

The
Reformed Church
in the
United States

Abstract of the Minutes
268th Synod

May 19-22, 2014
Emmanuel Reformed Church
Sutton, NE

This abstract of the 268th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States is dedicated in thanksgiving to God for the life and ministry of Rev. Robert Grossmann, who is now retired after over fifty years of faithful ministry.

Born at Eurkea SD to Rev. Walter and Dorothy Grossmann, Robert received early education in Hosmer, SD and Shafter, CA public schools. He graduated University of California at Berkeley in January 1960, and Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia in 1963. He received a Doctor of Divinity from Whitfield Seminary and PhD from Reformed International Theological Seminary, both in Florida.

Rev. Grossmann served RCUS churches at Pierre, SD, Artas and Herried, SD, Kansas City, MO, Mitchell, SD, Garner, IA, and Vermillion, SD, over a period of 52 years. He taught at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Whitfield Seminary, Heidelberg Seminary and Reformed International Seminary, full-time and part-time, over the past 28 years. He served as RCUS Foreign Missions Committee member and chairman

over the past 50 years, with travels to Kenya and the Congo in 1998 and 2004. In addition to authoring many articles and several books on Theology, Church History and Apologetics, he has also carried on a radio-preaching ministry for the past 51 years.

Robert married Pauline Carman in 1962 with whom he has six children, Samuel (deceased), Jonathan, Dorthea, Lydia, Ruth and James.

We give all the glory to the King of the Church for giving gifts to men and for giving gifted-men to His church (Ephesians 4:8-11).

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DIRECTORY OF CONGREGATIONS

ARKANSAS

NORTHWEST, AR (479) 202-5550; Pastor Brice cell: (479) 372-1177
 Grace Reformed, 3320 N. Second St. Rogers, AR 72756
 Service Times: Worship: 10:00 AM; SS 11:30 AM
 Pastor: Wesley Brice/ Ginger
www.gracereformednwa.org

CALIFORNIA

ANDERSON, CA (530) 365-6874; www.faithrcus.org

Faith Reformed, 3291 Rupert Rd.

Mail: P.O. Box 1973, Cottonwood, CA 96022

Service Times: SS 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM

Pastor: Vacant

BAKERSFIELD, CA (661) 587-3723; www.bakersfieldreformed.org

Grace Reformed, 420 Columbus St., Bakersfield, CA 93305

Service Times: Worship 9:30 AM; SS 11:00 AM

Pastor: Tracy Gruggett / Michelle; Pastor Emeritus: Lloyd Gross / Claire

CHICO, CA (530) 345-2732; www.reformedchico.org

Covenant Reformed, Meeting at 1877 Hooker Oak Ave.

Mail: P.O. Box 1612, Chico, CA 95927-1612

Service Times: SS 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM

Pastor: Gary Mancilas / Gloria

GRASS VALLEY, CA (530) 273-6280

Covenant Reformed, 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA 95945

Service Times: SS 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM; Wed. Study & Prayer 6:30 PM

Pastor: Dennis E. Roe / Julie; Assoc. Pastor: Jonathan Merica / Marsha

www.crcgv.org

LANCASTER, CA - (Antelope Valley) (661) 940-4669

Grace Reformed, 121 Carriage Lane, Suite 111, Lancaster, CA 93534

Service Times: SS 9:45 AM; Worship 10:45 AM; B.Study 6:30 PM

Pastor: Richard Stetler/ Heidi; Emeritus: Neale Riffert / Mary Elizabeth

www.gracereformedchurchlanaster.com

LODI, CA (209) 367-0552; www.prcloidi.com

Providence Reformed, 245 E. Vine St., Lodi, CA 95240

Service Times: SS 9:30 AM; Worship 10:45 AM; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 PM

Pastor: Doug Schlegel / Cheryl

LOS ANGELES, CA (626) 820-9390

Rehoboth Reformed, meeting at Cerritos Elementary School, 13600 183rd. Street, Cerritos.

Mail: 17874 Crimson Crest Dr. Rowland Heights, CA 91748

Service Times: Worship at 10:00 AM and 1:30 PM; SS 11:45 AM

Mission Pastor: Michael Voytek / Rebecca

www.RehobothReformedChurch.org

MODESTO, CA (209) 523-3220

Trinity Reformed, 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto, CA 95350

Service Times: SS 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM; Bible Study (1st & 3rd Sunday) 5:30 PM

Pastor: Hank Bowen/ Patty; Pastor Emeritus: Paul Treick / Karen

www.trinitymodesto.org

SACRAMENTO, CA (916) 451-1190

Covenant Reformed, 2020 16th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822

Service Times: SS 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM.

Pastor: Jimmy Hall/ Stefani; Emeritus Jim West/ Elaine; Assoc. Frank Walker/ Christine

www.covenantreformedchurch.org

SAN DIEGO, CA (619) 460-1321

Covenant Reformed Church, 49 3rd Ave., Chula Vista, CA

Mail: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977

Service Times: SS 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM; Bible Study 6:00 PM

Pastor: Gil Baloy / Maricar

www.covenantRCUS.org

SHAFTER, CA (661) 746-6907

Ebenezer Reformed, 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263

Worship Times: Worship 10:00 AM; SS 11:30 AM

Pastor: Paul Henderson/ Tina; Emeritus Vernon Pollema/ Betty

Associate: Valentin Alpuche/ Beartriz

STOCKTON, CA (209) 470-7174

Calvary Reformed Chapel, Clarion Inn, 4219 E. Waterloo Rd., Stockton, CA 96216

Mail: P.O. Box 692426, Stockton, CA 95269

Service Times: SS 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM

Pastor: Jonathan Merica/ Marsha
www.calvaryreformedchapel.com

WILLOWS, CA (530) 934-2732; www.gracercus.org
Grace Reformed, 148 W. Sycamore St.
Mail: P.O. Box 225, Willows, CA 95988
Service Times: SS 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM; Sunday Bible Study 6:00 PM
Pastor: Eric Bristley/ Kathleen

YUBA CITY, CA (530) 674-8797
First Reformed, 9882 Garden Hwy, Yuba City, CA 95991
Service Times: SS 9:30 AM; Worship 11:00 AM
Pastor: Sam Powell/ Susan; Emeritus: Gene Sawtelle/ Sharon
www.reformedyubacity.org

COLORADO

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO (719) 590-1477; Fax: 877-895-2241
Trinity Covenant Reformed, Grace Presbyterian Church, 2511 N. Logan Ave.
Mail: 6050 Del Paz Dr. Colorado Springs, CO 80918.
Service Times: Worship 10:30 AM; SS 12:35 PM
Pastor: C.W. "Bud" Powell, Jr. / Penny
www.trinitycovenant.com

GREELEY, CO (970) 336-9927; www.reformedgreeley.org
Grace Reformed, 1501 10th Ave.
Mail: 1505 10th Ave. Greeley, CO 80631.
Service Times: Worship 10:00 AM
Pastor: Jon Blair / Wendy

LIMON, CO (719) 775-9064; Fax: 719-775-9064
Providence Reformed, 725 Michigan Ave.
Mail: P.O. Box 848, Limon, CO 80828.
Service Times: Worship 10:00 AM; SS 11:30 AM
Pastor: Kevin Carroll / Tammy

IOWA

GARNER, IA (641) 923-3060; www.peacereformedchurch.com
Peace Reformed, 1905 200th St., Garner, IA 50438 (3 miles south of Garner on US 69)
Service Times: SS 9:30 AM; Worship: 10:30 AM
Pastor: Vacant

MINNESOTA

EDEN PRAIRIE, MN (612) 751-2096; www.emmausrcus.org
Emmaus Road Reformed, 12000 Anderson Lakes Parkway, Eden Prairie, MN.
Mail: 8701 Wood Cliff Road; Bloomington, MN 55438
Service times: SS 9:10 AM; Worship 10:30 AM
Pastor: Ryan Kron/ Colleen

HAMBURG, MN (952) 467-3878; www.stpaulsrcus.org
St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 15480 County Road 31, Hamburg, MN 55339
Service Times: SS 8:30 AM, Worship: 9:30 AM
Pastor: Rev. Dan Schnabel / Marie

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (763) 417-9835; www.redeemerrcus.org
Redeemer Reformed, 1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley, MN 55422
Mail: 3101 Virginia Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55427
Service Times: Worship: 10:15 AM and 5:00 PM, SS 9:00 AM (Sept. - May)
Pastor: James Sawtelle / Thelma

MISSOURI

KANSAS CITY, MO (816) 420-9700; www.northlandreformed.org
Northland Reformed, 2901 NW Cookingham Dr., Kansas City, MO 64164
Service Times: Worship: 9:30 AM and 5:00 PM; SS 11:00 AM
Pastor: Rev. Randall Klynsma/ Julie

NEBRASKA

LINCOLN, NE (402) 476-1827; www.stjohnsrcus.com

St. John's Reformed, 1101 South 26th St., Lincoln, NE 68502
Service Times: SS 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM
Pastor: Lee Johnson /Jenny Jo

OMAHA, NE (under the oversight of St. Johns in Lincoln)

SUTTON, NE (402) 773-4218

Emmanuel Reformed, 110 S. Way Ave
Mail: P.O. Box 362, Sutton, NE 68979
Service Times: SS 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM
Pastor: Joe Vusich /Gioia

SUTTON, NE (402) 773-4330

Hope Reformed, 311 E. Hickory
Mail: P.O. Box 372, Sutton, NE 68979
Service Times: SS 9:00 AM; Worship 10:30 AM; B.Study: 6:30PM
Pastor: Darrell Kingswood / Lori

NORTH DAKOTA

ANAMOOSE, ND (701) 626-7429

Kassel Reformed, meeting at St. Martin's Lutheran Church, Anamoose, ND 58710
Mail: 542 20th St. NE, Butte, ND 58723
Service Times:
Pastor: vacant; Clerk: Aaron Rau.

ASHLEY, ND (701) 288-3265

Salem Reformed, 209 1st Ave. SW, Ashley, ND
Mail: P.O. Box 345, Ashley, ND 58413
Service Times: Worship 9 AM
Pastor: Vacant; Clerk: Ron Meidinger

DICKINSON, ND (701) 974-4491; www.frcofd.com

First Reformed Chapel (under oversight of Salem Reformed in Ashley)
Meeting at Dickinson Holiday Inn Express
Mail: P.O. Box 60, Taylor, ND 58656-0060
Service times: SS 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM; Evening Study 6:30 PM.
Pastor: L. Dale Clark / Sandra

MINOT, ND (701) 838-6050

Harvest RCUS; Mail: P.O. Box 804. Minot, ND 58701
Service Times: Worship 10:30 AM
Pastor: Phil Poe / Karen

OHIO

NAPOLEON, OH (419) 599-3106; www.peacercus.com

Peace Reformed, 638 Huddle Rd., Napoleon, OH, 43545
Service Times: SS 9:00 AM, Worship 10:00 AM
Pastor: Rev. Steven Altman/ Bianca

PENNSYLVANIA

WAYMART, PA (570) 785-4012; www.heritagercus.org

Heritage Reformed, meeting at Waymart Presbyterian, 200 Belmont St., Waymart, PA 18472
Mail: 136 Grand Ave., Forest City, PA 18421
Service Times: Bible study: 9:30 AM, Worship: 10:30 AM
Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter/ Sharon

SOUTH DAKOTA

ABERDEEN, SD (605) 229-5953

First Reformed, 818 9th Ave. SE
Mail: 1002 Diamond St., Aberdeen, SD 57401
Service Times: Worship 9 AM
Pastor: David Dawn / Colleen
www.aberdeencus.org

EUREKA, SD (605) 284-2396; fax: call first

Eureka Reformed, 310 F Ave.
Mail: PO Box 456, Eureka, SD 57437
Service Times: Worship 9:00 AM

Pastor: James Grossmann/ Michelle

HERRIED, SD (605) 437-2481

First Reformed, 601 Main St.
Mail: PO Box 212, Herreid, SD 57632
Service Times: Worship 10 AM; SS 11:15 AM
Pastor: Vacant

HOSMER, SD

Hosmer Reformed, 202 West 5th St.
Mail: P.O. Box 136, Hosmer, SD 57448
Service Times: Worship 11 AM
Pastor: vacant; Clerk: LeRoy Neifer

MENNO, SD (605) 387-5536

Zion Reformed, 220 South Pine St. Menno, SD 57045
Service Times: Worship 10:30 AM
Pastor: Travis Grassmid / Charity

MITCHELL, SD (605) 996-2803

Grace Reformed, 1021 S. Davison
Mail: P.O. Box 252, Mitchell, SD 57301
Service Times: SS 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM
Pastor: Vacant
www.gracereformed.com

PIERRE, SD (605) 224-7846

Hope Reformed, 317 S. Garfield; Pierre, SD 57501
Service Times: Worship 9:30 AM; SS 10:30 AM; Wed. 7:30 PM
Pastor: J.P. Mosley / Francesca
www.hopercus.com

RAPID CITY, SD (605) 399-1711

Grace Reformed, 5626 Haines Ave., Rapid City, SD 57701
Service Times: SS 9:00 AM; Worship 10:30 AM; Bible Study 6:00 PM
Pastor: David Fagrey / Bonnie
www.gracereformedrapidcity.com

SIOUX FALLS, SD (605) 271-0754

Trinity Reformed, 7301 S. Louise Ave; Sioux Falls, SD 57106
Service Times: Worship 10:00 AM; SS 9:00 AM
Pastor: Mike McGee/ Jenny; Associate Maynard Koerner/ Marcia
www.trinityrcus.org

VERMILLION, SD (605) 624-4337

Providence Reformed, 830 E. Madison, Vermillion, SD 57069
Service Times: SS 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM
Pastor: Scott Henry/ Maria
www.providencercus.com

WATERTOWN, SD (605) 878-4567

Covenant Reformed, 15, 12th Ave. NE, Watertown, SD
Mail: 434 30th St. NW, Watertown, SD 57201
Service Times: Worship 10 AM; SS 11:20 AM
Pastor: George Syms / Debbie

TEXAS

SHERMAN, TX (903) 893-7547

Christ the King Reformed Chapel, Taxoma Room, Hampton Inn
Mail: 122 Willow Ridge Cir. Sherman, TX 75092
Service Times: call
Mission Pastor: Rev. Neal Riffert / Elizabeth

WISCONSIN

MANITOWOC, WI (920) 726-4940; email: salem@lakefield.net

Salem Ebenezer RCUS, 6524 Hwy C, Manitowoc, WI 54220
Service Times: SS 8:45 AM, Worship 10:00 AM
Pastor: Rev. Kyle Sorensen / Donielle
www.salemebenezer.org

WYOMING

CASPER, WY (307) 277-5901

Christ Reformed, meeting at Evansville Community Center, 71 Curtis St. Evansville, WY

Mail: 157 Forget Me Not, Casper, WY 82604

Service Times: Worship 9:30 AM; SS 11:30 AM

Pastor: Matthew Powell / Andrea

www.christreformedrcus.org

ROCK SPRINGS, WY (307) 362-5107

Providence Reformed, 1007 9th St., Rock Springs, WY 82901.

Service Times: Worship 10 AM; SS 11:45 AM

Pastor George Horner / Mary Jo

www.providencerocksprings.org

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Permanent Synodical Committees

Archives: Pastor of Willows (E. Bristley), R. Wegis, J.P. Mosely, G. Mancilas, M. Crook.

Board of Trustees: D. Clark, T. Rott, J. Snyder.

Christian Education: J. Grossmann, J. Blair, M. Reyna (1yr); K. Sorensen, T. Grugget, C.W. Powell, A. White (2yr); L. Johnson, J. Fluck, D. Weilersbacher, D. Kingswood (3yr).

Diaconal Ministries: J. Berg, D. Benz, Bobby Duncan (1yr); S. Altman, K. Armbruster, S. Henry, J. West (2yr); B. Davis, C. Dockter (deacon), P. Poe (3yr).

Editorial Advice: D. Dawn, G. Van Holland (1yr); G. Horner (2yr); J. West, J. Connelly (3yr).

Executive: J. Sawtelle, D. Fagrey, F. Walker, R. Gallimore, K. Bowen.

Foreign Ministries: D. Roe, G. Baloy, W. Johnson, A. Haller (1yr). D. Schnabel, R. Grossmann, D. Schlegel (2yr); M. Voytek, B. Borgwardt, T. Mayville, J. DeYoung (3yr).

Sub Committee- Radio Liaisons: P. Treick, N. Riffert, D. Schnabel, B. Borgwardt;

Home Missions: H. Opp (CE), H. Hart (SC), H. Bowen (WC), P. Poe (NP) (1yr); M. Willemsen (CE), Dan Mettler (SC) (2yr); D. Helseth (WC), L. Goehring (NP) (3yr).

Interchurch Relations: M. Koerner, R. Saunders (1yr); M. McGee, W. Brice, F. Hofmann, G. Syms, M. Wiersma, J. Merica (2yr); R. Potter, V. Pollema, R. Kron (3yr).

Ministerial Relief (MAF): M. Fisher, S. Gross, R. Goehring, R. Schnabel, J. Morton, W. Johnson.

Publication and Promotion: J. Hall, T. Grassmid, K. Carroll, P. Henderson, J. Vusich (1yr); A. Gillman, R. Mettler, R. Klyisma, D. Yeager (2yr); S. Powell, L. Lynch, R. Stetler (3yr).

Sub Committee – Website: M. Powell, F. Walker, R. DeJong, R. Mettler.

Special Judicial Committee: V. Pollema, N. Riffert, M. Powell, R. Stetler, S. Kooistra, J. Stuebbe, D. Clark, M. Davis.

Special Committee on Marriage in our Synodical Documents: S. Powell, R. Gallimore, D. Schlegel, G. Horner, K. Bowen.

SYNODICAL GUIDELINES	
Synodical Dues	\$19.00

Interchurch Relations	5.00
Home Missions	46.00
Foreign Ministries	9.00
Ministerial Relief (Retired Pastors)	85.00
Student Aid	7.00
General Benevolence	14.00
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Greenville Seminary	2.00
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New Geneva Seminary	2.00
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MERF	2.00
Total Per Communicant Member	\$199.00
<i>Reformed Herald (per subscription)</i>	+\$16.00

Abstract of the Minutes of the 268th Synod

I. Services

The 268th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States was hosted by the congregation of Emmanuel Reformed Church, Sutton, NE.

The Synod convened on Monday, May 19, 2014, with a 7:00 p.m. worship service conducted by Rev. Jay Fluck. Rev. Scott Henry preached the sermon entitled, “The Christian Response to Suffering,” from James 1:2-4.

On Wednesday evening a 7:00 p.m. worship service was conducted by Rev. J.P. Mosley. Rev. Dennis Roe preached the sermon entitled “The Harvest is still Plentiful, but the Laborers are Few,” from Matthew 9:37-38. Following the service Rev. Roe made a presentation regarding his recent trip to Kenya.

Devotions were led by the President Jim Sawtelle each morning at 8:00 a.m.

The closing devotion was conducted by Emmanuel Elder Fred Hofmann, who reminded us all where Paradise is really located.

II. Organization

Following the opening worship service on May 19, the President of the Executive Committee, Rev. Jim Sawtelle, called the meeting to order. The Stated Clerk, Rev. David Fagrey, read the roll which showed 43 ministers and 36 elder delegates present, a total of 79. The roll was called each morning. The closing roll call showed 42 ministers and 34 elders present.

The Bar of the House was set as the first 11 rows on either side of the aisle.

Tellers appointed were: Rev. Jimmy Hall, Rev. Ryan Kron, Elders David Blauw and Matthew Fickbohm.

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

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

President:	Rev. James Sawtelle
Vice President:	Rev. Frank Walker
Stated Clerk:	Rev. David Fagrey
Treasurer:	Elder Ted Griess
Reformed Herald Editor:	Rev. Kyle Sorensen

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

The Agenda and the Order of the Day were adopted.

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

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

V. Welcome of New Ministers

There were no new ministers.

VI. Welcome of New Churches

There were no new churches.

VII. Announcement of Standing Committees (appointed by the President)

The President announced the appointments to Standing Committees for this Synod.

- A. BENEVOLENCE: Rev. P. Poe, Rev. J. Fluck, Rev. J. West, Rev. G. Baloy, Elder D. D. Helseth, Elder R. Saunders, Elder M. Crook, Elder L. Neifer.
- B. ECUMENICAL: Rev. R. Potter, Rev. R. Grossmann, Rev. G. Syms, Rev. M. McGee, Elder B. Duncan, Elder E. Starks, Elder D. Ehly.
- C. EDUCATION & STUDENT AID: Rev. L. Johnson, Rev. D. Kingswood, Rev. R. Kron, Elder D. Blauw, Elder G. Van Holland, Elder R. Meidinger.
- D. EXCUSES: Rev. J.P. Mosley, Rev. G. Mancilas, Rev. M. Powell, Elder G. Lau, Elder Clinton Mehlhaf, Elder F. Hofmann.
- E. FINANCES: Elder R. Gallimore, Rev. D. Roe, Rev. M. Voytek, (Treas. T. Griess), Elder J. Morton, Elder R. Schroeder, Elder C. Fellersen.
- F. JUDICIAL: Rev. J. Blair, Rev. D. Schnabel, Rev. H. Van Stedum, Rev. R. Klynsma, Elder J. Stuebbe, Elder R. Spitzer, Elder R. Mettler.
- G. MINISTERIAL AID: Rev. S. Powell, Rev. P. Henderson, Rev. W. Brice, Rev. S. Henry, Elder S. Gross, Elder G. Stewart, Elder B. Borgwardt.
- H. MINUTES OF CLASSIS: Rev. H. Bowen, Rev. G. Horner, Rev. S. Altman, Rev. J. Hall, Elder M. Fickbohm, Elder Craig Mehlhaf, Elder J. DeYoung.
- I. MISSIONS: Rev. K. Sorensen, Rev. H. Opp, Rev. D. Schnabel, Rev. T. Gruggett, Rev. T. Grassmid, Elder R. De Jong, Elder G. Maassen, Elder A. Haller, Elder M. Wiersma.
- J. NOMINATIONS: Rev. J. Grossmann, Rev. J. Vusich, Rev. N. Riffert, Rev. D. Clark, Elder J. Gross, Elder D. Bentz, Elder T. Steinbach.
- K. PUBLICATIONS: Rev. M. Koerner, Rev. R. Stetler, Rev. K. Carroll, Rev. P. Treick, Elder M. Willemsen, Elder H. Yoder, Elder L. Lynch.
- L. MINUTES OF SYNOD: Rev. F. Walker, Rev. E. Bristley, Rev. D. Dawn, Elder M. Peery, Elder J. Ken Bowen, Elder J. Synder.

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

The Permanent Committee Reports were sent out prior to the meeting. They were forwarded to their respective Standing Committees as per the Agenda. Overtures and communications previously sent to the Synod were given to the President and Stated Clerk who referred them to the relevant Standing Committees. Some reports (i.e. Archives, Board of Trustees, and Executive) were dealt with by direct presentation from the floor. The Permanent Committee reports are printed below and their recommendations are handled by the Standing Committee they are referred to.

A. Archives Committee [Direct Presentation]

Dear Fathers and Brethren,

The Archives of the RCUS consist primarily of two fireproof four-drawer filing cabinets which contain written and typed records of the denomination. Included also are some books and booklets which deal primarily with its history. Printed copies of denominational minutes are stored in another room. Digital files of these documents were scanned using high-end equipment while the archives were located in La Habra, CA. They are in pdf format. Additional digital documents represent the history and theology which were part of the work of the e-Books Committee.

It is hoped that in the future, additional printed materials and other media will become part of the collection. It would be desirable to include not only publications representing the history and theology of the RCUS, but of the German Reformed tradition in Europe as well. It would be appropriate to have commentaries and copies of the Heidelberg Catechism along with books by its authors, Ursinus and Olevianus. The archivist compiled a comprehensive bibliography on the Catechism a number of years ago and has collected many editions and commentaries in English, German, and Dutch.

Work on a permanent home to house the archives has been contingent on the architectural plans for developing the facilities of Grace RCUS. A master plan to renovate the first floor was presented to the congregation in February, and the Consistory is presently discussing it. This overall plan is necessary in order to determine where the Archives would be located. It has been designated to be on the first floor, which was originally allocated for the church library. The room will be remodeled to include climate control and fire-proofing. Pray that our work of renovation will move forward efficiently. The present location is safe and climate-controlled. A photo is included below.

The Archivist has discussed with members of the committee and others about developing an electronic storage system which can be accessed through the internet. It would consist of a NAS (Network Attached Storage) server with multiple hard-drive bays which run a version of Linux (operating system) with RAID redundancy. Access via username and password can be made available to pastors, members, and others qualified to access these files via the internet on a PC or through a Mobile App. In addition to the files mentioned above, it may also contain other documents, images, media, and educational resources which are useful to the denomination. A similar NAS system could be located at a second location, such as Heidelberg Theological Seminary, which would replicate all files over the internet. In this way the digital archive would have greater security through multiple locations. We would like to discern from Synod if this would be a suitable path of action for the Archives. Cost for an initial NAS system would be about \$1500. Thus, two types of Archives—print and digital— will provide our denomination with resources to transmit its heritage to the coming generations.

Respectfully submitted, Eric D. Bristley, Archivist. Committee: R. Wegis, J. P. Mosely, G. Mancilas

B. Board of Trustees

Your committee met via email this past year to complete the North Dakota Secretary of State's form for the renewal of our Incorporation. The form was completed and sent to the treasurer that the fee could be attached.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Dale Clark, Elder Jim Snyder, Elder Tim Rott

C. Christian Education Committee (and Sub-Committees)

Your committee continues with its continued mandate to review the seminaries and colleges considered worthy of support by the RCUS. Your committee has had on its mind since the 266th synod *That each seminary approved by the RCUS be visited and evaluated at least once every three years by the Permanent Christian Education Committee.* (RCUS Abstract 2001:65) We are moving more fully into line with that requirement and there only remains one seminary which has not been visited within the specified three year period (City Seminary).

It was again noted at the 267th Synod that your committee had much to do over the year and plans were formulated at synod to accomplish visits to Mid-America Reformed Seminary, New Geneva Theological Seminary and City Seminary of Sacramento.

Considering that we still had a number of visits to do this year, our chairman asked that we follow two ground rules:

1. That where possible, we use those in visits who do not have a direct connection to the seminaries.
2. That where we have churches nearby, it would seem to be fiscally responsible to use men who are nearby (lead by men on the committee) instead of flying men across the country.

Seminary Visits: Your committee had subcommittees visit New Geneva Theological Seminary and Mid-America Reformed Seminary this year. Their reports are attached.

Last Years of Review: New Geneva Theological Seminary, 2014; Mid-America Reformed Seminary, 2014; Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 2013; Heidelberg Theological Seminary, 2013; and City Seminary of Sacramento, 2008.

Guidelines for Seminary visits – RCUS Abstract 2002:30ff

Recommendations:

1. That New Geneva Theological Seminary continue to be considered a seminary worthy of our support.
2. That the guideline for New Geneva Theological Seminary be continued at \$2.00 per communicant member for the 2015 Fiscal year.
3. That New Geneva Theological Seminary be commended for their years of service to the church. Take Note.
4. That Mid-America Reformed Seminary continue to be considered a seminary worthy of our support.

5. That the guideline for Mid-America Reformed Seminary be continued at \$2.00 per communicant member for the 2015 Fiscal year.
6. That Mid-America Reformed Seminary be commended for their years of service to the church. Take Note.
7. That Synod delete the list of colleges worthy of support, and instruct the Synod clerk to send a polite note of explanation to Covenant College that this decision is made based on our own policies and not because of any perceived issues with their institution.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. J. Grossmann, Rev. J. Blair, Rev. J. Fluck, Rev. T. Grugget, Rev. L. Johnson, Rev. D. Kingswood, Rev. C.W. Powell, Rev. K Sorensen, Elder M. Reyna, Elder D. Weilersbacher, Elder A. White.

Report of the Subcommittee to visit New Geneva Theological Seminary

Your Committee On November 18, 2013 your committee member Rev. Jon Blair, along with elder Harold Yoder, visited New Geneva Theological Seminary (NGTS) in Colorado Springs. Per synod mandate, the purpose of this visit was to determine whether a graduate of this seminary will be qualified and equipped to serve as a duly ordained Minister of the Word in the RCUS, and thus to recommend whether the seminary is worthy or not worthy of RCUS synodical support.

We had the opportunity to interview and dialogue extensively with the three full-time faculty members, who also wear many hats for the various administrative responsibilities: Dr. Dominic Aquila, Professor of Practical Theology as well as the seminary President; Dr. C.W. Powell, Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology as well as the Academic Dean; and Dr. Mark House, Professor of Biblical Studies as well as the Registrar / IT Director.

Without qualms or caveats, Dr. Aquila expressed the seminary's commitment to a sound theologically reformed faculty and seminary. All faculty members submit to a theological exam before the board and faculty. The full-time professors as well as adjunct professors are required to subscribe to the Westminster Standards or Three Forms of Unity (which is also required of board members of the seminary). In addition, the full-time faculty monitors the syllabus and course outlines of adjunct professors. On occasion, other evangelical visiting lecturers are invited who, at a minimum, must subscribe to the historic ecumenical creeds (e.g. Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed) and an evangelical statement of faith (e.g. NAE).

NGTS is accredited by the Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries. The support base is primarily from the PCA and RCUS, as well as some independent churches. Degree programs include Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Christian Ministry, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry, as well as a Certificate in Biblical Studies. The library is serviceable to the needs of the students in these programs and currently contains over 28,000 volumes. The seminary also teaches extension courses in Fredericksburg, Virginia, as well as internationally in Israel, Egypt, and India.

NGTS is in its twenty-first academic year, with current enrollment in the range of 30-35 students. Since the average age of students is around 35 years old, courses are taught at times convenient for those working full-time and having families—in the evenings throughout semesters and in concentrated modules. For this reason, there are no chapel services. Also, some courses have begun to be offered on-line for distance learning. We had the opportunity to attend an evening class and visit with the students. Each student highly recommended the seminary without hesitation. Comments centered on appreciation for the distinctively reformed teaching, a focus on the Bible, and that graduates “know their stuff.” Presently there are five graduates of NGTS serving as ministers in the RCUS, and four RCUS ministers who are currently enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program.

Using the synodical Seminary Evaluation Guideline, from what we gleaned through our extensive interviews with the faculty and from the course catalog, we believe the teaching of NGTS is biblically orthodox and generally consistent with RCUS confessions, constitution, and position papers.

Some main areas to be noted in particular are that the seminary teaches presuppositional apologetics, sound biblical hermeneutics (e.g. grammatical-redemptive-historical, Scripture interprets Scripture) and homiletics (e.g. textual, exegetical, practical), systematic theology interwoven with the Reformed Confessions (using Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*), a distinctively reformed / Calvinistic covenant theology, and a thorough curriculum in biblical theology, church history, and the biblical languages. The pastoral counseling class emphasizes the nouthetic approach, consistent with that of the Christian Counseling Education Foundation (CCEF). The biblical elements of liturgy are taught and a God-centered approach is emphasized. However, there is a broader application in terms of worship style than we would find in the RCUS (e.g. in the area of music, diversity in worship order).

The full-time faculty all hold to creation in six ordinary days and that is what is taught as the truth. The seminary outright rejects the teachings related to Sheperdism, the New Perspectives on Paul, and Federal Vision. Two-kingdom theology is not taught. Reformed / Presbyterian polity is emphasized, and it is notable that women are not enrolled in courses leading to ordination (e.g. homiletics). The board and faculty also agree with the position of the RCUS in the recently published study on promoting a biblical sexuality.

The seminary does not have a formal ministerial / pastoral experience program for its students. This is primarily because of the evening courses and make-up of the student body as being older men, where those tracking the pastorate are already involved in ministry within their local churches. Though NGTS may offer guidance and counsel to students and churches when requested, the seminary has self-consciously chosen to leave the area of ministerial experience to the church, and not have a program overseen by the seminary.

In the next 3-5 years there is expected to be a change in the faculty with the retirements of Dr. Aquila and Dr. Powell. This, of course, presents a concern for the future maintenance of Reformed distinctives and faithfulness, especially with the increasing doctrinal diversity within the PCA. This concern was also expressed by graduates of the seminary serving in the RCUS. Dr. Aquila informed us that the board of NGTS is aware of this in its planning for the future, and would greatly appreciate our prayers for wisdom and the Lord's gracious provision. In particular, we are thankful for Dr. Powell's faithfulness and significant influence as a long-time faculty member, and pray that the Lord might call other RCUS ministers to be future members of the faculty.

NGTS has shown a sincere interest in maintaining a working relationship with the RCUS over the years, and continues to do so. A newsletter is regularly sent to RCUS congregations. We were warmly welcomed personally, and the faculty welcomed this evaluation as well with nothing to hide, expressing gratitude for the care and support of the RCUS. Accordingly, we believe that a graduate of NGTS will be qualified and equipped to serve as a duly ordained Minister of the Word in the RCUS.

Recommendations:

1. That New Geneva Theological Seminary continue to be listed as a seminary worthy of receiving benevolent monies from the RCUS.
2. That the guideline for New Geneva Theological Seminary be continued at \$2.00 per communicant member for the 2014-2015 synodical year.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Jon Blair and Elder Harold Yoder

Report of the Subcommittee to visit Mid-America Reformed Seminary

Your subcommittee Your sub-committee to visit Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS) consisted of Revs. Kyle Sorensen and James Grossmann. It was our privilege to travel to visit MARS on Thursday, October 10, 2013. We met at the Seminary on Wednesday, October 9, and greeted those faculty who were around, talked to current students and had the opportunity to have dinner with Steve Carr and his family, student under care of the Covenant East Classis. After Dinner, your committee met to work out our plan for the visit on Thursday. One area of particular focus for your committee was the appointment of Assistant Professor in New Testament Studies, Marcus Mininger. It seemed to the committee that we do not know much about him. A review of our Abstracts shows that we have no record of his views on the days of Creation. We also understood that he has little, if any, ministerial experience. On Thursday, your committee attended two lectures by Professor Marcus Mininger and one by Dr. Cornelis Venema. We were hoping to attend a lecture by Professor Alan Strange, however our visit occurred on a day in which he was administering a mid-term exam.

The lectures by Professor Mininger were from the NT213 – Interpretation of the Gospels and Acts. He was teaching on the basic interpretive issues of these books. His teaching was Biblical and edifying, he even taught your committee a couple of things. His abilities as a teacher became very evident to us in the classroom. Furthermore, it was obvious that he is applying his teaching to the daily life of the Church. His class syllabus also shows his pastoral abilities to lead those who are under his care in the classroom. Those students interviewed seemed to be uniformly positive in their reception of Prof. Mininger's Lectures and classroom style.

The Lecture by Dr. Venema which we attended was from DS213 – Christology. His encyclopedic teaching style does not seem to have changed over the years. The doctrinal content of his classes also remains sound and he regularly refers to the creeds of the church during the lecture.

We had lunch with Steve Carr and reviewed his perception of his education at MARS. He noted that he has not found anything contrary to the RCUS creeds and views at MARS. He also mentioned that he is happy with MARS because it is “not a hobby horse institution”. This is notably the exact wording used by the professors in our interview with them. Their stated desire is to be a classically Reformed and confessionally orthodox seminary.

In review of the Seminary, it was noted that the Library is in order, cataloged in such a way as to be very accessible to the students. We also noted that a new classroom edition of the reformed confessions was produced by the seminary this year. We discovered that added in an appendix were the subscription vows of the URCNA, OPC and PCA, but not those of the RCUS. In conversation with the faculty, they stated that this was an oversight and were happy to correct this, even to paste copies into the already printed copies. Your committee has provided them the electronic version of the RCUS Directory of Worship so that they can make those changes as soon as possible.

On Thursday afternoon, we had the opportunity to meet with all of the faculty as a group. They were all very generous with their time for this.

We made the faculty aware of the recent RCUS position and teaching paper on Homosexuality. Prof. Alan Strange noted that he had already read it. Each of the faculty rejected the homosexual hermeneutic and described how they treat the issue in their area of specialty.

Because he had been hired since the last visit by a RCUS committee, we spent a fair amount of time reviewing the appointment of Prof. Mininger. It was revealed that his ordination was for the purpose of teaching at Mid-America and that he has never served as pastor of a church. He noted that he grew up in a pastor's family and has had pastoral experience through that. The faculty noted that while having someone who has pastoral experience is a goal, sometimes that goal cannot be attained. They also noted that his pastoral abilities are evident and univocally stated that he has been a good addition to the faculty. They also noted that the faculty development committee which worked with him throughout the hiring process included RCUS minister and board member, Rev. Jon Blair. Your committee privately asked Prof. Mininger about his views on creation, and he stated that he agrees with the MARS statement on their website. He also noted that the board and various other people asked him about this in the interview process.

Because of this recent change in faculty, we also questioned the Professors on the future of the professorship at MARS. Your committee was gratified to hear that in anticipation of this need, the MARS Board has their Faculty Development Committee seeking an additional professor in the area of Old Testament Studies. This is not because of an anticipated opening, but because they believe that this is a particularly difficult area to fill well.

One of the ways in which they have been looking for men that may fit as future faculty is to have a number of adjuncts teach courses (often electives), attempting to identify individuals who could possibly become a professor in the future. They are not necessarily looking for someone with a Ph. D., but looking for someone who has served the church well and can be groomed to that position.

Your committee also asked the professors about their teaching concerning the view of two kingdoms. Several of the professors stated that they do not want to get into a theological fight with any other particular institution. They all described how the current debate within reformed circles is being addressed in their own area of specialty. None of the MARS professors are favorable toward the two kingdoms position. One explicitly called it a “serious” error.

It should also be noted in this report that Rev. Strange has completed his Ph. D. thesis and by the time that this report is circulated will have defended it. Your committee believes that our church should congratulate Rev. Strange on this achievement and praise the Lord for his labors in this.

In response to question “1k” of the Seminary evaluation guidelines, while MARS has never had a preferred New Testament text, it seems that with the appointment of Prof. Mininger the professors much more uniformly hold to an eclectic Greek text for the New Testament.

With regard to orthodoxy, MARS has a page of Doctrinal Standards on its web page which contains their positions on Justification, Creation days, among many others.

Also of note in reviewing Mid America is the following: Daily Chapel services are held for the students and faculty. Student expenses seem to be in line with the other seminaries we support. A Student applying to MARS should have a Bachelor of Arts degree with a number of recommended courses. They understand that this is not always possible, and will work with non-traditional students on an individual basis. The M.Div. curriculum consists of 112 credit hours including 10 credit hours of ministerial apprenticeship. Students must maintain a B- average to receive the M.Div. Degree. MARS is accredited by The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) and by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) Category III (Masters degree-granting).

The Seminary yearly requests opportunities from all of the RCUS congregations to place students for summer assignments (in fulfillment of their Ministerial Apprenticeship requirements). MARS also sends the Mid-America Messenger to RCUS congregations on a regular basis.

More than 20% of the pastors in the RCUS (including retired ones), attended MARS.

In Summary, having reviewed the seminary and classes, you committee is comfortable recommending Mid-America Reformed Seminary to Students for the Ministry in the RCUS.

Recommendations:

1. That Mid-America Reformed Seminary continue to be considered a seminary worthy of our support.
2. That the guideline for Mid-America Reformed Seminary be continued at \$2.00 per communicant member for the 2015 Synodical year.
3. That Mid-America Reformed Seminary be commended for their years of service to the church. Take Note.

D. Diaconal Committee

Over the past year, your Permanent Diaconal Committee did not meet, and makes no recommendations.

Respectfully submitted, S. Altman, T. Savage, B. Davis, P. Poe, J. Berg, D. Benz, K. Armbruster, S. Henry, J. West.

E. Editorial Advice Committee

Your committee did not meet and transacted no business.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. George Horner, Rev Dennis Roe, Rev David Dawn, Rev Jonathan Merica, Elder J. Connelly, Elder G. Van Holland.

F. Executive Committee

During the course of this synodical year, your committee conferred by e-mail. We sent out three circulars. Executive Circular 267.1, dated June 10, 2013, contained a recommendation to grant \$2,000 to the web-site committee to upgrade the current software to Wordpress. Executive Circular 267.2, dated August 30, 2013, contained a recommendation to provide Ministerial Aid for Rev. Jim West in the amount of \$1,500.00 per month for this Synodical year beginning October 1, 2013. Executive Circular 267.3, dated October 9, 2013, contained a recommendation to provide Grace Reformed Church in Northwest, Arkansas an additional \$6,000 to the \$77,000 approved loan for a total of \$83,000 to assist in the purchase of a church building.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Executive Committee, David Fagrey, Stated Clerk

G. Foreign Ministries Committee

Your committee met in Sacramento on April 7th to discuss the work of the RCUS in foreign missions, review the previous year as well as plan for the upcoming year. As always your committee continues to thank God for the prayers and support of the congregations and individuals of the RCUS. Your prayers and support enable us as a denomination to obey Christ's command making disciples of all nations for His glory. Your committee continues to operate through the year with subcommittees for the Congo (United Reformed Churches of the Congo -URCC) headed by Rev. Robert Grossmann, for Kenya (Reformed Fellowship Church of Kenya - RFCK) headed by Rev. Michael Voytek and for the Philippines headed by Rev. Gil Baloy (United Covenant Reformed Church Philippines - UCRCP). Other committees, which report to the FMC, include the Reformed Radio Administration Committee (with Rev. Neil Riffert, Rev. Paul Treick and Rev. Dan Schnabel) and the Congo Economic Development Committee (The officers of the consistory of Providence RCUS, Lodi California).

CONGO

The reports of the pastors, particularly Rev. Kabongo from Mbuji Mayi and Rev. Abel N'tita from Kinshasa, and from the deacons is that the work of the URCC in all areas of the Congo are going well. The URCC is no longer growing rapidly but it is expanding its membership and the congregations seem to be fairly stable. In virtually every letter in which there is a report it will be "our churches and work go well." There have been major efforts to educate the church members in the Reformed faith, with several formal schools being established to carry on this teaching. Rev. N'tita has been particularly involved in this teaching ministry (he is a pastor in Kinshasa who is a graduate of the Dutch theological school in Lubumbashi when that was in operation, so he was quite well educated in theology). There have been a couple of concerns of sickness with these two leading men. Rev. Kabongo is has been chairman of the URCC General Synod since their beginning a few years ago, and Rev. N'tita has been the stated clerk of the same body since its founding. Rev. N'tita has been discovered to have high blood pressure, which has become a health concern for him because treatment is not nearly as available as it is here, even in a large city like Kinshasa. Rev. Kabongo and his wife have recently been going through a bout of Malaria, which for adults is usually like having a very bad case of the flu for two months or so. This is typical for many folks in equatorial Africa since Malaria has become endemic with the American banning of DDT not only here but effectively all over the world.

PHILIPPINES

Through the almighty providence and good pleasure of God, Rev. Michael Voytek and Rev. Gil Baloy were enabled to traveled to the Philippines from January 27 to February 14, 2014 on behalf of the RCUS to serve our Lord's church there. We undertook this ministry with three main purposes that were set before us. First, it was important to visit with the small denomination that we have been working with for a number of years. They call themselves the "United Covenant Reformed Church in the Philippines" (UCRCP). It is always a pleasure to visit with these brethren who are so enthusiastic for the Reformed Faith. As their fraternal or "brother" church, the RCUS has once again, like it has since the start of our relationship nine years ago, enjoyed the privilege of ministerial opportunities and hearty fellowship with these saints of God. A second purpose for our going was to rendezvous with Reformed churches from Canada and Australia. Providence Reformed Church of Hamilton, Canada (Canadian Reformed Churches) and the Free Reformed Church of Baldvis, West Australia, have recently begun to travel to and minister in the Philippines. It was hoped that our meeting with representatives of these two

Reformed churches would stimulate further progress of the Reformed Church there. Last but not least, the third purpose that served as the initial impetus for the trip was to evaluate in person how to help those devastated by Typhoon Yolanda (or Haiyan) in the central Visayan Islands. This was the most important purpose of all in terms of the exigencies of personal and family survival. We visited two of the hardest-hit provinces of Leyte and Samar. The Philippine Sub-Committee of the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee (FMC) received \$11,029 from the gifts of RCUS churches and numerous individuals. We established a savings account at “Banco De Oro,” the Philippine bank we send RCUS support to the UCRCP. In this way, we would not have to carry around a large amount of cash.

On the **first leg**, the disaster area visitation team consisted of Pastor Edmund Delos Reyes (“God is Faithful Grace Community Church”), two itinerant pastors from his congregation (Ritchel Jamilla and Harry Guerrero), UCRCP representative Pastor Nap Narag and Pastors Baloy and Voytek. We left a day later than planned on Saturday, February 1st, by plane to Tacloban City, Leyte. The airport was up and running but severely damaged. This is true of much of the city, which was literally ripped apart by the typhoon. Witnesses spoke of powerful winds blowing in from different directions followed by a tsunami-like surge of water in places measuring up to 50 feet. The combined effect was like a continuous washing machine agitation cycle. As we drove through one section of town, we encountered several huge ocean vessels permanently parked along the shoreline. We stopped at one ship for picture-taking, which was literally parked on the shore at the curb of the street. The people we met also spoke of a death toll closer to three times the 10,000 plus casualties reported by a city official. Each day an average of two bodies were being discovered while we were there (two months after the typhoon struck). We took many pictures which we will try to have available at synod. They speak much louder than words. Some of those pictures were also provided by another disaster outreach team from Jireh Reformed Congregational Church in Mindanao which arrived at the scene six days after the disaster struck (they were the first Christian organization to reach the disaster area). They described the sight of hundreds of bodies strewn about the landscape and the desperate need to the survivors for drinking water and ready-to-eat food.

Returning to our visit, we found that looking for a restaurant or other place to eat was a challenge in itself. We went to a Robinson Department Store Mall which normally has a food court as well as other storefront restaurants. The only two stores in operation were a hardware store and a grocery store. Our driver that we hired informed us that there are no fast food restaurants up and operating in the city. We had to resort to a side-street canteen, which can be risky for foreigners like ourselves. Fortunately we had packed part of the leftovers from our breakfast at the home of a relative of pastor Baloy. His relatives instructed us to buy rice and soft drinks to complement our lunch, which we did at the canteen. The owner who, like others we would later meet, described his near-death experience and how the second story of his eatery saved the lives of many. After lunch, we proceeded to Catbalogan City located on the island of Samar, which was a scenic four-hour-long trip up the coast. At one point, we crossed the San Juanico Bridge. It is a breath-taking part of the [Pan-Philippine Highway](#) that stretches from [Samar](#) to [Leyte](#) across the [San Juanico Strait](#). With a total length of 1.34 miles, it is the longest bridge in the Philippines spanning a body of seawater. The bridge was heavily damaged by [Typhoon Haiyan](#) in November 2013, but was evidently repaired by the time of our brief picture-taking event on it.

Catbalogan City to a large degree escaped the devastation of Tacloban City. This was not true for the villages in the outlying islands offshore which were practically wiped out. Brothers Harry and Ritchel, while on two previous disaster relief missions for their church, had met an elderly Pastor whose name is Diego Perolina who serves as pastor and has an outreach to a number of the small islands nearby. The church that Pastor Diego serves is the fruit of many years of ministry by the Brethren missionaries from Australia. We were invited by Pastor Diego and the Australian director of the Brethren Mission (Pastor Bruce) to bring disaster relief and to conduct a seminar on the Reformed Gospel the night we arrived as well as to preach and teach the following Lord’s day at the mission compound/church building. Pastor Diego and the members of his church are opened to the Reformed Faith. We were hoping to visit some of the outlying islands during our time there, but were prevented because the Mission’s boat was not serviceable. Thankfully, before leaving we were able to enlist the service of Pastor Diego to deliver several sacks of rice along with gospel tracts for the survivors of the storm that live on the outer islands. While on the beach waiting to find out whether we were going to be able to travel to the islands, we were approached by a large number of children and teen-agers who were open to receiving a gospel tract and to hearing an explanation of the gospel. It was so refreshing when young people are willing to come to us to hear God’s Word. The fields indeed are white unto harvest there.

While in Catbalogan City, we heard of many horror stories of the killer storm. The most heart-rending one was that of the sister of the head missionary’s wife. Karine Matobate from Jaro, Leyte, lost her four children, including an infant in her arms and a toddler at her side, to a 30-foot wave. In spite of that loss, Karine did not seem defeated but in fact helped organize our relief effort of distributing rice in Tacloban City. She went ahead of us to the township called Alimasag (“crab” in English), San Jose, on the outskirts of Tacloban City. The area was devastated by the typhoon and most of the temporary residents like Karine and her husband Nelson are forced to live in tiny shacks built from material found lying around after the storm. She assisted us by wisely distributing tickets to 80 residents of the “shanty town”. This system using tickets would prevent a mad rush for the rice. Karine informed “crashers” that they would not get any rice unless there were bags remaining. Nonetheless, she insisted that they line up in an orderly fashion and patiently wait their turn. As soon as our van arrived at our destination, Brother Ritchell immediately jumped out and preached a simple but clear gospel message in the open air. He stood before the line of recipients who were assembled with others who were probably family and neighbors. Those of us not involved in the distribution of the physical food, distributed the spiritual food in the form of gospel tracts and passing words of comfort and assurance of God’s mercy. Afterwards, Nelson and Karine led us to the motel in Tacloban City where we spent the night. Keep in mind that under the circumstances, next to restaurants, finding reasonably priced lodging was not easy without help. So we were very appreciative of this special couple. We continue to pray that God would direct them to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The **second leg** of our journey would take us (Pastors Baloy and Voytek) to Davao City, located on the island of Mindanao. We flew to Cebu City International Airport for a 10 hour layover before proceeding to Davao City. While at the Cebu Airport, we had some interesting encounters. For example, while waiting we began to distribute the “Million Peso Bill” gospel tract and were approached by a older Christian medical doctor by the name of Joel Ruiz. Though retired from his regular practice, has been conducting medical missions for years to help Christians and churches throughout the Philippines. Also, because of his overseeing (owning) an orphanage, he provided valuable information on the adoption process for some families in the States.

We finally made it to Davao City early that evening. We met Rev. Stephen ‘t Hart and his elder Hendrick de Jonge from West Australia who were staying at the same living quarters of the Summer Linguistics Institute. They were there at the invitation of the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church (UCRCP). Rev. Vic Bernales also invited us to speak alongside of Rev. ‘t Hart and himself at a conference on “The Challenges of Shepherding God’s Flock.” This event was open to their members and other churches in the area. After the seminar, we spent over 6 hours in consultation with our Australian brothers discussing the situation and ministry opportunities in the Philippines. It was a very fruitful discussion.

On the **third leg** of our trip, we returned to Manila. We made a gallant, but unsuccessful attempt to meet Rev. Wes Bredenhof and his traveling companions from Hamilton, Ontario (Canadian Reformed Churches) in the airport vicinity. Both churches from Australia and Canada planned their mission visits to coincide for strategizing purposes. One observation we can make is that Rev. Bredenhof is open to inviting foreign students to their seminary in Canada. Rev. ‘t Hart appears to follow our approach of long-distance learning coupled with short-term seminar training in the country. Rev. Maynard Koerner of the Heidelberg Theological Seminary has been diligent in working with us to provide this for the UCRCP and other interested churches. We hope to see the need for future pastors met in this way.

Rev. Edmund Delo Reyes invited us to speak at a conference on the Reformed Faith on the second Saturday of our trip. Then the next day (Lord’s Day) Pastor Edmund conducted the worship service

and Pastor Baloy was given the opportunity to proclaim the Word of God to the congregation. Later, after lunch, we joined a good number of their young people, both men and women, in their street evangelism outreach. We were also informed that the Canadian contingency that we missed meeting in the airport were due to hold a conference on Church History the following week and at the same time, our Australian brothers were headed to the church under the oversight of URCNA pastor Nollie Malabuyo and his Consistory. On Monday, we met with pastor and elder representatives of three of the four churches of the UCRCP in Manila. Rev. Bernales and Elder Ogie Bicaldo were flown in from Mindanao by us. Rev. Edwin Puzon and his elder Alfred Santiago were both absent. By the way, we were informed of a plan for Rev. Bernales to minister for a three-month period in San Carlos UCRCP. It would provide the church with much needed ministry, in light of the fact the church has not had a pastor since it came into the denomination.

On the **fourth and final leg** of our visit, there was a change-up in our plans ("blessed are the flexible, they are not easily broken"). We flew to Cagayan de Oro (Mindanao) to investigate the relief efforts in Leyte by Rev. Remegio Lapiz and the Jireh Reformed Congregational Church that had been mentioned to us by our Reformed Australian brethren. Rev. Remegio and members of his congregation had already traveled to the disaster area on five disaster relief trips before our arrival and had exhausted all the resources in bringing water and ready-to-eat food (first 4 trips) as well as a chainsaw and building materials (trips 4 and 5). We wanted to be able to provide more immediate help than what was done in Tacloban before returning to the U.S. For that reason, we prayerfully decided to invest \$3,000 in their disaster relief ministry. They have shifted from providing immediate water and food relief to rebuilding church buildings and homes that were severely damaged by the storm. In the Midweek Bible Study, Pastor Lapiz gave thanks to God for providing this assistance in answer to their prayers. When we were at their mango grove plantation, Pastor Baloy asked Rev. Lapiz what kept him from becoming a Presbyterian? His reply was in the negative, meaning nothing. The week after we left the Philippines, Pastor Lapiz reported that he and members of his congregation with carpenter experience loaded up their vehicles with building materials and traveled back to the disaster area to complete the rebuilding of a roof on one church as well as to minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation (pictures will be available at synod).

Since our trip, we arranged to fly Pastors Narag and Delos Reyes to Cagayan de Oro to work out an inter-church relief team. Meeting minutes, with the title "United Covenant Reformed Church of the Philippines," were taken by Rev. Narag, who led the brainstorming meeting. They came up with a proposed budget as well. Glowing emails followed this newly formed enterprise. Pastor Nap wrote later in recalling the meeting to the brethren of the church in San Carlos, Pangasinan, "I am very much encouraged because they not only expressed their agreement on what we are doing, but also are very much supportive in our move to form a team who I believe will later be the arm of the UCRCP in reaching others, not only for social work, but most especially for influencing the Philippines with the Reformed Faith." (March 3, 2014).

In summary, this particular visit took on the appearance of an orchestrated dance, like the dodging and weaving pedestrians and vehicles on the streets of many of the cities in the Philippines. Only the participants were pastors, elders, and brethren that made up the various churches we encountered from outside the Philippines and well as those from within. While there we also distributed almost 8,000 "Million Peso Bill" tract (a portion was given to each of four UCRCP churches as well). Through this introduction, we met many more people who filled the ballroom floor. We can definitely say that God directed us to those we met as we committed our way to Him. In the providence of God, Typhoon Yolanda create a window of opportunity for the spread of the gospel into lives which otherwise would not have been as open as they are now. Could the Scripture found in Acts 14:22 also apply in this context of ministering to people faced with the struggle of survival, "...and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"? It is our hope that those from the East and West would work together for the faith of the gospel, and not apart, in light of potentially many more souls won for the kingdom of God.

KENYA

As you are aware, the RCUS has been working with the Reformed Fellowship Church of Kenya (RFCK) for a number of years. There is currently one classis with 6 churches and 4 ordained ministers. Besides the pastors, every church is represented at classis by an elder delegate (note that there are also a number of deacons in the congregations as well). Our overall assessment is that they are growing in their understanding and practice of Reformed and Presbyterian church polity. Rev. Dennis Roe, while visiting the RFCK in February of this year, was able to observe the RFCK classis in action. Please refer to his report for his observations.

Concerning church support, they have established a financial accountability system between the individual churches and the classis. The delegates examine the quarterly Income & Expense Report submitted by each church and then they forward them with the classis support recommendations to our committee. Then the RCUS treasurer sends the total quarterly amount to the classis treasurer who subsequently distributes the funds to each church treasurer in the amount agreed upon by the church and the classis. Our committee budgeted \$6,000 last year for church support and we recommend that the amount be increased by \$1,200 to a total of \$7,200 this year. This increase will assist each church to support indigenous ordained pastors in all six congregations for the first time as well as to account for the changes in the exchange rate and inflation experienced in Kenya.

Concerning our support of diaconal needs and church buildings, with our help, the last two RFCK churches that were without a place to meet were able to secure land and have now erected a church building. Thus now for the first time all 6 churches now have place to meet. The greatest need now is improve the flooring in their building (currently all the churches have dirt floors). Imagine the challenge of worshipping God while standing in water and mud due to a sudden rain shower. For this and many other reasons, they desire to improve the flooring by making a thin concrete floor instead of dirt. We desire to assist them in this endeavor. They will do the labor and we will supply the materials. Furthermore, there were many diaconal needs that arose during the past year such as famine relief, orphan and widow relief, and the medical needs of one pastor. We budgeted \$2,000 last year for Diaconal aid and church buildings and we recommend the same amount this year.

Concerning the training of ministers for the Gospel, they are in process of examining for ordination 2 men trained at Knox Theological College (KTC) for the Gospel ministry. When they pass their examinations and are ordained, this will mean that each church in the classis will have an ordained pastor for the first time in the twenty years we have been working with them. Four of the six will have been trained at KTC. We have been assisting them in the preparation of ministers in the past by providing the opportunity to study at KTC located in Mbale, Uganda. Because of the difficulties of travel from Kenya to Uganda (one student who is now a pastor was seriously injured in a car accident while travel to/from school) as well as the hardship for being away from home for 3 weeks out of the month (i.e. no income to support their families), the RFCK classis (with the encouragement and support of the full time professor at KTC), determined to begin pastor and leadership training in Kenya. Rev. Dennis Roe, while visiting the churches of the RFCK in February of this year, was able to teach at their "log college" as well as to observe the KTC trained pastors teaching classes. Please refer to his report for a more in depth analysis of the school in Kenya and the opportunities that we have to assist our brethren in this vital ministry. We budgeted \$6,700 last year for student support and we recommend the same amount this year.

Overall the churches of the RFCK are growing in knowledge and practice of Reformed polity. We are greatly encouraged by the obvious blessing from the Lord.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation #1. That the budget be adopted as follows:

URCC - Congo:

Elder/pastor/church support \$12,600 (same as last year)
Kinshasa aid to churches \$13,200 (same as last year)
Lubumbashi church aid \$1,000 (same as last year)
Building and Diaconal aid \$1200 (same as last year)

RFCK - Kenya:

Church Support \$7,200 (20% increase. Soon will have 6 pastors 6 churches)
Diaconal aid \$2,000 (same as last year)
Theological training expenses 6,700 (same as last year)

UCRCP - Philippines:

Classis meeting expenses \$2,058 (same as last year)
Outreach expenses \$2,000 (same as last year)

Reformed Faith and Life (French): \$20,000 (same as last year)

Committee Expenses:

Foreign Missions Travel: \$5,000 (3,000 previously Africa)
Travel in USA \$3,000 (same)

Recommendation #2: That the Synod Treasurer be advised to expend funds from accrued funds when so directed by the Synod.

Recommendation #3: That the Foreign Missions Committee be authorized to expend funds raised by offerings in the churches when there are special needs.

Recommendation #4: That our funds for Reformed Faith and Life be devoted to the support and support services for the radio broadcasts for Africa. (We are encouraging Rev. Eric Kayayan to continue focusing on Africa)

Recommendation #5: That the RCUS call Rev. Dennis Roe as a missionary at large, doing and promoting foreign missions.

Recommendation #6: That the RCUS allocate \$1,800 a month for compensation and 1,000 a month for ministry expenses for the missionary at large. **Take note.** The Foreign Missions Committee inquired about a representative on the MERF board which meets in conference annually in Cyprus and annually sending a representative from Cyprus. Our investigation found because of travel expenses it would be an improvident use of the Lords money.

Recommendation #7: That the Foreign Mission Guideline be kept at nine dollars and the remaining be drawn from accrued funds in the foreign missions account.

Recommendation #8: Concerning referring ITEM back to permanent Foreign Missions Committee from 326th Synod to review as an approved benevolence. We recommend the following guideline be established for what mission organizations we approve for benevolence: To ensure the unity of true faith is not compromised, to consider a mission organization as worthy of support, the following stipulations must be met.

1. Examined by the permanent Foreign Ministries Committee to assess those who are Orthodox and Protestant (constitution art 5 and 74) preaching the pure doctrine of the Gospel.
2. The synod should endeavor to support, where possible, those mission organizations who's officers & board members are answerable to Reformed and Presbyterian church bodies.

Respectfully submitted, Dan Schnabel (*Chairman*), Michael Voytek (*Philippines Subcommittee chairman*), Bill Borgwardt, Wayne Johnson , Robert Grossman (*Congo Subcommittee chairman*), Albert Haller, Doug Schlegel (*Kenya Subcommittee chairman*), Thomas Mayville and Dennis Roe.

H. Home Missions Committee

The Synod Home Missions Committee meeting was held at Carter Lake, IA on April 10-11, 2014. We were hosted by Rev. Lee Johnson, pastor of St. John's RCUS, Lincoln, NE. The St. John's consistory oversees the work of Heritage Reformed Chapel, Omaha. Committee members present were: Revs. Harvey Opp, Howard Hart, and Henry Bowen; Elders Daniel Mettler, Lynn Goehring, Mori Willemsen, and David Helseth. (Due to a pastoral move, there is currently no minister from Northern Plains on the committee.) Home Missionaries present were Revs. Wesley Brice, Michael Voytek, Dale Clark, Ryan Kron, Matt Powell, and Scott Henry. At the opening of our meeting Rev. Travis Grassmid, along with Elder Mettler, reported for the South Central Classis Missions Committee on their visit to the Casper, WY work, and their assessment of the Omaha work. Elders Bob Davis and Spencer Gross had also participated in that assessment, the latter by teleconference.

Mission Reports

Christ Reformed Chapel, Casper, WY

Rev. Matthew Powell began to serve at Casper, in January of 2013, under the oversight of Providence RCUS, Rock Springs, WY. This work was approved as a Synod mission last year, and our funding began in July. The classis committee gave thanks to God, saying they are "very pleased with the progress of the past year". Services are held "in a wonderful location and structure", which is still property of a Baptist congregation. The RPCNA had previously sought to establish a mission at Casper, ceased for a time, and encouraged the RCUS to pursue a work including three families which still desired an RP church plant. That effort was renewed mid-year, and those families have become part of it. However, the Lord brought other families to our work, during the year.

As Rev. Powell stated, including his own, there were 5 core families in Jan. 2013. Those families have been retained, and membership now includes 10 communicants, and 2 preparing for confirmation. There are also 3 families regularly attending, two of which seem likely to join before long. There are 18 children in Sunday School, making for a lively and challenging class time! The substantial increase of those with long-term commitment gives assurance "there is a great deal of potential for the Reformed church in Casper."

They use various means of outreach, including "ways to form natural relationships with unbelievers in the community to create opportunities for discussion". The Rock Springs consistory has regular communication with Rev. Powell, and they are pleased with the progress. Also, a long-time elder of the congregation resides at Casper, and serves the work. The offerings have been excellent, and with the equal support of Classis and Synod, the Powell's are "adequately provided for financially." Your committee agrees with the positive evaluation of the work, and to the request for continued support at \$30,000 from Synod, matching Classis funds.

Heritage Reformed Chapel, Omaha, NE

Rev. Scott Henry moved to the Omaha area by the end of January, 2013. By that time, worship services were being held at a school in Bellevue, in the southeast metro area. The location was chosen to be close to the original families, most residing across the Missouri River, in Iowa. When Rev. Henry arrived, there were 4 dedicated families. Three other families became part of the group in the past year, and approximately 9 other families visited briefly, over that time period. It is, of course, typical that families will come and go in a mission work especially. However, it has been an unusual providence with Omaha, as it appears that all but one of the families will be gone by the time Synod meets, or soon thereafter. Transfer or loss of employment, and relocation, have been the reasons for this. Only one family left due to disagreements, and that was in the spring of last year.

Last September, with the first move of a "backbone" family, to live on the west coast, the relocations began. As that trend continued to include the core families, Rev. Henry grew discouraged. His understanding in accepting the call was that there were families present among whom he would labor to establish a mission church. He does report, with gratitude, that the members have been "progressively growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is evident by their walk of humility before God ... and desire for the Word of God." However, he does not have the desire needed to gather new people throughout the area. He was contacted and received a call from our Vermillion congregation, and will be there in May.

In spite of a difficult year, Rev. Johnson reported that the St. John's Consistory remains zealous for a work in the Omaha area. In reviewing the situation, the Classis approved continued funding at \$30,000 and an overture to Synod for the same amount again, contingent upon their permanent committee providing a favorable assessment of the work, and that "a suitable candidate is found to continue the mission work in Omaha." The assessment was conducted, and a report was given in person to the SHMC by Rev. Grassmid and Elder Mettler. They were "favorably impressed" with the new and detailed plan, presented to them by Rev. Johnson. The consistory's plan is to develop a new core group, as through multiple Bible studies in the metro area, using certain ads, a mailer, social media, web site, and having a missionary become active in voluntary organizations, and seek to evangelize, etc. They have determined that they must be more involved in decisions and oversight of a missionary's daily activities. The SHMC suggested that one of St. John's elders might have special assignment in oversight, etc.

With the past year of experience, a solid core of at least 5 families will be sought, before Sunday services are resumed. Various families did attend at Lincoln, before services were started at Bellevue. Also, greater care will be taken that the core families are established in the area, not in a time of transition. Locations will be carefully considered, even as the one remaining family is more centrally located.

The Classis missions committee, as a whole, has agreed to the favorable assessment. In what was heard of the direction to be taken, the SHMC was also encouraged to continue the Omaha work. We urge Synod to approve the same. For it is our understanding that the RCUS commonly commits to a work for at least a 3-4 year period, and that Synod monies are to help an overseeing consistory to call a missionary, but are not exclusively for 'a man'. Therefore, we believe that the remaining 2 months of support for the current fiscal year has already been granted, and can be used for continued costs of any advertising, the moving in of a missionary, and so forth. And support approved for the next fiscal year would be made available upon the arrival of a missionary.

Emmaus Road Reformed Church, Eden Prairie, MN

Rev. Ryan Kron gave details of the many blessings since the church was organized last spring. A number of men took officer training in the past year, and 'leadership training' for all men will begin soon. They have 2 elders and 2 deacons currently. The elders do family visitation, and report that many say the church "feels like family". A parsonage was purchased in the summer. It is a split level, 4 bedroom, 3 bath home, which is 4 miles from the Eden Lake Elementary School, where their Sunday services are held. The price was \$350,000, and a \$250,000 loan was received from an RCUS source. Interest only is being paid currently, as suggested by the lender. Therefore, savings are being accumulated toward a future church building. A five year plan for such is in place, and the cost of a church building could exceed one million dollars.

As for church life, attendance is excellent at mid-week studies, as well as on the Lord's Day. Seventeen communicants joined in the past year, for a total of 55 communicants and 14 baptized members. It is common to have 1-2 new visitors each Lord's Day, and 80-90 members and visitors at a service. Membership classes are ongoing, and 9 completed such recently. For Sunday School, there are 3 children's classes, a catechism class, and an adult class taught by Rev. Kron. Outreach includes ads in a mailer, on radio, the church web site – emmausrcus.org, a blog, sermonaudio.com, and most of all, personal invitations. There are only a few reformed congregations in the metro area, including 2 OPC congregations and Redeemer RCUS.

As explanations for the quick numerical growth, members suggested: a thirst for the gospel and for orthodoxy, many in the area are tired of mega church situations, and Emmaus fills a niche, so there are people of many different backgrounds. Above all, continual prayer is key - which a group of them undertakes on the first Saturday morning of each month. May all of our churches take that 'key' most seriously! They pray to grow in love for the lost, and some reach out to Somali neighbors through teaching them English.

Emmaus Road is reported to be doing very well in all aspects, including finances. (They did not request any financial support.) However, they desire their own church building in the future. Therefore, the SHMC agrees with Covenant East Classis that support should continue in the next fiscal year, although at a final year's level. Also, we seek approval that the Synod Day of Prayer offering go to Emmaus, since the church has never received it, and the offering will be an aid to their building fund. Proposed support is \$1,000 from Synod, and \$7,000 from Classis, an overall reduction of \$7,000, or 10% of original support.

Grace Reformed Church, Rogers, AR

Rev. Wes Brice reported that the congregation rejoices to have its first church building! After more than 10 years of services in rented rooms, this acquisition was a great blessing for the congregation. The building, at 3320 N. 2nd St., in Rogers, was first used in the beginning of November. It has a capacity of about 100 people. The property includes 3 acres and a 3 bedroom house. The price was \$185,000, purchased with a Synod loan of \$77,000, and a bank loan of \$60,000. They also replaced roofing on both structures, and have savings in case the older A/C or furnace would go out. They have more visitors with this building, to have approximately 50, including members, at services.

Rev. Brice has been in good health, and as members stated, he has the strength to 'serve well' in care for the congregation. Spiritual growth is seen in the continuing unity and service of church members. There are 2 elders and 2 deacons. New people have come in the past year, and two families are in a membership class. Increased visitors are also anticipated, after obtaining a new lighted sign which is next to the busy road from Pea Ridge, along which their property is located. They currently have 27 communicants and 2 baptized children on the roll.

After worship services, three Sunday School classes are held. Rev. Brice teaches the adult class. Every other Sunday, they enjoy a church meal together, and have a prayer time afterward. One of the men conducts that time, with psalms, taking requests, and asking for prayer to be offered as suitable. The time is one of blessing, for the 'outspoken congregation', which is working in accord. For outreach, the church web site continues to be a means of bringing visitors. They also have a weekly church listing in a newspaper. Rev. Brice meets with 4 men at a restaurant each week, and there are conversations on spiritual matters with some who drop by. A group of 11 youth from our Manitowoc congregation visited, and handed out material door-to-door last summer, in the church neighborhood. It was a good experience, and the youth were impressed with the Grace congregation being so excited about the reformed faith.

The congregation had received outside giving, which helped them purchase the property. Having a mortgage, they do expect to use some savings to meet their budget for several years. Yet, that trend may well be reversed with offerings of newcomers. The congregation is prepared to take a 5% decrease in support from Synod and Classis. Also, yearly increases are budgeted for the support of their pastor and his eventual retirement!

First Reformed Chapel, Dickinson, ND

Rev. Dale Clark reported on a year of "ups and downs". Earlier, two adults joined the congregation, along with their child. However, later in the year, the family left the work, having "very different views on worship, especially the music." It is encouraging that there were 2 confirmations, and a wedding has brought another soul to the group. Some have attended for a few months, including 2 young men who had summer work, but then moved afterward. There have been other visitors from a general evangelical background. Recently, a couple and a single man with Reformed Baptist background have been attending. There are normally 21 in attendance for services which continue to be held at the Holiday Inn meeting room. They have fellowship meals monthly, which has been good for "bonding together."

It is planned to elect an elder at Dickinson, as a member of the overseeing consistory, of Salem RCUS, Ashley. To that end, the men recently finished the book "Called to Serve". On Sunday evenings the group has studied the Catechism, and then viewed "The Truth Project", followed by the R. C. Sproul series, "Dust to Glory". One couple has visited with the latter. For outreach, the group has invited friends and acquaintances. Many invitations and brochures have been distributed, but most visitors have come through the website. Rev. Clark has sought to be a chaplain at the hospital, and awaits hearing from them. They had a conference on marriage, April 25-26, with Rev. Brice as a speaker, along with Rev. Clark.

At the classis missions visitation, the three core families expressed loyal support for Rev. Clark and his wife, and are "committed to growing a reformed congregation". That commitment is shown in that actual offerings exceeded the budgeted amount by \$14,000. They also thank the RCUS congregations for the Day of Prayer offering, and other gifts, which brought in over \$12,000. A building fund has been established, to which they plan to add. We are glad to report that the Classis has proceeded toward parity of funding, as we urged last year, enabling a decrease of Synod support from \$38,400 to a requested \$28,800.

Rehoboth Reformed Church, Los Angeles, CA

Rev. Michael Voytek reported on a major change for the congregation in their meeting location. They now rent the Cerritos Elementary School, which has numerous benefits compared to the former medical building in La Habra. A great blessing is that this location is not only easier to reach from 3 nearby freeways, but also saves them approximately \$1600 per month in rent! The multi-purpose room used for services will seat over 150, and other rooms can be used. The principle was very glad to have space rented by a church, as had been done previously. With the savings, \$500 monthly has been budgeted for advertising, and a building fund has been set up, for the first time, to receive \$1,000 monthly.

Rehoboth has been a self-governing church for over a year, and the officers have been diligent in their work. Although one elder left to attend seminary, another has returned as an active elder, who has taught Sunday School class for adults on "Biblical Apologetics". Beyond the worship services, there have been afternoon Bible studies, weekly fellowship meals, and studies for women and men. There are currently 4 covenant youth in confirmation class. There was an overall decrease of one, to have 33 communicants, and 9 covenant youth. Yet, there are a number of regular visitors at this time, and the

congregation is investigating “ways to expand the proclamation of the Gospel in the Cerritos and surrounding communities.”

The reach of the church web site was greatly expanded, and a radio program was broadcast for 4 months. Ministry through a newsletter, phone calls, and email requests came out of that effort. They are considering two minute slots on another station for 1/3 of the cost. New invitation material is being produced including business cards, postcards, and tracts. Bibles and other Christian literature were distributed at the Cerritos Farmer’s Market, seeking to answer any questions about the Christian faith.

The church is thankful for the years of denominational support, is seeking an overall 10% reduction, between Classis and Synod. Your committee agrees to the requested support, and was glad to learn of the blessings experienced, the efforts for outreach in the past year, and that the new location makes it easier to gain additional visitors.

Proposal for the Hispanic Mission Work, at Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, CA

Western Classis has approved this new work, for support by the Classis, and overtures Synod to approve the same as a Synodical Home Mission Work. Rev. Paul Henderson submitted a letter on behalf of the Ebenezer Consistory describing this ministry, which is to begin July 1, 2014. For many years it has been the desire of the congregation to proclaim the gospel to the Hispanic people in Shafter and surrounding vicinity. Since Rehoboth RCUS is no longer under oversight of Shafter, this mission-minded congregation has moved forward with this ministry.

They made contact with Rev. Valentin Alpuche in this regard. Originally from Mexico, he received a theology degree from John Calvin Theological Seminary, in Mexico City. He then studied at MARS, Dyer, IN, received the M.Div. degree, and was ordained as a Minister in 2008, and serves as an Associate Pastor in the URCNA, in Beecher, IL. He has translated English theological works into Spanish, and can be heard on sermonaudio.com. The Consistory worked with Rev. Alpuche over one year “to investigate the possibility of beginning and establishing a Reformed Hispanic Church” in Shafter or somewhere in their county. They believe he is the man for this calling, and Classis has agreed. He was recently licensed and the call to serve as a Missionary/Associate Pastor of Ebenezer was approved.

The plan is that he and his family (wife Betty, and 4 children) will live in Shafter, use both their home and the church building for Bible studies; offering a free English class; city-wide catechism class, and many evangelistic endeavors. Various advertising and other events will be used for outreach. The “hope is that in God’s time, we would even see a Hispanic Reformed Church or denomination formed” which might reach to the vast numbers of Hispanics in the United States and southward.

As to finances, the Shafter congregation and several others have committed to provide over half of the amount budgeted. The provision of \$17,760 (about 23%) for the next fiscal year was approved by Western Classis, and your committee agrees to the overture for the same amount from Synod.

The SHMC acknowledges that this is something of a different approach, than Synod has taken on for some time, as far as support of a Synod missionary without any existing seed families. That is necessary in this situation, with the lack of someone to reach the Spanish speaking people in the Shafter area previously. We do not believe that the Home Missions Manual would prohibit such a work, although it is written with the assumption that there will be seed families for an assessment. In this case, demographics and other aspects of the area have been investigated. One fact to consider is that Shafter alone is over 75% Hispanic. Therefore, we believe the need is great, and concur with this work! We will also propose some minor changes to the language of the Manual in regards to this type of situation. And as requested by Western Classis, we recommend that in the next year: further policies and procedures related to works without seed families should be included in the Manual.

Other Committee Work:

The Classes Missions Committee reports were reviewed before our meeting. Missionaries were asked questions for further information along with their own reports, and each work was prayed for in turn. One missionary was met with privately. Classes works for possible future support were considered. Regarding a request from Northern Plains Classis, we seek to add specific language (Rec. 10) that would guide a consistory in oversight of a mission work. The Manual directs that all works will be under such oversight, yet gives no specifics as to how that is to be done, which can be daunting to a consistory new to the situation.

The Manual with any changes will be sent out after Synod. Particulars regarding annual visitations of works by the Classes Missions Committees, and reporting on such, are found in Section II. Oversight. Things forgotten at times are: including SHMC members in visitations, recording the date of visitation with names of those involved, meeting with a majority of members of the work, including a strategic plan for a classis (as to outlook for existing and possible new works), reviewing the three year budget forms and submitting them to Classis standing missions, and then to the SHMC after Classis meets. Requirements for calling missionaries and organizing congregations are found in VI and VII.

Annual Day of Prayer and Missions Offering:

As a reminder, the Annual Day of Prayer for Missions is the second Sunday of September. We ask that the 2014 offering be designated for Emmaus Road RCUS, Eden Prairie, MN, having never received it. This will aid their building fund in a final year of Synod support. May we all give thanks to the Lord for His great blessing over the 2½ years since services began at Eden Prairie.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Christ Reformed Chapel, Casper, WY continue to receive \$2,500 monthly, for a total of \$30,000 in the fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2014.
2. That the Omaha, NE mission work continue to receive \$2,500 monthly, for a total of \$30,000 in the fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2014, provided that a suitable candidate is found to continue the work.
3. That Emmaus Road Reformed Church, Eden Prairie, MN receive \$83 monthly, for a total of \$1,000 in the fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2014. [A reduction of \$1,000, 2.5% of original support.]
4. That Grace Reformed Church of Northwest AR receive \$240 monthly, for a total of \$2,880 in the fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2014. [A reduction of \$720, 5% of original support.]
5. That Emmaus Road Reformed Church, Eden Prairie, MN receive the 2014 Annual Day of Prayer for Missions offering.
6. That First Reformed Chapel, Dickinson, ND receive \$2,400 monthly, for a total of \$28,800 in the fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2014. [A reduction of \$9,600, 20% of original support.]
7. That Rehoboth Reformed Church, Los Angeles, CA receive \$2,098 monthly, for a total of \$25,175 in the fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2014. [A reduction of \$1,325, 5% of support.]
8. That Synod approve the proposed Hispanic Mission Work of Ebenezer Reformed Church, in Shafter, CA and its surrounding vicinity as a Synod Home Mission Work.
9. That the Hispanic Mission Work of Ebenezer Reformed Church, in Shafter, CA receive \$1,480 monthly, for a total of \$17,760 in the fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2014.

10. That the Home Missions Manual, (Oversight) II. 3 be amended to begin with the following: “The overseeing consistory of an unorganized work should provide leadership as an ordinary consistory, make regular visits, such as having an elder present for worship services and to provide for administration of the sacraments, hold meetings with the core group to assess maturity and progress of the work, seek potential officers among the group; and the missionary shall participate in consistory meetings in person or by other means of communication.”
11. That the following amendments to the Home Missions Manual be made for clarification regarding a missionary to an area without initial seed families:
 - (IV. 2. b. 1) Regarding “Home mission works” replace, “When a group is being formed into a mission work by a local congregation,” with: “When a work is being developed by a local congregation,”
 - (IV. 2. b. 2) After the words, “If continued interest is evident, the local congregation shall arrange a personal visitation by members of the Home Missions Committee for the purpose of assessing the work” remove the period, and add: “including demographics, and interview of a proposed missionary.”
 - (IV. 4.) After the words, “answers to the following” add a period and replace the parentheses with: “(To expedite their work, the Assessment Committee may send out questionnaires consisting of many of the questions outlined below. For a mission without initial “seed” families, some questions will not apply):”
 - (IV. 4. m.) Replace “group?” to read: “What is the financial viability of the work?” In the parentheses after, “In order to determine this, the group” add: “and/or the oversight Consistory”, then continuing, “must research and present the following information):”
12. That the Permanent Synod Home Missions Committee amend the Synod Home Missions Manual to include policies and procedures related to home mission works, without initial seed families, which are in need of Classical/Synodical support.
13. That \$6,000 be budgeted for Permanent Home Missions Committee expenses in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014.
14. The 2014-2015 fiscal year Home Missions budget, if approved as recommended, will total \$141,615. [An increase of \$6,115 over last year.] Take Note.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Harvey Opp, chairman, Rev. Howard Hart, Rev. Henry Bowen, Elder Lynn Goehring, Elder Daniel Mettler, Elder Mori Willemsen, Elder David Helseth.

I. Interchurch Relations Committee

Your Committee conducted its business this past synodical year by telephone, e-mail, and also by a partial Interchurch Relations Committee meeting in conjunction with the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council 2013 in East Flat Rock, NC. Joint interchurch meetings were held at the NAPARC venue with the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC), the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA) and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). Delegates were also assigned to represent the RCUS at the OPC General Assembly, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA) Synod, the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Synod (RCN aka; GKNv)

Present for the IRC meeting in North Carolina were Rev. Wes Brice, Rev. Maynard Koerner, Rev. Mike McGee, Rev. Jonathan Merica and Rev. Ron Potter. Other members of the committee were hindered from attending for health reasons, work commitments or other providential circumstances. At that meeting business centered on forthcoming and future Interchurch meetings, the fulfillment of our synodical mandate, and reports in hand from delegates to other church bodies. Also reviewed, in preparation for the NAPARC meeting, were proposed changes to the NAPARC Constitution and Bylaws.

The following items were handed down to the IRC by synod 2013 for action. From the standing ecumenical report (2013 Abstract p. 76)

Recommendation 2. Regarding the permanent committee report recommendation #2: That the application for membership of the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council be approved.

Recommendation 3a. Regarding the permanent committee report recommendation #3: That the letter to the Synod of the RCN/GKNv drafted by the Synodical Interchurch Relations Committee be approved, and the letter as amended be sent by our clerk on behalf of our Synod to their Synod.

Recommendation 3b That our Synod request matter 3a) be heard while our representatives are in attendance at their General Synod.

Recommendation 6. Regarding overture #10 from Covenant East Classis regarding six day creation in the OPC: That the Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee of Synod interact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church regarding their confessional position of the authority and inspiration of Scripture in the light of their General Assembly’s adopted position that there is a multiplicity of acceptable views of Genesis 1-2 on creation, and that the IRC report back to the 268th Synod.

Each of these mandates will be dealt with below.

Relations with Churches in North America

- **Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC):**

The IRC partial committee met with its counterparts from the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) in conjunction with the NAPARC meeting. At 7:00 AM on the morning of November 19th, 2013 the committee members above met with the CanRC delegates to NAPARC, Rev. Eric Kampen, Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer; Rev. Doug Vandeburgt, and Elder Henry van Delden
Rev. Potter reported on the labours of Rev. Jay Fluck, and Rev. Potter in serving the small Blue Bell, congregation of the Canadian / American Reformed Churches, near Philadelphia PA. This church,

because of a membership drain and loss of its Pastor due to a Canadian corporation relocating plus declining finances, was placed under the oversight of the Dunnville, ON CanRC by Classis Niagara of the CanRC. Both pastors Fluck and Potter, as they are able each month, lead worship, preach and administer the sacraments there. As of this writing the baptized members of this congregation have been transferred to the RCUS church in Waymart, PA and an RCUS mission work under the oversight of Heritage RCUS has been established in Blue Bell.

A discussion took place about the CanRC position of children in the covenant in light of interaction with one of the men in Blue Bell. Since both churches hold to the *Three Forms of Unity* there was no substantial disagreement between us. A copy of a book explaining the CanRC form of baptism was provided to your committee for study and for further conversation as may be warranted.

In addition to the two aforesaid RCUS pastors providing ministry to the CanRC church in Blue Bell, the Rev. Sam Powell of the RCUS was the conference speaker at the CanRC Church in Winnipeg, MB October 18-19, 2013 on the subject of "*Promoting a Biblical Sexual Morality.*" Rev. Powell also preached twice on the Lord's Day October 20th, while in Winnipeg.

Your Committee discussed the development of our relationship as fraternal / sister churches and noted that there has been an exchange of articles between the *Clarion* and the *Reformed Herald*.

Copies of the Minutes of the CanRC Synod meeting were presented to your Committee and it was noted (1) that the Synod had voted to continue ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCUS under the adopted rules, (2) reversed its decision concerning women voting in congregational meetings (a concern previously raised by the IRC) and (3) sent a letter of admonition to the RCN concerning the developing hermeneutical situation in the Netherlands.,

The Synod of the CanRC also declined to extend any invitation to a fraternal relationship with the RPCNA due to their position on ordained women in office (deaconess). The CanRC delegates questioned your Committee as to how the RCUS has resolved this situation in terms of their fraternal relationship with the RPCNA. It was pointed out by your Committee that the RCUS entered a fraternal relationship with the RPCNA at a time when the matter of ordained deaconesses was not considered as thoroughly as it would be today.

We are thankful for our brothers in the CanRC and for the developing relationship between our respective churches. Plans have been made for our next Interchurch meeting, in the Fall of 2014 in Grassie, ON, again in conjunction with the annual meeting of NAPARC.

- **Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)**

The OPC GA met in California, June 5th ff., 2013 The Rev. Jonathan Merica was the delegate from the RCUS to this GA. His report follows:

The 80th General Assembly (GA) met at St. Mary's College, Moraga, CA from Wednesday, June 5, 2013 to Monday, June 10, 2013. Rev. Tony Curto, the Moderator of the previous General Assembly, opened the meeting with prayer and then the delegates joined in singing a hymn. Rev. Curto preached a message exhorting God's people to be assiduously engaged in the Lord's work for the glory of God and the good of the Church.

After the opening worship service, Rev. Jeffery Landis was nominated as moderator and then elected to serve at the 80th General Assembly. Upon the election of the Moderator, various OPC delegates were presented with overtures, communications, complaints and judicial appeals. Also, Advisory Committees were assigned, who were responsible for speaking to various matters on the Docket at the call of the Moderator. On Thursday, June 6, 2013 the Advisory Committees convened most of the day to address the matters of business assigned to them.

The Rev. Jack Sawyer was the spokesman for the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations, (CEIR). He explained the OPC's three-levels of interchurch relations with other denominations. The three levels are 1) Ecumenical Contact, 2) Corresponding Relations, and 3) Ecclesiastical Fellowship. It was a delight for the OPC to have a representative from the Presbyterian Church of Brazil as an observer. Later in the meeting each of the fraternal delegates of churches having ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC gave their individual addresses to the General Assembly. Your servant was warmly received, and also addressed the body.

It was noted by the OPC church statistician that in 2012 that OPC churches decreased by five for a total of 270 congregations. The total number of church plants slightly decreased to forty-nine. At the end of 2012 the total denominational membership was 30,555. The OPC is aggressively pursuing home missions work. It was well stated by Mr. Shaw, "We plant churches in a way that is Biblical, Confessional and Presbyterian" (*A. J. Fox's OPC, GA Report*) The OPC affirms that they are committed to the authority of Scripture and the Reformed confessions.

Mark Bube reported on the work of the Committee on Foreign Missions. He gave an update on the OPC mission fields. The Lord has opened many fields of labor for the OPC. Mr. Bube in stating the OPC's goal of missions said, "In missions we establish the worship of God and cast the net to bring His people in. The goal is the establishment of a healthy indigenous national church (i.e. Presbytery) that is committed to the Reformed Standards." (*A. J. Fox's OPC, GA Report*)

The 80th General Assembly delegates enjoyed their stay at Moraga, CA and ended ahead of schedule on June 10, 2013. Let us pray that God will bless our fraternal relationship with the OPC, and that we will be of encouragement to one another as we labor to advance the Kingdom of God.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Jonathan Merica,

Regarding Recommendation #6 of the 2013 Standing Ecumenical Report of Synod (see above)

Your Committee met with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, November 21st, 2013. This report follows:

The 267th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, which met in Newton, WI, May 20-23, 2013, issued the following mandate to the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) of the RCUS germane to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC):

... that the Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee of Synod interact with the OPC regarding their confessional position of the authority and inspiration of Scripture in the light of their General Assembly's adopted position that there is a multiplicity of acceptable views of Genesis 1-2 on creation, and that the IRC report back to the 268th Synod. (Abstract of the Minutes, p. 73).

In fulfillment of this mandate the IRC of the RCUS met with the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (CEIR) of the OPC at Flat Rock, NC November 20th, 2013, following the adjournment of the annual NAPARC meeting. The meeting lasted two hours. Present from the IRC of the RCUS were: Rev. Wes Brice, Rev. Maynard Koerner, Rev. Mike McGee; Rev. Jonathan Merica and Rev. Ron Potter. Present from the CEIR of the OPC were: Elder Mark Bube, Rev. George Cottenden, Rev. Tony Curto, Rev. John Hilbelink, Rev. George Knight III, Rev. Jack Sawyer and Rev. Tom Tyson.

The brothers from the OPC expressed deep appreciation to RCUS for initiating this meeting through its IRC to discuss the OPC position on creation. The meeting was conducted in a brotherly fashion with candor on both sides and with an evident desire to be faithful to the Scriptures.

Before reporting on the result of the meeting it would be important here to sketch the historical background that prompted the RCUS concern.

I. Historical background

In 2004 the OPC completed an extensive study on the views of creation and presented a paper to their General Assembly that same year entitled: *Report of the Committee to Study the Views of Creation*. This study began in 2001 with this mandate: “to examine the Scriptures and our Confessions of Faith and Catechisms, to assist the church in its understanding of the biblical doctrine of creation with respect to the various views of the days of creation (e.g. the days of ordinary length, the day age view, the framework view and the analogical view), thereby assisting sessions and presbyteries in their dealings with officers and candidates who hold differing views.”¹

The Committee, in its preface to the report stated its understanding of this mandate: “The Committee has understood its mandate as three-fold: first, to offer exegetical, hermeneutical, and theological assessments of several views of scripture held by officers in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.; secondly, to study how the standards of our church instruct our understanding of creation; and thirdly, to suggest ways in which the assemblies of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church can reach greater unity in their deliberations on this issue.”²

In its preface to the report the Committee also stated: “We rejoice that we have achieved unity on what we believe to be most significant in the Scriptures and in the Standards respecting the doctrine of creation, We have not been able to come to complete unity, however, over the nature and duration of the creation days.”³(underlining added -IRC)

The final actions of the 71st General Assembly of the OPC with regard to the creation study is recorded in the Minutes⁴ and were published in a separate letter from the Stated Clerk of the OPC, Rev. Donald Duff, dated July 16th, 2004 (hereafter *Clerk's letter*) as follows:

The 71st General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church received a *Report of the Committee to Study the Views of Creation*. After discussing the report and the recommendations found in the report the assembly passed the following motions with regard to the Report of the Committee on Views of Creation:

1. That the General Assembly recommend that presbyteries should expect a ministerial candidate to articulate his view on the days of creation with a proper recognition of the hermeneutical, exegetical, and confessional considerations involved. The following kinds of questions should be used by presbyteries when examining a candidate, whatever his view of the days of creation, in order to show that his doctrine of creation is consistent with Scripture and the subordinate standards:

A. Does the candidate affirm the following and can he articulate what he understands by them:

1. Creation ex nihilo
2. The federal headship of Adam
3. The covenant of works
4. The doctrine of the Sabbath
5. The sufficiency and perspicuity of Scripture
6. The historicity of the creation account

B. Does the candidate understand and affirm the priority of Scripture in the relationship between special and general revelation?

C. Does the candidate understand and affirm the hermeneutical principles that are expressed in Scripture and in the subordinate standards?

D. Is the candidate able to address and refute the errors of the theory of evolution both exegetically and theologically?

E. Can the candidate articulate and affirm the covenantal structure of the plan of redemption as found in Genesis 1-3?

2. That the General Assembly urge members of presbyteries and sessions to uphold the peace of the church by addressing theological issues within the church primarily through educational, administrative, judicial, or other constitutional means, and not merely by voting for or against candidates for office.

3. That the General Assembly encourage the Committee on Christian Education and its Subcommittee on Ministerial Training to seek ways of working more closely with the candidates and credentials committees of presbyteries in order to bring ministerial candidates to a fuller understanding of the confessional standards, the *Book of Church Order*, the *Minutes of the General Assembly* and the history of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

¹ Minutes 71st GA (2004) p.193, Preface, para. 1

² Ibid, para 5.

³ Ibid, para 4

⁴ Minutes of the Seventy-First General Assembly: Actions: 79, 113, 118, 119, 120, 121, 128, 130, 136; Advisory Committee &: 72; Report: 71, pp. 193-344

4. That the General Assembly refer the report to the presbyteries and sessions for their study and thank the members of the Committee to Study the Views of Creation for their arduous labors and for their expressed desire to maintain the purity, peace and unity of the church. The General Assembly recognizes that the concept of the *animus imponentis* (the intention of the imposing body) is new to many people in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Therefore, the Assembly draws attention to the following:

...the concept of the *animus imponentis* may not be employed so as to make a wax nose of the Standards and to pit the church's interpretation of the Standards against the plain words of the Standards themselves, particularly inasmuch as the Standards generally are thought to contain but few obscurities. Rather, *animus imponentis*, rightly understood and employed, means simply that the church as a whole in its integrity interprets its own constitution and that such interpretation, and not those of private individuals or lesser judicatories, is decisive. (*Report of the Committee on the Views of Creation*, pages 1659-1660, lines 2704-2710)

Donald J. Duff, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.
July 16, 2004

(Note: Your Committee will reference this letter in what follows).

II. Report of the Committee

At the outset it is to be made clear that the OPC holds firmly to the truth expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith (IV.I) namely: *It pleased God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make, of nothing, the world and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.* (Emphasis added – IRC). The OPC does not hold to any form of evolution whatsoever, theistic or otherwise. In fact it is required of a candidate, as stated in the Clerk's letter above (I.D.) that a candidate be examined as to his ability to "...address and refute the errors of the theory of evolution both exegetically and theologically."

The OPC also holds that God created in six days. At issue is the phrase in the WCF: "...in the space of six days." As referred to above in the preface to their report they have unity on this. It is disagreement over the *length of days* that prompted the study paper referred to above and thus the sentence on page 1 above, from the preface: "We have not been able to come to complete unity, however, over the nature and duration of the creation days."

The CEIR pointed out to your Committee that contrary to what our synodical mandate stated concerning "...their General Assembly's *adopted* position that there is a multiplicity of acceptable views of Genesis 1-2 on creation, ... the OPC *did not adopt* a multiplicity of views. The purpose of their original study was an attempt to settle the matter of the multiplicity of views that existed in their church, which they failed to do. In the words of the CEIR concerning this: "they (i.e. the General assembly) could not come to clarity as a church" and thus came to "no final determination" regarding the length of creation days. According to the CEIR the study committee was originally formed to help the church come to one opinion on the length of creation days. This it could not do.

It is to be noted that the motions, as recorded in the Clerk's letter above, are *not* adopted motions intended to establish a multiplicity of acceptable positions for the denomination. They are recommendations *only* to the presbyteries, to establish "fences" around the subject of their views of the length of the creation days that already exist so as to ensure that other truths relative to the doctrine of creation (as outline in Clerks letter 1.A. 1-6 above) can be affirmed by a candidate for licensure. The OPC therefore has no formal adopted position on the length of the creation days as we in the RCUS do. They thus remain in the same position they have always been in.

In responding to questions by the IRC of the RCUS the CEIR of the OPC pointed out that the various views argued in the study report itself reflect the views of those on the study committee who hold these views. They do not reflect any particular position officially held by the denomination. The CEIR observed to your committee that the 6 ordinary day view of creation pre-dominates in the OPC.

The observation was made by one member of the CEIR that it is regrettable that in their history, when views other than 6 ordinary days were in the church at the beginning, or later entered the church, that they were not tested in the courts of the church and that the church thus was not as diligent as it could have been historically. No one on the CEIR dissented from this observation. The failure to deal judicially with views other than six ordinary days of creation invariably led to the multiplicity of views present in the OPC today.

Moreover the comment was also made that that though there has been no clarity achieved in this generation on the matter of the length of creation days, it seems inevitable that the only way this will ultimately be resolved is in the courts of the church in the future. This is in keeping with what the GA recommended when it said in the Clerks letter #2 above: *That the General Assembly urge members of presbyteries and sessions to uphold the peace of the church by addressing theological issues within the church primarily through educational, administrative, judicial, or other constitutional means, and not merely by voting for or against candidates for office.* (Emphasis added – IRC).

Your committee asked the CEIR what effect a view like the Framework View on the days of creation, for example, might have on the larger interpretation of scripture. In other words, as the mandate to the IRC by our Synod put it ,how would this affect their view of the "... *authority and inspiration of Scripture.*" It is precisely here that the "fence" referred to above comes into play. As recommendation #1 above in the Clerk's letter makes clear, any departure from the hermeneutical principles expressed in *scripture and in the subordinate standards* (I.B.) would render a candidate unable to affirm what is required of him by the GA's action and thus ineligible for licensure. The CEIR, to a man, affirmed that if the hermeneutic employed to arrive at a Framework View is applied elsewhere in scripture the candidate is ineligible for licensure.

Your Committee also addressed the matter of *animus imponentis* (cf. Clerks letter #4) which the study committee referred to. By this phrase is meant “the intention of the imposing body.” By the use of the *animus imponentis*, it is possible for a presbytery, for example, to establish that when the WCF states “in the space of six days” that the standards mean six ordinary days, or if a presbytery so decides, the phrase in the standards can mean six days of indeterminate length. The CEIR admitted that the *animus imponentis* has been “troublesome having been used and misused.”

Properly understood, as stated in the Clerk’s letter above (#4) instead of being used to make a “wax nose of the Standard and to pit the church’s interpretation of the Standards against the plain words of the Standards themselves, particularly inasmuch as the Standards generally are thought to contain but few obscurities . . .” the concept, “. . . rightly understood and employed, means simply that the church as a whole in its integrity interprets its own constitution and that such interpretation, and not those of private individuals or lesser judicatories, is decisive.” The misuse of this concept would mean that one presbytery could officially differ from another in its view of creation which would create disunity in the church.

III. Summary Observations:

1. In sum your Committee believes that the OPC has struggled with this matter of the length of creation days and simply cannot, at this time come to any consensus. The CEIR gave every indication that allowing a multiplicity of views on the length of the creation days is not where they would like the OPC to be and not a place the OPC wants to be in. Other than bringing matters to a judicial head to test the subject in the court of the church, there does not seem to be, at present, any way out of this difficulty for them. In their study committee they made an effort to settle this matter and failed.
2. Your Committee finds that the OPC has made an effort to set up a recommended examination fence to ensure that hermeneutical principles of scripture and the standards applied to ones view of the length of creation days do not adversely affect other doctrines relative to creation such as 1. Creation ex nihilo; 2. The federal headship of Adam; 3. The covenant of works; 4. The doctrine of the Sabbath; 5. The sufficiency and perspicuity of Scripture; and 6. The historicity of the creation account. Yet the necessity of erecting the fences in the first place points back to the hermeneutical problems having to do with the length of creation days that they are attempting to keep in check. In one sense they are to be commended for their desire to safeguard the perspicuity of scripture yet in another it’s a bit like shutting the barn door after the fact. It seems to your Committee that this demonstrates the weakness of the position in which the OPC finds itself. There remains a real danger to the OPC as they seek to maintain the hermeneutic position which the Westminster Confession requires.
3. Your Committee also explained to the CEIR the difficulty their multiple views on the length of creation days brings when it comes to some members transferring into the RCUS which holds to the ordinary length of the creation days. They had sympathy for this difficulty but their hands are tied in dealing with it if they are to preserve the unity of their church.
4. Your Committee believes that the overarching concern of the OPC in allowing these multiple views of the length of the days of creation along with the “fences” is to “promote the purity, peace and unity of the church”⁵ until such a time as this matter comes to a judicial head. .

Your Committee urged the CEIR and through them, the OPC itself, to make every effort to take advantage of the providential occasion to bring this matter of the multiplicity of views of the length of the days of creation to a satisfactory biblical and confessional conclusion.

Conclusion:

Your Committee is not satisfied with the state the OPC is presently in with respect to a multiplicity of views regarding the length of creation days. As the OPC report itself makes clear, the contested phrase in the WCF . . . *in the space of six days* has been ably defended as scriptural days of ordinary length.⁶ We believe that they have unwisely separated “the nature and duration of the creation days” from the doctrine of creation as set forth in Scripture as well as their Confession.

Recommendation #1: That the RCUS recognize the difficulty this issue of the length of creation days has presented and continues to present to our OPC brethren and that our churches covenant to pray for them that this matter may be resolved among them.

Recommendation #2: That the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS continue to discuss this matter of the length of creation days in its periodic meetings with the CEIR of the OPC and in its annual report to Synod, advise of any developments.

- **Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA)**

Your Committee delegated the Rev. Jonathan Merica to represent the RCUS at the meeting of the RPCNA Synod in Marion, IN, June 21-28, 2013. At the last minute Rev. Merica was stricken with illness that hospitalized him and therefore he could not attend. Since your chairman was unavailable, Rev. Merica contacted the Clerk of Synod, Rev. Fagrey, and arranged for a letter of explanation and greeting to be sent to the RPCNA

The next meeting of the RPCNA is scheduled to be held on the campus of Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana, June 23-27, 2014. At present, because of budget restraints, we are not sure if we will have a delegate present. If we do not we will send a letter of greeting.

⁵ Minutes 71st GA, Advisory Committee 7:72, p. 20

⁶ Ibid, pp. 222 ff.

- **United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA)**

At the initiative of the URCNA a meeting between their Committee on Ecumenical Relations and Church Union (CERCU) and the IRC of the RCUS was held November 20th, 2013 at 9:00 PM in conjunction with the annual NAPARC meeting. The members of the IRC stated above were in attendance. Members of the CERCU present were: Rev. Bill Boekestein, Rev. John Bouwers, Rev. Dan Donovan, Rev. Casey Freswick, Rev. Dr., Michael Horton, Rev. Rick Miller, Rev. Bill Pols, Rev. Ralph Pontier, and Rev. William Van Hall.

The CERCU reviewed the URCNA's rules for *Phase 2 of Ecclesiastical Fellowship*. Which, for the benefit of the newer members of the RCUS Synod, are presented herein:

- 1) *the churches shall assist each other as much as possible in the maintenance, defense and promotion of Reformed doctrine, liturgy, church polity, and discipline*
- 2) *the churches shall consult each other when entering into ecumenical relations with other federations*
- 3) *the churches shall accept each other's certificates of membership, admitting such members to the Lord's Table*
- 4) *the churches shall open the pulpits to each other's ministers, observing the rules of the respective churches*
- 5) *the churches shall consult each other before major changes to the confessions, church government, or liturgy are adopted*
- 6) *the churches shall invite and receive each other's ecclesiastical delegates who shall participate in the broader assemblies with an advisory voice*

In keeping with each of our respective rules, your Committee discussed with the CERCU the need for better communication of their synodical decisions noting as we did the fact that our Synodical Abstracts are on line and available. We advised the CERCU of the need for more regular fraternal delegates from their churches, particularly in the Western Classis and of the need for their delegates to stay for the duration of our Synod and Classis meetings and not to come in time for their speech and then to leave shortly afterwards. The CERCU explained that this comes about from recruiting pastors in the regions of our meeting, rather than sending a committee member, to cut down on expenses. The CERCU recorded our concerns in their minutes.

The matter of pulpit exchanges was discussed. The URCNA is much more active in promoting this that we are in the RCUS. It was noted that Rev. Koerner has filled several pulpits in the URCNA recently.

The CERCU queried the RCUS as to their interest in pressing forward into church union. Your delegates pointed out to the CERCU that this is not on the "radar" for us and that our interest lies in promoting our fraternal relationship and in working together more than it does in church union. The CERCU is driven by something they refer to as the "ecumenical imperative" and so *Phase Three - Church* with those churches they are in fraternal / sister relationship with, is their ultimate goal.

The CERCU also queried the IRC as to why we do not have two Lord's Day services in all our churches. This is a topic that came up when we entered into fraternal relations with the URCNA and it comes up repeatedly in our interchurch meetings with the CERCU. Your Committee responded by pointing out that this matter comes up frequently between us and that we have previously explained our various practices on the Lord's Day which we did once more. Clearly the CERCU would like the RCUS to have two services each Lord's Day.

A question was asked concerning our practice of catechism preaching. We explained that the reading of the Heidelberg with a brief explanation of each Lord's Day is part of our liturgy and that the Confessions are used in the context of our preaching and teaching ministries.

Your committee was asked by one member of the CERCU "What is confirmation?" Your Committee responded with an explanation of our practice.

The meeting between our delegations was frank and candid and evidenced that there are differences of tradition and practices between us but that we have a common interest as fraternal churches in laboring together in the furtherance of the gospel. It was agreed that going forward we ought to be seeking ways that we can labour together to that end. It is expected that we will be meeting together more regularly in the future than has been the case in the past.

The URCNA meets June 3-6, 2014 in Visalia, CA. At present, because of budget restraints, we are not sure if we will have a delegate present. If we do not we will send a letter of greeting.

Relations with other Churches

- **North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).**

The 39th, annual meeting of NAPARC took place November 19-20, 2013 at the Bonclarken Assembly Grounds of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, in East Flat Rock, NC. Present as delegates from the RCUS were Rev. Wes Brice, Rev. Maynard Koerner, Rev. Mike McGee and Rev. Ron Potter. The report of that meeting follows:

The thirty ninth meeting of the North American Presbyterian Reformed Council (NAPARC) convened for its annual meeting at Bonclarken, the beautiful assembly grounds of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, in East Flat Rock, NC, November 19th – 20th, 2013.

Present were delegates from the 12 member churches of NAPARC: The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC), the Église réformée du Québec (ERQ), the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA), the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC), the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Presbyterian Reformed Church (PRC), Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA), and the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA).

Present also were observers from the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) which is a Korean speaking denomination in the process of applying for membership in NAPARC. Since the annual NAPARC meeting is increasingly becoming a venue for interchurch relations committee meetings, there were a number of visitor members from these committees also present.

The Interim Committee of NAPARC, which consists of one delegate from each member church, met in the morning of November 19th to finalize the docket for the plenary session of NAPARC which began that afternoon. The plenary session was called to order by the chairman, Rev. Rob Patrick (ARPC) who led the Council in opening devotions and prayer from 2 Timothy 3. Once the roll call of churches was completed, the Council proceeded to the election of a new slate of officers. Upon recommendation of the Interim Committee, the Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer (CanRC) was elected chairman and the Rev. Ben Westerveld (ERQ) was elected vice-chairman. Rev. Maynard Koerner (RCUS) was returned to the office of treasurer and the Rev. Ron Potter (RCUS) to the office of secretary.

Once assuming the Chair, Rev. Holtvlüwer, expressed appreciation to Rev. Patrick for his service as chairman and proceeded to call for each of the member churches to present their reports assigning a member of the next delegation in line to report, to pray for the reporting church. After each report an opportunity was given for questions. What was evident in these reports is scriptural and creedal fidelity among the member churches of NAPARC, the distinguishing characteristics of the three marks of the true church, the active missionary efforts of the churches at home and abroad, the evident working of Christ and conversely, the attempts of the Devil, in some cases, to cause disruption. It was plainly evident to all in attendance that the Kingdom of our LORD is advancing.

The adjournment for the evening meal and speaker fell before the reports were finished. These were completed the following morning. The Council, those in attendance as visitors and visitors from local ARPC churches, gathered in the Dining Hall at Bonclarken for a meal and to hear Dr. Mark Ross of Erskine Seminary (ARPC) address the assembled on the subject of *Church Unity* from John 17:20ff. This presentation was extremely edifying and was well received by those in attendance.

On Wednesday, following devotions and prayer by the chairman from Luke 10:38-42 and after the completion of the remaining church reports and the report from the one observer church in attendance, the Council reviewed the communications received by the Secretary, received and adopted the Treasurer's and Auditors report, adopted the Interim Committee report, received the report on the Foreign Missions Consultation and then proceeded to take up the report of the Committee of Review (COR.)

The COR was tasked several years back with reviewing the function of NAPARC, its Constitution and its By-laws and to bring recommendations to the Council. Their work resulted in changes to the NAPARC Constitution, which were then, upon action of the Council, proposed to the member churches for approval. Their work also resulted in changes to the NAPARC Bylaws, which after amendments by the Council, were voted on and adopted unanimously. These new Bylaws, too numerous to list here, will be posted on the NAPARC web site, published in the Minutes and are now governing the operations of the Council.

As a result, NAPARC will thus meet in 2014 over a three-day period instead of a two-day period, with time given between sessions for interchurch relations committee's to meet and conduct business without having to labour early in the morning before the Council convenes, or late at night after it adjourns. In addition a member church of the NAPARC host church will ordinarily conduct a devotional service on one evening and the practice of a meal and provision of a speaker by the host church will take place on the second evening.

Also approved by the Council was the publication, in its minutes and on its web site, of several informational documents that have been produced over the years by NAPARC and were gathered together by the COR. These documents will be of use to the member churches as they relate in the context of the Council. Then finally the Council determined to maintain a cumulative list of the topics of ongoing and completed studies by the member churches to be distributed with the Minutes of the Council meetings. .

Before adjourning, the Council invited the following churches to observe NAPARC 2014: the Bible Presbyterian Church, the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) and the Protestant Reformed Churches of North America. The vice chairman, Rev. Ben Westerveld, closed the Council with devotions and prayer from 1 Timothy 1:6-7.

The next (40th) meeting of the Council will be hosted by the Canadian Reformed Churches near Hamilton, ON, Canada, November 11-13, 2014.

It is to be noted from the above report, that pursuant to recommendation #2 of the 2013 Standing Ecumenical Committee Report (see above, p.1) that the RCUS was one of three churches to vote in favor of the admission of the KPAC (Kosin) to membership in NAPARC. The other nine churches have not yet acted on the application.

In addition, the NAPARC report above refers to proposed changes to the NAPARC Constitution that is being sent down to the churches for approval. These appear in appendix #1 and appendix #2. The first shows the Constitution with editing marks and the second, the final version.

Recommendation #3: That the proposed changes to the NAPARC Constitution be approved. (see appendix #1 & #2)

- **Invitations to NAPARC Churches to observe Synod 2014**

In keeping with the practice begun last year, to invite NAPARC churches with whom we do not have a fraternal relationship, to observe our Synod meetings, the IRC invited the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC) to attend Synod 2014. Regrettably their General Assembly meets the same time we do so they could not send an observer. Your Committee then invited the Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ). To date no answer has been received from them.

Relations With Churches Abroad

- **International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)**

Your Committee delegated the Rev. Jim Sawtelle and Rev. Scot Henry to represent the RCUS at the 2013 meeting of the ICRC in Wales. Their report follows:

The eighth meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches was held in Cardiff, Wales from August 29 to September 4, 2013. The opening meeting was a prayer service held at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Cardiff. The host denomination was the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales (EPCEW). These churches tend to be rather small, but the people have large hearts and served us with very warm hospitality. They also told us that the people of Wales and England are very hardened spiritually and display not only indifference to the gospel, but also outright hostility to it at times. Yet, the pastors and members of the churches there faithfully and vigorously bear witness to the gospel and hold a warm and steadfast adherence to the historic reformed faith. The confessional basis of the EPCEW is the Westminster standards.

The Welsh are legendary for their singing, and during our times of worship with them and the final evening hymn sing this gift was beautifully displayed. In fact, our worship gatherings with the local congregants and conference delegates from all over the world were truly a taste of heaven.

The assembly began its work on Thursday morning at the conference Center of the University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd, with the roll call showing 28 of the 30 member churches represented. During the conference two more churches were received into membership: the Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Kenya), and the Sudanese Reformed Churches. Thus the total number of churches stands now at 32. Three more churches applied for membership. Each one gave an introduction of their church to the conference. There were also in attendance a few observers from denominations interested in joining in the future.

The applications for membership by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Malawi and the Universal Reformed Christian Church in Nigeria (Tiev) were deemed incomplete according to the

Constitutional requirements for membership and will await fulfillment of the remaining requirements until the next conference in 2017. The application of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA) was also referred to the next conference meeting. While their application was not lacking, there were concerns expressed by some delegates about these churches and ultimately the conference decided to keep them on observer status until those issues could be further worked through over the next four years. The debate over the application of the CRCA was at times a bit contentious and controversial. In the end the vote taken to receive their application failed to meet the required two thirds majority by one vote. Your delegates voted in the minority as we believed the concerns raised on the floor were sufficient to warrant the extra time needed to resolve some outstanding issues. The failure of the application of the CRCA at this time demonstrates that admission to the ICRC is not a mere rubber stamp process.

Business sessions were held each day from 9 am to 5 pm. The evening sessions consisted of designated speakers delivering papers assigned to them, each dealing with the theme of the conference, “Preach the Word”, 2 Timothy 4:2. These talks were open to a popular audience. On the day following each address, the conference delegates were separated into four groups for discussion and interaction on the presentations.

The papers were as follows: “The Necessity of Preaching,” by Dr. Robert Letham (EPCEW); “The Nature of Preaching,” by Dr. James Visscher (CanRC); “The Practice of Preaching in Non-Literary Cultures,” by Dr. Jun Ho Jin (Korean Presbyterian Church Korea). The papers were well prepared and generally excellent. The discussions in response were vigorous and helpful.

Some of the business at this conference was of a routine variety that is required of every conference meeting. However, the bulk of the meetings were spent dealing with the report of the special review committee appointed at the last conference meeting (2009) to review the constitution, regulations and structures of the ICRC. The purpose of this review committee’s work was to evaluate, after 25 years of the Conference’s existence, how the Conference is fulfilling its mandate and mission; how well the Constitution and Regulations cover the Conference’s needs and procedures; and how the Conference might better serve the member churches. The review committee did a thorough and excellent job of analyzing all these areas, and presented to the conference a detailed list of recommendations.

The review committee recommended a few refinements to the Constitution, and several changes to the structure of the Conference together with appropriate changes to the regulations in order to encourage more regional interaction between member churches and to give a higher priority to their theological education and diaconal ministries. To enable these changes, the review committee proposed appointing a Coordinating Committee, a Theological Education Committee, a Diaconal Committee and a Regional Conference Committee in addition to the already existing Mission Committee. Finally, in order to give greater visibility to the ICRC and to improve communication among member churches and make information about the various ministries of the member churches more easily accessible, a Website Committee was proposed. They also recommended adoption of a more comprehensive set of Rules of Order by which the conference may conduct its business proceedings.

In order to consider the review committee’s recommendations, each proposed new committee, with the Constitutional basis and regulations governing its tasks were given to an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committees constituted a “review of the review committee,” you might say. They in turn offered refinements to the proposals, and brought final recommendations to the floor for debate and adoption. This procedure worked well to provide accountability to the review committee’s work. The Conference adopted a document with proposed changes to the Constitution and Regulations, and now sets this document before the member denominations to debate and adopt/reject. Each member church now also has the opportunity to offer amendments to this document for further consideration by the ICRC conference in 2017. It takes a two thirds majority of the member churches to adopt the proposed changes. So the Synod of the RCUS now has at least two years to study the proposed changes and respond to them.

One further report given at the conference is worthy of note. The Mission Committee held two meetings in the last four years. These meetings are opportunities for member churches to send a representative of its Foreign Missions agency to meet together for mutual reflection, information on their work of various mission fields, and to discuss strategies for building up of the church for the glory of God. One of the meetings was in the Netherlands, the other in Philadelphia. Mr. Mark Bube, the OPC’s Foreign Missions coordinator, put together a booklet entitled “Mission Field Survey.” It identifies the various mission fields in which each member church in the ICRC is active.

The committee lamented the fact that only a handful of churches were represented at these meetings. To my knowledge the RCUS did not send a representative to either meeting. Mr. Bube made note of the fact that a number of member churches did not respond to the mission survey, and thus their works are not listed. Your delegates noted that RCUS’s mission works are not recorded in the survey booklet. This is unfortunate in light of the fact that at least two other groups are either contemplating works in the Philippines or are already working there. Perhaps we are missing an opportunity for better cooperation and use of resources in the area of diaconal needs and theological training. Another member church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland (RPCI), is involved in mission work in France. Your delegates made good contacts with their delegates. These brothers are faithful men. In light of the contemplated move of Rev. Eric Kayayan to France, we might be well served to develop contacts with these brothers regarding their work there. The newly received member church in Kenya is another group to make mention of in this regard. They seem to be a mature Presbyterian church and made mention of operating a seminary in that country.

The next meeting of the Conference is scheduled for some time between May and August in Jordon, Ontario Canada, hosted by the United Reformed Churches of North America.

Reflections from your delegates:

First, members of synod should be aware that the recommended changes adopted by the conference to the Constitution, Regulations and structure of the ICRC represent a significant broadening of the conference’s work. The recommendations are in keeping with the stated purpose of the ICRC*, and in theory these proposals could be a very positive thing. In reality we wonder how many of the member churches will have the resources to participate in many of the new committee activities as fully as envisioned. That said, perhaps the RCUS could choose two or three of those proposed new committees that might prove to be of greatest help to us and concentrate our participation on them.

Second, both of your delegates were impressed and blessed by the interaction we had with the many delegates at the conference. We noted especially a strong desire by the UK churches to be faithful to the reformed faith and a careful adherence to the confessions, as well as maintenance of faithful worship. These are their convictions in the face of a very spiritually hardened populace. These churches nevertheless persevere in the work of missions, though progress is often very little and very slow. The churches in India are also impressive in this regard.

Third, it appeared evident to your two delegates that the RCUS can be well served by the conferences in developing a better knowledge of some of the foreign churches. A number of the member churches are doing mission work in Africa and Asia, and could be of help to us in areas of theological training. As noted above, this is particularly true with respect to the Philippines and possibly Kenya. In all candor, we believe the RCUS could do a better job of utilizing our contacts with many of the conference churches. The Spirit of Christ is definitely working among these churches, and we ought to support and encourage our fellow reformed brethren in their faithful endeavors to take the gospel to their communities and countries.

Fourth, having a delegate who had attended previous conferences proved to be very helpful as a number of the churches send some of the same delegates to the conference over the years. This

continuity was an advantage to us, and we would recommend that we continue to send at least one delegate each time who has attended recent past conferences.

Fifth, your delegates were pleased to note a great deal of unity in theological commitment among the member churches. The fellowship we enjoyed with the brothers there was truly encouraging and uplifting. At the same time, it is clear that some of the member churches are facing great pressures in their various settings to water down their historic biblical principles, or to be somewhat overly accommodating to social trends in the various contexts. Some of the pressures and theological trends we noted were: fuzzy views of the ongoing manifestation of charismatic gifts, especially in terms of how these would be viewed in a “missionary” context. Some of the Asian churches in particular are dealing with this challenge, but also some of the African churches. The temptation to include women in the offices of the church in order to be “culturally relevant” continues to be a struggle for the churches in the Netherlands. The tendency of the “foreign” churches to look to North American popular mission techniques and methods was notable. Too often there has been an uncritical adoption of some of these methods, viewed from a distance to be successful. Having said that, it was heartening to see that a number of ministers among the EPCEW have written a thoughtful set of chapters engaging Tim Keller on some of his theological views. This work is charitable in tone, expressed appreciation for Keller’s insights in some particulars, and yet is honestly and straightforwardly critical of his theology in a number of areas. They gave a copy of the book to every delegate at the conference. We see this as a healthy sign, and hope that this kind of discerning study will continue among them.

Sixth, the churches in Africa and Asia are experiencing persecution from Islam as well as Pentecostalism. A number of the cults also try to lure away members of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches by promising large sums of money to them if they will join with them. We need to be much in prayer for the churches in the Sudan especially. It was heartbreaking to hear of how many of those churches in northern Sudan have been burned down, the homes of the members confiscated, and the people driven into the jungles. They are often forced to worship in caves with small groups of people in order to avoid detection. At the same time, the Sudanese Reformed Church is very aggressive in their witness of the gospel and are starting a number of churches in Muslim areas. Truly, the Word of God is not bound! Mission work among the people of China continues to open up for some member churches though we were asked to avoid many specifics of this in print so as not to jeopardize the work.

A final thought to conclude a lengthy report. Revelation 7:9, 10 gives us a picture of God’s great church gathering work in the world. “*After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no man could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongue, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the lamb!”*” Our attendance at this conference gave us a small taste of what that great multitude and its worship is like. It was a moving and edifying experience to be a part of it. By the mercy and marvelous grace of God, we are part of that great multitude. Our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed building His Church. As the Rev. Ian Hamilton well proclaimed in his sermon in the opening night prayer service: “Christ is marching in triumphal procession throughout the earth!” Amen, brother Hamilton! Hallelujah!

Respectfully submitted, Rev. James Sawtelle, Rev. Scot Henry

**Constitution of the ICRC, III. PURPOSE*

The purpose of the Conference shall be:

1. to express and promote the unity of faith that the Member Churches have in Christ;
2. to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the Member Churches;
3. to facilitate and promote cooperation among the Member Churches in such areas as missions, theological education, and ministries of mercy;
4. to study the common problems and issues that confront the Member Churches;
5. to present a Reformed testimony to the world.

• **Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated). (RCN / GKNv)**

Pursuant to Synodical recommendations 3a & 3b stated above in the introduction to this report, the letter approved by Synod 2013 was sent by the Stated Clerk to the RCN along with the request that this letter be taken up when our delegates are in the Netherlands for the Foreign Visitors Week scheduled for March of this year. The Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCN (BBK) responded by advising that this could not be done but once Synod convenes, a date will be set for our delegation to meet with the Synod of the RCN. To accomplish this your delegates scheduled for the Foreign Visitors Week were asked by your Committee to stand down and await this new date. Rev. Jim Sawtelle a former delegate of the RCUS to the RCN, was asked to attend the Foreign Visitors Week to represent the RCUS in their place. Although very willing, providential circumstances later prevented him from committing himself to this task.

Your committee did not want to recruit another delegate because we believed it important to have continuity on the field. We believe that in the light of our letter of admonition that it was imperative that we get to address their Synod. Regrettably the date was set but it conflicted with our own Synod and therefore the two delegates scheduled, also had to stand down.

Your Committee is in receipt of the report to the Deputies of the RCN concerning *Man/ Woman* in the church. This was a majority report in which the study committee recommends opening up the offices of the church to women. There was also a minority report which dissented from this recommendation. It remains to be seen what the Synod will do with these reports. It is anticipated that they will send these reports down to the churches for consideration and then take action at their 2017 Synod. Your Committee is yet hopeful that other letters of admonition, in addition to our own, will have some weight in their deliberations. It may be the majority report of their committee will be rejected, in the end, by their Synod. If it is not there is real possibility of a church division over this issue. Your Committee is desirous of maintaining contact with the RCN and to await the outcome.

Since the action taken above by our Synod 2013 re: our relationship with the RCN, the Theological Seminary of the CanRC held a conference in Ancaster, ON January 16-18th, 2014 on the subject of hermeneutics. Several Professors from the Theological University of Kampen (Seminary of the RCN) presented lectures, along with professors from the CanRC seminary and Mid-America Reformed Seminary. In consultation with representatives of the CanRC, who are on the same page as we are with their sister church, the RCN, your Committee gave approval for the attendance of Rev. Koerner and Rev. Potter at this conference. Their report follows.

On January 16th through the 18th, an Interchurch Relations Sub-Committee comprised of Rev. Maynard Koerner, and Rev. Ron Potter, attended a conference in Ancaster ON entitled: *Correctly Handling the Word of Truth: Reformed Hermeneutics Today*. This conference was held at the instigation of the Theological University of Kampen (TUK), the Netherlands and was hosted by the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS) in Hamilton, ON as the 4th in a series of annual conferences. . Attendance during the daytime was approximately 200 of which 170 were Ministers of the Word and in the evening it swelled to 400-500 as members from neighboring Reformed churches attended. .

The Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS had a particular interest in attending this conference in light of the influence that the TUK has upon the Reformed Church in the Netherlands (RCN / GKNv) and the hermeneutic developments taking place in the RCN with whom we have a fraternal relationship.

Among the speakers from the TUK were Professors Dr. Barend Kamphius, Dr. Kort VanBekum, Dr. Ad de Bruijne, Dr. J.M. Burger and Professor Gert Kwakkel . In addition speaker Dr. R.D. Anderson represented the Australian Reformed Church and speakers Dr. Cornel Venema and Dr. Alan Strange represented Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS). Speakers from the CRTS were Dr. J. VanVliet, Dr. A.J. deVisser, Dr. J. Smith, Dr. G.H. Visscher and Dr. T.G. VanRaalte.

In all there were eleven presentations. Your sub-committee, having to return home for Lord's Day Services before the conference was completed, attended nine of the eleven presentations. Theological papers were written by each of the presenters and a critique of each paper was written by a responder. The format followed was to have a main presenter followed by the critique and then followed by a counter-response and then questions from the floor. There was never a dull moment.

It was clear to your committee that the speakers and responders from Australia, Mid-America and CRTS were orthodox in their hermeneutical approach. It was equally clear that the speakers and responders from the TUK are operating under a different hermeneutic, one that is culturally driven if not actually neo-orthodox. This was exemplified in many instances. Let a few examples suffice.

First, in the opening session having to do with the *Bible and Science*, the CRTS speaker was very clear that our understanding of general revelation must be subordinate to special revelation. Though Belgic Article 2 speaks of creation as "a most elegant book" that leads us to "see clearly the invisible things of God, even His everlasting power and divinity" it does not mean to establish that creation is a book of equal weight with the special revelation of God's Word. In fact the Belgic goes on to say later in article 2 that God "makes Himself more fully and clearly known to us by His holy and divine Word." By this the Belgic teaches the superiority of special revelation over general revelation. Special revelation is fuller, clear, its resolution higher and its picture brighter. One (i.e. the Word) is the book. The other (creation) is compared to a book.

This means then as it pertains to the length of creation days that special revelation in Genesis 1 sets the parameters of how we are to understand these days, that is as ordinary days. It is not left to science to interpret these days, in the "light" of evolution over millions of years as long periods of time.

By contrast the TUK responder to this paper though acknowledging that scientific methods are insufficient of themselves to understand the universe and that reality is much deeper than science can discover, did say that Genesis 1 is not theology. The purpose of Genesis 1 according to this responder was for Israel. It was intended to show Israel, in contrast to the gods of other nations, how Elohim, the Creator, could powerfully rule over a sin-filled world and that Genesis 1 was therefore dealing with the matter of theodicy. He claimed we are asking the wrong question of Genesis when we ask the length of creation days. He quoted Augustine and Bavinck as those who historically left room for other views on the length of creation days. He concluded by saying: "Therefore a person must see the limits of science on the one side and the limits of scripture on the other without losing his faith."

In his reply to the responder the original CRTS speaker denied that Genesis 1 was dealing with theodicy and went on and cited Bavinck as saying that the "theory of evolution degrades the image of God" and then asked: "Which quote of Bavinck do we pick?"

In a second example, this time dealing with subject of the *Hermeneutics of Dogma* the TUK speaker argued that there cannot be a straight line from the text to dogma. Dogma asks for the interpretation of the text in the light of new questions. He argued that dogma does establish boundaries (i.e. the core of the gospel) but within those boundaries are a variety of experiences of faith. We have, he argued, room to breathe and to discuss. He went on to argue that revelation is pure but not adequate therefore we need the use of metaphors and that the bible is to be understood metaphorically. With regard to the church, he argued, we need a new language to reach the world and that this is the province of hermeneutics.

The CRTS responder pointed out that the speaker had a new emphasis regarding hermeneutics compared to what he had written 25 years before. He argued on the basis of Belgic articles 5 and 7 for the fact that God speaks now as He did in the past and that the bible has inborn contemporary relevance as do our confessions which are based on the bible. Therefore why do we need a new language consisting of metaphors?

The TUK reply to this critique was that by using metaphorical language the word from one context can be used in another context. The counter reply from the CRTS responder was that the bible uses metaphor but not as a language.

As a third and final example a TUK speaker presented a paper entitled *A Soteriological Perspective on our Understanding*. In this presentation he set up a straw man which he called *foundationalism*. By his definition *foundationalism* holds that rational knowledge must be based on a solid and firm foundation. The focus is on epistemology. His argument was that *foundationalism* has a tendency to forget salvation and leads to relativism and subjectivism. He then argues that more is needed than a foundational model. We need to be in Christ for our understanding and for our hermeneutics. Sin he argued leads to blindness, conflict, misunderstanding, false judgments and lies. But in Christ we have a new relationship with God. In Him we keep striving for complete understanding of God's Word. Now that we have the mind of Christ, the Holy Spirit who lives in our heart, guides us into all truth.

Now understand here that this speaker is not arguing for our having the mind of Christ as a lens through which, by the Spirit's enablement, we understand the scriptures. He is arguing that we have the mind of Christ *in addition* to the scriptures, as a separate source of insight. On the one hand we listen to the text of the scriptures but on the other our aim ought to be to get to the world behind the text by using the mind of Christ and with this new perspective discern for our times what is true and what is false in the light of Christ.

According to this speaker we know that the scriptures condemn homosexuality. But now having the mind of Christ we need to distinguish between the truth received in the Word and our understanding of that truth in the light of the culture. Therefore having the mind of Christ means we need to understand the world of the homosexual, his commitment, and his love and with the mind of Christ come to an understanding of what the scripture really means today. We need to improvise and improvising is a better model than foundationalism for furthering the gospel.

The MARS responder very cogently demolished this presentation arguing that the mind of Christ leads us to God's living word not to a new understanding. The mind of Christ brings us to the truth not to the need to posit new truth to accommodate the church to the culture.

The original presentation by the TUK speaker provoked a flurry of questions from the floor. He was asked by one questioner directly: “Do we have the truth or are we aiming at the truth?” The answer was: “Yes and No. We know some things but we are still searching.” A second question was: “If we have the truth and it is sufficient, why do we have to improvise. Do we not need to apply it not improvise?” The answer: “We need to distinguish between the truth received and our understanding of truth.” He also added, because he had used the word “improvised” in his presentation that he meant improvisation as a metaphor.

Concluding thoughts:

It was very clear to this sub-committee that the TUK is in a free fall hermeneutically. It is clearly seeking to accommodate the culture in order to make the church relevant by making a wax nose of scripture. In fact one speaker was asked: if a culturally driven hermeneutic was God centered.” The unequivocal answer was: “Yes!”

The language of metaphor was raised numerous times in the TUK presentations. On one occasion the TUK speaker was asked if the lion in 1 Kings 13 was real or a metaphor. He did not answer the question directly. We found that in many cases the TUK answers to direct questions were confusing.

This report has not elaborated on the CRTS presentations or the MARS presentation since they were consistent with established Reformed hermeneutical principles. In one CRTS presentation the speaker interacted very ably, throughly and critically with the latest RCN paper *Male/Female In the Church* which is driven by the same culturally driven deviant hermeneutic witnessed to by the TUK professors in this conference. He argued biblically and cogently that Paul’s statements on women in the church were not culturally conditioned but driven by the creation ordinance and the law of God.

The Conference was conducted in a scholarly and brotherly fashion. Your sub-committee approached the TUK professors to see if all the papers of this conference would be published and were told they would be. We await their publication.

Respectfully, Rev. Maynard Koerner, Rev. Ron Potter

In lieu of our delegates to the GKN your Committee sent a letter of greeting.

- **United Reformed Churches in the Congo (URCC) [Pending]**

This relationship is pending (2012 Abstract p.48). Contact with the URCC will be maintained by the Permanent Foreign Missions Committee.

- **Reformed Fellowship Church of Kenya (RFCK).**

Contact with the RFCK is maintained by the Permanent Foreign Missions Committee.

- **United Covenant Reformed Church in the Philippines (UCRCP) [Pending]**

The invitation to the UCRCP was extended by Synod. This invitation was accepted by the UCRCP in January of 2014. The RCUS is thus now in formal relationship with this denomination.. Our fraternal relationship with the UCRPC will be maintained by the Permanent Foreign Missions Committee.

Budget Matters

Recommendation #4: That the Synod of the RCUS establish a guideline for the Interchurch Relations Committee of Synod.

Grounds:

1. At present all expenses related to Interchurch work come out of synodical Dues.
2. Any IRC reserves accumulated are absorbed when new dues are set.
3. The payment of dues annually to NAPARC and every 4 years to ICRC require advance budgeting.
4. In light of our new fiscal year the IRC will have to plan for meetings with fraternal churches and NAPARC over a year in the future without knowing if they will be held, or where they will be held or how much actually needs to be budgeted.
5. The IRC needs the financial flexibility to respond to invitations from other churches, to call committee meetings if necessary or to send delegates to meetings not planned for and for other unexpected expenses (i.e. attendance at conferences germane to the work of the IRC)
6. The Treasurer will have the mechanism in place to respond to inquiries from the auditors about expense items not budgeted for in any one fiscal year. (i.e. he can point to the reserves set aside for anticipated expenses in the future. For example if the IRC spends \$3,000 in 2017 for delegates to attend the ICRC, and this puts us beyond the budget for that year, he can point to the fact that in 2014-16 \$1,000 has been set aside each year for this meeting and he is covered.)
7. If a budget item is overlooked (as was the case this year) then there are some reserves to fall back on which we do not presently have.
8. The establishment of a separate guideline for IRC will result in a reduction in synodical Dues corresponding to amount normally spent each year for IRC work, NAPARC and ICRC dues etc.
9. The present system of funding the IRC out of synodical Dues is broken.

Proposed Budget

Your Committee proposes the following budget for Synodical year 2014-2015. Please note (1.) that the fraternal churches we send delegates to have not set their place of meeting and so the amounts budgeted

are estimates only. (2.) that this budget includes “set asides” for anticipated expenses to prevent budget spikes in any one year and (3) that this budget includes a provisional amount for a committee meeting.

1. Delegate to the OPC GA June 2015 (estimate)	800	
3. Delegate to the RPCNA Synod, June 2015 (estimate)	800	
4. Delegation to NAPARC Nov. 2014, Grassie, ON (three days includes sub-committee meetings with fraternal churches)	\$3,000	
5. NAPARC dues	500	
6. Interchurch Relations Committee and sub-committee meetings; invitations to observe NAPARC churches.		\$3,500
7. Set aside funds for 2017 ICRC meeting	750	
8. Set aside funds for ICRC dues (approximately \$1200)	400	
9. Set aside funds for delegates (2) to RCN 2017	650	
10. Interchurch Relations Committee misc. expenses	200	
Total:	\$10,600	

Recommendation #5: That the proposed budget of \$10,600 be adopted.

Respectfully Submitted: Rev. Ron Potter, Chairman, Rev. Vern Pollema, Rev. Ryan Kron, Rev. Maynard Koerner, Rev. Mike McGee, Rev. Wes Brice, Elder M. Wiersma, Elder Fred Hofmann, Rev. George Syms, Rev. Jonathan Merica.

J. Ministerial Aid Fund Committee

In response to the recommendation of the 267th Synod, a subcommittee of the MAF committee was organized to include Mr. Wayne Johnson and Mr. John Morton to review the issue of encouraging estate planning and bequests to the denomination in attaining the goal of building the MAF fund to \$3,000,000.

The committee believes the Synod should consider wills and bequests for any specific ministry of the church as part of a complete planned giving program. While very large church bodies may be able to provide the staff and economic base to "self-insure" some of the tax-advantaged vehicles that are part of most planned giving programs, smaller church bodies, many Christian colleges and seminaries use one of several "providers" to handle the administration.

We believe the two most common options are also probably the best for our purposes. The first is the Barnabas Foundation, which was begun by Reformed people, and which has an excellent reputation. The second is Waterstone (formerly known as Christian Community Foundation). The latter works with a broader range of Reformed and evangelical groups. The chief advantage of Waterstone is that it does not involve upfront costs.

Waterstone has been in operation for 30 years, has assets of \$236 million and carries a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. They provide charitable gift annuities, donor advised trusts, and all the other giving vehicles common in church planned giving programs. Their website may be viewed at www.Waterstone.org.

The Barnabas Foundation is much more hands on, and will meet with donors in their home, hold church-wide meetings, etc., and provide more direct assistance in developing materials for us. Their website may be viewed at <http://barnabasfoundation.com/about/services/>

The way we propose to set up our giving options would allow us to switch in future years without penalty if we determined that the per-transaction fee system of Waterstone was exceeding the annual fees of Barnabas, or Synod may decide the familiarity of Barnabas with the Reformed world may make it a more productive fit. They work with Calvin College, Dordt, MARS and dozens of other organizations.

While the key focus of the initiative is directed to achieving the MAF funding goal, gifts or requests could be designated to various ministries of the RCUS, e.g. the MAF, home missions, foreign missions, diaconal, etc, if desired by the giver. While some may simply designate the beneficiary of their estate to the RCUS or "Benevolence Fund", the Synod could allocate the distribution of those funds to the ministry they consider critical at the time of the annual synod meeting.

The committee continued to oversee Barber Financial funds management twice this past year. Some members of the committee, while desiring to be at the meetings, were unable to be present.

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

1. A new committee be organized for purposes of promoting and soliciting constituents of the RCUS in contributing to the RCUS as a part of their Estate Planning initiatives.
2. The Synod approve use of Waterstone as the organization to solicit and direct individual estate bequests to the RCUS Synod for those choosing to use external estate planning services.
3. This report be copied by each church and distributed to members of their church for information purposes
4. That articles be placed in the Reformed Herald advising members of the RCUS of the various ways they might contribute to the RCUS through the use of Waterstone; that contributions to the RCUS via Waterstone be noted in the Reformed Herald without the name of the donor, but showing the amounts and terms of the donation; that the elders of the churches of the RCUS regularly encourage their members to consider gifts and bequests to the churches and the denomination; and that the pastors of the various RCUS churches via preaching of the word outline the responsibility of the members to serve the Lord in this special way.

Respectfully submitted, Mark B. Fisher, Chairman, Ralph Goehring, Spencer Gross, Wayne Johnson, John Morton, and Ray Schnabel, Secretary

K. Publications and Promotions

The committee was very active this past year by email. We are pleased to report the following:

Publications

The study paper, “Promoting a Biblical Sexual Morality” was published according to the guidelines laid down by the 267th Synod (Abstract page 81). The *Heidelberg Catechism (450th Anniversary Edition)* was completed and published. Both of these titles are available at amazon.com.

At the request of the Western Classis Publications Committee, the Western Classis study paper on Paedocommunion entitled “Discerning Christ’s Body” was published with the disclaimer that it is NOT a Synodical work, but a work of Western Classis.

The Committee has also received a request from the Foreign Missions Committee for permission to translate “Promoting a Biblical Sexual Morality” into Armenian.

There are no more copies of the *Traditional Language Catechism*, nor the *Traditional Language Three Forms of Unity*. We are currently editing the *Traditional Language Catechism* and that should be available on amazon.com shortly. There are no plans at this time to republish the *Three Forms of Unity, traditional language*.

The titles that we now have available at Amazon are:

- Promoting a Biblical Sexual Morality
- Heidelberg Catechism (450th anniversary edition)
- The Three Forms of Unity
- Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism (Rev. Norm Jones)
- The Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States
- Discerning Christ’s Body (Western Classis)

From April, 2013 through March of 2014, the sales and royalties report is as follows:

Title Name	Units	Royalty USD	Royalty GBP	Royalty EUR
Discerning Christ's Body	9	\$5.04	£0.00	€0.00
Promoting A Biblical Sexual Morality	190	\$52.92	£0.07	€0.00
Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism	221	\$335.92	£0.00	€0.00
The Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States	21	\$17.64	£0.00	€0.00
The Heidelberg Catechism, 450th Anniversary Edition	401	\$118.80	£2.80	€0.00
The Three Forms of Unity	366	\$278.16	£0.00	€0.00
	1208	\$808.48	£2.87	€0.00

Recommendation 1: that the royalties for “Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism” in the amount of \$335.92 be forwarded to Mrs. Lena Jones

Recommendation 2: That permission be granted to the Foreign Missions committee to translate “Promoting a Biblical Sexual Morality” into Armenian.

Reformed Herald:

The 267th Synod commissioned the Permanent Publications Committee to examine the bid for OliveTree to do the graphic design. After much consideration, the committee declined the bid and engaged the services of Matthew Silber to do the graphic design. The committee is satisfied with his work and notes that he is very willing to make whatever changes the editor might see fit to make. He is currently working under the instructions given to him by the committee. We asked for fewer pictures and more readable copy. There have been a few suggestions for improvement, but these have not yet been communicated to Mr. Silber. He has been doing the Herald since January, 2014. He charges a flat rate of 800.00 per issue, and his work has been delivered exactly when promised.

In March, 2014, Rev. Paul Treick informed the committee that he wishes to retire as editor of the Herald. The committee has been in communication with several men who it believes could do the job, but the committee is not ready to make a recommendation at this time. Standing Rule number 12 requires that the nomination be done by secret ballot.

The 267th annual Synod commissioned the committee to “examine the subscription model currently used to fund the Herald, considering whether it would be better to move to a guideline based model...” The committee reports that with all of the changes done on the Herald this past year, it was unable to complete this task. The committee is optimistic that the Herald will be delivered in a more timely and efficient manner, and they will then be able to focus on the best way to fund it. Until that time, the committee recommends that the subscription price be set at \$16.00.

Recommendation #3: That the editor of the Reformed Herald be provided with up to \$500.00 for expenses (above the amount of \$1500.00 provided for in standing rule 7)

Recommendation #4: That the Synod continue to engage Matthew Silber for the graphic design work of the Herald for the next Synodical year at the rate of \$800.00 per issue.

Recommendation #5: That the subscription rate for the Herald be set at \$16.00

Book Depository

Our current book deposit inventory is as follows:

1986 soft-cover catechisms: 636

1986 Hard-cover catechism: 692

Creation Pamphlets: four boxes

Confirmation Handbooks: 113

Directory of Worship, black (Traditional Language) 142

Directory of Worship, red: 303

Old Testament Workbooks: 497

Old Testament Workbooks (teacher's editions) 120

Faith of our Fathers: 187

The inventory remains largely unchanged over the years for various reasons. First, the catechisms are the 1986 edition which is no longer in use. Second, some of the titles, such as the Confirmation Handbook, are not in use in the churches. Third, the ordering procedures are cumbersome compared to amazon.com; fourth, and most importantly, the manager of the depository is in Florida for most of the year, making the titles unavailable for purchase.

Faith of our Fathers has been made available by the author on Amazon.com and he is currently in the process of making the *Old Testament Workbooks* available as well.

All the other publications that the churches actually use are available on Amazon.com, with the exception of the directories of worship.

If the depository is still to be used, a new home must be found, but shipping the items to a new location would be costly. The committee believes that the cost to ship would not answer the question "Then what do we do with the books that no one seems to want?"

With the exception of the directories of worship, the committee believes that the rest of the titles should be liquidated expeditiously to whoever wants them and the depository closed.

Recommendation #6: That the Permanent Publications and Promotions Committee find a new home for the Directories of Worship and they be made available year round for purchase.

Recommendation #7: That the remaining titles in the book depository be distributed to the churches upon request for the cost of shipping, provided that these requests be received by July 1st, 2014.

Recommendation #8: That any items remaining in the book depository after the requests have been received and processed be liquidated at the discretion of the Permanent Publications and Promotions Committee.

Respectfully Submitted, Pastor Matt Powell, Pastor Frank Walker, Elder Rod DeJong,
Elder Jim Drewes

Website Sub-Committee

Your committee's main work is maintaining the denomination's website. Most of this active work is done by the chair of the committee who responds to any requests for information or other contacts that come through the website (either answering himself or forwarding to appropriate committees of Synod), or to any requests for information updates to any of the church pages. The committee conferred several times through the year by email.

This year the main business before the Committee was the unexpected need to change the underlying content management system used to run the denomination's website. This was necessary because the old software had become obsolete. The site was run on an older version of Joomla, and there was no simple upgrade path to the newest version. The older version was no longer secure, was no longer receiving updates, and was no longer compatible with some plugins we wanted to use. Our web hosting company, Springs Hosting, was recommending we switch to Wordpress instead, as they thought that would be more than adequate to our needs and was much simpler to administer and update. They told us that this would require an intensive process of rebuilding the site, but that this would have to be done whether we stayed with Joomla or went to Wordpress. The chair of the committee researched the issue independently and came to the conclusion that what Springs Hosting was telling us was essentially true. But it would necessitate extra funding for the committee to pay for the time required. The extra funding was approved and we went forward.

The transition process was disappointing to your chairman. It took much longer than expected, and ended up requiring a great deal of time on my part to make it work. The technician put the site live when it was basically in an unusable condition, and after a few days spent in vain trying to get them to fix it, I instructed them to take it down and replace it with the old site, and give me access to work on the new site so I could get it working. I spent many hours rebuilding pages from scratch, repopulating data and bugfixing the page. All of the churches' contact information had to be re-entered by hand. It was not a seamless transition at all. We had never required this kind of work from Springs Hosting before, and though they had been a good provider for us in the past they proved not to be up to this kind of work. I was working with a new tech, someone I had not dealt with in the past, and she was not up to the job. Deadlines repeatedly passed, things they said worked didn't, and I ended up needing to learn how to do a lot of work in Wordpress myself to get it up and running in the condition it is in now. The Reformed Herald site had to be completely rebuilt and repopulated from scratch, something that took many additional hours of my labor and which is an ongoing project.

I believe we should find a new company to work with. Some suggestions were made early on from various pastors regarding tech companies they worked with, but at the time I thought Springs Hosting was up to the job, which I no longer believe. Therefore your chairman believes we should pursue a new relationship with a new hosting company.

We feel our budgetary needs will not be impacted by this move. The website is in a good functional state now. There is cosmetic work that should be done, but the heavy lifting of the site transition

is complete, and last year's budget should be sufficient.

Last year the Synod approved the adding of a section of recommended links to various websites connected with the RCUS in different ways. The intended process was for such links to be approved by the Editorial Advice Committee. This year that process was unsuccessful. Members of that committee had various health problems and other difficulties that created communications problems that impeded the approval process. As a result, we never got any of these recommended links added to the page.

We did have a greater number of news items submitted to the site, which we believe gives the site a great deal more utility, in addition to making it feel current and live. This gives a better impression to visitors to our site regarding the active church life of the RCUS. More could be done, however. We have not received any news items at all from a majority of the churches.

One feature we believe would be useful to have on the website would be a pastor's directory, where all of the pastors are listed in alphabetical order and by state of residence. Currently pastor's contact information is tied to the church in which they serve. But that means if someone wishes to contact a particular pastor, one has to know which church they are in. We pastors can be expected to know this information, but many in our churches don't. Further, and more important, there are pastors who are not currently serving an RCUS church, but are laboring out of bounds or are retired. Their information is not present anywhere on the site. A pastor's directory would solve that. This idea was floated via email to the various pastors, but there was enough disagreement about the issue that the subcommittee felt it best to discuss the proposal at Synod.

Recommendation #1- that the Website Subcommittee be authorized to pursue a relationship with a new hosting company.

Recommendation #2- that the Website Subcommittee be authorized to place a "Pastor's Directory" on the website with direct links to each pastor's information, so that the contact information of pastors in the denomination can be easily located.

Recommendation #3- that the churches and pastors continue to be reminded to send in news items to the website, keeping in mind the need to secure permission from anyone not a pastor or elder before their names or pictures can be publicly posted.

Recommendation #4- that the Website Subcommittee budget be set at \$4000.

Respectfully Submitted, Matt Powell, Rod DeJong, Robert Mettler, Frank Walker

IX. Reports of Officers

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

Esteemed Brothers:

Article 111 of the Constitution stipulates that the President of the Executive Committee shall annually submit a report on the state of the Church, making use of the reports of the Presidents of the Executive Committees of Classes. A review of those reports reveals the following concerning the present state of the RCUS.

From the eastern most parts of "fly-over country," Rev. Klynsma of *Covenant East Classis* comments: "As I've read and reviewed the parochial reports of the pastors serving the churches of Covenant East Classis, it is clear that the work of the ministry is being done. We can and should rejoice that each of our pulpits is filled and that our pastors are enjoying sufficient health to continue their labors." Klynsma goes on to report that one pastor in the classis was challenged with significant health issues. Pastor Steve Altman "has gone through two hip replacement surgeries... and now reports being nearly pain free."

Covenant East Classis currently maintains three mission works. Rev. Klynsma notes a particularly praiseworthy development in one of those works. This event is recounted in the words of Rev. Wesley Brice, who "...on behalf of the Grace Reformed Church of Northwest Arkansas, joyfully shares the story of how they have found and were able to purchase a church building: '...at about the middle of last [year] we heard about a church building that had just come on the market at 3320 North Second Street in Rogers, Arkansas and this time offers were made, received, conditional use permit sought and granted and with thankful hearts we are now in own building, rejoicing and giving God thanks for answered prayer.'"

There are three men under care of the Classis, studying at three different seminaries, who desire to pursue a call to the ministry.

"The statistical reports show that overall our congregations are doing quite well... Most (if not all) have been able to pay their classical and synodical guidelines and a couple have made substantial progress in paying down their building debt."

"Overall, we can rejoice in all that the Lord has done and is continuing to do through the churches of Covenant East Classis."

Working our way westward, we learn the following from Rev. Dawn's report on *Northern Plains Classis*: "I do not believe that complacency is, at present, a temptation with which we are faced. However, which of us has not been tempted to discouragement? We need to remember that the church is not ours, but Christ's. We may plant and water, but it is God who gives the increase."

The oil boom in North Dakota, by the providence of God, has become an opportunity to plant and water. Two congregations in the classis are favorably located in areas where populations have swelled from an influx of workers migrating to the oil fields. The president writes: "Rev. Phil Poe reports from Minot that attendance is good, and there is a possibility of an increase of up to 20 new members." The Classis' current mission work is in Dickinson, in the southwest corner of the state. "Rev Clark's ministry in Dickinson has included opportunities for teaching both on Sunday and during the week. This city is in the centre of North Dakota's oil boom. As a result, there is much movement within the population. This is reflected in the ebb and flow of visitors to the worship services of the church."

An encouraging note of progress for the Classis is this description of the work in Watertown, SD: "One matter of joy is the fact that the church no longer receives financial support from Classis... We are thankful to God for the way he has brought this congregation through difficult times and is providing for their needs."

Rev. Dawn's report reveals that there are four vacant congregations in the Classis. Sadly, the prospects for at least two of those congregations are uncertain. Dawn writes: "The church in Anamoose is a cause for concern. Statistically, they have 19 communicant members...the membership is elderly and many cannot attend meetings. This church has no pastor. When they meet, generally it is to listen to a

recorded sermon. The lack of pastoral care and the inability to have regular formal worship services is a great concern. On the other hand, there is a desire on the part of the membership not to disband.” The Ashely and Hosmer congregations have cooperated in the support of a pastor for many years. However, due to the departure of Rev. James Grossmann from Ashely to Eureka, Pastor Dawn observes: “There are real questions regarding the viability of our Hosmer church. We need to pray that the Lord will provide a man for Ashely and give great wisdom to the remaining members at Hosmer concerning the future of their church.”

I think the following is a thoughtful summery that frames for us the challenges before Northern Plains Classis: “Our classis membership has again fallen. In the past year, membership has declined...5%. What these statistics represent is the fact that we have an aging membership that reflects the older population of the Dakotas. Our churches do not have a self-sustaining membership. For the classis to continue into the next generation, we need new membership from those outside the church at this time. I want to emphasise that evangelism is the duty of every church, regardless of the size of its membership. We do not evangelise to pump up our membership or our finances. Nonetheless, I believe the state of our classis is one means by which God is reminding us of our duty to spread the gospel. I believe the primary purpose of the church is the proper worship of God. Secondly, and inseparable from the first, is evangelism. I fail to see how one is possible without the other.”

Next we head south, to consider the report of Rev. Jon Blair, *South Central Classis*. As Rev. Blair reflects on the state of the classis and the work of the churches, he is asking this question: “Am I / are we being faithful in the care of the sheep Christ has entrusted to us? This can be convicting, as it gives cause for self-examination.”

“Though the answer to that question will no doubt fluctuate between minister, elder, and deacon (not to mention church members), when I read the parochial reports I think the answer on the whole is, ‘Yes’. I say this primarily because it is apparent that the churches are striving, however imperfectly that might be, to maintain the marks of the true church, use the keys of the kingdom, and administer the means of grace. As we know, this is...essential to faithfully tending and feeding Christ’s sheep out of love for Him and them.” Blair concludes this line of thought with the following reminder: “For it is not the size, but the health of the body that is to be our chief concern.”

Rev. Blair mentions the unusually high number of changes in pastoral relationships within the classis. This is the result of the opening of two new mission works, the resignation of one pastor, and the retirement of Rev. Robert Grossmann. Yet, with all this change, only one charge remains vacant at present—Trinity Reformed Church of Sioux Falls, SD.

The president notes a number of matters to be considered at the spring Classis meeting: “...the Special Committee on Pastoral Relations appointed at the 2013 Classis meeting will present its report, especially pertaining to a minister’s right of conscience. In relation to the Omaha charge, the Missions Committee is recommending the continuation of funding at the prior year level, contingent upon a new assessment by the Classis Home Missions Committee. In relation to the Limon charge, Rev. Carroll reports that the definition of voting members was changed in the church Constitution, which results in allowing women to vote in congregational meetings.”

Rev. Blair informs us that “...the teaching and training of men for the ministry continues through the two seminaries which we support within the bounds of Classis—Heidelberg Theological Seminary and New Geneva Theological Seminary. It is also being recommended that the two students currently under care for the ministry...remain in that status this next year.”

And finally, this should receive our attention: “As mentioned earlier, Rev. Robert (Bob) Grossmann retired from his charge in Vermillion at the end of 2013, after serving in the pastoral ministry of several congregations in the RCUS across five decades. Although he plans to remain active in various ministry activities (for it is hard to imagine him doing otherwise), we want to especially recognize his faithful service in the pastorate. As he will be reading his final pastoral report of his labors in Vermillion, let us then pause to express our thanksgiving, and pray with thanksgiving in the name of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, for His gracious provision and continued blessing upon Bob and his wife Polly.”

The final destination on our tour of the denomination brings us to the “left coast” and the report of Rev. Frank Walker from *Western Classis*: “There are...a lot of exciting things going on the Western Classis. It’s not very often that we see seven adult baptisms in one church in the same year (San Diego)... I rejoice with exceeding great joy to see many of our pastors involved in the training of the next generation of servant-leaders. By the grace of God, all the churches in the Western Classis, except perhaps Anderson, either have a pastor or at least a reasonable hope of securing one in the near future.”

“But the one thing that has piqued my enthusiasm more than anything else is the effort of the Shafter congregation to start a Spanish-speaking Reformed church from scratch. What a wonderful opportunity this is! And not only is the Shafter church aggressively pursuing this, the San Diego consistory has its heart set on doing something similar...Brothers, it looks like God has heard our prayers. Praise his name!”

Rev. Walker then raises the salient point of financing these endeavors. This is a serious challenge. With the highest classical guideline in the denomination Western Classis must support its share of the Classis/Synod mission work in La Habra, a number of churches needing benevolent aid, and now the prospect of a new mission work. The question of how the Classis can practice good stewardship with its finite resources and step out in faith in the face of this new endeavor without overwhelming the congregations is a pressing concern.

I want to include a portion of Walker’s reply to his own question. He writes: “The Lord used twelve apostles to effect the conversions of at least 100,000 souls before the end of the first century. Couldn’t he do the same today?” The President then continues with this point: “And second, our resources may be small, but those of our God are not. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and, as a dear Christian woman said to me thirty years ago, ‘All we have to do is ask him to slaughter one for us.’ Our God can stretch the widow’s mite and make it do more good than all the money of Bill Gates and Warren Buffet put together. But do we trust him enough to step out in faith?”

Rev. Walker reports that Western Classis would consider three Special Study Committee reports: The Special Committee to study our practice of adult baptism in light of Article 185; the Special Committee on musical instruments in worship; the Special Committee to study Two Kingdom theology.

With regard to numerical statistics, Walker notes that “the Western Classis lost eleven communicant members in 2013.” He further notes: “Since 2004, the number of communicant members has decreased...more than 12%....The problem is not that we’re failing to bring new members in. Nor is it that we don’t provide sound instruction....The problem is that we’re not bringing in more people than we’re losing.”

It is heartening to read this further thought provoking paragraph: “Being reformed, we understand that Jesus Christ is Lord of the harvest, giving an increase by his Spirit as he sees fit. Thus, discouragement need not turn into despair. But we must ask ourselves some hard questions. Are we making the best use of our resources? Are we equipping our members to engage in personal evangelism? Do we ourselves go out into the highways and byways and compel people to come in? Is our elder visitation program effective? Do we as a classis have a long-term plan and vision to expand our horizons, or do we just take things as they come? Do our churches have plans to improve their outreach? Are we using modern technology to its fullest potential in promoting the gospel of salvation? What about the social media? How much is the economy to blame for our losses? Are fraternal churches losing members proportionately?”

“I don’t know the answers to these questions....But I do know that we need to talk about what we’re doing and how we do it with a view toward improving our ministry. We need to make evangelism

a much higher priority, and we must devote ourselves even more rigorously to seeking our heavenly Father's blessing in prayer."

Rev. Walker concludes his report with this summary: "The marks of the true church are certainly evident in the churches of the Western Classis. I don't think there's any doubt about that. We can all be thankful that the Lord has given us a church where the preaching of God's Word is central, the sacraments are reverently administered, and Christian discipline is carried out, however painful it may be at times.

Yet, there is MUCH work to be done. The fact that the Lord has blessed us so richly should arouse us to greater zeal and enthusiasm. We have the promise of Jesus himself, who said, *Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it* (Matt. 16:18)."

Turing to the Permanent and Special Committee reports, there are a number of matters that bear on the state of the denomination. I will mention those I believe to be most notable.

I think we can hardly underestimate the importance of the Web Site committee work. While it might appear to some to be somewhat extraneous to the work of the Synod, we simply have to understand the times we live in. It has become an almost proverbial saying today that for 16-30 year olds, if you don't exist on social media, you don't exist. Building and maintaining an aesthetically pleasing, user friendly web site is essential in today's world. We need to support and encourage the committee to continue its good work and press on to greater heights with it.

The Interchurch Relations Committee report, at 28 pages, is the longest permanent committee report I have seen in twenty years of the ministry. I trust the report's length is a demonstration of the care with which we maintain our fraternal relationships with an eye to mutual accountability in faithful service of Lord Jesus Christ. In a day when we see much declension in historic orthodoxy all around us, we must prize and welcome the opportunity to walk with our fraternal churches in fidelity to the Triune God and His Word. With that thought in mind, the report encourages this body to consider our fraternal bonds with the Reformed Church in the Netherlands (GKV). There are some matters of grave concern before that body, and we ought to be in prayer for them and be thoughtful about how we can humbly urge them to hold fast to the faith once delivered to the saints. How we maintain and labor for mutual accountability with our fraternal churches says much about the state of our own concern for the witness of Christ in the world.

The reports of the Home and Foreign Missions Committees will require much thoughtful and careful consideration at this Synod. For a small denomination, the Lord has given us many opportunities to participate in the spread of the gospel both at home and abroad. We ought to rejoice in that. On the home front, we see that some of the works are flourishing, while at least one, the Omaha work, appears to be floundering. Yet, the Classis and Synod Home Missions Committees recommend forging ahead in Omaha. The question of supporting a Hispanic outreach in the Shafter area is also before us. May God grant us wisdom in considering these recommendations.

Giving to the mission works has been steady and generous. With gratitude to God, we read the account of the aid already administered to the churches in the Philippines in response to the devastating typhoon of last fall. Not to mention the ongoing diaconal efforts in Congo among the churches there, and the crucial support of the ministers in Congo and Kenya.

The recommendation coming before this Synod to designate a "missionary-at-large" for the foreign works is intriguing. Having "boots on the ground" is undeniably useful in giving needed counsel and providing well aimed aid for our sister churches. Perhaps the office of a missionary coordinator best fills the need to shepherd these churches into fuller maturity and order.

But what I missed is a clear and concise job description and manual of procedures for this endeavor. For instance, what body will oversee this missionary, and how would that oversight be administered week to week, month to month? What is the term of his service: one year, three years? No doubt such things would need to be modified with time and experience. But some starting point would seem to be prudent if we are to proceed. Related to this question is the practical matter that Synod would need to draft a Letter of Call.

The Special Judicial Committee is recommending some amendments to the Constitution. While I won't make comments on the substance of the recommendations, I would raise the issue of the proposed renumbering of the articles of the Constitution from articles 40 onward. Admittedly the total renumbering would be only two articles off from the present number. However, every past synodical decision referring to an article in the Constitution from 40 and onward would now need to be annotated. If the body decides to adopt the Committee's recommendation on the articles in question, perhaps we should merely add the amended article, bracket the former article numbers with an asterisk ([41-42*]) explaining our action, and retain the numbering sequence as it is.

Finally, I would like to mention the retirement of the Rev. Paul Treick from the editorship of the *Reformed Herald*. Clearly this has been a labor of love, for the honorarium stipulated for the editor of the *Herald* does not begin to approach anything like real compensation for the hours spent on producing each installment. By all measurements, Rev. Treick leaves the *Herald* in better shape than when he took it on. We thank you for your faithful service, brother.

So what is the state of the RCUS? A number of things impressed me. First, we are in a period of change. A number of our oldest congregations in rural areas are made up of elderly members and in the near future likely will be closing. While this is a sad reality, that trend reflects the general demographic of many rural areas. We have also seen the retirement of a number of our longest serving pastors in the RCUS over the last few years. As the transition in leadership progresses, we must not lose the staunch commitment of this older generation to Scripture, the Confessions and proper church order. These men also provided us with a wonderful example of love for God, allegiance to the Truth, love for the church, warm camaraderie, and sacrificial pastoral labor. May we be as faithful in our generation, and by God's grace more so, as they have been in theirs.

Second, even as we have lost men from the active ministry of the church to retirement, we have a healthy number of men studying and preparing for a call to the pastoral ministry in approved seminaries. We also have received a number of men into the ministry in the RCUS from other church communions. The Lord is providing for the needs of His church, in answer to our prayers. We praise His Name for remembering us in His mercy.

Third, there is a great deal of energy and resources committed to pastoral training spread over a variety of seminaries. Many of our ministers have become professors and adjunct professors. It is a sign of health and vitality that a Church should have in her midst a broad number of godly, mature, wise, orthodox pastor-scholars.

Fourth, the realities of numerical declines in some of the Classes have already been noted from the President's reports above. This is disheartening. All the more so since all Classes report great care in striving to maintain the marks of the church in purity. We long to see the fruit of the gospel in the Lord adding to the church.

A hopeful sign for the state of the church is that there have been no reports of Elijah-like flights into the wilderness to sit under a broom tree to await death. Under the chastening of the Lord, it is fitting that we consider our ways. Each President rightly urged his respective classis to do that. Brothers, what have we done with their urgings?

Are there special Classis meetings called to do some strategic planning? Rev. Walker's list of questions seems to be an appropriate agenda for discussion. But I would also remind us that the Scriptures teach us to consider our trials with the question: Is there sin in the camp? Let us address it with true repentance. Is there discouragement? Let us stir one another up to love and good works. Let us hold fast our confession. Let us pray fervently for God's wisdom and blessing.

Jesus said, “*You are the light of the world.*” He said this to surprise us; he said it to encourage us; he said it to challenge us. By all accounts we are not hiding this light under a basket. Think of this indescribable gift: the gospel of Christ, his word of Truth, the knowledge of the richness of the Reformed faith, the keys of the kingdom of heaven. With such riches twelve men heeded the voice of the Lord and preached and taught, making disciples. And God turned the world upside down by their witness (Acts 17:6). Let us continue to be faithful with these little things trusting God to glorify His name according to His will. And as we pray, let us do so with the conviction of our confession that “my prayer is much more certainly heard of God than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of Him” (HC Q&A 129).

Respectfully submitted, Rev. James Sawtelle

B. Stated Clerk’s Report (and Necrology)

In accordance with the requirements of this office, your clerk has preserved the minutes of the 267th Synod with all supporting documents. An Abstract of the actions of Synod, including reports was prepared and published in accord with Standing Rule 9. Copies of this Abstract and a Directory of Congregations were distributed to all ministers and congregations of Synod, as well as to all churches with which we maintain fraternal relations. The Index of Positions and Resolutions included in the Abstract was updated.

I will send out the same number of Abstracts as last year unless I hear from you otherwise.

The minutes and all supporting documents of the 2013 Synod were preserved in a post-hole binder.

I completed the following directives from the 267th Synod:

1. Regarding the letter drafted by the Synodical Interchurch Relations Committee (see 2013 Abstract, pages 53 and 76, C.3.a-b), I sent the letter, dated June 5, 2013, to the Synod of the RCN/GKNv. I also sent the letter by e-mail.
2. Concerning Standing Excuses recommendation 5 (2013 Abstract, page 83), I wrote a letter of encouragement and gentle admonishment to the Consistories who have not had elder delegates at Synod for the last two years.
3. Concerning Standing Judicial recommendation 3 (2013 Abstract, page 77), regarding Standing Rules 2 and 3, I changed “two weeks before the session of Synod” to “May 1.
4. Concerning Standing Judicial recommendation 5, regarding Standing Rule 15, I replaced the words “Chairman of the Candidates and Credentials Committee” with “Stated Clerk.”
5. Concerning Standing Missions recommendation 22 (2013 Abstract, page 79), I sent a letter, dated, June 28, 2013, to the widow of Pastor Bankina Kabongo expressing our condolences and in recognition of his work in the Congo.

I sent invitations to all churches with which we have fraternal relations and to institutions that we support, to attend this year’s Synod meeting. This year we invited Covenant College and Westminster Biblical Missions. I also invited all the supported institutions to come with displays to be set up at the Synod, if they desire.

All Necrologies that I have received accompany this report.

Thank you all for your cooperation during the past year.

Respectfully, David Fagrey, Stated Clerk.

NECROLOGY

Elder Leslie A. Goeke (Salem-Ebenezer RCUS, Manitowoc, WI)

Leslie A. Goeke (1931-2013) was born on April 26, 1931, in in Newton, Wisconsin, son of the late Edwin and Hilda (Stoltenberg) Goeke. Following service to his country in the U.S. Army, he worked at the Manitowoc Engineering Company as a machinist for several years and then concentrated solely on farming. He married Ann Buretta on November 19, 1960, and they were blessed with 50 years together. Ann preceded him in death on August 24, 2011. Leslie was a lifelong member of Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church and served as elder on the consistory for many years, and was a member of the Adult Bible Class. Upon their retirement in 1992, Leslie and Ann moved to Manitowoc. They traveled extensively across the United States and to many countries abroad. Leslie volunteered at Pinecrest Historical Village, logging hundreds of hours of service doing clean-up work and painting, including painting the caboose. Leslie peacefully entered his eternal home on June 14, 2013, at the age of 82. Leslie will be fondly remembered by his brother, Arnold (Doris) of Manitowoc; his sister, Eleanor (Wilbur) Westphalen, of Plymouth; his nieces and nephews, and many dear friends. He will also be sadly missed by his pet dog, Ivy. Leslie was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Ann; his brothers, Roland and Wilbur; and his sisters-in-law, Irene Goeke, Idabell Goeke, and Caroline Goeke.

C. Treasurer’s Report

Esteemed Brothers:

The report of the Treasurer to the 2014 RCUS Synod meeting includes the following documents:

- a.) Loans Receivable as of March 31, 2014
- b.) Statement of Assets and Liabilities 2014
- c.) RCUS Fund Balances 2014
- d.) RCUS Profit & Loss for 4/2013 to 3/2014
- e.) RCUS Previous Year Comparison
- f.) RCUS Fiscal Year Profit & Loss

g.) RCUS Treasurer Procedures Manual

I have not included the audit for the fiscal year 2012/2013, as that was mailed out earlier. If anyone needs an extra copy it can be provided at the time of the meeting.

The ending cash balance as of March 31, 2014 is \$356,171.31 a reduction of \$81,746.17 from the cash balance of \$437,917.48 on March 31, 2013. Much of that reduction is attributable to a \$77,000 loan made to Grace Reformed in Bentonville, Arkansas during this past fiscal year.

This year the special day of prayer offering was for First Reformed Chapel in Dickinson, North Dakota. The amount received was \$10,516.63. As directed by them that amount will be used to offset their building loan.

As of the date of this letter the Ministerial Aid Fund has a balance of \$1,289,664.92. At the time of the meeting I will distribute the most recent balance in that fund. At the time of last year's meeting the balance was \$1,257,022.17. There was contributed to the MAF the sum of \$19,169.17 from a combination of the proceeds of a life insurance policy that named MAF as a beneficiary and the proceeds of an IRA that a family decided should go to the MAF after the death of their mother. Contributing to the MAF was a frustration for both parties. At this point there is no way to contribute to the MAF other than to send the money to the RCUS and ask that it be forwarded to the fund itself. Since the life insurance policy named the MAF instead of the RCUS there was a difficulty in having the insurance company agreeing to send the money to the RCUS. I asked for and received permission to address during the meeting the frustration of the family that wanted the IRA money to go to the MAF, and will do so during my time.

Finally, I would ask that Synod approve the recommendation of the Interchurch Relations Committee to set a separate guideline for Interchurch Relations. I believe it would add to the flexibility that committee needs and will provide clarity in responding to requests for information by the auditor.

I again want to thank Reverend Jim Sawtelle and Clayton Greiman for reviewing my monthly records and you for your patience with me during the last year.

Recommendations:

1. That Synod decide what, if any, changes it wants to make to the Manual of Procedures for the Office of Treasurer of the Reformed Church in the United States.
2. That the treasurers of the various churches be reminded to comply with standing rule 8 with regard to designating for which fund the monies delivered to the RCUS are to be attributed.
3. That when preparing budgets, committees set out what expenditures they anticipate for the following fiscal year, and indicate if applicable, whether the expenditure has previously been budgeted for.

Reasoning: The auditor requires me to verify that a particular expenditure has been approved. It is generally a matter of pointing to a page of the abstract and indicating to them that it was approved at the last meeting of Synod. It is confusing to do so when the expenditure is budgeted for in a prior year or over the course of several years.

In Christ's service, Ted S. Griess Synod Treasurer.

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Cash Basis	3/31/2013	3/31/2014
Current Assets		
Cash	\$0	\$0
Checking	\$437,917.48	\$356,171.31
Other Assets		
Notes	\$94,975.79	\$144,714.97
Total Assets	\$532,893.27	\$500,886.28
Liabilities	\$0	\$0
Fund Balances	\$532,893.27	\$500,886.28

LOANS RECEIVABLE
as of March 31, 2014

	Beginning Bal	Principle	Interest	Ending Bal
Rock Springs	\$4,332.44	4,332.44	61.15	\$0
Modesto	\$7,859.35	3,946.34	303.66	\$3,913.01
Aberdeen	\$14,284	14,284.00	357.10	\$0
Dickinson	\$68,500.00	3,683.01	2,055	\$64,816.99
Bentonville	\$77,000.00	1,015.03	574.97	\$75,984.97
				\$144,714.97

**Apr '13 – Mar
14**

Income

benevolence	44,658.35
building fund	34,370.15
diaconal	
Philippines	<u>12,137.60</u>
Total diaconal	12,137.60

dues

interest	3,717.45
dues - Other	<u>49,954.09</u>
Total dues	53,671.54

foreign ministries

congo	500.00
International Radio	1,500.00
kenya	1,631.55
foreign ministries - Other	<u>29,869.16</u>
Total foreign ministries	33,500.71

home missions	
Day of Prayer	10,516.63
home missions - Other	<u>107,091.53</u>
Total home missions	117,608.16
hope haven	6,124.81
merf	5,006.06
ministerial aid	
Temporary funds	17,102.06
ministerial aid - Other	<u>40,508.66</u>
Total ministerial aid	57,610.72
ministerial relief - inc	292,363.65
Publications - Inc	
3 forms of unity	56.78
catechism	103.00
confirmation handbook	70.00
creation pamphlets	144.00
directory of worship	23.00
Faith of Fathers - Treick Wkb	51.85
reformed herald	62,059.16
shipping & handling	444.19
Treick Workbooks	105.00
Publications - Inc - Other	<u>911.87</u>
Total Publications - Inc	63,968.85
seminaries	
greenville	4,629.82
heidelberg	5,843.92
mid-america seminary	5,794.82
new geneva	<u>4,678.92</u>
Total seminaries	20,947.48
student aid	20,305.01
Westminster Biblical Missions	<u>3,765.03</u>

Total Income 766,038.12

Expense

Benevolence - Expense

Covenant, Chico	11,160.00
Faith, Anderson CA	6,500.00
Grace, Lancaster CA	2,850.00
Mrs. Amy Stevens	17,050.00
Rev. Jay Fluck	1,974.00
Rev. Ron Potter	<u>1,350.00</u>
Total Benevolence - Expense	40,884.00

Building - Expense 77,000.00

Diaconal - exp

Kenya	200.00
Philippines	<u>10,653.60</u>
Total Diaconal - exp	10,853.60

Dues - expense

abstracts	3,334.69
audit	1,800.00
Book depository	900.00
Book Depository Mgr	300.00
Christian Education committee	1,361.37
greenville representative	1,674.28
Hope Haven	114.75
hope haven representative	110.25
icrc	2,102.88
Incorporation	10.00
Interchurch Relations	3,562.31
min aid committee	33.06
NAPARC	3,589.74
new geneva representative	117.00
Officer remuneration	2,550.00
postage	453.45

supplies	272.59
Synod meeting	<u>39,177.57</u>
Total Dues - expense	61,463.94
Foreign Missions - exp	
Congo	27,676.00
FM committee	4,398.36
International Radio	20,214.00
Kenya	
church support	2,564.00
students	750.00
Kenya - Other	<u>8,326.80</u>
Total Kenya	11,640.80
Philippines	4,058.00
Foreign Missions - exp - Other	<u>5,000.00</u>
Total Foreign Missions - exp	72,987.16
Home Missons - exp	
Casper, Wyoming	22,500.00
Day of Prayer for Ark	150.00
Dickinson, ND	40,400.00
Emmaus Reformed, Minneapolis	5,253.00
Grace Reformed Church, ARK	3,780.00
LA Basin Mission	24,969.00
Omaha	30,000.00
SHM committee	<u>5,312.22</u>
Total Home Missons - exp	132,364.22
Hope Haven distribution	6,156.76
MERF Distribution	6,288.29
Ministerial Aid Distribution	53,773.67
ministerial relief - exp	
Mrs. Elizabeth Sander	2,000.00
Mrs. Grace Ploeger	14,500.00

Mrs. Joan Vance	12,100.00
Mrs. Kay Savage	12,100.00
Mrs. Lena Jones	14,500.00
Mrs. Marjorie Duckett	12,100.00
Mrs. Phyllis Grossmann	14,500.00
Mrs. Virginia Hoeflinger	16,800.00
Rev. Gene Sawtelle	21,600.00
Rev. Herman Van Stedum	18,000.00
Rev. Howard Hart	20,850.00
Rev. Jim West	9,000.00
Rev. Neale Riffert	21,600.00
Rev. Paul Treick	14,400.00
Rev. Vernon Pollema	<u>12,000.00</u>
Total ministerial relief - exp	216,050.00

Publications - Exp

Committee	300.00
Olive Tree	805.00
Reformed Herald	
Postage	80.54
Reformed Herald Editor	1,500.00
RH layout expense	4,342.50
Subscription Manager	500.00
Reformed Herald - Other	<u>19,713.70</u>
Total Reformed Herald	26,136.74
Royalties	304.84
website hosting	5,247.43
Publications - Exp - Other	<u>98,612.36</u>
Total Publications - Exp	131,406.37

Seminary distributions

Greenville	4,493.04
Heidelberg	6,000.89
Mid-America	5,497.72

New Geneva	<u>4,496.21</u>
Total Seminary distributions	20,487.86
student aid expense	
Cody Schwichtenberg	2,600.00
Derrick Merkel	3,000.00
Steve Carr	8,344.30
Tim Marinelli	<u>6,124.12</u>
Total student aid expense	<u>20,068.42</u>
Total Expense	<u>849,784.29</u>
Net Income	<u><u>-83,746.17</u></u>

	<u>Feb '09 - Mar 14</u>
RCUS Fund Balances 2014	
Income	
benevolence	3,388.46
building fund	34,778.73
deficit reduction	426.92
diaconal	12,930.64
dordt college	0.00
dues	55,628.87
foreign ministries	96,815.67
home missions	48,555.22
hope haven	5,018.14
merf	3,858.27
ministerial aid	29,433.25
ministerial relief	19,680.72
other assets	144,714.97
publications	
reformed herald	-6,057.01
publications - Other	<u>13,674.35</u>
Total publications	7,617.34

seminaries	16,978.04
student aid	16,109.51
unallocated income	1,186.50
westminster biblical missions	<u>3,765.03</u>
Total Income	500,886.28
Expense	<u>0.00</u>
Net Income	<u><u>500,886.28</u></u>

**Jul '12 - Jun
13**

RCUS 7/2012 to 6/2013

Income	
benevolence	42,713.21
building fund	18,444.72
diaconal	207.50
dues	
interest	1,712.86
dues - Other	<u>49,236.73</u>
Total dues	50,949.59
foreign ministries	
congo	2,388.00
International Radio	714.00
philippines	1,009.28
foreign ministries - Other	<u>38,681.40</u>
Total foreign ministries	42,792.68
home missions	
Day of Prayer	17,096.92
home missions - Other	<u>49,115.75</u>
Total home missions	66,212.67
hope haven	6,156.76

merf	6,288.29
ministerial aid	
Temporary funds	104,714.32
ministerial aid - Other	<u>34,604.50</u>
Total ministerial aid	139,318.82
ministerial relief - inc	313,985.77
Publications - Inc	
3 forms of unity	56.78
abstracts	20.00
catechism	167.00
confirmation handbook	40.00
creation pamphlets	6.00
directory of worship	23.00
Faith of Fathers - Treick Wkb	8.50
jones workbook	208.00
reformed herald	61,491.48
shipping & handling	63.25
Treick Workbooks	68.00
Publications - Inc - Other	<u>798.28</u>
Total Publications - Inc	62,950.29
seminaries	
greenville	4,493.04
heidelberg	6,000.89
mid-america seminary	5,500.89
new geneva	<u>4,493.04</u>
Total seminaries	20,487.86
student aid	<u>26,588.35</u>
Total Income	797,096.51
Expense	
Benevolence - Expense	
Covenant, Chico	5,580.00

Faith, Anderson CA	6,000.00
Grace, Lancaster CA	3,300.00
Mrs. Amy Stevens	17,700.00
Rev. George Syms	2,800.00
Rev. Jay Fluck	7,896.00
Rev. Ron Potter	<u>5,400.00</u>
Total Benevolence - Expense	48,676.00
Building - Expense	68,500.00
Diaconal - exp	
Kenya	200.00
Philippines	<u>1,000.00</u>
Total Diaconal - exp	1,200.00
Dues - expense	
abstracts	3,018.62
audit	1,800.00
Book Depository Mgr	300.00
greenville representative	2,562.52
Hope Haven	138.15
icrc	1,202.15
Incorporation	10.00
Interchurch Relations	2,335.82
min aid committee	33.06
NAPARC	2,549.87
Officer remuneration	2,550.00
postage	453.45
supplies	157.31
Synod meeting	<u>39,177.57</u>
Total Dues - expense	56,288.52
Foreign Missions - exp	
Congo	25,968.00
FM committee	4,736.08
International Radio	20,214.00

Kenya	
students	3,950.00
Kenya - Other	<u>4,630.00</u>
Total Kenya	8,580.00
Philippines	<u>4,058.00</u>
Total Foreign Missions - exp	63,556.08
Home Missons - exp	
Covenant, Chico CA	4,825.00
Day of Prayer for Ark	17,096.92
Dickinson, ND	40,400.00
Emmaus Reformed, Minneapolis	15,000.00
Grace Reformed Church, ARK	4,020.00
LA Basin Mission	19,257.00
Omaha	12,500.00
SHM committee	<u>4,958.23</u>
Total Home Missons - exp	118,057.15
Hope Haven distribution	6,156.76
MERF Distribution	6,288.29
Ministerial Aid Distribution	139,318.82
ministerial relief - exp	
Mrs. Elizabeth Sander	11,000.00
Mrs. Grace Ploeger	14,400.00
Mrs. Joan Vance	12,000.00
Mrs. Kay Savage	12,000.00
Mrs. Lena Jones	14,400.00
Mrs. Marie Stuebbe	2,400.00
Mrs. Marjorie Duckett	12,000.00
Mrs. Phyllis Grossmann	14,400.00
Mrs. Virginia Hoeflinger	16,800.00
Rev. Gene Sawtelle	21,600.00
Rev. George Syms	11,200.00
Rev. Herman Van Stedum	18,000.00

Rev. Howard Hart	20,400.00
Rev. Neale Riffert	21,600.00
Rev. Paul Treick	14,400.00
Rev. Vernon Pollema	<u>12,000.00</u>
Total ministerial relief - exp	228,600.00
Publications - Exp	
Committee	300.00
Reformed Herald	
Reformed Herald Editor	1,500.00
RH layout expense	4,362.57
Subscription Manager	500.00
Reformed Herald - Other	<u>13,725.53</u>
Total Reformed Herald	20,088.10
Royalties	304.84
website hosting	1,461.77
Publications - Exp - Other	<u>98,787.36</u>
Total Publications - Exp	120,942.07
Seminary distributions	
Greenville	4,493.04
Heidelberg	6,000.89
Mid-America	5,497.72
New Geneva	<u>4,496.21</u>
Total Seminary distributions	20,487.86
student aid expense	
Cody Schwichtenberg	5,200.00
Derrick Merkel	3,000.00
Steve Carr	9,500.00
Tim Marinelli	<u>2,470.67</u>
Total student aid expense	<u>20,170.67</u>
Total Expense	898,242.22

Net Income

-101,145.71

MANUAL OF PROCEDURES FOR THE OFFICE OF TREASURER
OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

1. The first of each month checks are to be sent for those items which Synod has approved to be paid on a monthly basis. Examples of these include: Ministerial Relief, Benevolence, and Home Missions.
2. Other monies are distributed whenever requested by a Chairman or sub-chairman of a particular committee or when statements are received for items approved by Synod. Examples of these would include: Foreign Missions, Diaconal, and Reformed Herald Publication costs.
3. Reimbursement requests are honored if the individual requesting them appears to have participated in work approved by Synod. Examples of these would include: Mileage and Lodging expenses for attending meetings of Synod committees.
4. Normally all items should have been budgeted for by Synod. The job of Treasurer is not to be an auditor, but the Treasurer should attempt to make sure that amounts requested have been budgeted for. Exceptions would include items circularized by the Executive Committee and not objected to, and requests by the Diaconal Committee chairman after approval by the Diaconal Committee.
5. On occasion funds will need to be wired for the Foreign Missions Committee. Care should be taken to hold down the cost of wiring those funds and to make sure that arrangements have been made to send the funds to the proper individuals.
6. On June 30th of each fiscal year funds should be distributed to the various institutions for which guideline amounts have been received during the year. Examples of these are: Hope Haven, Greenville Seminary, Heidelberg Seminary, Mid-America Seminary, New Geneva Seminary, Middle East Reformed Fellowship, and Westminster Biblical Missions.
7. On June 30th of each fiscal year funds should be distributed to the Ministerial Aid Fund received from any source. The Ministerial Aid Committee should have indicated prior to the distribution where they want the funds invested.
8. On June 30th of each fiscal year funds should be distributed to the church designated by Synod as the recipient of the Day of Prayer offerings.
9. On June 30th of each fiscal year funds should be distributed for royalties previously approved by Synod. As of this date those include a 15% royalty to Mrs. Lena Jones for sales of the Jones Workbook and a 15% royalty to Rev. Paul Treick for sales of any of his publications.
10. Prior to the end of the fiscal year all honorariums which have been approved by Synod or provided for by a Standing Rule should be paid. See Standing Rule #7.
11. Receipts from the various churches for guideline payments need to be deposited regularly and accounted for showing the fund or funds that the church wants the payment to go towards. Churches should be encouraged to comply with Standing Rule 8 by designating which fund the monies are to go towards.
12. Receipts for other than guideline amounts should be deposited regularly and records should be maintained showing what the amount was for. In the event that the amount received is a charitable contribution a thank you note should be sent acknowledging the gift shortly after receipt. The receipt form required by the Internal Revenue Service for charitable contributions should be sent by January 31st of the year following the gift.
13. The account should be reconciled monthly shortly after receiving the bank statement. Monthly reports should be prepared showing the income and expenses of the RCUS, the reconciliation of the account, the Fund Balances as of the end of the Month, and the guideline amounts received from the churches. Copies of these monthly reports should be sent to those individuals who are reviewing them. At this time those individuals are Rev. Jim Sawtelle and Elder Clayton Greiman.
14. Year-end reports should be prepared as soon as it is practical after the bank statement is received for June of the fiscal year. Reports showing the guideline amounts received should be forwarded to the various churches informing them what amounts the Treasurer's records show was received from the church for a particular fund for the past fiscal year. Any discrepancy with the church records should be adjusted for.

15. The RCUS has made a number of loans to churches within the denomination for the purchase or improvement of buildings. The church needs to present a proposal to a meeting of Synod and the terms of the loan need to be set out in the motion approved by Synod. The terms should include a repayment plan, interest rate, and collateral taken, if any. As a part of the yearly Treasurer's report to Synod the report would include the amount remaining due on the outstanding loan and whether the payments are being made.
16. The RCUS makes loans to students for the ministry who are under care. The amount of the loan is approved of by Synod, and the funds are sent to the student when requested by him, together with the Student Loan Agreement. The student signs the Student Loan Agreement stating that he intends to serve the RCUS for a period of 5 years following graduation, and in the event that he fails to serve the RCUS for those 5 years, the student agrees to repay the loan within the 5 years following his separation from the ministry of the RCUS. The original of the Student Loan Agreement is sent to the Stated Clerk.
17. After January 31, the Treasurer should receive a report from the Ministerial Aid Fund showing the investments and the growth or loss within the fund for the prior fiscal year.
18. As soon as practical after the end of the fiscal year, the Treasurer's records and the report of the Ministerial Aid Fund should be forwarded to the Auditor for review. Any discrepancy found by the Auditor should be accounted for.
19. Before May 1 the Treasurer's report, audit report, and report of the Ministerial Aid Fund should be forwarded to the delegates to the next Synod meeting.

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

(see Inter-Church Relations Committee Report in this Abstract).

XII. Addresses by Delegates from other Reformed Churches, Institutional Representatives

The following fraternal delegates brought greetings to the body: Rev. L. Anthony Curto from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; Rev. Jerry Milroy from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America; Elder Henry Van Delden from the Canadian Reformed Churches; and Rev. Todd De Rooy from the United Reformed Churches.

The following Institutional representatives addressed the body: Rev. Dr. Maynard Koerner addressed the body as a representative of Heidelberg Theological Seminary; and Rev. Dennis Roe addressed the body as a representative of Westminster Biblical Missions.

XIII. Reports of Board Members and Liaisons

Mid-America Reformed Seminary

Rev. Jon Blair gave an oral report.

Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Rev. Wes Brice gave an oral report.

Radio Administrative Committee

Esteemed Brethren,

On September 24, 2013, the Reformed Faith and Life (French) committee met at Lynwood URC, Lynwood, IL. All the members of the RCUS contingent of the committee were present, as were members from the United Reformed Churches in the U. S. and Canada, as well as Rev. Eric Kayayan. RFL is the umbrella organization for both the French and the Armenian works. The business meetings are held separately, and our RCUS committee observed the Armenian meeting as well.

Rev. Dan Schnabel was elected chairman for the French committee, replacing Rev. Keith Davis. Other officers remained the same. Balance between the URCNA and the RCUS. While we have invited brothers from the OPC to attend and join us, that interest has been sporadic and unofficial.

The financial report ending September 30, 2013, showed a balance in our Reformed Radio Administration Funds of \$2,162.96 with year-to-date income of \$80,206.43 and disbursements of \$78,043.47. \$11,600 was received as a memorial from Mrs. Carmen Kayayan = s estate and is not counted in these figures nor will it be used for the general operating expenses. It should be noted that, in addition to the North American contributions, the Reformed Church in South Africa contributed more than twice that amount for Rev. Kayayan = s support.

The general operating budget set for this year is \$112,900. In addition to that is a one-time budget for relocation of Rev. Kayayan to France. The moving expenses are estimated at \$18,000 and set-up and maintenance for the RFL broadcast and resource center is budgeted at \$11,600 (taken from the Carmen Kayayan memorial). The moving expense of \$18,000 is to be raised by appeals to congregations during this year. To date a substantial portion of this expense has been raised by generous giving from congregations and individuals in the RCUS and beyond.

A major portion of the meeting was spent discussing the relocation of Rev. Kayayan to France, which he has envisioned for several years. He will need to sell his home in South Africa and purchase one in France. The large enough to also house the broadcasting facilities. This is presently underway and Rev. Kayayan's move is contemplated for August of 2014.

Discussion was held as to the changes this move might bring to the RFL ministry. This move is not to be seen as a cutting back on any portion of the work, but it would provide greater influence in France and other European countries. The overseeing consistory in Rietvallei has approved of this move and would continue oversight of Rev. Kayayan. For the present there would be no change in what RFL is doing, as the broadcast can be prepared and distributed from anywhere in the world. This move would be a return home for Rev. Kayayan, as he considers France his native home.

As far as the broadcasts are concerned, that work continues as usual, with continued emphasis on the north and west African nations. This is especially significant given the influence of Islam in those regions. The programs involve sermons, Bible studies, and catechism lessons.

Rev. Kayayan was given an itinerary last fall to visit RCUS congregations in the western states. He was also scheduled for the URC in Phoenix, but since they had a scheduling problem, our Hamburg church invited him. His travels took him to Grace RCUS in Bakersfield (for a joint Missionfest with Shafter), Covenant RCUS in Sacramento, and St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS in Hamburg, MN, where he addressed the various congregations. His presence was well-received by these congregations. Thanks to all who helped with ground transportation for these visits.

A book of 21 sermons in Afrikaans has been published by Rev. Kayayan in South Africa. There is an expansion of the capabilities of Trans World Radio that we will be a part of. Trans World Radio has created a huge server allowing storage of a great number of recordings and texts. RFL BSA (French) has been asked to contribute its programming to TWR for its French window. This is a wonderful opportunity since our website has limited space available for our programming. Radio stations from around the world would be able to download RFL material. Initial expenses are minimal, but they would go up in subsequent years. Short-wave broadcasting may be less effective in future years. Rev. Kayayan has taken the initiative of going with the trial period of use of TWR360. One can access it via Google: TWR360. TWR does all the promotion. This system would save many of the difficulties that come with handling of materials.

There is great reason for encouragement in the French broadcast of the Reformed faith through RFL. Financially there has been good support for his work from the U. S., Canada, and South Africa through the past year. The Reformed faith is being spread broadly and taking root in many countries. Some of which cannot be safely reached by sending personnel. We are blessed to be able to work with Rev.

Kayayan who is very staunch and faithful to the Reformed faith. Your prayers are needed for Rev. Kayayan's continued work, the matter of relocation of him and his family, and the transition of the broadcast facilities. No doubt this will be the focus of discussion at our next meeting.

We are again asking, through the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee, that the budget of \$21,000 for the next Synodical year be continued.

The next annual meeting of the RRAC is scheduled to be at Lynwood URC on October 7, 2014.

Respectfully, Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Neale Riffert, Rev. Dan Schnabel, Elder Bill Borgwardt

Reformed Herald Editor's Report

Esteemed brothers,

This will be my last report as the Reformed Herald editor, after 13 years at this position. I have informed the Publications Committee of my retirement. They could consider other men for nomination. The new editor will begin his work with the July/August issue. I have enjoyed the challenge and writing my own Reflections each month. After going digital in 2001, the appearance of our magazine has changed considerably over the years. We added some color, and more graphics. I remember the late-night struggles with creating crossword puzzles and children's challenges which were printed for few years. Maybe we are also getting close to the time when it can go to full color too. A new editor will surely bring some new and fresh ideas.

Over the past year we have gone to a bi-monthly edition with 24 pages instead of the monthly issue with 12 pages. The synod will have to determine if this is the way they want to continue. There are some drawbacks with the bi-monthly issuance, as is the case with some time-sensitive material and announcements.

I want to thank those of you who have contributed articles, sermons, news items, pictures, and comments over the past years. Without these, there would be no publication at all. The pastor profiles have received many very positive comments. I've tried to mix the younger pastors with the older ones in each issue. There are still a number of pastors who are scheduled for their moment in the sun and I will attach their names as an appendix to this report for the next editor. In recent years Rev. Eric Bristley has added his design talents which improved the appearance considerably. My wife Karen has been a big help in studiously correcting grammar and punctuation for each issue. Likewise, Rev. Frank Walker has done a good job keeping the subscriptions current.

In the last year we have been using a new printer for the Reformed Herald as well as a new layout designer in 2014. I think that the Synod should consider improvements in both of these. The print quality is not nearly as good as Premier's was, and the design layout and clarity of print could use improvement. These should be reexamined for the future. Premier has indicated that they have a new mailing system that would be an improvement over the previous method which was burdensome. Thankfully, the present system of mailing no longer requires filing an annual report to the Postal Service, although that had nothing to do with having it printed in Canada.

Again, thank you for the trust you have placed in me over the past years to serve the church in this way

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Paul H. Treick

- The body expressed its thanks to Rev. Paul Treick for his many years of faithful service as editor of the Reformed Herald!

XIV. Special Committee Reports
A. Special Judicial Committee

[The first recommendation was defeated. Recommendations #2 and #3 were recommitted to the committee and the committee was reconstituted]

The 266th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States instructed the President of the Executive Committee to appoint a Special Judicial Committee to which three overtures were referred. Those overtures follow along with respective recommendations:

- (1) That Article 119 of the Constitution of the RCUS be amended as follows: after the word “dismission,” insert the words, “or shall renounce his membership.” NOTE: The purpose of this amendment is to clarify the fact that renouncing one’s membership does not bring church discipline to a halt.

Recommendation 1: That the proposed amendment, “or shall renounce his membership,” be inserted in the first paragraph of Article 119, following the words, “or continually absents himself from public worship.” **Grounds:** The first paragraph envisions discipline, whereas the second paragraph is concerned with certificates of dismissal and erasure not involving discipline.

Some of the discussion resulting in the above recommendation revolved around Article 74 (cf. Art. 5) which deals with “furnishing members in good and regular standing, with certificates of dismissal to another congregation in the Reformed Church or to any orthodox Protestant Church which receives members by certificate from the Reformed Church in the United States.” According to Abstract 70:26, “the word ‘orthodox’ does not mean only Reformed, nor is it required that we transfer members to any and all churches By ‘orthodox’ is meant those churches with the historical Reformed theology. Each transfer must be made on an individual basis.”

An additional paragraph clarifying how a Spiritual Council should respond to a member seeking transfer to another church while that person is under discipline was proposed via the following overture: “When a member has been placed under discipline, as defined in Articles 113 & 114, he shall not be dismissed to another congregation until the discipline has been officially removed through repentance and restoration. In the event a member under discipline shall join another church contrary to the advice and authority of the Spiritual Council, the other church shall be informed that discipline was in process and the member’s name shall be erased from the roll and the circumstances recorded in the minutes.” THIS OVERTURE WAS DEFEATED (cf. Abstract 93:105). (As to the question of Erasure as a form of discipline, see Abstract 91:137ff.)

- (2) That the RCUS Constitution be amended by deleting articles 40-42. [The grounds from the original overture to Synod from the Western Classis are: (1) the provisions governing the selection of the Teachers of Theology had as their purposes, in part, to insulate seminary professors from the courts of the Church, and the direct oversight of the lower judicatories of the Church, and in particular the oversight of the Classis to which the Teacher belongs; (2) the current RCUS Constitution goes well beyond defining the criterion for selecting a seminary teacher, putting the vocation on a par with the biblical offices of the Church, going so far as to stipulate that those chosen to this “office” shall serve for life; (3) while retiring pastors may, by reason of affection, be granted the honorific of “Pastor Emeritus,” such “Emeritus” status is granted automatically to retiring “Teachers of Theology;” (4) Article 42 establishes a higher standard for treating the temporal needs of retiring Teachers of Theology than is accorded to retiring Ministers of the Word (Article 34); and (5) there is no biblical foundation for any of these provisions].

Recommendation 2: That Articles 40-42 concerning Teachers of Theology be deleted and replaced with a new Article 40 to read: “A Teacher of Theology shall remain under the direct oversight of the lower judicatories of the church, and, in particular, the oversight of the Classis to which he belongs. A charge or complaint against a Teacher of Theology that relating to his position may only be brought by a delegate member of one of the several classes. All issues arising from an accusation or complaint against a Teacher of Theology relating to his position shall be under the original jurisdiction of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States.” (This will require a re-numbering of all subsequent articles.)

In coming to a consensus on the above recommendation, some of the discussion revolved around the question of oversight. Consider the following: a seminary would be an institution that serves the Synod as a whole, but Teachers of Theology would not be under the oversight of the Synod directly, but of their Classis, and yet, according to Articles 36-38, are elected and inaugurated by the Synod. It was also pointed out that Teachers of Theology are a subset of the Office of the Minister of the Word (cf. Article 15), and therefore subject to the discipline of Ministers, Elders and Deacons as defined in Articles 120-124. The above recommendation is designed to address the question of oversight.

There was also discussion on deleting the entire section dealing with Teachers of Theology. Since this brought up the issue of a denominational seminary, the better part of discretion prevailed and the proposal was not pursued. Although the Constitution does envision or provide for the existence of a denominational seminary (cf. Articles 36-39, 108, Form XVI. CALL OF A TEACHER OF THEOLOGY), at present there appears to be too little support and enthusiasm for such. However, it was conceded that the possibility (or dream) should not be squelched, and that neither was it the intent of the original overture.

- (3) That Article 84 of the RCUS Constitution be amended by addition as follows: a. Between the words *minister* and *from* in the first sentence, add the words, *or licentiate*; b. At the end of the Article, add the following sentences: *nor shall a minister or licentiate be installed until confirmed by Synod. Classes shall forward to Synod its actions concerning ministers and licentiates from other denominations; and also provide a resume regarding the new minister or licentiate.* [Note from the 1987 Abstract, concerning the process for the recommendation of new ministers from another denomination by a Classis to the Synod, the following recommendations were adopted: “That the recommendation by the Classis include a statement of the actions by that Classis, and a resume regarding the new minister” (page 68, Standing Judicial, 2.b.); and “the Judicial Committee interprets the Constitution to hold that a new man from another denomination may not be installed until after he has been approved by Synod” (page 70, Standing Judicial, #14.).

Recommendation 3: That Article 84 of the RCUS Constitution be amended by inserting the words *and installation* after “reception” in the last sentence and adding the following sentence at the end: *Classes shall forward to Synod its actions concerning ministers from other denominations; and also provide a resume regarding the new minister.* **Explanation:** The addition of *or licentiate* in a. of the overture is redundant (it’s already there) and un-necessary in b. Article 26 (RCUS Constitution) is to licentiate from another denomination as Article 35 is to ministers from another denomination. The above amendments simply put into the Constitution what is already our practice as mandated by Synod. The additional requirement of Synod approval of a minister from another denomination before installation is both good and necessary. Synod has a vested interest in its ministers. The education of its ministers is of primary concern to Synod. It would oversee a denominational seminary. It now approves seminaries worthy of support and for students to attend. It helps students financially to attend such seminaries. None of this has been the case with ministers/men coming from another denomination. Although it may be seen as another layer of bureaucracy, it is also careful oversight.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Ron Morris, Rev. Vern Pollema, Rev. Neale Riffert, Rev. Matt Powell, Rev. Richard Stetler, Rev. Doug Schlegel, Elder Stacy Kooistra.

XV. Standing Committee Reports

[The committee recommendations appear below in their final form, whether amended or not. The recommendations were adopted unless otherwise noted]

A. Benevolence Committee

1. That Synod grant benevolent aid for Grace RCUS, Lancaster, CA in the amount of \$575 per month for the next synodical year.
2. That Synod grant benevolent aid for Faith RCUS, Anderson, CA in the amount of \$500 a month, up to \$6,000, for the next synodical year, once a minister is called.
3. That Synod grant benevolent aid to Covenant RCUS, Chico, CA in the amount of \$837 per month for the next synodical year.
4. That Synod grant benevolent aid to Mrs. Amy Stevens in the amount of \$1,425 per month for the next synodical year.

B. Ministerial Aid Committee

1. That Synod direct the chairmen of MAF to enter into contract with Waterstone as the organization to solicit and direct individual estate bequests to the RCUS Synod for those choosing to use external estate planning services.
2. That the report of the MAF committee be copied (without the recommendations) by each church and distributed to members of their church for information purposes. [TAKE NOTE]
3. That the committee be instructed to write an article to be published in the Reformed Herald advising members of the RCUS of the various ways they might contribute to the RCUS through the use of Waterstone.
4. That contributions to the RCUS via Waterstone be noted in the Reformed Herald without the name of the donor but showing the amounts and terms of the donation.
5. That the elders and deacons of the churches of the RCUS regularly encourage their members to consider gifts and bequests to the churches and the denomination. [TAKE NOTE]
6. That the pastors of the various churches be strongly urged to look for opportunities to outline and teach the members these investment options in their visitations, bible studies, annual meetings, and other opportunities as they may arise. [TAKE NOTE]
7. That the consistories be advised that the MAF committee is available to answer any questions and to assist in promoting these investment options in any way that they can. [TAKE NOTE]
8. That the following Ministerial Aid requests be granted. The amounts listed are to be paid monthly, for the next synodical year:

Mrs. Chester Ploeger	\$1,200
Mrs. Joan Vance	\$1,000
Mrs. Marjorie Duckett	\$1,000
Mrs. Kay Savage	\$1,200
Rev. & Mrs. Gene Sawtelle	\$1,800
Rev. & Mrs. Neale Riffert	\$1,800
Rev. & Mrs. Vern Pollema	\$1,000
Rev. & Mrs. Paul Treick	\$1,200
Rev. & Mrs. Jim West	\$1,500
Rev. & Mrs. Howard Hart	\$1,750
Mrs. Phyllis Grossmann	\$1,200
Rev. & Mrs. Herman Van Stedum	\$1,650
Mrs. Virginia Hoeflinger	\$1,600
Mrs. Lena Jones	\$1,200

C. Ecumenical Committee

1. From Recommendation #1 of the Permanent IRC Report, that the RCUS recognize the difficulty of the matter of the nature (including length) of creation days has presented and continues to present to our brothers in the OPC and that our churches covenant to pray for them that this matter may be resolved among them.
2. From Recommendation #2 of the Permanent ICR Report, that the IRC of the RCUS continue to discuss the matter of the nature (including length) of creation days in its periodic meetings with the

CEIR of the OPC, and in its annual report to Synod, advise of any developments.

3. That the IRC discuss the nature (including length) of creation days with NAPARC churches we have fraternal relations and report back to the 269th Synod of the RCUS.
4. From Recommendation #3 of the Permanent IRC Report, that the proposed changes to the NAPARC Constitution be approved.
5. From Recommendation #4 of the Permanent IRC Report, that the Synod of the RCUS establish a guideline for the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS.
6. That the proposed budget of \$13,150 be adopted.
 - \$800 – Delegate to the OPC GA June 2015
 - \$800 – Delegate to the RPCNA Synod, June 2015
 - \$4,400 – Delegate to NAPARC, Nov. 2014, Grassie, ON
 - (three days includes sub-committee meetings with fraternal churches)
 - \$500 – NAPARC dues
 - \$3,500 – IRC & sub-committee meetings; invitations to observe NAPARC churches
 - \$750 – Funds for 2017 ICRC meeting
 - \$400 – Funds for ICRC dues (approx. \$1,200)
 - \$900 – set aside funds for delegates (2) to RCN 2017
 - \$650 – set aside funds for delegate to CanRC 2016
 - \$650 – set aside funds for delegate to URCNA 2016
 - \$200 – Interchurch Relations Committee misc. expenses.
 - \$13,150: TOTAL
7. That \$650 be budgeted for sending a delegate to the 2014 RPCNA Synod meeting, June 2014, in Marion, IN.
8. That the FMC make contact with the CCCA of the CanRC concerning UCRCP.

D. Education and Student Aid

1. That New Geneva Theological Seminary continue to be considered a seminary worthy of support.
2. That the guideline for New Geneva Theological Seminary be continued at \$2.00 per communicant member for the next synodical year.
3. That New Geneva Theological Seminary be commended for their years of service to the church. [TAKE NOTE]
4. That Mid-America Reformed Seminary continue to be considered a seminary worthy of support
5. That the guideline for Mid-America Reformed Seminary be continued at \$2.00 per communicant member for the next synodical year
6. That Mid-America Reformed Seminary be commended for their years of service to the church. [TAKE NOTE]
7. That Synod delete the list of colleges worthy of support, and instruct the Synod clerk to send a polite note of explanation to Covenant College that this decision is made on our own policies and not because of any perceived issues with their institution.
8. That student aid for the 2014-2015 academic year be granted to Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg to attend Heidelberg Theological Seminary as follows: \$5,200 tuition and \$400 books.
9. That student aid for the 2014-2015 academic year be granted to Mr. Chris Campell to attend Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary as follows: \$2,000 tuition and \$400 books.
10. That student aid for the 2014-2015 academic year be granted to Mr. Steve Carr to attend Mid-America Reformed Seminary as follows: \$8,500 tuition and \$400 books.
11. That student aid for the 2013-2014 academic year be granted to Mr. Steve Carr to attend Mid-America Reformed Seminary as follows: \$3194.30 tuition and \$195.45 books.
12. That student aid for the 2014-2015 academic year be granted to Mr. Tim Marinelli to attend Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary as follows: \$8,925 tuition.
13. That the guideline for Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary be continued at \$2.00 per communicant member for the next synodical year.
14. That the guideline for Heidelberg Theological Seminary be continued at \$2.00 per communicant member for the next synodical year.
15. That \$2,000 be budgeted for the Permanent Committee for the next synodical year, and that the Permanent Committee be instructed to submit budgets in future reports.
16. [FROM THE FLOOR] That recommendations for guidelines for seminaries not reviewed be the responsibility of the Standing Education and Student Aid Committee.

E. Judicial Committee

1. That paragraph 49 of the Rules of Order be amended by inserting the sentence, “Moving the question requires two-thirds of the votes cast in the affirmative to be sustained.”
2. That the Executive Committee propose the time of devotions in the agenda and the order of the day. The committee believes the sense of the body is that the delegates would prefer to have a variety of speakers for devotions. [TAKE NOTE]
3. That the Executive Committee, via executive circular, confirm Rev. Alpuche subsequent to notification from the Western Classis after June 1, 2014 that the papers are in order.
4. That Synod recommend to the churches that they adopt constitutional language and policy language affirming the biblical and historic institution of Christian marriage as a union between only one man and one woman.
5. That Synod erect a special committee to study how the RCUS may adopt constitutional, confessional, or liturgical language to affirm our practice of the biblical and historic institution of marriage as a union between only one man and one woman.

F. Missions Committee

1. Regarding recommendation 3 of the Permanent Foreign Ministries Committee, that the Foreign Ministries Committee be authorized to expend funds raised by offerings in the churches when there are special needs.
2. Regarding recommendation 4 of the Permanent Foreign Ministries Committee, that RCUS funds for Reformed Faith and Life be prioritized for their radio ministries in Africa.
3. Regarding recommendations 5 and 6 of the Permanent Foreign Ministries Committee, that the Permanent Foreign Ministries Committee investigate and bring to next year's Synod a recommendation concerning the position of a foreign missions coordinator.
4. Regarding the matter of placing an RCUS representative on the MERF board, this was deemed unwise because of the annual travel costs to Cyprus. [TAKE NOTE]
5. Concerning recommendation 8 of the Permanent Foreign Ministries Committee, we recommend the following protocol be established for which mission organizations the RCUS will approve for benevolence: (1) the mission organization is examined by the permanent Foreign Ministries Committee to assess if it is Reformed; (2) the synod should endeavor to support, where possible, those mission organizations whose officers & board members are answerable to Reformed and Presbyterian church bodies.
6. That the Guideline for Westminster Biblical Missions for the next synodical year be continued at \$2 per communicant member.
7. That the Guideline for MERF for the next synodical year be set at \$2.00 per communicant member.
8. Regarding Synod Overture #57, that when a minister travels at home or abroad on behalf of the Foreign Ministries Committee, the church he serves may request financial assistance for pulpit supply (including travel costs) through the Foreign Ministries Committee.
9. Regarding the letter from the Diaconal Ministries Committee of the OPC, we refer it to the Permanent Foreign Ministries Committee to respond. [TAKE NOTE]
10. That Synod take note regarding recommendations 2 and 7 of the Permanent Foreign Ministries Committee. [TAKE NOTE]
11. That the budget for Foreign Ministries for the next Synodical year be as follows:
 - URCC - Congo:**
 - Elder/pastor/church support \$12,600 (same as last year)
 - Kinshasa aid to churches \$13,200 (same as last year)
 - Lubumbashi church aid \$1,000 (same as last year)
 - Building and Diaconal aid \$1200 (same as last year)
 - RFCK - Kenya:**
 - Church Support \$7,200 (increase of \$1,200. Soon will have 2 more pastors)
 - Diaconal aid \$2,000 (same as last year)
 - Theological training expenses 6,700 (same as last year)
 - UCRCP - Philippines:**
 - Classis meeting expenses \$2,058 (same as last year)
 - Outreach expenses \$2,000 (same as last year)
 - Reformed Faith and Life (French):** \$20,000 (same as last year)
 - Committee Expenses:**
 - Foreign Missions Travel \$5,000 (3,000 previously Africa)
 - Travel in USA \$3,000
 - Pulpit Supply \$2,000
12. That Christ Reformed Chapel, Casper, WY continue to receive \$2,500 monthly, for a total of \$30,000 in the next Synodical year.
13. Concerning recommendation 2 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that the Omaha, NE mission work continue to receive \$2,500 monthly, for a total of \$30,000 in the next Synodical year, provided that a suitable candidate is found to continue the work. We note that this is an exception to our normal Home Mission practice of having a certain number of seed families before beginning a work.
14. Concerning recommendation 3 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that Emmaus Road Reformed Church, Eden Prairie, MN receive \$83 monthly, for a total of \$1,000 in the next Synodical year. [A reduction of \$1,000, 2.5% of original support.]
15. Concerning recommendation 4 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that Grace Reformed Church of Northwest AR receive \$240 monthly, for a total of \$2,880 in the next Synodical year. [A reduction of \$720, 5% of original support.]
16. Concerning recommendation #5 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that Emmaus Road Reformed Church, Eden Prairie, MN receive the 2014 Annual Day of Prayer for Missions offering.
17. Concerning recommendation #6 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that First Reformed Chapel, Dickinson, ND receive \$2,400 monthly, for a total of \$28,800 in the next Synodical year. [A reduction of \$9,600, 20% of original support.]
18. Concerning recommendation #7 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that Rehoboth Reformed Church, Los Angeles, CA receive \$2,098 monthly, for a total of \$25,175 in the next Synodical year. [A reduction of \$1,325, 5% of support.]
19. Concerning recommendation #8 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that Synod approve the proposed Hispanic Mission Work of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, CA, and its surrounding vicinity, as a Synod Home Mission Work. We note that this is an exception to our normal Home Mission practice of having a certain number of seed families before beginning a work.
20. Concerning recommendation #9 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that the Hispanic Mission Work of Ebenezer Reformed Church, in Shafter, CA receive \$1,480 monthly, for a total of \$17,760 in the next Synodical year.
21. That the Home Missions Manual, (Oversight) II. 3 be amended to begin with the following: "The overseeing consistory of an unorganized work should provide leadership as an ordinary consistory,

make regular visits, such as having an elder present for worship services and to provide for administration of the sacraments, hold meetings with the core group to assess maturity and progress of the work, seek potential officers among the group; and the missionary shall participate in consistory meetings in person or by other means of communication.”

22. That Synod take note regarding recommendation #11 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, since we do not want to make a rule out of an exception. [TAKE NOTE]
23. Concerning recommendation #12 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that the Permanent Synod Home Missions Committee amend the Synod Home Missions Manual to include policies and procedures related to home mission works, without initial seed families, which are in need of Classical/Synodical support. [TAKE NOTE].
24. Concerning recommendation #13 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, that \$6,000 be budgeted for Permanent Home Missions Committee expenses in the next Synodical year.
25. Concerning recommendation #14 of the Permanent Home Missions Committee, the next Synodical year’s budget for Home Missions, if approved as recommended, will total \$141,615. [An increase of \$6,115 over last year.] [TAKE NOTE]

G. Minutes of Classis Committee

1. That the final form of the minutes include line numbering for the purpose of identification.
2. That when recording the chair being vacated by the one presiding over the meeting it should be noted in the form of who assumed the chair and at what time.
3. That the minutes of the Western Classis be found in order with the following corrections:
 - 1) On page xv there needs to be a correction of the designation for those present and those retired in the footnotes.
 - 2) On page 3, line 25 the “take note” needs to be removed.
 - 3) On page 6, line 41 the appendix reference should be page 57 instead of 58. And on line 46 there needs to be added an appendix reference to page 54.
 - 4) In the recording of the theme of services and hymns a consistent form is needed.
 - 5) On page 8, line 50 needs a period.
 - 6) On page 11, line 54 the number reported for elders present should be 12 and total 29.
 - 7) On page 12, line 23 the “carried” needs to be deleted.
 - 8) On page 15, line 8 “Seconded. Carried.” needs to be added.
 - 9) In the Appendix Table of Contents correct pp. 15-39 to 15-34 and p. 15 to pp. 15-22.
 - 10) Some documents do not have the required the number of signatures.
 - 11) Some appended documents could have been set in a more logical order.
4. That the minutes of the South Central Classis be found in order with the following corrections:
 - 1) On page 6, under Reports of Standing Committees the minutes of the Executive Session should say page 10 instead of page 9.
 - 2) On page 2, pertaining to going into Executive Session, the associated documents are mis-numbered with two #4 overtures and no #6 overtures.
 - 3) The Election of Officers in the Table of Contents should be listed as page 9 instead of page 8.
5. That the minutes of the Northern Plains Classis be found in order with the following corrections:
 - 1) The page numbering for the Reports of Standing Committees as listed in the Table of Contents is incorrect.
 - 2) In Art. VII the period after “amended” should be removed and the colon should be moved outside of the parenthesis.
 - 3) On Art. VII there needs to be a period after the “Carried.”
 - 4) On Art. IX C and D there should be a period rather than a comma before the “Take Note.”
 - 5) On page 3 there should be a period rather than a comma before “Take Note.”
 - 6) On page 8 the capitalization or lower case of the reference of “*body*” needs to be consistent.
 - 7) On page 8 and 9 there needs to be a space between the time and the “am” and “pm.”
 - 8) On page 8, Art. XVIII the headings A and B should be in bold to be consistent.
6. That the minutes of the Covenant East Classis be found in order with the following corrections:
 - 1) On page 3 under X. Reports of Officers, a period needs to be added after the Carried.
 - 2) In reporting names there needs to be a consistent use of titles and capitalization.
 - 3) In Table of Contents add “Report” for page 2 “Overtures, Reports and Communications.”
 - 4) On page 1 II.D. 2 Only one Elder is nominated. Remove “s” in Elders.
 - 5) On page 4, line 3 the word AT is in capitals for no apparent reason.
 - 6) On page 5 it is never noted that some answers were from written submissions to Art. 81.
 - 7) On the bottom of page there is a missing heading for Services.
 - 8) On page 8 under J and F recommendations are moved and then “take note.”

H. Publications Committee

1. That the royalties for “Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism” in the amount of \$335.92 be forwarded to Mrs. Lena Jones.
2. That permission be granted to “Christians for Armenia” to translate “Promoting a Biblical Sexual Morality” into Armenian and that it be acknowledged as a work of the RCUS.
3. That the editor of the *Reformed Herald* be provided with up to \$500 for the next synodical year for expenses (above the amount of \$1500 provided for by Standing Rule 7).

4. That Rev. Kyle Sorensen and Rev. Joe Vusich be nominated for the position of *Reformed Herald* editor. [TAKE NOTE]
5. That the subscription rate for the *Reformed Herald* be set at \$16.00.
6. That Synod take note that Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, CA will provide a new home for the Directories of Public Worship and will make them available for purchase year round along with the other books currently in the Book Depository. [TAKE NOTE]
7. That the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, CA be authorized to arrange for the transport of the books currently in the Book Depository to Lancaster, CA, that they be authorized to dispose of non-usable books, that they use the most feasible way to transport the books, and that the cost be covered by Synod.

WEBSITE SUB-COMMITTEE

8. That the website sub-committee be authorized to pursue a relationship with a new hosting company.
9. That Synod take note that churches and pastors be reminded to send in news items to the web-site, keeping in mind the need to secure permission for anyone not a pastor or elder before their names or pictures can be publicly posted. [TAKE NOTE]
10. That the website sub-committee budget be set at \$4,000 for the next synodical year.
11. That the Phoenix United Reformed Church be permitted to place on their website the 2011 edition of the Heidelberg Catechism, with the following limitations: (1) their reprint state that the Catechism is a work of the RCUS; (2) that they do not change any of the wording; and (3) that they do not offer reproductions for sale.
12. That Synod through the Permanent Publications and Promotions Committee contract with Premier Printing of Winnipeg, CA to design, print, and deliver the *Reformed Herald*.
13. That the website sub-committee be authorized to place a Pastor's Directory on the website with direct links to each pastor's information, so that the contact information of pastors in the denomination can be easily located.

I. Finances Committee

1. Regarding #3 of the Treasurer's Report, that when preparing budgets, committees set out what expenditures they anticipate for the following fiscal year, and indicate if applicable, if any previously accrued funds are intended to be used for these expenditures.
2. Regarding #1 of the Treasurer's Report, that the Manual of Procedures for the Office of Treasurer be adopted as presented in the Treasure's Report.
3. Regarding #2 of the Treasurer's Report, take note. [TAKE NOTE]
4. That congregations hosting Synod be granted up to \$5,000 reimbursement to help defray the cost of hosting Synod and that a special committee be appointed by the executive committee to study the logistics, potential options and /or alternative methods for holding Synod meetings and submit a recommendation to the 269th Synod.
5. That \$700 be reimbursed for housing fraternal delegates Curto, Milroy and Poppe.
6. That reimbursement for travel to the 2014 Synod be paid in the total amount of \$34,104 according to the 2014 Synod delegate expenses.
7. That Guidelines for the 2014-15 fiscal year be adopted as follows:

Synodical Dues: \$19.00

Interchurch Relations: \$5.00

Home Missions: \$46.00

Foreign Missions: \$9.00

Ministerial Relief: \$85.00

Student Aid: \$7.00

General Benevolence: \$14.00

Hope Haven: \$2.00

Greenville Seminary: \$2.00

Heidelberg Seminary: \$2.00

Mid-America Seminary: \$2.00

New Geneva Seminary: \$2.00

Westminster Biblical Missions: \$2.00

MERF: \$2.00

TOTAL: \$199.00

Reformed Herald (per subscription): \$16.00

J. Excuses Committee

1. Take note that the Kassel Reformed Church of Anamoose, ND did not send delegates or excuses to the 2014 Synod meeting of the RCUS. [TAKE NOTE]
2. That the excuses from all sessions of Synod be granted to Rev. Thomas Mayville, Rev. C.W. Powell, Rev. David Dawn, and Rev. Jonathan Merica; and the following elder delegates: John Grimm, Dan Wright, Josh Berg, Jesse Smith, Raymond Jung, Leroy Neifer, Ron Meidinger, James Synder, and David Vander Vliet.
3. That excuses for part of the session of Synod be granted to the following delegate: Rev. Michael Voytek.
4. That Synod be reminded that letters of excuses need to be sent and signed by the absent delegate, and if feasible, signed by the consistory of the charge.

5. That the Clerk be instructed to write a letter of encouragement regarding attendance to Synod to the consistories who have not had an elder delegate at Synod for the last two years.
6. That Synod take note that Elder Spencer Gross, Rev. Kevin Carroll, and Elder Harold Yoder were excused by the body for part of the sessions of Synod. [TAKE NOTE]

K. Nominations Committee

That the Permanent Synodical committees for this synodical year be as follows:

Archives: Pastor of Willows (E. Bristley), R. Wegis, J.P. Mosely, G. Mancilas, M. Crook.

Board of Trustees: D. Clark, T. Rott, J. Snyder.

Christian Education: J. Grossmann, J. Blair, M. Reyna (1yr); K. Sorensen, T. Grugget, C.W. Powell, A. White (2yr); L. Johnson, J. Fluck, D. Weilersbacher, D. Kingswood (3yr).

Diaconal Ministries: J. Berg, D. Benz, Bobby Duncan (1yr); S. Altman, K. Armbruster, S. Henry, J. West (2yr); B. Davis, C. Dockter (deacon), P. Poe (3yr).

Editorial Advice: D. Dawn, G. Van Holland (1yr); G. Horner (2yr); J. West, J. Connelly (3yr).

Executive: J. Sawtelle, D. Fagrey, F. Walker, R. Gallimore, K. Bowen.

Foreign Ministries: D. Roe, G. Baloy, W. Johnson, A. Haller (1yr). D. Schnabel, R. Grossmann, D. Schlegel (2yr); M. Voytek, B. Borgwardt, T. Mayville, J. DeYoung (3yr).

Sub Committee- Radio Liaisons: P. Treick, N. Riffert, D. Schnabel, B. Borgwardt;

Home Missions: H. Opp (CE), H. Hart (SC), H. Bowen (WC), P. Poe (NP) (1yr); M. Willemsen (CE), Dan Mettler (SC) (2yr); D. Helseth (WC), L. Goehring (NP) (3yr).

Interchurch Relations: M. Koerner, R. Saunders (1yr); M. McGee, W. Brice, F. Hofmann, G. Syms, M. Wiersma, J. Merica (2yr); R. Potter, V. Pollema, R. Kron (3yr).

Ministerial Relief (MAF): M. Fisher, S. Gross, R. Goehring, R. Schnabel, J. Morton, W. Johnson.

Publication and Promotion: J. Hall, T. Grassmid, K. Carroll, P. Henderson, J. Vusich (1yr); A. Gillman, R. Mettler, R. Klyisma, D. Yeager (2yr); S. Powell, L. Lynch, R. Stetler (3yr).

Subcommittee – Website: M. Powell, F. Walker, R. DeJong, R. Mettler.

Special Judicial Committee: V. Pollema, N. Riffert, M. Powell, R. Stetler, S. Kooistra, J. Stuebbe, D. Clark, M. Davis.

Special Committee on Marriage in our Synodical Documents: S. Powell, R. Gallimore, D. Schlegel, G. Horner, K. Bowen.

L. Minutes of Synod Committee

1. That Synod approve the following operational procedures for the Standing Minutes of Synod Committee:

- A. After each page is finished, the clerk will print off a DRAFT copy to distribute ONLY to the Standing Committee on Minutes of Synod.
- B. The Standing Committee will review that draft and give a corrected copy to the clerk, who will make the corrections.
- C. All delegates will then be instructed to review a master revised copy provided by the clerk and make any further corrections on the master copy.
- D. The President will call for the committee's report, at which time the committee will inform the body of its progress. The President shall ask the body, "Shall the REVISED minutes now be approved?" (Rule of Order #8) If no objections are made, he shall declare them to stand as the APPROVED minutes.
- E. The committee's report should note, "Your committee received the draft minutes from the Stated Clerk and made corrections which were then incorporated into the revised minutes. [Take Note.]"
- F. The Stated Clerk shall keep a complete copy of both the DRAFT minutes and REVISED minutes for the Synod's permanent records. The APPROVED minutes shall automatically be entered into the record books.
- G. The record in the Abstract before the heading of adjournment should read "The Draft Minutes were reviewed by the Standing Committee on Minutes of Synod and returned to the stated clerk for revision. These revisions were entered and then published as the Revised Minutes, which were distributed to all delegates as available and corrected as necessary. The stated clerk read aloud the final items of business for which there was no time to complete this review process. After accepting further corrections, the President declared the minutes approved as corrected."

2. Your committee received the draft minutes from the Stated Clerk and made corrections which were then incorporated in the revised minutes. [TAKE NOTE]

XVI. Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

A. Expression of Appreciation

The following expression of gratitude was given to Emmanuel Reformed Church: "the 268th Synod of the Reformed Church in the U.S. hereby expresses its sincere and loving appreciation to the congregation of Emmanuel Reformed Church of Sutton, NE, for its enthusiastic and well organized welcome and care for the members of Synod during this 268th session. And we thank God for making Emmanuel Reformed Church an integral part of our denomination. We pray that the Lord our God will continue to richly bless your congregation in the future."

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

Both these reports were adopted.

XVII. Adjournment

A. Minutes of Synod Report

B. Roll Call

The closing roll showed 42 ministers and 34 elders.

C. Motion to Adjourn

That the 268th Synod of the RCUS adjourn to the 269th Synod to be held at Zion Reformed Church in Menno, SD next May, beginning with a worship service on May 18, 2015 at 7:00pm.

D. Closing Service

1. Devotions

Elder Fred Hofman from Emmanuel RCUS led in the closing devotion.

- 2. Apostles Creed, Lord’s Prayer, Benediction, Doxology.** The President led the assembly in the recitation of the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. He pronounced the Benediction and led in the singing of the Doxology.

The meeting of Synod was concluded at 2:50 p.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2014.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. David P. Fagrey, Stated Clerk

APPENDIX
 Standing Rules of Synod
 Index of positions and Resolutions
 Membership and Financial Statistics
 General Information

Standing Rules

[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 July 1 to June 30 of the following year. The synodical dues shall be due on the first of June and are to be paid not later than the thirtieth of June of the current fiscal year. [1991, 2010, 2011]
 2. The statistics of the Classes for the calendar year shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod May 1. [2011, 2013]
 3. The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk May 1 [2013].
 4. Any member may move to have the Standing Rules read at the second session of Synod. Passage of the motion shall require a second and a simple majority vote.
 5. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Synod at forty-five cents (\$0.45) per mile per vehicle. Public transportation costs and rental car fees for the delegate shall be reimbursed at full cost. (Delegates are exhorted to exercise good stewardship in the use of Synod's funds and to not abuse this provision). [2005, 2008, 2011]
 6. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only those delegates to Synod whose congregations have paid the synodical dues in full to the Synod Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Synod or have been properly excused by Synod. [2008, 2011]
 7. The President of Synod shall receive four hundred fifty dollars (\$450), the Stated Clerk shall receive one thousand dollars (\$1,000), and the Treasurer one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the synodical year. An amount equal to 10 percent of the Stated Clerk's honorarium will be available for the Stated Clerk to use for secretarial help. The Editor of the Reformed Herald shall receive one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500), the Book Depository Manager shall receive three hundred dollars (\$300), and the Subscription Manager shall receive five hundred dollars (\$500) for the fiscal year of Synod. [1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2007]
 8. The monies sent to the Synod Treasurer shall be made out in check form to the REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
 9. The Stated Clerk of Synod shall prepare an abstract of the synodical minutes, including a cumulative index of resolutions and positions taken by Synod, and shall publish the same. Each Stated Clerk of Classic shall prepare an abstract of classical minutes and shall send one copy to each minister, elder delegate and congregation of Synod. [1987, 1989, 1990]
 10. The Synod shall have Permanent Committees as follows [and the Standing Nomination Committee each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. [1989, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2007]
- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Archives | B. Board of Trustees |
| C. Christian Education | D. Home Missions |
| E. Diaconal Ministries | F. Interchurch Relations |
| G. Editorial Advice | H. Ministerial Relief |

I. Executive

J. Publications & Promotions

K. Foreign Ministries

11. The complete Synod statistics shall be duplicated by the Stated Clerk each year at the Synod's expense.
12. Nominations for all officers of Synod and the editor of the Reformed Herald shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names with the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election. [1997]
13. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Synod shall be completed and submitted to the Consistories of all the churches and the Treasurer of Synod no later than April 1. Reports may be emailed to consistories with known email addresses; otherwise, they must be mailed by regular mail. The only committee exempt from this requirement is Home Missions, which shall submit its report at least three weeks in advance of Synod. Excuses for this requirement are to be made only on written request to the Executive Committee of Synod by the chairman of the committee involved by April 1. All reports, overtures and correspondence must be submitted on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, and all reports must be signed by a majority of the committee members. [1992, 2000, 2004]
14. The services of Synod shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circularized before Synod.
15. Students for the ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Synod to attend only such seminaries which are listed as institutions worthy of receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States. Only students who attend institutions so listed shall be eligible for student aid while preparing for the Christian ministry. Each student receiving student aid must affirm his commitment to pursuing ordination in the RCUS each year before receiving student aid. His affirmation must be signed, dated, witnessed and sent to the Stated Clerk of Synod, who will forward a copy of the same to the Stated Clerk of the student's Classis. [2001, 2013]
16. It shall be the practice of the Reformed Church in the United States to require each candidate for the ministry to complete an eight-month internship before his ordination exam. This internship shall be spent with a pastor who has served at least five years in the Reformed Church in the United States. The pastor shall provide a written evaluation of the candidate to the Candidate and Credentials Committee. During this internship particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the peculiarities and practices of the Reformed Church in the United States. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed. [1995]
17. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Synod four weeks in advance of Synod shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Synod at any time. [1998, 2004, 2010]
18. The spring meeting of the Classes shall be held at least one month before the annual meeting of Synod. [1987]
19. The annual session of Synod shall begin each year on the evening of the third Monday of May unless Ascension Day occurs in that week, in which case it shall begin on the evening of the second Monday in May, and shall meet each day until all business regularly brought before it has been disposed. The Order of the Day of Synod shall provide for a service of worship on Monday evening and for committee work on Tuesday evening. [1992, 1998]
20. The Executive Committee of Synod is charged with overseeing contact with groups expressing interest in the RCUS, and with developing materials that will facilitate uniform presentations to such groups. [1997, 2000]

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 Procedures for Establishing an RCUS Seminary 05:58; 06:72; 08:79
 RCUS Ecclesiology - 94:40; 95:117
 Reformed Pastors on Independent Mission Boards - 94:48
 Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS - 74:20
 Revolving Fund for Church Buildings - 72:20; 73:20
 "Right to Die" Issue - 93:115
 Student Assistants to Ministers - 73:19; 77:26
 Theonomy - 85:72; 87:41; 92:94
 Voting in Congregational Meetings (Place of Women in the Church) - 64:11; 65:12
 Voting in Congregational Meetings - 78:28
 Women in the Military - 95:124; 96:60; see also 99:75

Membership and Financial Statistics 2013		No. of elders	No. of deacons	comm. memb. last Yr.	Rec'd by confirm.	Rec'd by letter	Rec'd by Prof.	Total Rec'd	Tot. old/new Memb.	Lost by dismissal
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS										
Northwest, AR	Grace	2	2	28	0	0	0	0	28	0
Garner, IA	Peace	3	3	86	3	0	0	3	89	2
Minneapolis, MN	Redeemer	3	4	136	7	1	8	16	152	50
Eden Prairie, MN		2	2	37	1	8	11	20	57	2
Hamburg, MN	St Paul's	3	3	208	0	0	8	8	216	0
Waymart, PA	Heritage	2	1	20	0	0	0	0	20	3
Kansas City, MO	Northland	3	4	51	4	0	3	7	58	0
Manitowoc, WI	Salem Ebenezer	4	3	158	0	0	0	0	158	0
Napoleon, OH	Peace	3	3	68	0	0	5	5	73	0
Subtotal		25	25	792	15	9	35	59	851	57
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS										
Aberdeen, SD	First	3	3	94	0	2	1	3	97	0
Anamoose, ND	Kassle	2	2	16	0	0	0	0	16	1
Ashley, ND	Salem/incl. Dickinson	3	3	50	2	0	2	4	54	0

Dickinson, ND First Ref.w.Ashley	0	0	8	2	0	2	4	12	0
Eureka, SD Eureka	3	3	144	0	0	0	0	144	11
Herried, SD First	2	2	44	0	7	0	7	51	0
Hosmer, SD Hosmer	2	2	19	0	0	0	0	19	0
Minot, ND Harvest	1	1	33	0	0	0	0	33	0
Pierre, SD Hope	2	0	25	0	1	0	1	26	0
Watertown, SD Covenant	2	0	21	0	0	0	0	21	1
Subtotal	20	16	446	2	10	3	15	461	13

SOUTH CENTRAL CLASSIS

Casper, WY Christ Reformed	1	0	0	0	4	6	10	0	0
Col Spr., CO Trinity Cov.	3	2	49	1	2	0	3	52	2
Greeley, CO Grace	2	3	52	1	0	1	2	54	7
Limon, CO Providence	3	2	43	1	8	2	11	54	4
Lincoln, NE St. John's	4	4	86	1	2	2	5	91	2
Menno, SD Zion	4	4	155	5	0	0	5	160	1
Mitchell, SD Grace	3	2	76	2	7	4	13	89	2
Omaha, NE Heritage	0	0	12	0	0	2	0	16	6
Rapid City, SD Grace	3	2	65	2	2	3	7	72	7
Rock Spr., WY Providence	3	2	40	0	0	0	0	40	2
Sherman, TX Christ the King	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8	2
Sioux Falls, SD Trinity	6	6	158	1	3	0	4	162	7
Sutton, NE Emmanuel	3	3	125	2	2	0	4	129	0
Sutton, NE Hope	3	4	176	0	0	3	3	179	3
Vermillion, SD Providence	2	1	26	0	0	0	0	26	6
Subtotal	40	35	1071	16	30	23	67	1132	51

WESTERN CLASSIS

Anderson, CA Faith	1	1	20	0	0	2	2	22	0
Bakersfield, CA Grace	4	4	129	4	0	1	5	134	0
Chico, CA Covenant	2	1	15	0	0	0	0	15	0
Grass Valley, CA Covenant w.Slkn	2	0	41	0	1	2	3	44	5
Los Angeles, CA Rehoboth	3	2	34	3	0	0	3	37	2
Lancaster, CA Grace	2	3	36	0	2	1	3	39	3
Lodi, CA Providence	3	1	26	0	0	0	0	26	0
Modesto, CA Trinity	2	2	56	0	0	0	0	56	22
Sacramento, CA Cov.	5	5	137	8	7	2	17	154	6
S. Diego, CA Covenant	2	2	24	0	0	8	8	32	0
Stockton, CA Calvary w/G.Valley	1	0	15	0	0	1	1	16	0
Shafter, CA Ebenezer	2	5	66	0	0	1	1	67	0
Willows, CA Grace	2	3	35	0	0	0	0	35	1
Yuba City, CA First	3	3	54	1	6	5	12	66	0
Subtotal	33	32	673	16	16	22	54	727	39

TOTALS THIS YEAR 118 108 2,982 49 65 83 195 3,171 160

TOTALS LAST YEAR 118 106 2,974 54 128 10 291 3,255 203

Lost erase/dis	Lost by death	Total Lost	Com mem this Yr.	unconfirmed memb.	total bapt memb	# families	# children in SS	adult Bapt	infan t bapt.	Total baptism	# Rec. Lord's Sup	x Lds Sup serv
3	1	4	24	2	26	13	3	1	1	2	24	6
0	1	3	86	19	105	48	11	0	1	1	77	5
0	1	51	101	52	153	45	54	1	1	2	95	6
0	0	2	55	14	69	25	19	0	1	1	57	12
1	6	7	209	28	237	124	16	2	2	4	181	9
3	0	6	14	6	20	7	4	0	1	1	14	12
2	0	2	56	15	71	22	24	0	2	2	56	7
11	4	15	143	18	161	88	10	0	0	0	145	4
6	0	6	67	18	85	35	14	0	3	3	65	6
26	13	96	755	172	927	407	155	4	12	16	714	67
5	3	8	89	19	108	44	16	0	0	0	79	4
0	0	1	15	1	16	10	1	0	0	0	7	2

0	2	2	52	9	61	21	7	0	1	1	41	7
0	0	0	12	7	19	5	7	0	0	0	12	4
0	3	14	130	4	134	79	3	0	0	0	108	4
1	1	2	49	16	65	20	16	0	0	0	29	4
0	2	2	17	0	17	14	0	0	0	0	13	3
5	0	5	28	10	38	12	12	0	0	0	28	12
1	1	2	24	9	33	15	6	0	0	0	25	6
0	0	1	20	6	26	9	2	0	0	0	20	6
12	12	37	424	74	498	224	63	0	1	1	350	48

0	0	0	10	14	24	5	15	0	5	5	10	7
3	0	5	47	25	72	21	28	0	0	0	43	12
3	0	10	44	13	57	26	5	0	2	2	56	5
0	0	4	50	12	62	20	11	0	0	0	48	12
4	0	6	85	27	112	39	28	0	2	2	81	6
0	4	5	155	18	173	84	14	0	1	1	146	4
0	0	2	87	17	104	37	15	0	1	1	87	6
0	0	6	10	5	15	4	n/a	0	0	0	12	6
2	0	9	63	29	92	31	19	0	1	1	63	6
0	0	2	38	16	54	22	7	0	1	1	29	12
0	0	2	6	3	6	4	0	0	0	0	12	3
0	0	7	155	69	226	77	59	0	7	7	136	5
0	2	2	127	18	145	77	9	0	0	0	110	6
6	4	13	166	61	227	87	40	0	2	2	140	6
4	0	10	16	8	24	8	9	0	0	0	21	3
22	10	83	1059	335	1393	542	259	0	22	22	994	99

0	1	1	21	4	24	12	3	1	3	4	19	11
1	2	3	131	42	173	54	32	0	1	1	92	4
0	0	0	15	8	23	8	0	0	1	1	15	12
2	0	7	37	14	51	23	10	1	3	4	32	12
2	0	4	33	9	42	18	9	0	0	0	37	6
4	0	7	32	7	39	17	7	0	0	0	29	4
2	0	2	24	1	25	13	0	0	0	0	25	12
3	1	26	30	4	34	16	2	0	2	2	33	4
1	0	7	147	56	203	69	42	0	7	7	147	12
2	0	2	30	7	37	18	6	7	3	10	26	11
0	0	0	16	3	19	10	0	0	1	1	16	12
1	1	2	65	11	76	37	11	0	1	1	66	4
0	0	1	34	17	51	16	8	0	2	2	34	12
1	1	2	64	14	78	36	14	0	0	0	64	12
19	6	64	663	194	856	337	144	9	23	32	619	116
79	41	280	2,901	775	3,674	1,510	621	13	58	71	2,677	330
74	45	319	2,938	826	3,764	1,562	680	8	67	75	2,732	316

Membership and Financial Statistics 2013

Receipts from Reg. Offerings	Receipts from Spec. Offerings	Receipts from other Sources	Total Receipts	Giving to Synod Guideline	Giving to Classis Guideline	Giving to Non-Guideline Causes
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COVENANT EAST CLASSIS

Northwest, AR	Grace	76,691	19,300	11,817	107,808	4,274	1,385	0
Garner, IA	Peace	129,515	16,021	2,730	148,266	26,960	5,932	935
Minneapolis, MN	Redeemer	237,924	129,079	2,594	369,597	21,686	7,147	6,023
Eden Prairie, MN		161,767	16,645	22,520	200,932	6,600	2,300	1,500
Hamburg, MN	St Paul's	153,265	2,500	19,000	174,765	41,854	14,212	1,846
Waymart, PA	Heritage	23,980	135	15,750	39,865	4,120	1,430	0
Kansas City, MO	Northland	170,057	19,456	0	189,513	10,282	3,468	4,235
Mantowoc, WI	Salem Ebenezer	168,134	1,532	6,909	176,575	33,507	10,871	2,100
Napoleon, OH	Peace	133,429	1,427	2,386	137,242	14,177	4,488	535
Subtotal		1,254,762	206,095	83,706	1,544,563	163,460	51,233	17,174

NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS

Aberdeen, SD	First	82,481	5,009	30,000	117,490	14,094	6,204	0
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Anamoose, ND	Kassle	11,426	0	0	11,426	3,292	1,066	0
Ashley, ND	Salem/Incl. Dickinson	72,862	5,959	78,493	157,314	6,931	1,132	245
Dickinson, ND	First Ref./w.Ashley	21,485	170	48,281	69,936	0	0	170
Eureka, SD	Eureka	88,432	679	15,003	104,114	9,979	9,504	679
Herried, SD	First	55,531	0	0	55,531	3,199	3,256	0
Hosmer, SD	Hosmer	4,404	0	15,270	19,674	930	1,000	0
Minot, ND	Harvest	84,065	0	10,434	94,499	6,792	2,178	500
Pierre, SD	Hope	39,279	3,212	1,200	43,691	931	1,650	0
Watertown, SD	Covenant	68,986	0	9,691	78,677	7,389	1,155	0
Subtotal		507,466	14,859	160,091	682,416	53,537	27,145	1,424
SOUTH CENTRAL CLASSIS								
Casper, WY	Christ Reformed	37,690	0	45,000	82,690	995	494	0
Col Spr., CO	Trinity Cov.	92,960	3,966	1,328	98,254	10,051	4,847	2,916
Greeley, CO	Grace	102,220	8,680	0	110,880	11,284	5,138	0
Limon, CO	Providence	55,153	4,146	2,450	61,749	3,813	4,374	600
Lincoln, NE	St. John's	90,679	564	56	91,299	16,887	7,340	0
Menno, SD	Zion	136,397	19,824	677	156,898	31,887	15,118	21,245
Mitchell, SD	Grace	112,025	0	34,157	146,182	15,649	7,510	0
Omaha, NE	Heritage	54,389	0	57,500	0	0	0	0
Rapid City, SD	Grace	189,888	0	0	189,888	13,169	5,500	6,900
Rock Spr., WY	Providence	108,111	500	0	108,611	7,579	3,952	1,000
Sherman, TX	Christ the King	13,021	1,135	19,539	33,695	1,652	855	1,135
Sioux Falls, SD	Trinity	188,029	40,647	15,825	244,501	31,759	13,371	0
Sutton, NE	Emmanuel	89,278	25,772	0	115,050	24,984	12,351	723
Sutton, NE	Hope	191,194	22,532	51,646	265,372	36,300	17,450	7,300
Vermillion, SD	Providence	62,206	2,415	2,926	67,547	2,112	2,173	1,000
Subtotal		1,523,240	130,181	231,104	1,772,616	208,121	100,473	42,819
WESTERN CLASSIS								
Anderson, CA	Faith	49,484	0	11,500	60,894	1,964	345	0
Bakersfield, CA	Grace	207,575	16,276	10,949	234,800	28,284	12,384	6,000
Chico, CA	Covenant	33,651	2,950	22,227	58,828	1,310	1,028	175
Grass Valley, CA	Cov. (Incl Stkn)	111,067	6,736	258	118,061	3,270	1,648	0
Los Angeles, CA	Rehoboth	104,447	748	62,369	167,564	5,879	3,264	0
Lancaster, CA	Grace	60,662	7,433	10,150	78,245	612	272	0
Lodi, CA	Providence	56,823	3,028	6,028	65,879	512	700	1,890
Modesto, CA	Trinity	65,591	331	9	65,931	5,071	3,570	1,081
*Sacramento, CA	Cov./City Sem.	258,450	54,381	105,340	418,171	28,474	13,152	7,182
San Diego, CA	Covenant	62,630	6,523	9,836	78,989	4,776	2,304	6,029
Stockton, CA	Calvary w/Gr Valley	48,743	0	258	49,000	2,880	1,440	0
Shafter, CA	Ebenezer	182,968	7,200	122	190,290	15,906	6,336	12,499
Willows, CA	Grace	102,263	0	479	102,742	6,663	3,360	0
Yuba City, CA	First	119,652	11,161	0	130,813	9,568	5,184	4,833
Subtotal		1,415,263	116,767	239,267	1,771,207	112,289	53,547	39,689
TOTALS THIS YEAR		4,700,731	467,902	714,168	5,770,802	537,407	232,398	101,106

Giving to Non-RCUS	Other Expenses	Total Expenses	Value of Church Building	Value of e of Church Parsonage	Improvements on church property	Present Property Debts	Debt Payments Past Year	Giving to Synod per com.	Giving to classis per com.	Giving to rcus per com.
0	69,709	75,368	180,000	0	0	136,000	0	153	49	202
14,615	115,372	163,814	750,000	125,000	12,058	0	0	313	69	393
22,734	256,716	314,306	750,000	250,000	41,014	263,237	40,496	159	53	256
12,997	111,170	134,567	0	353,717	18,225	250,000	0	178	62	281
2,526	118,039	178,477	1,000,000	300,000	36,000	0	0	201	68	278
135	30,702	36,387	0	0	0	0	0	206	72	278
15,904	159,274	193,163	1,500,000	0	0	95,000	57,000	202	68	353
2,286	109,752	158,516	800,000	200,000	0	0	0	212	69	294
5,781	95,761	120,742	275,000	0	5,907	0	0	208	66	282
76,978	1,066,495	1,375,340	5,255,000	1,228,717	113,204	744,237	97,496	206	65	293

0	71,002	91,300	350,000	0	0	0	14,284	150	66	216
0	2,040	6,398	0	0	0	0	0	206	67	272
100	97,623	106,031	25,000	113,500	0	64,817	5,738	120	20	143
0	60,948	61,118	0	16,500	0	68,500	0	0	0	0
0	78,597	98,759	250,000	100,000	0	0	0	69	66	140
0	49,089	55,544	40,000	42,000	1,110	0	0	73	74	147
0	15,923	17,853	25,000	0	0	0	0	49	53	102
100	78,797	89,267	0	274,000	9,298	0	0	206	66	287
61	39,906	42,548	110,000	90,000	800	0	0	37	66	103
0	42,615	51,159	0	150,000	1,420	0	0	352	55	407
261	475,592	558,859	800,000	769,500	12,628	64,817	20,022	120	61	184
0	10973	64881	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1,025	70,673	89,512	0	0	0	0	0	214	103	401
646	83,076	100,144	242,000	158,000	20,533	0	0	217	99	316
0	58,617	67,409	40,000	0	0	0	0	89	102	191
600	72,926	97,153	110,000	99,100	0	0	0	172	75	247
115	103,962	172,327	500,000	35,000	424	0	70,000	206	98	440
0	113,622	163,284	525,000	189,000	0	0	0	206	99	304
118,061	118,061	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9,400	146,987	181,956	525,000	189,000	0	0	0	202	85	441
0	91,731	104,252	170,000	incl.	0	0	4,985	190	99	313
0	24,776	28,418	0	0	0	0	0	206	107	313
15,529	188,723	249,382	1,032,190	0	0	149,656	55,501	201	85	286
1,936	88,806	128,800	522,000	157,000	0	0	0	200	99	304
24,840	162,442	248,332	800,000	80,000	33,567	0	0	206	95	347
262	73,499	79,046	305,000	125,000	0	0	0	81	84	203
172,414	1,408,874	1,774,896	4,771,190	1,032,100	54,524	149,656	130,486	194	94	328
0	60,834	63,145	400,000	0	0	0	0	98	17	115
2,855	157,978	207,501	600,000	0	0	0	0	219	96	362
0	57,007	59,520	0	0	0	0	0	87	69	167
7,304	101,561	113,783	219,125	0	0	13,246	4,035	65	45	223
0	159,879	169,022	0	0	0	0	0	173	96	269
0	67,767	68,651	0	0	0	0	0	17	8	25
9,175	52,166	64,443	263,578	0	14,900	0	0	20	27	119
0	66,237	75,960	350,000	0	319	4,000	3,000	91	64	174
10,212	338,500	397,520	377,080	0	18,647	0	0	208	96	356
1,386	56,499	70,994	0	0	0	0	0	199	96	546
4,408	42,980	51,708	0	0	0	0	0	192	96	288
5,351	122,886	162,978	500,000	150,000	0	0	0	241	96	526
7,400	77,903	95,326	500,000	0	0	0	0	190	96	286
0	109,608	129,193	311,323	125,965	7,600	0	0	177	96	363
43,683	1,428,825	1,678,036	3,521,106	275,965	41,466	17,246	7,035	167	80	305
293,336	4,379,786	5,387,131	14,347,296	3,306,282	221,822	975,956	255,039	180	78	292

GENERAL INFORMATION

Internal Revenue Service Number for the RCUS
51-0202914

Publications of the RCUS
RCUS Book Depository Manager: Elder Larry Lynch, Lancaster, CA
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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
United Reformed Churches in North America
Reformed Fellowship of Kenya
United Reformed Church of the Philippines
Member: North American Reformed and Presbyterian Council
Member: International Conference of Reformed Churches

Seminaries Listed as Worthy of Support

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

Benevolences Listed as Worthy of Support

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

Reformed Church in the U. S. Website

www.rcus.org
Reformed Herald Online - reformedherald.org

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