faith can exist without its fruits and evidences." This is Arminian, Socinian, and Romish doctrine that he falsely attributes to the Reformed, and then seeks to cure the disease that the Reformed don't have, by seeking to apply to them the Arminian, Socinian, and Romish cure: that works must be added to faith in order for the believer to be justified. The Reformed have always taught that faith without works is dead, that is, no faith at all, and that true faith is alive and will inevitably bring forth the fruit of repentance and loving works.
- k. That he errs in teaching that Paul's phrase, "righteousness of faith" means the works that Christians perform by faith, rather than the perfect righteousness of Christ which is received by faith.
- l. That he errs in confusing the relationship between faith and works, affirming that they cooperate in justification and whatever goes with faith also cooperates in justification. This is contrary to the Scripture, the creeds, and the confession which teach that works are the fruit of faith, and inevitably appear, but have no part in justifying the sinner before God.

Resolution 3: Therefore, we also resolve that the teachings of Rev. Norman Shepherd on justification by faith are another gospel and we admonish Rev. Shepherd and call upon him to repent of his grievous errors.

Resolution 4: That the Reformed Church in the United States recognize these Romish, Arminian, and Socinian errors for what they are and urge our brethren throughout the world to reject them and to refuse those who teach them.

Recommendation 2: That this report, along with the supplementary material, be made available to the churches of the RCUS, to all denominations in fraternal relationship, to the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and to member denominations in NAPARC and ICRC."

Recommendation 3: That this report, along with the supplementary material, be made available to the churches of the RCUS, to all denominations in fraternal relationship, to the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and to member denominations in NAPARC and ICRC."

Recommendation 4: That per his request, Rev. Norman Jones, be removed from the committee due to health reasons and that another member be assigned as a replacement.

T. Gruggett, N. Jones, C.W. Powell, D. Fagrey, D. McPherson

F. On Biennial Synods

Dear Brothers,

The following task was referred by Synod 2003 to the Executive Committee: "that synod form a Special Committee to study the constitutionality and feasibility of holding biennial synod meetings or other options" (2003 Abstract, page 75).

For your information please refer to RCUS Abstract of 1994, page 19-20, under the title, "III. Meeting Biennially or as a Delegated Body."

Recommendation #1. That the Synod of the RCUS continue to meet in general convention. (as adopted in 1994, page 62).

Your Executive Committee believes that the reasons for maintaining a general convention synod reported in 1994, still exist today.

This statement was as follows: "However the Executive Committee believes that as a Synod, we are at that stage of our existence where meeting in general convention is still possible and necessary for accomplishing important work of the church, ie., the work of our Permanent and Special Committees. Meeting in general convention is also important for our unity and cohesiveness as a body. As we grow, it may be necessary to meet as a delegated body."

With regard to the feasibility of holding biennial meetings, the constitution makes no provision for biennial meetings and indeed at this time requires annual meetings (Art. 95). Therefore this Article of the Constitution of the RCUS would have to be amended by the usual procedure before biennial meetings might be held. At this time the Executive Committee makes no recommendation to amend the Constitution in this way on the following grounds:

1. The unity and peace of our church, spread across so large a nation, is helped greatly by the personal interchanges and fellowship of the delegates of the whole church coming to Synod each year. In the case of biennial synods some might be tempted by a spirit of independence and/or ignoring the work of the broader church.

2. It would be disruptive to the work of several of our important Synodical works if our permanent Committees were not able to receive new instructions and budgets yearly. Foreign Mission might well prosper under biennial meetings, but Committees such as Home Missions, Publications (when new printings of our materials are needed), and Interchurch relations (which often change without warning) would have to be given new powers to be able to function for two years without Synodical directives (we have tried to limit Committee powers over the years to avoid a board/bureaucracy-driven denomination).

3. Biennial synods would work a hardship on parties to appeals.

4. Biennial synods would in our opinion lower the value of the work of the whole Church as compared to that of the local Church among our officers and people. Yet there is no such disjunction in Scripture. Indeed Scripture says, "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you. Nor can the head say to the feet, I have no need of you" 1 Cor. 12:21). Therefore doing the work of the whole Church is just as important as doing that of the local church, and the time spent at Synod is no less a service of God than, for example, that spent in a catechism class.

5. Biennial Synods would leave a greater amount of responsibility in the hands of permanent committees, where decisions would have to be made as issues arise. These should

and in most cases would be handled by Executive Circulars. But, that form of doing business does not allow for the sufficient information, discussion, and debate that would be beneficial in many items proposed. If the circular were objected to, it would have to wait up to two years for action which might be a serious hardship or setback in some cases.

6. The Executive Committee points out that last year's synod, including deaf translation, cost close to \$24,000, which is 4.7% of total guidelines paid to Synod in 2002, and .45% of the total receipts of our churches in 2002. Assessing cost versus value is obviously subjective for each of us, but these are the hard figures.

Reasons for Changing the Pattern of Our Synodical Meetings :

1. *Cost* - We believe as pointed out, that this is a somewhat subjective opinion of cost versus value. Some money could indeed be saved by a change.

2. *Burden on Hosting Congregation* - This burden consists in making arrangements and feeding the synodical delegates, as well as housing them. Certainly more congregations, should they be willing, might host a smaller synod.

3. *Use of Time* - It is our belief that all of us should involve ourselves more deeply in the work of the broader church, including its synod meetings.

Other Options : Should synod still desire to lower the cost, and make it possible for more congregations to host synod, we suggest the following option:

1. That Synod meet as a delegated body in which each congregation is represented by its minister OR elder delegate at each Synod meeting on a rotating basis. This would cut the number of delegates in half while still requiring each congregation to be represented by one delegate at every Synod. This would, of course, require an amendment to the Constitution of the RCUS and not resolve all the grounds listed above.

Respectfully submitted,

V. Pollema, R. Grossmann, P. Treick, G. Born, and E. Merz

XV. STANDING COMMITTEES

Where a Primarius Delegate Elders was absent, the Secundus was placed on their respective committee.

A. Ministerial Aid

Recommendations adopted:

1. That overture #5 regarding benevolent aid for Rev. Saavalainen be referred to standing Benevolence.

2. That a committee be appointed to establish a 'Synodical Pension Plan,' in addition to the Ministerial Aid Fund, to aid our ministers for their retirement, and that this plan be circularized at least 30 days prior to the meeting of the 259th Session of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States in order that it may be considered for implementation at the 259th Session.

3. That, should the synod adopt this plan, the Permanent Ministerial Aid Fund Committee implement and administer this plan for those RCUS ministers who desire to participate in the plan. Take Note.

4. That the investment policy of placing the MAF assets into a balance of 50 percent in mutual funds and 50 percent in CD's be continued. Take Note.
5. That Synod continue the Guideline of \$15.00 for the MAF for 2004-2005.
6. That Rev. Haddock, at his request be removed as a member of the MAF Committee.
7. That the 2004-2005 Permanent Committee select one of its members to be a signatory along with the Synod Treasurer on future MAF accounts.
8. That Rev. Haddock transfer funds to the new MAF accounts as the committee believes to be prudent.
9. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
10. That ministerial aid for Rev. and Mrs. Chester Ploeger in the amount of \$1200 per month be approved.
11. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
12. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
13. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
14. That ministerial aid for Rev. and Mrs. Robert Sander in the amount of \$1,300 per month be approved.
15. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Kay Savage in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
16. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Virginia Hoeflinger in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
17. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Phyllis Grossmann in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
18. That ministerial aid for Rev. and Mrs. Howard Hart in the amount of \$1,250 per month be approved.
19. That ministerial aid for Rev. and Mrs. Norman Jones in the amount of \$1,300 per month be approved.
20. From the Executive Committee Report, that Synod participate in the charitable annuity giving as proposed by City Seminary of Sacramento, with an emphasis on Home Missions and Ministerial Relief, and that this program be evaluated by the Executive Committee and reported in their recommendations to the 260th Synod of the RCUS.

J. Sawtelle*, B. Haddock, M. McGee, S. Wilbur, R. Lopez, T. Rott

B. Missions

Recommendations adopted:

1. That \$16,000 be used to send short-term ministers to Kenya to forward church education.
2. That the Foreign Ministries budget for 2004 be as follows:

Congo	
Elder/Pastor support	\$13,800
Kinshasa aid	\$7,000
Publishing	\$1,000
Building and diaconal aid	\$2,000
Kenya	

Church support	\$9,000
Publishing	\$2,000
International Radio	\$14,000
Committee Expenses	
Travel to Africa	\$4,000
Travel to Europe	\$1,000
Committee expenses in U.S.	\$3,000
TOTAL	\$72,800

3. That Covenant Reformed Church of Watertown, SD, be commended for coming off of synod support. Take Note.
4. That support for Redeemer Reformed Church, Golden Valley, MN, be set at \$6,876 for 2005.
5. That support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, CA, be set at \$12,496 for 2005.
6. That the budget for 2004 be amended to provide support in 2004 for Rehoboth Chapel in the LA Basin at \$14,473.
7. That support for Rehoboth Chapel in the LA Basin be set at \$14,451 for 2005.
8. That support for Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, CO, be set at \$18,580 for 2005.
9. That support for Providence Reformed Church, Vermillion, SD be set at \$11,511 for 2005.
10. That the budget for 2004 be amended to provide support in 2004 for Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, CA, in the amount of \$22,180.
11. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, CA, be set at \$19,980 for 2005.
12. That support for High Plains Reformed Chapel, Calhan, CO, be set at \$18,000 for 2005.
13. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, AR, be set at \$14,400 for 2005.
14. That support of the Bible Study and Worship Services in Chicago be set at \$350 per month or \$4,200 from June of 2005 through May of 2005.
15. That \$9,000 be designated for the start of a new RCUS radio program in targeted areas.
16. That \$9,000 be budgeted for potential new works.
17. That \$3,500 be budgeted for committee expense.
18. That the annual Home Missions Offering on the Day of Prayer in 2004 be designated for High Plains RCUS of Calhan, CO.
19. That Synod support Deaf Reformed Ministries in the amount of \$2,000 for 2004.
20. That Home Missions budget for 2005, if approved as recommended, would be \$143,994. Take Note.

D. Fagrey*, H. Kalkman, J. DeBoer, K. Hamilton, C. Fellersen,
J. Johnson, D. Stelpstra, D. Speranza

C. Ecumenical

Recommendations adopted:

1. (regarding meeting with the PCA for discussion on union): That the Stated Clerk of the RCUS write the PCA Stated Clerk, the Rev. L. Roy Taylor, and inform him that given the strict subscription of the RCUS to the Three Forms of Unity, and considering the theological broadness of the PCA and the recent adoption of a "good faith" subscription policy, your committee believes that this is not something to pursue at this time.

2. That the Rev. Robert Grossmann be the Fraternal Delegate to the OPC 2004 GA, meeting June 2-9, at Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA.
3. That Rev. Maynard Koerner and Rev. C. W. Powell be sent as observers to the 2004 URCNA Synod Meeting in Calgary, Alberta, June 15-18.
4. That the budget the Permanent Interchurch Committee has proposed for 2004 (\$8,500) be adopted.
5. That the Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee write responses to the GKN papers on Divorce and Remarriage, and Sabbath and Sunday, to be presented to the 259th Synod.
6. That these two papers and the responses be sent to the delegates to the 259th Synod.
7. That the Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee inform the GKN that a response is forthcoming.

G. Horner*, G. Syms, N. Riffert, E. Rynders, R. Gallimore, R. Kusler

D. Benevolence

Recommendations adopted:

1. The Synod adopt the report of the Diaconal Committee.
2. Concerning overture #1 from Covenant East Classis, that benevolent aid in the amount of \$425 per month be granted to Rev. Ron Potter from June 2004 for 12 months.
3. Concerning overture #5 from Covenant East Classis, that benevolent aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month be granted to Rev. Jari Saavalainen from May 2004 to May 2005.
4. That the Stated Clerk send a letter to the clerk of Covenant East Classis asking classis to send a delegation to visit Deaf RCUS, MD, to assess their financial needs.
5. Concerning overture #6, that benevolent aid in the amount of \$500 be granted to Rev. Kevin Hamilton for a period of 10 months from May 2004 through February 2005.
6. Concerning overture #13 from Western Classis, that benevolent aid be granted to Grace RCUS, Lancaster, CA, in the amount of \$600 per month from May 2004 for 12 months.
7. Concerning overture #13 from Western Classis, that benevolent aid in the amount of \$1,200 be granted to Faith RCUS, Anderson, CA from May 2004 for 12 months.
8. Concerning overture #20 from South Central Classis, that benevolent aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month be granted for Mrs. Amy Stevens for the next synodical year.
9. Concerning overture #20 from South Central Classis, that benevolent aid in the amount of \$725 per month be granted to Trinity RCUS, CO, from May 2004 for 12 months.
10. Concerning the request from Synodical Liaison to Deaf Ministries, that benevolent aid in the amount of \$2,000 be granted this year.

D. Roe*, T. Mayville, T. Gruggett, C. Melhaf, B. Borgwardt, D. Mettler

E. Education and Student Aid

Recommendations adopted:

1. That the writers, Howard Hart and Harvey DeGroot, compiler Charles Henson, and proofreader Jess Johnson, of the curriculum material be commended for their diligent and laborious work.
2. That Rev. Hart be granted an honorarium for completing the required editing of the Curriculum in the amount of \$1500.

3. Regarding recommendation #3 of the Permanent Christian Education Committee Report; that Charles Henson be paid this Synodical year the \$1500 honorarium per curriculum year of compilation as approved by the 257th Synod. Take note.
4. Regarding recommendation #4 of the Permanent Christian Education Committee Report; that Jess Johnson be paid this Synodical year the honorarium of \$1000 per curriculum year of proofreading as approved by the 257th Synod. Take note.
5. Regarding recommendation #5 of the Permanent Christian Education Report, take note.
6. Regarding recommendation #6 of the Permanent Christian Education Committee Report; that any proposed changes to the curriculum be forwarded to the Permanent Christian Education Committee for review and corresponding action. Take note.
7. That RCUS congregations be encouraged to use the RCUS Sunday School Curriculum.
8. That Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary continue to be listed as an approved seminary of the RCUS.
9. Regarding recommendation #9 of the Permanent Christian Education Committee Report; that the RCUS establish a \$1.00 guideline for GPTS.
10. Regarding recommendation #10 of the Permanent Christian Education Committee Report; that Synod appoint one ordained, active RCUS minister to serve on the board of GPTS.
11. That Rev. Ron Potter be appointed board member of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.
12. That Synod remove Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia) from its list of "approved" seminaries.
13. That Synod limit seminary "approval" to those that have representation on their respective governing board and/or faculty by at least one ordained, active RCUS Minister or Elder.
14. That the status of Westminster Theological Seminary of California remain the same. Take note.
15. That City Seminary be placed on the list of approved seminaries worth of support.
16. That Rev. Kevin Hamilton be granted financial assistance in the amount of \$530 for seminary courses.
17. That Scott Henry be granted student aid as follows: \$4500 for tuition and \$250 for books for the coming academic year.
18. That James Grossman be granted student aid as follows: \$4500 for tuition and \$100 for books for the coming academic year.
19. That Richard Stetler be granted student aid as follows: \$4446 for tuition for the coming year.
20. That Ted Schieffelin be granted student aid as follows: \$1500 for tuition for the coming year.
21. That Sam Powell be granted student aid as follows: \$4500 for tuition and \$200 for books for the coming year.
22. That a guideline of \$2.00 be established for Heidelberg Theological Seminary.

J. Merica*, R. Potter, R. Morris, D. Kingswood, J. Snyder, J. Liesveld, J. Mills

F. Judicial

Recommendations adopted:

1. That Synod take note of the fact that the Western Classis declared the teachings of Mr. Harold Camping heretical on the basis of his false teachings for which he was admonished in 1993 and 2003. Take Note.
2. That the Synod express its agreement with the actions of the Western Classis given in Recommendation 1.
3. That the Synod's actions be reported to churches with which the RCUS maintains a fraternal relationship and with NAPARC churches, and that this be done by the Stated Clerk.
4. That the letter from Covenant Reformed Church, Carbondale, PA, be received as information only since Art. 83 of the Constitution assigns the prerogative for dissolving a congregation to Classis, and the Covenant East Classis, according to the Executive Committee report in its 2004 Abstract, has already taken action. Take Note.
5. That line #29 of the Statistics form/report be changed from "Giving to Non-budg. Rcus Causes" to "Giving to Non-Guideline Causes."
6. That the Synod adopt the following explanations for the statistics form/report:
 - A. Statistics shall be reported for the calendar year preceding the Classis to which they are submitted.
 - B. Line #1 "No. Of Elders" shall include only active elders other than ministers of the Word..
 - C. Line #2 "No. Of Deacons" shall include only active deacons.
 - D. Line #23 "Receipts from Reg. Offerings" shall include only normal Lord's Day offerings of the local congregation that are used for ordinary expenses.
 - E. Line #24 "Receipts from Spec. Offerings" shall include offerings of the congregation for specific purposes (e.g. Day of Prayer Offering).
 - F. Line #25 "Receipts from Other Sources" shall include any support or aid given by Classis or Synod.
 - G. Line #29 "Giving to non-Guideline RCUS Causes" shall include all monies given to support RCUS projects that are not included in the guidelines of Synod or Classis.
 - H. Line #31 "Other Expenses" shall include the remainder of expenditures not specified on lines 27-30, including debt payments (line #37) and interest payments.
 - I. Line #36 "Present Property Debts" shall reflect the end of year balance (remaining principal) of outstanding property debts.
 - J. Line #37 "Debt Payments past year" shall include only payments toward the principal of property debt and shall not include interest.
 - K. That the definition of "family" on the current statistics form continue to define line 16 "No. Of Families."
7. That the Stated Clerk include the above explanations with the Statistics forms in his annual mailing to the classes and/or congregations.
8. That the Executive Committee, in concert with the Synod Treasurer, continue contact with Mr. Chris Caughey, encouraging him to fulfill his loan obligations to the RCUS.
9. To enable John Sawtelle to seek a call in the RCUS, we extend the time of his loan payment four years from now, and that the Executive Committee work with him so that he makes regular payments during this time.
10. That Standing Rule 14 be amended by replacing "at least three weeks," etc., of the first sentence with "no later than April 1st. The only committee exempt from this requirement is Home Missions, which shall submit its report at least three weeks in advance of Synod.
F. Walker*, G. Sawtelle, W. Brice, C. W. Powell,

D. Van Peurseem, W. Lingenfelter, M. Kappas

G. Publications

Recommendations adopted:

1. That the Reformed Herald subscription rate continues at \$10.00 per year per family.
2. That the Rev. Paul Treick be nominated to serve as the editor of the *Reformed Herald*. An election by ballot resulted in the election of Rev. Paul Treick as editor of the *Reformed Herald*.
3. That the Reformed Herald editor be given an expense account of \$500.00 for the Synodical year.
4. That 50 eCertificate packages be produced and made available to the churches of the RCUS for \$20.00 a piece through the RCUS Book Depository.
5. That the second volume of the Sunday School curriculum be published in a CD format as soon as possible and made available through the Book Depository, and that the last two years be published in CD format and made available as they are ready, and that \$1,500 be budgeted for each CD volume.
6. That a Sunday School Curriculum Committee be formed to receive feed back from the churches and propose changes to the material to the Christian Education Committee. Suggested members: Carl Esparaza, James Ochsner, & Jon Blair.
7. That the curriculum not be placed in a printed form for at least four years to allow ample time for use of the materials and suggested revisions.
8. With regard to Recommendations 6-8 of the Permanent Publications Report, Take Note.
9. That a budget of \$1800 to maintain the denomination's web site be approved for the next Synodical year. This budget consists of \$1200 for web engineering, \$360 for web hosting and \$240 for software maintenance (if needed).
10. With regard to Web Site Committee Recommendations No. 2 - 6, Take Note.
11. That the request of Rev. Howard Hart to use the Sunday School curriculum for instruction in the 7th & 8th grade at Mitchell Christian High School be granted.
H. Bowen*, G. Mancilas, H. Hart, R. DeJong, C. Esparza, J. Johnson

H. Finances

Recommendations adopted:

1. That Synod pay the travel expenses for this meeting. The total is \$18,370.05.
2. That the deficit reduction balance of \$11,566.06 be transferred to the General Benevolence Fund to help offset part of the deficit in that fund.
3. That Clayton Greiman be appointed to the Finance Committee. Take Note.
4. That the elders and ministers of Synod remind their treasurers to use the up-to-date remittance forms and fill them out completely.
5. That Synod committees in their reports indicate the time period during which the Treasurer is to pay funds if it is not for the fiscal year.
6. That Synod commend the Treasurer, Elder Ted Griess, for his diligent labors during the past year.
7. That the Treasurer's and Auditor's Reports be approved.
8. That the Synod loan \$10,000 to Rock Springs Reformed Church from the Building Fund.

9. That Mr. Chuck Snyder be given an honorarium of \$1,000 and Mike Brabo one of \$800 for interpreting for Synod.

10. That the Synod Guideline for 2004 be as follows:

<i>Synod Dues</i>	8.00	<i>Building Fund</i>	3.00
<i>Deficit Reduction</i>	5.00	<i>Ministerial Aid</i>	15.00
<i>Home Missions</i>	51.00	<i>Dordt College</i>	2.25
<i>Foreign Ministries</i>	17.00	<i>Hope Haven</i>	2.00
<i>Ministerial Relief</i>	49.00	<i>Mid-America Seminary</i>	2.00
<i>Diaconal Ministries</i>	1.00	<i>New Geneva Seminary</i>	2.00
<i>Publishing</i>	5.00	<i>Heidelberg Seminary</i>	2.00
<i>Benevolence</i>	22.00	<i>Greenville Seminary</i>	1.00
<i>Student Aid</i>	7.00	TOTAL GUIDELINE	\$194.25

11. That the Synod pass the following resolution of information to future delegates, to be sent out by the Stated Clerk with other meeting information: 1) Delegates are urged to attempt to find the most inexpensive means of travel to Synod that are reasonable in the use of their time; 2) that delegates who request motel accommodations during Synod are to pay their own bill; and 3) that delegates who are placed in a motel by the hosting congregation shall have their bill paid by the host congregation.

12. That Synod disburse \$500 to the Manitowoc congregation to help with expenses of hosting Synod.

R. Grossmann*, J. Fluck, S. Richert, T. Griess (Treas.), S. Gross, C. Grieman

I. Minutes of Classes

Recommendations adopted:

Your committee commends the clerks of the four Classes for their diligent work, and recommend the following:

1. That the minutes of the Covenant East Classis be approved with the following exceptions:

A. The Treasurer's name and address are not included as per RCUS Constitution Art. 98, #6.

B. The credentials form from Redeemer Church lacked the signature of the Consistory Clerk.

C. The page number for the overtures and Services reports are incorrect.

D. The minute's conclusion was not signed.

2. That the minutes of the Northern Plains Classis be approved with the following exceptions:

A. The incorrect year is printed on the pages of the minutes themselves.

B. The excuses of the elders of Harvest Church are not on white paper.

C. The Interchurch Relations report was not signed by a majority of its members.

D. The parochial reports of Rev. Haddock and Rev. Jones were not signed.

3. That the minutes of the South Central Classis be approved with the following exceptions:

A. Various reports had either no signatures or insufficient numbers of signatures: President's; Treasurer's; Candidates and Credentials; Interchurch Relations; Publications; Reformed Resource Center; Heidelberg Youth Camp, and Executive Circulars.

B. A parochial report and a student under care report were not on 8 ½ x 11" white paper.

C. The Table of Contents for the documents needs further detail in accord with the agenda.

4. That the minutes of the Western Classis be approved with the following exceptions:

A. The Table of Contents page numbers for the minutes are incorrect.

B. Several parochial reports were not on all-white paper; one was unsigned.

C. Several reports had an insufficient number of signatures.

D. The appendix Table of Contents has the wrong page number for the Judicial Committee.

E. Complete names and addresses for Clerk, President, and Treasurer are not given, according to RCUS Constitution Art. 98, #6.

5. That all clerks be urged to include document or page numbers of the documents within the minutes proper, as was done in the minutes of South Central Classis and Northern Plains Classis.

H. Opp*, D. Dawn, M. Voytek, S. Hodge, J. McClay, E. Starks, M. Peery

J. Nominations

The Permanent and Special Committees adopted are list on page 20 of the Abstract (Summary Information).

M. Koerner*, D. Clark, H. Van Stedum, H. DeGroot, G. Stewart, J. Honeck, S. Powell

K. Excuses

Recommendations adopted:

1. That excuses be granted to the following delegates who were absent from all or part of the 258th Synod, according to their requests: P. Henderson, R. Davis, J. West, A. Rau, G. Gannon, T. Ochsner, V. Ochsner, J. Hieb, A. Haller, E. Ochsner, F. Walker, C. Fellersen, D. Dawn, S. Hodge, J. Saavalainen, G. Mancilas, L. Neifer, D. Van Peurse, D. Roe, S. Wilbur, J. Merica, D. Helseth, W. Embree, W. Haddock, A. Fickbohm, J. Jiesveld, Orrin Herrmann, D. Schnabel, J. Fluck, R. Morris, D. Fagrey, R. Gallimore, A. Dockter.

2. That the Executive Committee remind all the delegates of the Standing Rules and Rules of Order regarding excuses when the clerk sends out information for the next Synod.

D. Fagrey*, K. Sorensen, J. Blair, C. Beck, O. Herrmann, A. Dockter

L. Overtures

The Overtures Committee handled 65 items. Most were referred to the above Standing Committees and their disposition is recorded in their committee reports. Overtures Committee did handle some items which were adopted as listed below.

1. Request from Wayne Johnson concerning time to present the history recovery project be granted at an appropriate time, when he arrives.

2. Communication from MARS and Item #9 from Hope Haven, that their representatives would be here, Lord willing. Take Note.

3. Thanks from Ron Potter for benevolent aid. Take note.

- 4. That the invitation for the 259th Synodical meeting from Grace Reformed Church of Bakersfield, CA and Ebenezer Reformed Chapel of Shafter, CA, be accepted.
- 5. Overture 25 from Rock Springs Wyoming was a duplicate of Overture 22. Take Note.
- 6. Archive committee reported no materials received this year. Take Note.
- 5. Take note of the invitation to the centennial anniversary of the Odessa charge at First Reformed Church of Herried, SD, on August 1st, 2004 at 7:30 PM.
- 6. Regarding continued contact with Chris Caughey and John Sawtelle by the Executive Committee, take note.

D. Schnabel*, D. Kingswood, L. Gross, G. Baloy, T. Schieffelin,
L. Ochsner, A. Fickbohm

XVI. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

The following expression of appreciation to the host congregation was adopted. “Dear Saints of Salem Ebenezer, We extend to you our heartfelt appreciation for serving so wonderfully as the host of the 258th Synod. Your loving kindness in opening up your homes to us, preparing and serving the delegates delicious meals, providing transportation and granting us the opportunity for fellowship in the likemindedness of the Gospel will be truly memorable to us. We pray God’s richest blessings upon your service to His kingdom and hope that we might experience your Christian hospitality again in the future.”

That the next abstract be dedicated to the memory of Rev. Dorman Savage.

Synod wishes to commend Rev. Robert Grossmann for his diligent work as liaison to the Deaf Reformed pastors.

That Synod committees be allowed to send out email reports to consistories with whom they have made prior arrangements, was referred to the Executive Committee to report back next year.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Final roll call showed 38 ministers and 33 elder delegates present.

On motion it was determined that the 259th Session of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, meet at Shafter/Bakersfield, CA, at 7:30 PM on May 18, 2005.

The clerk read the minutes and the President declared them approved as corrected.

Elder Bill Borgwardt led the closing devotions with the reading of Romans 12 and prayer.

The President led the assembly in the Apostles’ Creed and Lord’s Prayer, the pronouncement of the benediction, and the singing of the doxology.

The business of the 258th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States concluded at 9:15 PM on Thursday, May 13, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul H. Treick, Stated Clerk



APPENDIX

STANDING RULES OF SYNOD

INDEX OF POSITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

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. A pastor and his elder delegate to Synod shall be paid twenty-two cents (\$.22) per running mile; when there is but one elder delegate, if he drives his own car, he shall be paid twenty cents (\$.20), and if he rides with another person he shall be paid two cents (\$.02) per mile. When distance and time require delegates to use public transportation to Synod they shall be granted full fare. [1996]

6. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel in behalf of Synod at twenty cents (\$.20) per running mile, also if several ride together in one car, or if by public transportation, the actual fare. [1996]

7. 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.

8. 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 dollars (\$1,000), 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]

9. 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.

10. 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]

11. The Synod shall have Permanent Committees as follows:

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

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

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

13. 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]

14. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Synod shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the churches and the Treasurer of Synod no later than April 1st. 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, at least two weeks before the meeting of Synod. 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]

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

16. 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]

17. 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]

18. 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]

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

20. 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]

21. 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]

22. Each year the Synod of the RCUS will pay for the services of at least two American Sign Language interpreters to interpret the proceedings of Synod. The interpreters are to be chosen by the consistories of the deaf churches of the RCUS. [2002]

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Membership and Financial Statistics - 2003		No. of Elders	No. of Deacons	Comm. Memb. Last Yr.	Rec'd by Confirmation	Rec'd by Letter	Rec'd by Prof.	Total Rec'd	Tot.OI d/New Memb.	Lost by Dis-missal
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS										
Bentonville, AR	Grace Chapel	0	0	4	0	4	2	6	10	0
Columbia, MD	Deaf	2	1	19	0	0	0	0	19	2
Danville, KY	Deaf	2	0	14	0	2	0	2	16	0
Garner, IA	Peace	3	3	121	0	5	2	7	128	4
Golden Valley, MN	Redeemer	3	3	55	0	4	3	7	62	1
Hamburg, MN	St. Paul's	3	3	246	2	0	1	3	249	1
Kansas City, MO	Northland	2	3	53	0	4	0	4	57	11
Napoleon, OH	Peace (incl. PA)	3	3	62	0	10	1	11	73	0
Newton, WI	Salem-Ebenezer	3	3	266	3	0	8	11	277	0
Subtotal		21	19	840	5	29	17	51	891	19
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS										
Aberdeen, SD	First	3	3	112	0	0	0	0	112	2
Ashley, ND	Salem	3	3	52	0	0	0	0	52	0
Denhoff, ND	Kassel	2	2	27	0	0	0	0	27	2
Eureka, SD	Eureka	3	3	210	3	0	0	3	213	1
Herried, SD	First	2	2	65	0	0	1	1	66	2
Hosmer, SD	Hosmer	2	3	40	0	0	0	0	40	0
Leola, SD	Oranien	1	2	10	0	0	0	0	10	0
Minot, ND	Harvest	2	3	35	4	0	5	9	44	0
Pierre, SD	Hope	2	0	21	0	0	0	0	21	1
Watertown, SD	Covenant	2	0	20	0	0	0	0	20	2
Subtotal		22	21	592	7	0	6	13	605	10
SOUTH CENTRAL CLASSIS										
Calhan, CO	High Plains	0	0	11	0	2	6	8	19	0
Col Spr., CO	Trinity Cov.	2	1	46	0	1	7	8	54	4
Greeley, CO	Grace	1	2	22	0	2	3	5	27	0
Karval, CO	Bl Cliff Com.	3	2	19	2	1	0	3	22	0
Limon, CO	Providence	1	1	12	0	2	0	2	14	0
Lincoln, NE	St. John's	4	4	71	3	3	0	6	77	2
Menno, SD	Zion	6	6	192	0	0	1	1	193	8
Mitchell, SD	Grace	3	2	72	3	2	0	5	77	5
Rapid City, SD	Grace	2	2	55	0	0	1	1	56	4
Rock Spr., WY	Providence	3	1	33	0	0	2	2	35	2
Sioux Falls, SD	Trinity	5	5	104	4	4	2	10	114	3
Sutton, NE	Emmanuel	3	3	167	5	0	0	5	172	18
Sutton, NE	Hope	4	4	226	4	19	0	23	249	4
Vermillion, SD	Providence	2	1	23	0	0	0	0	23	3
Subtotal		39	34	1053	21	36	22	79	1132	53
WESTERN CLASSIS										
Anderson, CA	Faith	1	1	26	0	5	0	5	31	0
Bakersfield, CA	Grace	4	4	141	4	2	4	10	151	1
Chico, CA	Covenant	2	2	20	0	0	2	2	22	0
Grass Valley, CA	Covenant (Sn Ram)	3	3	66	0	3	6	9	75	0
La Habre, CA	Rehoboth Chapel	0	0	18	0	0	6	6	24	0
Lancaster, CA	Grace	3	2	34	0	0	1	1	35	0
Lodi, CA	Providence	4	3	53	2	1	4	7	60	0
Modesto, CA	Trinity	4	3	64	7	1	2	10	78	9
Scramento, CA	Covenant (Sn Diego)	5	7	138	7	5	1	13	151	4
San Diego, CA	Covenant Chapel	1	1	14	0	0	0	0	14	0
San Ramon, CA	Grace Chapel	0	0	20	0	1	2	3	23	0
Shafter, CA	Ebenezer (LA)	6	4	112	0	1	8	9	121	1
Willows, CA	Grace	0	2	34	2	0	6	8	42	5
Yuba City, CA	First	3	2	50	0	0	0	0	50	1
Subtotal		35	33	738	22	18	34	74	816	21
TOTALS THIS YEAR		117	107	3223	55	83	79	217	3444	103
TOTALS LAST YEAR		120	107	3287	41	91	78	210	3497	110
CHANGE		-2%	0%	-2%	0.25	-9%	+1%	+3%	-2%	-6%

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	10	2	12	6	3	0	0	0	10	6
1	0	3	16	7	23	7	7	0	0	0	19	12
0	0	0	16	15	31	10	8	0	3	3	12	9
7	1	12	117	30	147	71	20	0	3	3	103	5
0	0	1	61	52	113	33	45	0	5	5	62	6
0	3	4	245	44	289	137	36	0	0	0	192	7
11	0	22	35	27	62	19	26	0	1	1	35	6
3	2	5	68	25	93	42	22	0	1	1	67	7
7	6	13	264	42	306	150	33	0	3	3	231	4
29	12	60	832	244	1,076	475	200	0	16	16	731	62
0	3	5	107	34	141	60	28	0	2	2	95	4
0	1	1	51	1	52	28	4	0	0	0	49	3
0	0	2	25	4	29	19	4	0	0	0	25	4
0	6	7	206	28	234	111	20	0	0	0	175	7
5	0	7	59	12	71	33	14	0	0	0	54	14
0	0	0	40	1	41	26	0	0	0	0	30	3
0	2	2	8	0	8	5	0	0	0	0	8	4
0	0	0	44	17	61	24	17	0	4	4	44	12
0	0	1	20	2	22	10	2	0	0	0	20	6
1	0	3	17	7	24	9	4	0	0	0	17	6
6	12	28	577	106	683	325	93	0	6	6	517	63
0	0	0	19	13	32	8	9	0	0	0	19	2
6	0	10	44	14	58	26	14	1	0	1	41	12
0	0	0	27	17	44	15	17	0	2	2	27	4
0	1	1	21	10	31	18	0	0	1	1	22	4
2	0	2	16	10	26	6	10	0	0	0	16	4
0	0	2	75	26	101	37	17	0	2	2	68	6
5	3	16	177	38	215	93	39	0	3	3	173	4
0	1	6	71	33	104	35	30	0	1	1	71	4
0	1	5	51	41	92	26	34	0	2	2	55	8
0	0	2	33	14	47	19	9	0	1	1	31	12
0	0	3	111	50	161	56	46	0	2	2	110	5
4	2	24	148	31	179	78	23	0	3	3	153	4
8	0	12	237	66	303	108	75	0	4	4	230	5
1	0	4	19	9	28	12	3	0	1	1	23	4
26	8	87	1,049	372	1,421	537	326	1	22	23	1,039	78
0	0	0	31	6	37	20	10	0	0	0	27	4
11	6	18	133	32	165	78	34	1	1	2	124	4
1	0	1	21	1	22	11	0	0	0	0	22	12
7	0	7	68	33	101	37	27	0	7	7	69	16
0	0	0	24	8	32	11	12	2	1	3	23	6
0	0	0	35	26	61	22	11	0	0	0	36	4
2	0	2	58	27	85	31	20	0	3	3	58	12
2	0	11	63	29	92	24	25	0	1	1	61	4
4	0	8	143	97	240	64	76	1	4	5	143	15
2	0	2	12	8	20	7	8	0	0	0	14	9
0	0	0	23	4	27	13	0	0	2	2	19	4
3	2	6	115	42	157	57	35	2	4	6	106	6
1	1	7	35	25	60	17	15	3	2	5	34	12
0	2	3	47	24	71	26	18	0	0	0	49	12
31	11	63	749	342	1,091	387	271	7	22	29	729	101
92	43	238	3,207	1,064	4,271	1,724	890	8	66	74	3,016	304
85	44	239	3,258	1,111	4,369	1,729	951	3	81	84	3,045	311
+8%	-2%	0%	-2%	-4%	-2%	0%	-6	+63%	-19%	-12%	-1%	-2%

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS - 2003

COVENANT EAST CLASSIS

		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-Budg. RCUS Causes	Giving to Non-RCUS Causes
Bentonville, AR	Grace Chapel	24,247	615	28,800	53,662	793	108	0	0
Columbia, MD	Deaf	24,100	916	3,250	28,266	1,487	1,026	0	1,380
Danville, KY	Deaf	15,280	0	15,280	3,172	864	0	0	0
Garner, IA	Peace	88,881	30,558	2,342	121,781	25,656	6,534	2,090	300
Golden Valley, MN	Redeemer	162,749	4,085	23,431	190,265	9,860	2,970	4,085	0
Hamburg, MN	St. Paul's	185,430	1,066	224,301	410,797	23,056	13,284	125	1,066
Kansas City, MO	Northland	134,657	2,981	72,000	209,638	7,464	1,890	200	2,000
Napoleon, OH	Peace (Incl. PA)	105,478	5,598	2,032	113,108	12,892	3,348	2,930	1,814
Newton, WI	Salem-Ebenezer	123,795	2,951	30,973	157,719	45,801	14,364	919	2,507
Subtotal		864,617	48,770	387,129	1,300,516	130,181	44,388	10,349	9,067

NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS

		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-Budg. RCUS Causes	Giving to Non-RCUS Causes
Aberdeen, SD	First	61,244	5,033	5,685	71,962	13,396	4,592	0	0
Ashley, ND	Salem	30,659	860	3,469	34,988	8,800	2,132	150	100
Denhoff, ND	Kassel	11,591	0	174	11,765	4,978	1,066	0	133
Eureka, SD	Eureka	100,467	3,413	24,771	128,651	14,700	16,110	840	2,805
Herried, SD	First	39,522	9,376	111	49,009	3,647	2,665	250	0
Hosmer, SD	Hosmer	6,433	1,370	12,275	20,078	560	120	0	0
Leola, SD	Oranien	7,302	775	412	8,489	1,933	410	50	0
Minot, ND	Harvest	48,895	9,351	4,345	62,591	5,067	1,476	0	0
Pierre, SD	Hope	28,339	439	450	29,228	1,276	861	0	357
Watertown, SD	Covenant	29,745	870	26,523	57,138	3,865	820	435	285
Subtotal		364,197	31,487	78,215	473,899	58,222	30,252	1,725	3,680

SOUTH CENTRAL CLASSIS

		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-Budg. RCUS Causes	Giving to Non-RCUS Causes
Calhan, CO	High Plains	37,215	0	36,000	73,215	3,385	1,271	0	0
Col Spr., CO	Trinity Cov.	47,301	0	9,329	56,630	8,753	3,290	0	625
Greeley, CO	Grace	45,061	92,848	37,160	175,069	4,005	1,496	1,017	196
Karval, CO	Bl Cliff Com.	19,020	195	54,680	73,895	0	120	0	0
Limon, CO	Providence	17,737	0	0	17,737	2,379	897	0	0
Lincoln, NE	St. John's	58,374	10,151	711	69,236	12,495	4,711	1,938	483
Menno, SD	Zion	98,025	14,820	12,259	125,104	37,104	14,358	1,896	0
Mitchell, SD	Grace	60,446	26,508	0	86,954	14,314	5,384	0	0
Rapid City, SD	Grace	137,485	0	0	137,485	11,082	4,188	0	0
Rock Spr., WY	Providence	61,029	3,507	0	64,536	6,431	2,656	1,850	1,192
Sioux Falls, SD	Trinity	138,493	12,410	977	151,880	19,445	9,635	4,129	5,721
Sutton, NE	Emmanuel	65,455	3,189	822	69,466	7,616	12,529	900	3,084
Sutton, NE	Hope	125,254	13,187	2,305	140,746	45,031	17,872	1,384	11,761
Vermillion, SD	Providence	40,155	2,358	31,873	74,386	6,263	1,820	1,398	0
Subtotal		951,050	179,173	186,116	1,316,339	178,303	80,107	14,632	23,062

WESTERN CLASSIS

		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-Budg. RCUS Causes	Giving to Non-RCUS Causes
Anderson, CA	Faith	44,110	0	17,150	61,260	5,415	2,600	0	0
Bakersfield, CA	Grace	164,890	199,423	18,856	383,169	28,869	14,100	0	4,515
Chico, CA	Covenant	40,709	721	25,505	66,933	232	300	200	20
Grass Valley, CA	Cov. (SnRam)	143,577	10,271	41,706	195,554	4,673	2,344	483	12,773
La Habre, CA	Rehoboth Chapel	47,975	0	32,537	80,512	w/ Shafter	w/ Shafter	0	0
Lancaster, CA	Grace	61,032	6,184	13,544	80,760	6,650	3,400	324	0
Lodi, CA	Providence	86,752	3,335	8,779	98,866	10,562	5,301	3,930	474
Modesto, CA	Trinity	84,904	518	17,839	103,261	7,945	5,015	0	0
Sacramento, CA	Cov (Sn Diego)	246,905	118,192	132,942	498,039	27,389	13,800	26,311	15,546
San Diego, CA	Covenant Chapel	24,589	100	8,263	32,952	2,741	1,400	100	0
San Ramon, CA	Grace Chapel	38,775	0	37,000	75,775	4,145	2,080	0	0
Shafter, CA	Ebenezer (LA)	160,540	9,678	34,495	204,713	22,100	11,100	2,709	6,905
Willows, CA	Grace	77,346	12,380	3,240	93,444	640	3,700	2,060	250
Yuba City, CA	First	88,440	21,740	1,900	112,080	9,575	5,000	1,456	5,742
Subtotal		1,199,205	382,442	315,956	1,898,079	124,050	66,660	37,473	46,225

TOTALS THIS YEAR

TOTALS THIS YEAR		3,379,069	641,872	967,416	4,988,333	490,756	221,407	64,179	82,043
TOTALS LAST YEAR		3,217,092	229,622	1,862,731	5,309,445	514,552	223,293	73,605	120,533
CHANGE		+5%	+64%	-52%	-6%	-5%	-1%	-13%	-32%

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.
27,462	28,363	0	0	0	0	0	198	27	225
26,301	30,194	0	0	0	0	0	78	54	132
8,438	12,474	0	0	0	0	0	227	62	288
84,685	119,265	700,000	120,000	19,045	0	0	212	54	283
158,536	175,451	660,000	210,000	28,018	603,924	49,435	179	54	308
447,899	485,430	1,225,000	150,000	225,000	73,000	0	94	54	148
217,908	229,462	1,200,000	120,000	4,650	450,000	120,600	141	36	180
73,990	94,974	165,000	85,000	477	0	0	208	54	309
92,673	156,264	650,000	140,000	9,887	0	0	172	54	230
1,137,892	1,331,877	4,600,000	825,000	287,077	1,126,924	170,035	168	50	234
52,909	70,897	150,000	90,000	0	0	0	120	41	161
29,300	40,482	24,900	19,000	6,169	0	0	169	41	213
8,063	14,240	10,000	0	0	0	0	184	39	224
82,934	117,389	250,000	75,000	12,572	0	0	70	77	151
36,257	42,819	40,000	42,000	4,000	0	0	56	41	101
22,242	22,922	25,000	0	0	0	0	14	3	17
6,972	9,365	20,000	0	0	0	0	193	41	239
53,034	59,577	150,000	78,000	7,790	18,809	3,978	145	42	187
26,534	29,028	100,000	105,000	325	41,788	7,116	61	41	102
54,278	59,683	0	145,000	0	17,600	15,000	193	41	256
372,523	466,402	769,900	554,000	30,856	78,197	26,094	98	51	152
64,630	69,286	89,000	165,000	15,000	154,660	9,153	308	116	423
43,216	55,884	0	0	0	0	0	199	75	274
203,337	210,051	192,000	158,000	3,220	191,000	27,237	182	68	296
75,580	75,700	0	0	0	38,071	1,929	0	0	0
15,994	19,270	48,000	0	0	17,000	4,205	238	90	328
37,971	57,598	110,000	99,100	0	0	0	198	75	304
70,932	124,290	500,000	75,000	8,500	0	0	193	74	267
0	19,698	260,000	85,000	0	10,000	500	198	75	274
60,305	75,575	257,000	174,000	107,227	25,000	3,430	201	76	278
49,434	61,563	0	0	0	24,000	3,517	195	80	331
75,252	114,182	423,946	140,000	9,119	173,674	35,145	187	93	319
46,596	70,725	522,000	156,960	0	0	0	46	75	126
74,296	150,344	400,000	60,000	4,300	0	0	199	79	284
74,694	84,175	250,000	85,000	4,024	6,000	13,000	272	79	351
892,237	1,188,341	3,051,946	1,198,060	151,390	639,405	98,116	171	77	261
47,866	55,881	360,000	0	1,275	0	0	208	100	308
294,089	341,591	500,000	200,000	0	0	185,243	205	100	305
72,914	73,677	0	0	0	0	0	12	15	37
170,163	190,436	179,000	0	401	100,000	11,475	71	36	114
73,268	73,268	0	0	0	0	0	w/ Shafter	w/ Shafter	w/ Shafter
78,611	88,985	0	0	0	0	0	196	100	305
78,762	99,029	225,201	0	0	0	0	225	113	373
89,574	102,534	340,000	0	1,015	81,345	18,300	124	78	203
391,280	474,326	255,500	0	55,500	0	0	198	100	298
20,208	24,449	0	0	0	0	0	196	100	296
73,427	79,652	0	0	0	0	0	207	104	311
182,917	225,731	412,000	77,000	0	0	0	199	100	324
79,010	91,660	400,000	0	6,985	0	0	195	109	364
65,310	87,083	220,000	120,000	3,000	84,000	10,360	192	100	321
1,550,496	1,830,933	2,891,701	397,000	68,176	265,345	225,378	176	90	317
3,953,148	4,817,553	11,313,547	2,974,060	537,499	2,109,871	519,623	153	67	241
3,081,531	4,013,514	10,650,556	2,633,060	313,764	2,069,853	369,871	157	68	247
+22%	+17%	+6%	+11%	+42%	+2%	+29%	-3%	-1%	-2%

GENERAL INFORMATION

Internal Revenue Service Number for the RCUS

51-0202914

Publications of the RCUS

RCUS Book Depository

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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

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)

Safe Harbor Lighthouse, Kansas City, MO

Reformed Church in the U. S. Website

rcus.org