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ABSTRACT of the MINUTES for the WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States

15th Annual Session

March 7-9, 2000

Providence Reformed Church
Lodi, California

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2000 WESTERN CLASSIS DIRECTORY

MINISTERS

- Clark, Rev. Dale** (530) 898-9229
2665 Floral Ave., Chico, CA 95973
E-Mail: clarkds@jps.net
- Fluck, Jay E.** (562) 947-4837
11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
E-Mail: jepluck@aol.com Fax: (562) 947-5958
- Gross, Rev. Lloyd** (602) 854-3701
215 N. Power Rd., Mesa, AZ 85205
- Mancilas, Gary** (661) 726-1038
44503 13th St. E., Lancaster, CA 93535
E-Mail: gmancilas@hughes.net
- Mayville, Thomas** (530) 934-3736
839 Crestwood Way, Willows, CA 95988
E-Mail: T.mayville@juno.com
- Merica, Rev. Jonathan** Home (209) 369-7914
2431 Inglewood Dr., Lodi, CA 95242 Church (209) 367-0552
E-Mail: jonmerica@aol.com
- Pollema, Rev. Vernon** Home (661) 746-0211
235 James Street, Shafter, CA 93263 Church (661) 746-6907
E-Mail: vpollema@juno.com
- Riffert, Neale** (530) 347-1119
20636 Mayfair Ct., Cottonwood, CA 96022
E-Mail: nealer@snowcrest.net
- Roe, Rev. Dennis** Home (530) 272-6693
17355 Alexandra Way, Grass Valley, CA 95949 Church (530) 273-4673
E-Mail: mathatas@jps.net Fax: (530) 273-4673
- Sander, Rev. Robert** (408) 532-9398
5142 Cribari Pl., San Jose, CA 95135
E-Mail: RevRDS@aol.com
- Sawtelle, Rev. Gene** Home (530) 671-7579
9882 Garden Highway, Yuba City, CA 95991 Church (530) 755-2272
- Treick, Rev. Paul** Home (209) 526-0637
1515 Carlton Avenue, Modesto, CA 95350 Church (209) 523-3220
E-Mail: triwheeler@aol.com Fax: (209) 523-3220
- Walker, Rev. Frank** Home (661) 827-9885
5601 Spring Blossom St., Bakersfield, CA 93313
E-Mail: fhw@iname.com
- West, Rev. Jim** (916) 488-5569
5216 Locust Avenue, Carmichael, CA 95608
E-Mail: jimwest@jps.net

PRIMARIUS ELDERS

- Fay, Richard** (209) 599-5450
1667 Bailey Dr., Ripon, CA 95366
E-Mail: RMF124@aol.com
- Mettler, Darrell** (310) 392-3375
2520 3rd St. #4, Santa Monica, CA 90405
E-Mail: dmettler@compuserve.com
- Mills, Jeff** (760) 762-5907
24351 Joshua Ave., Boron, CA 93516
- Peery, Michael** (530) 365-7464
2258 Mill St., Anderson, CA 96007
E-Mail: peerys@jps.net
- Richert, Steven** (530) 272-9668
15099 Rattlesnake Rd., Grass Valley, CA 95945
E-Mail: richerts@characterlink.net
- Stewart, Greg** (530) 751-2151
2495 S. Walton Ave., Yuba City, CA 95993
Fax: (530) 755-4193
- Van Egmond, Cornelis** (209) 369-9379
7518 Liberty Rd., Galt, CA 95632
E-Mail: vanegmond@softcom.net
- Van Tol, Ted** (530) 934-4117
7578 Road 41, Willows, CA 95988
- Williams, Greg** (661) 835-1527
10228 Heather Valley Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93312
E-Mail: glwilliams@aeraenergy.com

SECUNDUS ELDERS

- Elliott, Richard** (916) 485-9862
760 El Encino Way, Sacramento, CA 95864
- Fellersen, Chris** (916) 423-1741
8675 Sleepy Hollow Lane, Elk Grove, CA 95624
cfellersen@CS.com
- Heerema, John** (209) 847-5811
9942 Victory Rd., Oakdale, CA 95361
jolly3jays@juno.com
- Helseth, David** (530) 891-6435
6 Cecil Place, Chico, CA 95928
- Spitzer, Ryan** (661) 871-6388
2620 Silver Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93306
E-Mail: rspitp@aol.com
- Stricker, Werner** (530) 673-5058
1160 Cecily Ct., Yuba City, CA 95991

- Wegis, Robert** (661) 831-5640
 5107 Sherman Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93309
 E-Mail: rwegis@hotmail.com Fax: (661) 868-6301
- Wood, Ernie Z.** (661) 949-7771
 43850 N. 20th St. E. Space 200, Lancaster, CA 93535
 E-Mail: Ezwood@minister.com
- (or) E. Zane Wood (719) 783-0304
 Sangre de Cristo Seminary
 6160 County Rd. #130, Westcliffe, CO 81252
- Zoetewey, Dean** (209) 369-9485
 13779 Wells Lane, Lodi, CA 95240
 E-Mail: dzoetewey@softcom.net

LICENTIATE

- Richert, Steven** (530) 272-9668
 15099 Rattlesnake Rd., Grass Valley, CA 95945
 E-Mail: richerts@characterlink.net

STUDENTS UNDER CARE OF CLASSIS

- Baloy, Guillermo** (619) 697-0272
 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977
 E-Mail: gmbaloy@flash.net
- Henderson, Paul** (219) 838-3941
 8542 Henry St., Highland, IN 46322
 E-Mail: TheHendersons@juno.com
- Henry, Scott** (661) 267-0138
 38824 Ocotillo Dr.
 Palmdale, CA 93551-3836
 E-Mail: PROREGE37@Juno.com
- Loverin, Jerry**
 187 ½ 8th Street NE, Sioux Center, IA 51250
 E-Mail: jrrylvrn@dordt.edu
- Wood, Ernie Z.** (661) 949-7771
 43850 N. 20th St. E. Space 200, Lancaster, CA 93535
 E-Mail: Ezwood@minister.com
- (or) E. Zane Wood (719) 783-0304
 Sangre de Cristo Seminary
 6160 County Rd. #130, Westcliffe, CO 81252

2000 WESTERN CLASSIS ROLL

For the Classical Year beginning March 7, 2000

Minister	Primarius Elder	Secundus Elder	Charge
Dale Clark			Covenant, Chico
Jay Fluck		(Stated Supply, L. A. Basin Home Mission Work)	
Lloyd Gross	(Pastor Emeritus, Grace Reformed, Bakersfield)		Retired, Mesa, AZ
Gary Mancilas	Jeff Mills	E. Zane Wood	Grace, Lancaster
Thomas Mayville	Ted Van Tol		Grace, Willows
Jonathan Merica	Cornelis Van Egmond	Dean Zoetewey	Providence, Lodi
Vernon Pollema	Greg Williams	Ryan Spitzer	Ebenezer, Shafter
Neale Riffert	Michael Peery	Richard Elliot	Faith, Anderson
Dennis Roe	(Assoc. Pastor, Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento, serving in Grass Valley)		
Robert Sander			Retired, San Jose, CA
Gene Sawtelle	Greg Stewart	Werner Stricker	First, Yuba City
Paul Treick	Richard Fay	John Heerema	Trinity, Modesto
Frank Walker	Darrell Mettler	Robert Wegis	Grace, Bakersfield
Jim West	Steven Richert	Chris Fellersen	Covenant, Sacramento



INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS

President — Rev. Jim West
 Vice-President — Rev. Neale Riffert
 Stated Clerk — Rev. Paul Treick
 Treasurer — Mr. Chris Fellersen

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

Classical Dues	\$12.00
Benevolences	37.00
Home Missions	63.00
Publications	00.00
Building Fund	8.00
Heidelberg Youth Camp	<u>00.00</u>
TOTAL (Per comm't member)	\$120.00

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

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Executive Committee: Jim West, Paul Treick, Wayne Johnson
Candidates and Credentials Committee: D. Roe, P. Treick (3 yrs); F. Walker, R. Fay (2 yrs); J. West, R. Spitzer (1 yr)
Missions Committee: J. Merica, F. Walker (3 yrs); N. Riffert, E. Merz (2 yrs); D. Roe, M. Peery (1 yr)
Christian Education in the Church: V. Pollema, R. Fay (3 yrs); J. Fluck, G. Mancilas (2 yrs); D. Clark, J. Mills (1 yr)
Interchurch Relations Committee: J. Merica, G. Mancilas (3 yrs); N. Riffert, E. Merz (2 yrs); T. Mayville, D. Mettler (1 yr)
Publications Committee: W. Johnson, D. Clark (3 yrs); T. Mayville, M. Peery (2 yrs); V. Pollema, T. Van Tol (1 yr)
Diaconal Committee: V. Pollema, R. Eddington (3 yrs); J. Fluck, W. Stricker (2 yrs); R. Sander, C. Van Egmond (1 yr)
Heidelberg West Youth Camp Committee: T. Mayville, S. Richert (3 yrs); P. Treick, G. Stewart (2 yrs); N. Riffert, G. Williams (1 yr)

(Indicates chairman)

DIRECTORY OF CONGREGATIONS

ANDERSON, CA - Faith Reformed Church

Church Location: 3291 Rupert Rd. (off Stingy Lane)
Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 902 Anderson, CA 96007
Church Phone: (530) 365-6874
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 am; Worship 10:30 am
Pastor: Neale Riffert / Mary Elizabeth / Neale Jr.
Home Address: 20636 Mayfair Ct., Cottonwood, CA 96022
Home Phone: (530) 347-1119 **E-Mail:** nealer@snowcrest.net

BAKERSFIELD, CA - Grace Reformed Church

Church Location: 420 Columbus Street, Bakersfield (north on Union Ave. to Columbus St., east on Columbus to the church)
Church Mailing Address: 420 Columbus St., Bakersfield, CA 93305
Church Phone: (661) 325-0165
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM
Pastor/Wife/Children: Frank Walker / Christine / Sharon, Bethann, Cathryn, Tari, Jonathan.
Home Address: 5601 Spring Blossom St., Bakersfield, CA 93313
Home Phone: (661) 827-9885 **E-Mail:** fhw@iname.com

CHICO, CA - Covenant Reformed Chapel

Church Location: Meeting at 1877 Hooker Oak Ave. (Adventist Church: east on East Ave. To Hooker Oak Ave., Turn right; proceed through first stop sign and turn left into church parking lot)
Church Mailing Address: 2665 Floral Ave., Chico, CA 95973
Church Phone: (530) 345-2732
Service Times: Christian Education 9:00 AM; Worship 10 AM & 6 PM
Pastor/Wife/Children: Dale Clark / Sandra / Alan, Laura, Thomas, Jonathan
Home Address: 2665 Floral Ave., Chico, CA 95973
Home Phone: (530) 898-9229 **E-Mail:** clarkds@jps.net

GRASS VALLEY, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: 336 Crown Point Circle (in the Nevada County Board of Realtor's Bldg). From US 49 N., take the Idaho-Maryland exit in Grass Valley. Turn right and proceed ½ mile to Centennial Rd.. Turn Right. Proceed approximately ½ mile to Crown Point Circle. Turn Right. go one block then bear right at the Y. Turn into the first drive on the left. There will be a sign identifying the building and the church.
Church Mailing Address: P. O. Box 2264, Grass Valley, CA 95945
Church Phone/Fax: (530) 273-HOPE
Service Times: Sunday: 10:00 AM Bible Study for all ages; 11:00 AM Worship and Praise; Wednesday: 7:00 PM Bible Study & Prayer; Thursday: 4:00 PM Young Peoples' Bible & Catechism Class at Pastor's home (ages 12-16).
Pastor/Wife/Children: Dennis E. Roe / Julie / Josiah, Abigail, Esther, Joanna

Home Address: 17355 Alexandra Way, Grass Valley, CA 95949
Home Ph.: (530) 272-6693 **E-Mail:** mathatas@jps.net **Fax:** (530) 273-4673

LANCASTER, CA - Grace Reformed Church

Church Location: 44957 Elm Ave. Lancaster, CA 93534 (corner of Elm & Kettering)
Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2472, Lancaster, CA 93539
Church Phone: (661) 940-4669
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:45 AM
Pastor/Wife/Children: Gary Mancilas / Gloria
Home Address: 44503 13th St. E., Lancaster, CA 93535
Home Phone: (661) 726-1038 **E-Mail:** gmancilas@hughes.net

LODI, CA - Providence Reformed Church

Church Location: 245 E. Vine Street, Lodi
Church Mailing Address: 245 E. Vine St. Lodi, CA 95240
Church Phone: (209) 367-0552
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM & 6:00 PM; Tues. Bible Study 7:00 pm.
Pastor/Wife/Children: Jonathan Merica / Marsha
Home Address: 2431 Inglewood Dr., Lodi, CA 95242
Home Phone: (209) 369-7914 **E-Mail:** JonMerica@aol.com

LOS ANGELES - Home Mission Work

Church Location: Call (562) 947-4837 for current location.
Service Times: Worship 10:30 AM; Catechism Class 12 Noon; Dinner 1:00 PM; Bible Study 6:00 PM.
Stated Supply/Wife/Children: Jay E. Fluck / Loretta / Jeffery, Joel, Erin
Home Address: 11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
Home Phone: (562) 947-4837 **E-Mail:** jefluck@aol.com **Fax:** (562) 947-5958

MODESTO, CA - Trinity Reformed Church

Church Location: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto (Briggsmore east; right on Coffee, right on E. Fairmont 2 blocks.)
Church Mailing Address: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto, CA 95350
Church Phone: (209) 523-3220
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:15 AM; Worship 10:30 AM & 6:00 PM
Pastor/Wife/Children: Paul Treick / Karen / Paula, Sara
Home Address: 1515 Carlton Ave., Modesto, CA 95350
Home Phone: (209) 526-0637 **E-mail:** triwheeler@aol.com

SACRAMENTO, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: 2020 16th Avenue, Sacramento (from Frwy 99 take 12th Ave/Sutterville Rd.. Exit. Go west to Freeport Blvd., left to 16th Ave and left to 2020 16th Ave. From I-5 Frwy take Sutterville Exit, go east on Sutterville to Freeport Blvd., left on Freeport and right on 16th Ave. to 2020 16th Ave.)
Church Mailing Address: 2020 16th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822

Church Phone: (916) 451-1190
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM & 6:00 PM
Pastor/ Wife/Children: Jim West / Elaine / Ruthanna
Home Address: 5216 Locust Ave., Carmichael, CA 95608
Home Phone: (916) 488-5569 **E-Mail:** jimwest@jps.net

SHAFTER, CA - Ebenezer Reformed Church

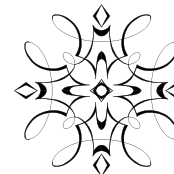
Church Location: 235 James Street, Shafter (next door to the City Library, Fire, and Police Depts.)
Church Mailing Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263
Church Phone: (661) 746-6907
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM & 7:00 PM (1st, 2nd, 3rd Sundays)
Pastor/Wife/Children: Vernon Pollema / Betty
Home Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263
Home Phone: (661) 746-0211

WILLOWS, CA - Grace Reformed Church

Church Location: 112 South Butte St. (corner: Butte & Sycamore)
Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 225, Willows, CA 95988
Church Phone: (530) 934-2732
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM
Pastor/Wife/Children: Thomas Mayville / Carolyn / Michelle, Sarah, Joshua
Home Address: 839 Crestwood Way, Willows, CA 95988
Home Phone: (530) 934-3736 **E-Mail:** t.mayville@juno.com

YUBA CITY, CA - First Reformed Church

Church Location: 9882 Highway 99, South of Yuba City
Church Mailing Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991
Church Phone: (530) 755-2272
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 11:00 AM
Pastor/Wife/Children: Gene Sawtelle / Sharon
Home Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991
Home Phone: (530) 671-7579



ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES
WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States

Meeting

March 7-9, 2000

Providence Reformed Church, Lodi, California

*“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast,
that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will
I make a
pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more
out:
and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the
name
of the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem,
which cometh
down out of heaven from my God: and I will write
upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him
hear what the
Spirit saith unto the churches.”
Rev. 3:11-13*

SERVICES

The Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States opened its 15th Annual Session at Providence Reformed Church of Lodi, California on Tuesday, March 7, 2000 at 1:00 PM with a devotion by Rev. Jonathan Merica of Lodi, CA. The hymn “*Christian, Dost Thou See Them*” was sung. Rev. Merica read Matthew 16:13-27 and addressed the delegates and visitors on the subject of “*Building the Church*.”

The Tuesday evening Worship Service was held at 7:00 PM with Rev. Gary Mancilas of Lancaster, CA conducting. Rev. Neale Riffert, Anderson, CA, preached the Word of God from Psalm 2 in a message entitled, “*Raging Nations*.” Following the service housing assignments were made and refreshments were served in the basement fellowship hall.

The Wednesday morning devotion was led by Student Under Care, Mr. Guillermo

Baloy of San Diego. This sermon/devotion was in partial fulfillment of his licensure examination. The hymn “*Now Thank We All Our God*” was sung, after which Mr. Baloy read scripture from Jeremiah 6:9-25 and address the body on “*Ask for the Old Way*” from Jeremiah 6:16.

Devotions on Thursday morning were conducted by Rev. Dale Clark, mission pastor from Chico, CA. He led in the singing of “*My Faith Looks Up to Thee*” and read the Word of God from Luke 12:22-40. He addressed the delegates and visitors on the subject of “*Do Not Worry*.”

The closing devotions were conducted by Elder Cornelis Van Egmond of Lodi, CA, who read scripture from Acts 1:1-26 and led in prayer.

Each session was opened and closed with prayer to God’s guidance and blessing upon the labors of His Church. A number of prayers were offered during the course of business for various individuals or causes. Following the reading of every two Parochial Reports, pray was assigned for these pastors and congregations in particular.

ORGANIZATION

Rev. Jim West, President of the Executive Committee, called the meeting to order on Tuesday, March 7, 2000 at 1:26 PM. The initial roll call showed thirteen pastors and nine elder delegates present. The Bar of the House was declared to be the first six rows on either side of the aisle. The President read the Standing Rules of the Western Classis as specified in Standing Rule #5.

The following were elected to office for the coming Classical year: Rev. Jim West, President; Rev. Neale Riffert, Vice-President; Rev. Paul Treick, Stated Clerk; and Elder Chris Fellersen, Treasurer.

Rev. Thomas Mayville was appointed to be the *Reformed Herald* reporter for this meeting of Classis.

The assembly then adopted the Agenda, Services, and Order of the Day. A Special Order was called for– the partial licensure examination of Mr. Guillermo Baloy– on Wednesday following the morning devotion.

FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

Rev. Calvin Malcor, Associate Pastor of Covenant OPC of San Jose, fraternal delegate from the Presbytery of Northern California, OPC was welcomed, seated in the Bar of the House and given the privilege of the floor.

Rev. John McFarland, Pastor of Christ Our King Fellowship of Orange, CA, fraternal delegate from the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA was welcomed, seated in the Bar of the House and given the privilege of the floor.

Rev. Alrick Headley, Pastor of Zion United Reformed Church of Ripon, CA was welcomed as an observer. He represented the Southwest Classis of the United Reformed Churches in North America.

Several elders from our Classis congregations were present during various times of the meeting and they were welcomed, seated in the Bar of the House, and given privilege of the floor.

RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS AND CHURCHES

The President welcomed Rev. Thomas Mayville, serving Grace Reformed Church of Willows who was ordained to the ministry during the past year. Also welcomed was Rev. Gary Mancilas who is the Pastor of Grace Reformed Church of Lancaster. Rev. Gene Sawtelle led in prayer for these men and for those students who are in preparation for the gospel ministry.

There were no new congregations received during the year, but it was noted that progress is being made in that direction by some of the mission congregations.

STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The President made the following appointments to the Standing Committees:
Examination and Licensure: *F. Walker, D. Roe, P. Treick, J. West, Elder from Shafter
Overtures: *D. Roe, D. Clark, Elder from Lancaster
Judicial: *V. Pollema, J. Fluck, Elder from Lodi, Elder from Modesto
Nominations: *G. Sawtelle, G. Mancilas, Elder from Shafter
Missions: *J. Merica, N. Riffert, Elder from Sacramento
Finances: *T. Mayville, J. Merica, Elder from Willows
Minutes of Synod: *G. Mancilas, J. Fluck, Elder from Yuba City
Benevolences: *D. Clark, G. Sawtelle, Elder from Bakersfield
Excuses: *R. Sander, Elder from Anderson, Elder from Modesto
 (*indicates chairman)

PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF OVERTURES, REPORTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

All pertinent overtures and materials were given to the Overtures Committee for dispersal to the appropriate Standing Committees. Some items from Permanent Committee Reports were referred to Standing Committees also. The results of the Classis’ actions to the various recommendations are printed in this Abstract.

PRESENTATION OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive Committee

Honorable Western Classis
 Reformed Church in the United States

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The business of the Executive Committee was primarily conducted by telephone and E-Mail, although on some occasions we did meet in person.

Your committee presented four Executive Circulars (14:1 to 14:4) to the delegates for approval. Those recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1: *That, on the advice of the Western Classis Home Missions*

Committee, the home mission work in the LA Basin come under the oversight of Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, California.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that up to \$35,000 from the Western Classis Church Building Fund be made available for the purchase of a church building for the Grass Valley home mission work of Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento.

Recommendation 3: That Mr. Gil Baloy, a member of Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento, be approved as a Student Under Care of the Western Classis as a student for the Christian Ministry.

Recommendation 4: That Mr. Baloy's preliminary examination in orthodoxy and intent be declared satisfactory, and that he be permitted to serve as Stated Supply in the work in Chula Vista.

Recommendation 5: That the Permanent Home Missions Committee of Western Classis, working jointly with the sponsoring church — Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento — help oversee the work in Chula Vista.

Recommendation 6: That Rev. Dennis Roe work with Mr. Baloy to assist him in his preparation for a full licensure examination at the forthcoming spring meeting of Western Classis.

Recommendation 7: That Classis, from its Benevolence fund, provide aid to Trinity Reformed Church of Modesto for pulpit supply through the month of January, 2000, if needed.

Recommendation 8: Your Executive Committee recommends the following schedule for services:

Tuesday, March 7, 2000 at 1:00 PM – Opening Devotions: Rev. Jonathan Merica

Tuesday, March 7, 2000 at 7:00 PM – Evening Service:

Conducting - Rev. Gary Mancilas: Preaching - Rev. Neale Riffert.

Wednesday, March 8, 2000 – Morning Devotions: Mr. Gil Baloy

Thursday, March 9, 2000 – Morning Devotions: Rev. Dale Clark

Thursday, March 9, 2000 – Closing Devotions: Elder delegate from Providence Reformed Church, Lodi.

Your committee was assigned the task to meeting with the group of interested folks in San Diego in order to present the RCUS – its doctrines and practices – to a scheduled meeting there. All three members of your committee met for several hours – giving information and answering questions. We were very well received there and enjoyed a delicious meal with all the families. Subsequent to that, they petitioned to be taken into the Western Classis, and that action is reflected above.

Your committee was also asked to meet and give counsel to the Spiritual Council of Providence Reformed Church in Lodi. Since the Stated Clerk was ill at the time, Rev. Dale Clark filled in for him at the request of the president of the committee. This meeting was held in January of 2000. Rev. West, Rev. Clark and Elder Johnson visited Lodi and gave some advice about a broken marital situation in their congregation.

No other business was brought to or required the attention of the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jim West, chm., Rev. Paul H. Treick, Elder Wayne Johnson

Classis Action: The report as a whole was adopted.

B. Missions Committee

Esteemed Brothers:

The Western Classis at present is funding two mission works Covenant Reformed Chapel in Chico, CA, which is under the supervision of Grace Reformed Church, Willows, and Rehoboth Chapel in Whittier, CA which is under the supervision of Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter. Within our bounds there are also mission congregations under the supervision of particular congregations that are not receiving support from classis or synod: Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley, and the Gospel Presbyterian Fellowship of San Diego both having oversight by the Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento. There is also a group in Pleasanton that recently began worship services and is overseen by the Providence Reformed Church, Lodi. First Reformed Church, Yuba City receives a portion of its support from Synod, and Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto, while still receiving Synodical Mission support through this year, will be self-supporting at the end of this year. We rejoice that the Lord has opened these doors to us and that His Gospel is being preached in these respective communities.

Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico

The congregation at present has 15 communicant members and 4 non-communicant members. Two members were received into the congregation in November, and there are presently five persons being instructed for membership. Attendance for the past year has been up, and tithes and offerings received in 1999 were \$5553 more than was budgeted. Worship services are held each Sunday morning in rented quarters, and a Bible Study is held Sunday evenings in the pastor's home. The church advertises twice monthly in a local paper, and in a Yellow Pages ad, and door hangers were hung on 800 homes in the neighborhood where the church is meeting for worship. The number of visitors in attendance during the year has also increased over the past year, and by quarter was 16, 34, 31 and 58.

Rehoboth Chapel, La Mirada

Rehoboth Chapel has had some setbacks during the past year. Worship services are held each Sunday, morning and evening, in pastor Fluck's home. Some who were originally in the core group that formed Rehoboth have since departed. There are at present 14 communicant members and 5 baptized children. It should be noted that the Synod Home Missions Committee is recommending that Synod funding for the L. A. Basin work cease as soon as possible in the year 2000. The Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, which has oversight of this work will present a report on Rehoboth Chapel at this session of Classis.

First Reformed Church, Yuba City

First Reformed Church, Yuba City does not receive funding through the Western Classis, but is funded in part through the Synod Home Missions.

Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto

Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto is in their last year of receiving support from Synod Home Missions.

Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley

Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley continues under the supervision of the

Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento.

On the Horizon

The Gospel Presbyterian Fellowship of San Diego

This group is meeting Sunday mornings at the police station in Chula Vista, and has an average attendance of about 25. There is also an afternoon Bible study in one of the members home. The group is guided by Gil Baloy who will be examined for licensure at this Classis, and the GPF is under the supervision of the consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento. The group was drawn to the RCUS because of our reputation as an Orthodox Protestant Church that strives to be consistently Reformed. The GPF has not requested any financial assistance from either the Western Classis or Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento. A fuller, printed report on the Gospel Presbyterian Fellowship of San Diego is available to the delegates of classis.

The Grace Reformed Chapel, Pleasanton

The Grace Reformed Chapel, Pleasanton held their first worship service on Sunday, February 27th. This chapel is an extension ministry of Providence Reformed Church, Lodi, and is an outgrowth of a Bible Study that Rev. Merica has been holding in Pleasanton the past two years. He is holding the worship service on Sunday afternoons, and will continue the Bible Study in Pleasanton on Thursday evenings.

Trinity Reformed Chapel, Bakersfield

The Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield is supporting an outreach Bible Study in the south side of Bakersfield, meeting in the home of Jeff Jones, an elder in Grace Reformed Church.

Recommendations:

1. That the Western Classis continue its support of the Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico, noting the SHMC recommendation of the 20% reduction for the year 2001, and supply \$10544.00 from Classis Home Missions Fund for Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico.
2. That the WCHMC meet on March 28th in La Mirada with the Rehoboth Chapel members, and the Ebenezer Reformed Church consistory to discuss all options regarding the work in La Mirada.
3. That our congregations be kept apprized of the fledgling works in Pleasanton, South Bakersfield, and San Diego that they may be lifted up in prayer before the Throne of Grace.
4. That the consistories of Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento, and Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter be commended for taking up the oversight of the Gospel Presbyterian Fellowship of San Diego and Rehoboth Chapel, respectively.
5. That note be taken that Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto will be fully self-supporting at the end of this year, and that prayerful thanksgiving be rendered to God for His blessings upon the congregation, and for their continued strengthening in their kingdom labor.

We rejoice in the opportunities that the Lord has opened to us as a classis for labor in His kingdom, and are thankful in both the trials and triumphs experienced in this ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Neale R. Riffert, Rev. Jonathan Merica,

Elder Eric Merz, Rev. Dennis Roe, Rev. Frank Walker

(Note: Steve Wilbur, a member of the committee moved to the state of Washington, and was dismissed to the care of a Bible Presbyterian Church)

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

C. Christian Education in the Church Committee

Esteemed Brothers of the Western Classis,

Your Committee did not meet in person this year due to the chairman's failure to remember that there was any business to do until late in the year. There was one item of business that the committee was to carry out from the 1999 Abstract, "1. That the Committee edit the Pre-School curriculum in preparation for publication." (Page 17). The second recommendation was defeated last year, see the minutes of the meeting on page 4.

Your Committee met over the phone and brings the following recommendation:
 1. That the Pre-School curriculum be published as is, with the number of copies to be left to the recommendation of the Permanent Publications Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Dale Clark, chm., Rev. Vernon Pollema, Rev. Jay Fluck,
 Rev. Gary Mancilas, Elder Richard Fay, Elder E. Zane Wood*

Classis Action: After discussion of the recommendation, it was recommitted to the Permanent Committee to report back at this meeting. The Committee did return with a substitute recommendation which passed. It reads: "That the Pre-School curriculum booklet be referred to the Permanent Christian Education Committee for final editing and correcting. Any corrections from the churches be sent to the chairman by June 1, 2000."

D. Candidates and Credentials

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers:

The Candidates and Credentials Committee of Classis has actively overseen the training of our students for the ministry: Chris Caughey, Paul Henderson, Scott Henry, John Sawtelle, E. Zane Wood and Gil Baloy.

Just before Synod met last year, the chairman received communication from Mr. John Sawtelle in which he requested to have his name removed from the list of students. John had come under the conviction that the regulative principle forbids the singing of uninspired songs within the context of public worship. Since this is not the position of the Reformed Church in the United States, John decided not to pursue licensure and ordination among us. Western Classis Executive Circular 14:2 notes that "at his own request, Mr. John Sawtelle is removed from the list of Students under Care of the Western Classis. He has applied for membership in the Reformed Presbyterian Church

of North America.” Though we would have preferred to see John minister in the RCUS, we can certainly rejoice that he is serving in a fraternal church. The Christian Education Committee of Synod is already working with John for the repayment of his student loans.

Recently, the chairman also received a communication (undated; postmarked January 21, 2000) from Mr. Chris Caughey in which he wrote, “I am hereby withdrawing myself as a student under care of Classis.” No reason is given in the letter for his decision, though he indicates that he had spoken with the Spiritual Council of Covenant Reformed Church before withdrawing. The chairman of your committee understands from his pastor that Chris has embraced the Framework Hypothesis and realizes that this makes him ineligible for service in the RCUS. Chris is aware that he must repay his student loans in full. His contract stipulates that this must be done within five years “after leaving the ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States.” The chairman of your committee believes that Chris left the ministry when he asked to be removed from the list of students. As a Classis, we must notify Synod of Chris’ decision so that a repayment schedule can be arranged.

Though we have lost two students, we rejoice that Mr. Gil Baloy was received as a Student under Care via Executive Circular 14:3. The committee examined Gil in orthodoxy and intent by conference call in late October. The same circular declared his examination satisfactory and permitted him to serve as Stated Supply in Chula Vista (a work forming under the supervision of the Sacramento Consistory). The Rev. Dennis Roe was assigned to help Gil prepare for a full licensure examination. However, because Gil is working full-time to support his family, he has requested that we administer only a partial examination at the upcoming meeting of Classis. We are proposing that Gil be examined as follows: Systematic Theology (15 minutes for each locus, with questions from the floor after all loci have been covered)— Prolegomena and Theology (Walker); Anthropology, Christology and Soteriology (Roe); Ecclesiology and Eschatology (Treick); Apologetics and Philosophy (20 minutes each with West examining); and Church History (25 minutes with West examining). The remainder of the examination will take place at a future date.

Mr. Paul Henderson is now completing his third and final year of instruction at MARS. The Lord has blessed Paul this year not only in bringing him to this point in his education but also in giving him and his wife Tina their first child. Paul has a cumulative grade point average of 3.04 and has received some “pre-call inquiries” from RCUS churches. He requests to be examined for licensure sometime after graduation.

Providential circumstances have delayed Mr. Scott Henry’s plans to attend MARS in the fall of this year. Last summer his neck was injured in an accident at work. He may need surgery in the near future to repair the damage. In the meanwhile, he has been taking courses in presuppositional apologetics and Reformed theology through Bahnsen Theological Seminary. He hopes to begin his studies at MARS in the fall of 2001. Until then, Scott takes advantage of opportunities to serve in the Lancaster church, teaching adult Sunday school and assisting with visitation. Scott was recently elected to serve as an elder in Lancaster. We should keep this brother and his family in prayer. May he continue to look to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ for encouragement.

Last year the Western Classis granted Mr. E. Zane Wood permission to study at Sangre de Cristo Seminary in Westcliffe, Colorado. Because Sangre de Cristo is located

at 9600 feet, it is virtually impossible to have classes from January through April due to the harsh winters. Instead, the seminary offers classes in the summer and fall. Summer classes are taught by visiting professors from other Reformed seminaries. These are typically concentrated courses of one to three weeks’ duration. The fall semester then focuses on the Biblical languages and homiletics. Ernie’s first year of study included classes in Exegetical Hermeneutics, Teaching/Preaching Seminar, New Testament Survey, Essentials of New Testament Greek, Public Worship, English Bible (Colossians), Ecclesiology, Sunday School Administration, Apologetics, Church History III, Church Music, Pastoral Duties, Ethics, and Soteriology. Ernie completed his first year with a GPA of 3.94. He is now using his “summer break” to complete a seminary project that is due next fall, viz., a translation and commentary on 1 John. He has also been exhorting in various congregations in the Western Classis.

At this point, none of our students is requesting student aid from Classis or Synod.

It has been brought to our attention that Mr. Jerry Loverin, a member of the Modesto congregation, may be seeking Student under Care status by the time of Classis. His Consistory has already agreed to provide a letter of recommendation. Jerry plans to acquire his seminary education at MARS. If we do receive communication from Jerry, we can deal with it at Classis.

Recommendations:

1. That Mr. Chris Caughey be removed from the roll of Students under Care, and that Synod be advised of this in order to arrange for the repayment of his student loans.
2. That Mr. Gil Baloy be examined at the spring meeting of Classis as outlined in the report.

Respectfully,

*Rev. Frank Walker, chm, Rev. Jim West, Rev. Dennis Roe, Rev. Paul Treick
Elder Earl Van Houten, Elder Jon Stuebbe*

Classis Action: Both recommendations of the committee were adopted as printed above.

E. Interchurch Relations Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

The Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee of the Western Classis has been in communication with our brethren of other Reformed and Presbyterian churches with whom we have fraternal relations by means of U. S. Mail, e-mail, telephone and personal contact. Not only were delegates sent this year to our fraternal churches, but also an observer was sent to the Classis Southwest U. S. of the Federation of the United Reformed Churches in North America. Your chairman was thankful for the willingness of several Western Classis delegates to sacrifice valuable time out of their busy schedules to attend the meetings of our fraternal churches. The Western Classis delegates’ reports on the meetings with our fraternal churches will not be enlarged upon in this report; rather the delegates will read their reports at the Western Classis meeting on March 7-9, 2000 in Lodi, CA.

The Presbytery of Southern California (OPC) conducted three regularly stated

Presbytery meetings. Your chairman sent a letter of greeting to the Presbytery meeting at Westminster, CA when it convened October 15-16, 1999. The Western Classis plans to have Elder E. Zane Wood serve as the Western Classis delegate and bring greetings at the Presbytery of Southern California meeting in Carson, CA on February 4-5, 2000.

The Presbytery of Northern California (OPC) had two stated meetings this year. The Western Classis was represented by a delegate at both meetings. Your chairman attended the Presbytery meeting as a delegate of Western Classis at Murphys Christian Camp in Murphys, CA on March 19, 1999. The fall meeting of the Presbytery of Northern California was represented by Rev. Neil Riffert, which convened at the New Covenant Orthodox Presbytery Church in South San Francisco on September 24, 1999.

When the Western Classis meeting convenes in March 7-9, 2000, notice should be given to the reports of the Western Classis fraternal delegates to the Presbytery of Northern California. A special committee studying the days of creation asserts that the view of the writers of the Westminster Standards was that the days were “formal days of ordinary length.” The committee also proposes that candidates for the ministry must take an exception to the Westminster Standards if they cannot affirm the days of creation as “normal days of ordinary length.”

The Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA meets on February 25-26, 2000 in Phoenix, AZ just prior to our Western Classis meeting. The meeting was originally planned to convene in Los Angeles, but the location was changed to Phoenix, AZ since a candidate taking a call to the Phoenix congregation will be examined at their Presbytery. Our beloved Rev. Lloyd Gross has graciously been filling the vacant pulpit for the Phoenix RPCNA congregation this past year.

Currently, the Western Classis is on hold in its fraternal relationship with the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico. By action of the RCUS Synod last year, the 253rd Synod adopted the following resolution regarding our relationship with the IPCM: “That fraternal relations with the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico be suspended until a response is received to the March 1998 letter to the Ecclesiastical Relations Committee of the IPCM from the IRC of the RCUS, and that the IPCM be advised of this action.” It is your chairman’s understanding that the IPCM to date has not responded; therefore, the Western Classis’ fraternal relationship with them is still suspended by action of the RCUS Synod.

In preparation for the 15th Western Classis meeting at Providence Reformed Church in Lodi, CA, your chairman sent letters of invitation to all the churches with whom we have fraternal relations. A letter inviting an observer from the Classis Southwest U. S. of the Federation of the United Reformed Churches in North America was also sent.

It is the hope of your committee that the Western Classis will take notice of the concerns facing our fraternal churches and keep those matters in prayers.

May God’s grace and peace abound in our churches as we labor together for His kingdom and glory.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Jonathan Merica, chm., Rev. Gary Mancilas, Rev. Robert Sander,
Elder Jamie Clark, Elder Eric Merz*

Classis Action: The report was adopted by the Classis.

F. Publications Committee

The Publications Committee of the Western Classis did not have any business before [it] during the Classical year; did not meet and did not expend any funds.

*Elder Wayne C. Johnson, chm., Rev. Vernon Pollema, Rev. Tom Mayville,
Elder Michael Peery, Elder Ted Van Tol, Rev. Dale Clark*

Classis Action: The report was adopted by the Classis.

G. Diaconal Ministries Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

Your committee received no requests, conducted no business, and makes no recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Vernon Pollema, chm., Rev. Gene Sawtelle, Rev. Robert Sander,
Elder Cornelis Van Egmond, Elder Werner Stricker, Deacon R. Eddington*

Classis Action: The report was adopted by the Classis.

H. Heidelberg West Youth Camp Committee

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The Heidelberg West Youth Camp, held June 15-18, 1999 at Camp Peaceful Pines, was a real blessing to both youth and adults who attended. There was good fellowship, edifying lectures and sermons, good food, and a minimum of disciplinary trouble. The theme of the lectures centered on *Christian Stewardship* in three Areas: *Stewardship of Doctrine, Stewardship of Time and Talents, and Stewardship of Possessions*. The evening services revolved around the theme of *Contending for the Faith* with sermons from the book of Daniel. The weather was good this year after missing a year due to snow and cold.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who gave selflessly of their time to be at camp for the teaching, recreation, counseling, and cooking. Everyone did an outstanding job and we all had fun doing it. Special thanks to Greg and Susie Born who provided some pretty bizarre recreational activities each afternoon. And last, but not least, Greg Stewart served as Camp Director and did a fine job. Thanks to all!

The ladies from Trinity Reformed in Modesto provided the cooking last year, and it is possible that we may have enough volunteers this year from Modesto to do it again. They did an excellent job of providing very good meals and snacks for a very good price. We had a total of 86 campers – 58 children and 28 adults. T-Shirts were provided with each registration which was \$65 per camper. The cost of the T-Shirts with our

camp logo (Calvin's seal last year) was \$673.24) The T-Shirts made a nice addition and gave the students some remembrance after they left camp. \$2880 was paid out to the camp for the use of the grounds.

We have considered finding another campground that might offer greater facilities (swimming, ball fields, etc.), but so far have not found anything that is in this price range and which gives us full use of the grounds as well as providing our own cooks. This is what has kept our prices down. The fact that we can completely run our own program is a real advantage that not all camp facilities will accommodate. The camp dates are a bit early for some people and it is a little cool early in June, but getting in on better dates is difficult. The camp offered us some alternative dates this year that were not really better as they ended up too late in the summer.

At the present time the Treasurer shows a balance in the Heidelberg Camp Fund of \$2942.68. From that we have drawn \$50 recently for additional deposit needed for reserving the grounds for this summer. Camp Peaceful Pines, owned and operated by the Brethren Church, has raised their price for this year. This is the first price increase in quite a number of years. They are now charging \$11 per camper per day and \$6 per day for day visitors. We left \$150 on deposit and they asked for an additional \$50 for a total of \$200.

We have signed the contract with Camp Peaceful Pines to reserve the grounds for Heidelberg West Youth Camp for Tuesday, June 13 through 12 Noon on June 16, 2000. These are the camp dates, so please take this back to your churches and promote the camp of the Western Classis! The camp committee will soon be meeting to determine and assign the lectures, sermon topics, etc. and an information packet will be sent to the churches at that time. We do need qualified counselors – both men and women. We used some of the college age students with an adult last year to help with cabin counseling. The success of the camp weighs heavily on volunteer help. Please inform your congregations of this need and then contact either your chairman or Greg Stewart. It is a fact that if we do not have a sufficient number of counselors to adequately care for the children, we will not be able to hold a camp. So let's get volunteers early.

We are asking, given the increase in the daily camp rate and deposit amount, that the cost per camper be raised to \$70 this year (which includes the T-Shirts). We should not need money in the Classis Guideline this year, as we have enough working capital on balance to run the camp for the year 2000.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Paul Treick, chm., Rev. Gene Sawtelle, Elder Greg Stewart,
Elder Greg Williams, Rev. Thomas Mayville, Elder Steven Richert*

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Finance Committee.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

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

Beloved Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

What does the President of the Western Classis look for when he reads and then

assesses a minister's parochial report? Is he looking for mountain-top experiences, and floods of Gentiles flocking into Christ's Church? Does he look for exciting stories about dramatic conversions akin to Saul's encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus? Or, does he expect to read about the persecution of our churches by those who detest the message of a Gospel that zeros in upon the depravity of man and the total sovereignty of God, including the sovereignty of His grace in salvation? Although these are things that have often characterized the life of the Church in history, it would be Scriptural to say that the kingdom of God usually does not come with great fanfare. It is not normally the mighty rushing wind or tongues of fire, but "*the still, small voice*" that transforms people and determines important historical events. Of course, this still, small voice is the Word of God as revealed in Scripture and preached by Christ's ministers.

After reading all the Parochial reports I am convinced that the ministers in the Western Classis are indeed fulfilling their callings as Christ's shepherds to His sheep. God's flock is being fed the Word of God, the sacraments are faithfully implemented, and Church discipline is also meted out. This shepherding not only includes the preaching of the Word of God, but also the instruction and discipleship of all of God's people, with special emphasis upon the catechumens. Once again, we continue to demonstrate not only to the evangelical churches, but even to our Reformed brothers our commitment to the instruction of our covenant youth, so that they will grow up to be trees of righteousness, planted by the Lord, that He might be glorified (Isaiah 60:1ff).

During this Classical year several brothers and sisters in Chula Vista (at the Gospel Presbyterian Fellowship) appealed to the Western Classis for membership. They indicated their desire to join Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento. As this report is being written, there are now 17 members who have joined (this includes eleven adults and six covenant children). Of these seventeen, five were baptized into the name of the Triune God. It was the privilege of your President to conduct membership classes and to administer the baptisms. Also, the Word of God was preached in Chula Vista; it was preached on a Lord's Day that witnessed the largest attendance in their brief history as a fellowship. For your President, this was like a dream. If the phrase "when the Lord returned the captivity of Zion" is proverbial for great blessing and cornucopia, this was it. Finally, the Western Classis has churches from one end of California to the other. We are beginning to surround the forces of Gog and Magog! May God give us more churches (and workers) to vanquish the enemy through the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. All of this is not to mention Providence Reformed Church's mission work in Pleasanton, which experienced its inaugural Lord's Day worship service two Sundays ago (with about twenty-seven attending). Indeed, the Western Classis seems to be inching closer and closer to the Bay area, where the So o he United States is located. Also, Grace Reformed Church's initiation of a Bible Study in Southwest Bakersfield is a harbinger of good things to come there. It seems a truism that when one church tries to evangelize itself out of existence, that the net result is spiritual and often numeral growth for the mother church. Still another indication of our continued interest in missions is the work of Pastor Pollema at Ebenezer Reformed Church. He reports of evangelism at Corcoran State Prison, a weekly radio broadcast, and the work of the Rehoboth Chapel in Los Angeles. Added to all this is a report by our student undercare, Mr. Baloy, of a church in the Philippines that has much more than a cursory interest in the RCUS. As this is being written, Mr. Baloy is making plans to visit

there in early August to bring us back further word.

Your President rejoices that at this particular meeting of Classis that we anticipate the examination of Mr. Gil Baloy for future licensure. We are also moving closer to the examination of Mr. Paul Henderson, who is in his last year at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, and who has indicated his desire to be examined after graduation.

But this past Classical year has also seen an increase in physical infirmities among our ministers. The Rev. Robert Sander and the Rev. Lloyd Gross continue to struggle with their infirmities, even though they remain very active in teaching and preaching. Also, Pastor Gene Sawtelle and Pastor Paul Treick have on-going problems with their backs. Although Pastor Sawtelle worked through it all, Pastor Treick required disc-surgery after several weeks of so much pain that he was not even able to get out of his sweat suit. By the grace of God his surgery appears successful, so that he is measurably, if not immeasurably improved and "back in the saddle." We should give thanks to God for their zeal for God's truth! Their desire to battle illness has nothing to do with earning a paycheck; it stems from a deep-seated desire created by God the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel. This is not to forget our student under care, Mr. Scott Henry, who suffers from neck problems, which have impeded his immediate design to attend Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

Your President was saddened by the decisions of Mr. John Sawtelle and Mr. Chris Caughey who asked that their names be deleted from the roll of students under care. With respect to John, it was bitter-sweet. Bitter, because your President would love to have given John the right hand of pastoral fellowship within our own denomination; sweet, because John is now a faithful minister in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (among which your President has many ministerial friends). With regard to Mr. Caughey, I believe that Classis needs to reexamine its commitment to Westminster Theological Seminary in California. This is not easy for me to say, being a loyal alumnus, and one of the minority who voted to continue aid to Westminster during last year's Synod. Particularly, we should question our decision to send a "Student under Care" there, who was for the most part a rookie to the traditions and practices of RCUS. Although the Framework Hypothesis is a front burner theological issue, it would seem that sending students to Westminster has become highly impractical and expensive both for us and for Synod.

Membership-wise, your President notes that the total membership of the Western Classis is about the same as last year. The total baptized membership stands at 938 compared to 943 one year ago. But your President also observes that Classis churches received seventy-four into membership compared to forty-nine a year ago. This is off-set by the loss of twenty-seven by dismissal and twenty-seven by either erasure or disciplinary erasure. Your President does not have a brilliant interpretation of these statistics, but he can assert one thing for certain: stagnancy does not exist in the Western Classis. We are a busy church, doing the work of the Lord. There is a difference between building a church and building a crowd and your President believes we are doing the former.

With respect to buildings of worship, your President reports that Grace Reformed Church of Willows has paid off its debt to Classis. We do indeed praise God for their conscientious attempts to reduce and then eliminate their debt. Also, we thank God that Covenant Reformed Church of Grass Valley will be moving into their new building in

April. I also note that Trinity Reformed still has a mortgage of over \$132,000 on her property. This seems a monster debt for a congregation of that size and will be even more so once Trinity Reformed is off Home Missions aid. Nevertheless, the trail of God's bountiful care of the brethren at 'Trinity' has shown itself repeatedly over the years. The Lord God of Elisha, Who enabled the widow to pay her debt, ever lives! (2 Kings 4:1-7) Far from signifying that God is only interested in smaller things, the payment of her debt teaches that if God provides for the lesser, how much more the greater? Your President is also reminded of a conversation with the brethren at Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, who indicated that they may have to refinance their building or move.

Keeping our building needs before us, your President also notes that Classis voted last year not to fund the *Missions Building Fund*. There were no doubt good reasons for this decision; however, we should be wary of making this an habitual practice, even though the Building Fund at this time is designed principally for missions.

To revisit to my opening theme: the kingdom of God does not always come with great pomp and circumstance. How then does it come? By faithful preaching and teaching, and by making use of all the means of God's grace. One of the ministers in his parochial report wrote: "I daily pray for you all (the "all" referring to all our churches-JW) that God will bless you and your ministries." Another speaks about members of his congregation arising early for congregational prayer during the week. This is not the activity of automatons or "the frozen chosen," but of the Spirit of God working in the hearts of our people. These Christ-centered activities help explain the spiritual prosperity of our Western Classis churches. It is easy to utter a pious platitude (like, "I will pray for you"), or even to promise what we mean, but without a corresponding performance. Let us beware of sins of omission, among which prayerlessness is often a celebrated culprit. God is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). The Apostles spoke of the ministry as giving themselves "continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6: 4). Let us follow their pattern.

In conclusion, the words of Zechariah 4:6 are always applicable: "*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*" I am reminded of a famous preacher who used to recite a portion of the Apostle's Creed to himself as he mounted the pulpit, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, I believe in the Holy Ghost, I believe in the Holy Ghost." Let us begin the new millennium with a renewed commitment to preaching and teaching Gospel truth, while trusting God's Spirit to produce heartfelt cries like, "*God be merciful to me a sinner,*" and "*What must I do to be saved?*"

Respectfully Submitted,
Pastor Jim West, President, Western Classis

Classis Action: The report was adopted and is to be printed in the Abstract and in the *Reformed Herald*.

B. The Stated Clerk on the Minutes

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The Minutes of the 14th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis were typed, bound

and placed in a permanent binder, along with all reports, overtures, and pertinent documents. The Synod's Committee on the Minutes of Classis, did not find errors in the minutes themselves, but pointed out that there were no index tabs in the binder of minutes, one parochial report was not signed, and all the pages of the Appendix were not numbered. These were all corrected.

An Abstract of the 14th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis was prepared and 200 copies were printed, bound, and mailed to the delegates and congregations of Classis and Synod in the time from of Standing Rule #9. In Classis, one copy was sent to each delegate and six more copies were sent to each congregation. Three copies were mailed to each congregation and retired minister of Synod. The cost for printing and mailing was \$690.56.

The President's Report on the State of the Church was sent to the Reformed Herald where it appeared in print. Seven Overtures were sent to the Clerk of Synod and were acted upon by Synod as reported in the Synodical Abstract. Other statistical and credential reports were sent to the Synodical Clerk.

I have continued the practice of sending the Classis Treasurer a listing of all motions passed by the Classis which require financial attention by him. I also sent a Guideline form to each congregation based on the Guideline for Giving adopted by the 14th Annual session of Western Classis. If in the future you wish to have the format of this altered for your Church Treasurers, please inform the clerk.

As directed by last year's Classis (Abstract p. 78), I have received copies of some your local church constitutions, but have not yet received the most recent copy from all congregations. If you have not yet sent this to the clerk, this should be done as soon as possible. Also, you are reminded of the motion passed at last year's classis regarding amendments that might have been made: "*That the Secretary of the Congregation inform the Classis via letter to the Stated Clerk who will indicate in his Clerk's Report any amendments in its constitution.*" I have not received any such information, and assume that there were no amendments made in the last year. It is possible that the congregational secretary overlooked this since it is a new provision. If so, please remind him of this.

Your clerk reports the following changes in matters pertaining to the roll of the Western Classis:

Men Licensed: 0
 Calls Accepted: 0
 Ministers Received: 0
 Ministers Ordained: 2 (Rev. Gary Mancilas and Rev. Thomas Mayville)
 Ministers Installed: 2 (Rev. Gary Mancilas in Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, CA; Rev. Thomas Mayville in Grace Reformed Church, Willows, CA)
 Ministers Transferred: 0
 Ministers Removed: 0
 Ministers or Elders Deceased: 0
 Churches Received or removed: 0
 Churches changed (new name): 0
 Necrologies Received: 0

A letter of invitation for an observer at the Classis Southwest U.S, Federation of United Reformed Churches in North America was received and this information sent to

our Interchurch Relations Committee.

Regarding the Internet "SuperHighway," your clerk appreciates your reports sent to him via the Internet or given to him on disk. This saves some time. Please be reminded that the clerk still needs to receive a hard copy bearing your signature for the records (a graphic signature might be acceptable on attachments). A number of credential forms were sent without E-Mail addresses for delegates that your clerk believes do have E-Mail accounts. If this is the case, please check the Classis Directory handed out at this meeting and include this information if it is missing. Frankly, using E-Mail for information only saves time if it can be done for all delegates. This information is helpful for the clerk as well as for Classis Committees. Also, please inform the clerk of any changes in time or location for the services and meetings in your local congregation so these changes can be published in the Abstract.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Paul H. Treick, Stated Clerk, Western Classis

Classis Action: The Stated Clerk's report was adopted by the Classis.

C. Executive Committee of Synod

There was no report as yet from the Executive Committee of Synod to the Classes.

C. Treasurer's Report

BALANCE SHEET
DECEMBER 31, 1999

	12-31-99	12-31-98	CHANGE
ASSETS			
Cash	\$136,726.23	\$112,508.91	\$24,217.32
Mission's Building Fund Loan-Willows	0.00	9,000.00	(9,000.00)
TOTAL ASSETS	\$136,726.23	\$121,508.91	\$15,217.32
LIABILITIES:			
Accounts Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	000	0.00	0.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$136,726.23	\$121,508.91	\$15,217.32
TOTAL LIABILITIES & SURPLUS	\$136,726.23	\$121,508.91	\$15,217.32
FUND BALANCES:			
General	\$1,518.82	(\$648.06)	\$2,166.88
Home Missions Building Fund	104,128.98	90,225.51	13,903.47
Home Missions	12,446.52	8,079.93	4,366.59

Benevolence	13,038.77	11,982.37	1,056.40
Publications	2,650.46	1,753.17	897.29
Heidelberg Camp	2,942.68	1,115.99	1,826.69
TOTAL FUNDS	\$136,726.23	\$112,508.91	\$24,217.32

INCOME STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1999

INCOME:	C.M. 1-01-99	Dues	Bldg Fund	Hm Miss	Benev.	Publ	Heid. Camp	Total Per Church
Faith-Anderson	33	\$495.00	\$0.00	\$1,981.00	\$3,333.50	:0.00	\$0.00	\$5,809.50
Grace-Lancaster	37	370.00	0.00	2,892.57	1,924.00	0.00	0.00	4,986.57
Grace-Bakersfield	137	1,414.00	1,115.00	5,115.00	2,358.00	4.00	4.00	10,010.00
Covenant-Chico	14	138.00	0.00	938.00	715.00	0.00	0.00	1,791.00
Covenant-Grass Valley	46	480.00	0.00	3,077.00	2,392.00	0.00	0.00	5,929.00
Providence-Lodi	54	461.00	420.00	3,854.50	3,450.00	56.00	56.00	8,097.50
Trinity-Modesto	82	650.99	387.50	4,382.02	3,968.00	51.85	51.70	9,491.88
Covenant-Sacramento	75	750.00	0.00	12,725.00	3,900.00	0.00	0.00	17,375.00
Ebenezer-Shafter	85	850.00	0.00	8,809.84	4,420.00	0.00	0.00	11,879.84
Grace-Will.-(Excl Loan)	32	320.00	0.00	2,018.00	1,664.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00
First-Yuba City	48	480.00	0.00	3,538.00	2,496.00	0.00	0.00	6,514.00
Publ. Book Sales/Misc.		0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	727.65	2,872.73	3,700.38
F&M Bank Int Allocated		(21.19)	2,980.97	266.91	395.90	57.99	38.80	3,717.38
TOTAL INCOME	823	86,367.80	\$4,903.47	\$47,095.84	\$31,018.40	\$897.29	\$3,021.23	\$93,302.03
EXPENSES:								
Stated Clerk Expenses:								
Gratuity 1999-00 Clerk				\$400.00				
Abstract Expense & Mailing				690.56				
Clerk Phone/Postage				97.54	\$1,188.10			
Executive Committee Expenses:								
Classis Meeting-March 1999				1,601.60				
Mileage/Airfare/Postage				813.73				
Candidates/Credentials Mileage				311.77	2,727.10			
Benevolences:								
Faith Reformed/Anderson				26,010.00				
Grace Reformed-Lancaster				8,900.00				
Diaconal-John Sawtelle				800.00	33,710.00			
Inter-Church Relations								
Mirage-Delegate to RPCNA-SD				141.17				
Mileage-Delegate to OPC-SoCal				31.40				
Mileage-Delegate to URCNA				113.15	285.72			
Home Missions:								
Covenant Reformed-Chico				13,125.00				
LA Basin-Jay Fluck				6,280.00				
LA Basin-Shafter				19,452.25				
Mileage/Travel				142.00	38,979.25			
Heidelberg Camp								
Heidelberg Camp Fund-Ck# 1349 Returned				(928.92)				
Heidelberg Camp Fund-2-28-99 Balance				2,123.46	1,194.54			
TOTAL EXPENSES						\$78,084.71		\$15,217.32
INCOME FOR YEAR								
CASH AND NOTE RECEIVABLE ON HAND 12-31-98								
CASH AND NOTE RECEIVABLE ON HAND 12-31-99								

INCOME STATEMENT BY FUND
FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1999

FUND:	General	H. Mission Bldg Fund	Hm Miss	Benevolence	Publication	Heidelberg Camp	Total
INCOME:							
Giving	\$6,388.99	\$1,922.50	\$46,828.93	\$30,620.50	\$111.65	\$111.70	\$85,984.27
Book Sales/Camp Funds					727.65	2,872.73	3,600.38
Allocated Interest	(21.19)	2,980.97	266.91	395.90	57.99	36.80	3,717.38
Total Income	\$6,367.80	\$4,903.47	\$47,095.84	\$31,016.40	\$897.29	\$3,021.23	\$93,302.03
EXPENSE:							
Stated Clerk	1,188.10						1,188.10
Exec. Comm	2,727.10						2,727.10

Inter Church	285.72						285.72
Benevolences			33,710.00				33,710.00
Home Missions		38,979.25					38,979.25
Publications							0.00
Heidelberg Camp					1,194.54		1,194.54
Total Expense	4,200.92	0.00	38,979.25	33,710.00	0.00	1,194.54	78,084.71
Income (Loss) Yr	\$2,166.88	\$4,903.47	\$8,116.59	(\$2,693.60)	\$897.29	\$1,826.69	\$15,217.32
Balance 12-31-98	(\$648.06)	\$90,225.51	\$8,079.93	\$11,982.37	\$1,753.17	\$1,115.99	\$112,508.91
Subtotal 12-31-99	\$1,518.82	\$95,128.98	\$16,196.52	\$9,288.77	\$2,650.46	\$2,942.68	\$127,726.23
Credit to Benevolence from Home Missions-LA			(3,750.00)	3,750.00	0.00		
Loan Pmts-Willows		9,000.00					9,000.00
Balance 12-31-99	\$1,518.82	\$104,128.98	\$12,446.52	\$13,038.77	\$2,650.46	\$2,942.68	\$136,726.23

Elder Chris Fellersen, Treasurer, Western Classis

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Finance Committee.

PAROCHIAL REPORTS

Rev. Neale Riffert read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brothers:

The past year has been one of trying to settle into an entirely different type of ministry than I have experienced in the past 33 years. Some have described Faith Reformed Church as being in a “mission” mode, but that is not quite accurate. This is a congregation that has been rocked hard over the past several years, and which has been struggling to regroup, and rebuild. The year began on a positive note with the congregation preparing for the classis sessions that were held here last spring.

Shortly thereafter the Geneva Academy, the school that had been using Faith’s facilities, opted to move to a new location. This move was abrupt and not under the most amicable circumstances. The upshot was the loss of two families to the congregation, and probably a third family as well.

Later in the summer, a family, though not members, but who were faithful in their attendance and support moved to the Napa Valley.

I have sought to be faithful in preaching and teaching, and in seeking to promote orderliness in worship and meetings and practice. We have an adult Sunday School class each week in which I have been teaching through the Heidelberg Catechism, using the Study Guide published by the RCUS. In our worship services I have spent the better part of the year preaching from the book of the Exodus with an emphasis on the Ten Commandments. Our consistory meets monthly. Communion was administered eleven times during the year. The Ladies Fellowship meets monthly, and there is a Women’s Bible Study twice monthly that my wife leads. We have visited the members of the congregation, and have had most them to our home.

Membership classes were held for three months and we received two families into membership, one a single man, and one a married woman with her seven year old daughter. We had one baptism. We have a young man (high school senior) who started attending our worship services late last summer, and who is presently interested in entering Dordt College in the fall semester of this year.

I have tried to keep the ministry of the Classis and Synod before the congregation, and we were able to contribute to the special offering for the L. A. Basin, and the Mission offering for Trinity Reformed Church in Modesto. The financial support out of the membership has been good, and Faith Reformed Church for the first time in its history has fully paid both its Classis and Synod guidelines. We acknowledge our gratitude for the support we receive from both the Western Classis and the Synod of the RCUS.

I participated in the Heidelberg West Youth Camp last June, attended the Northern California Presbytery, OPC meeting in September as the fraternal delegate from Western Classis, and served on the Synod Special Committee on the Authority of Position Papers, presenting a paper at its meeting in Sioux Falls in October. I was remiss in my duties as chairman of the Western Classis Home Missions Committee, partly because of the time constraints incurred in trying to get settled in a new home, and situated in a new community. Nonetheless, I apologize for not being more diligent in attendance upon the duties as Home Missions Chairmen.

I was in the pulpit 51 of the 52 Sundays of 1999, being absent only when I preached Mission Fest at the invitation of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter.

My own expectations in coming to this charge were perhaps too high, for I expected that the congregation, having traveled down a rocky road the past several years would demonstrate greater cohesiveness among the membership. This has not been the case, and I guess I also expected that there would be a somewhat greater desire for participation in the worship and service of the church than has been manifested. I have not been able to strike the rapport with the people necessary for a work of this nature to be attractive to visitors. Nonetheless, despite some discouragement we continue to plow in hope, not looking back.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Neale R. Riffert

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. West read the Parochial Report of Rev. Lloyd Gross

Dear Brothers in Christ,

It is a great privilege and blessing to me to report once again to you, dear brothers, in this annual parochial report.

God once again showed extraordinary grace and mercy to my dear wife and me in this past year. We praise God for the measure of health and well-being. My dear wife worked full time and was able to support us for which we are so grateful to God. She is now cutting back to 4 days a week to allow a little more time together and to do many things she loves to do. We do quite a bit of entertaining guests wherever we can. We have blessed fellowship with many saints of God.

As you all know I had the marvelous privilege of supplying the pulpit at the Phoenix RPCNA this past year. They were vacant and virtually every Sunday I preached there. Several times I preached also in the URC here. The RPCNA will have

a regular pastor beginning March 1. I will deeply miss those preaching opportunities. But God will do what is right and I wait on Him.

When not preaching Claire and I worship in the Phoenix URC. We continue to be richly blessed with the preaching of God's Word. We are profoundly grateful to our Lord for the preaching of the Reformed faith. We receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper here. As you know I was received as an associate member of the URC here believing I should be under the direct oversight of the elders of the church. Are we regularly worship. They are faithful men of God and we appreciate their pastoral visits and care.

Though I am keenly aware that full time pastoral work is no longer possible doing some supply preaching is far different than pastoring a congregation.

Personally I am struggling with increased neuropathy pain due to debilitating diabetes but I praise God for His mercy in being able to be up and about.

I greatly miss the fellowship of you brothers. I daily pray for you all that God will bless you and your ministries. What a glorious calling you have to preach the gospel which is the only hope of life in this dying world. God strengthen you all in that task until Jesus comes. May He come soon!

Love In Christ,
Rev. Lloyd Gross

Classis Action: Take Note. (Rev. Sawtelle led in prayer for Reverends Riffert and Gross.)

Rev. Thomas Mayville read his Parochial Report

Beloved fathers and brothers,

It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve as Pastor at Grace Reformed Church in Willows since we last convened. At the very outset, I want to commend the officers the Lord has called to serve Himself and His people in Willows. Elder vanTol, Deacons Eidman, Benningfield and vanTol have done an outstanding job this past year. They have assisted in shepherding the flock, ministering to their Pastor and his family, caring for the physical needs of various members, and caring for the building.

PASTORAL LABORS

Since our last Classis meeting, the Lord has been pleased to give me the ability to pass my ordination exam, and since then it has been my privilege and honor to minister the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the congregation every other month and to pronounce the benediction of the Lord upon His people each Lord's Day. In terms of completing my education, this past year I completed a college English course and have finished my reading for an Ancient Philosophy class through Mid America. Soon, I will be taking my final exam in that class. Then, for the last part of my education, I will write a paper on the use of "theistic proofs."

In the last twelve months I have preached several series, verse by verse, from 1 Kings 17-19, Daniel 1-2, and 1 Corinthians 1-3. In addition to these series, I have preached occasional sermons for Christmas Day, New Years, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Resurrection Sunday. In the past year Carolyn and I have enjoyed a get

acquainted visit with each family of the congregation. Elder van Tol and I are in the process of family visitation with each family this year. I believe that these visits have been a blessing to both the members and the officers involved. Along with family visitation, the Lord gave me opportunities to visit the sick and hospitalized this past year. This past year, we rejoiced in the Lord's bringing an eight year old baptized member home from the hospital after a 60 plus day stay, in which he had a brush with death. The Lord also gave me the opportunity to preach at Bakersfield and Shafter's Missionfest this past year.

TEACHING MINISTRY

I rejoice in the growth I have seen in our covenant children this past year! The Sunday School classes for pre-school through 5th grade, including catechism memorization, has been a wonderful preparation for the confirmation classes. It has been my pleasure and joy to teach the catechumens the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort and Ancient and Medieval Church History in the last twelve months. It is exciting for me to see our young people approach confirmation with a solid understanding of the teachings of Scripture under their belts. Most of the parents are faithful in helping their children struggle through the difficulties of memorizing the catechism.

By God's grace, we have established a Young People's group this year. The studies each month emphasizing a Christian world and life view in every area of life and thought has been well received and is making a positive impact on our youth. Their time of fellowship each month has been enjoyed by all. We are off to a rocky start in terms of participation in monthly activities. The trick is working out an activities schedule for the coming year which will enable the majority of the young people to participate while accommodating 4H, sports, FFA and other responsibilities. To this end, we will probably formulate a committee to work up a calendar for the coming year. I am thrilled to have Jason and Cori Downs as co-laborers with our Young People. It was great to see several of our young people at the rafting trip enjoying fun and fellowship with brothers and sisters from Yuba City and Modesto. We look forward to other inter-church activities to encourage this kind of fellowship. On that note, I also enjoyed serving the covenant youth of California as a counselor and teacher at the Heidelberg West Youth Camp. I am hopeful that this year several of our young people will attend for a time to make new Christian friends, have fun, fellowship and grow spiritually.

In addition to preaching, visiting and teaching our youth, I have thoroughly enjoyed our Sunday night Bible studies as another opportunity to help the congregation grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that the study in liturgics was very helpful for those who attended in giving them a better understanding of why we do what we do in worship and why we avoid some popular methods of worship. Our study of natural and special revelation in Calvin's Institutes has been enlightening and enjoyable for those attending.

ACTIVITIES

The entire congregation is indebted to the Ladies Auxiliary for their labors in our behalf since its formation last year. For our benefit, they have organized a refreshment schedule each Sunday and fellowship lunches each month. Their yard sale proceeds have been used to purchase pew Bibles and help with the cost of the

new chairs. Additional activities this past year included our annual hymn sing and our Reformation celebration. Both were great successes and a good time was had by all.

BUILDING PROJECT

Through the Lord's blessing and the faithfulness of the congregation, we have much to rejoice in this year! Our loan to Classis for the building renovation has been paid in full. We enjoyed enough surplus to purchase 100 beautiful new chairs for the sanctuary. Through the help of the congregation on work days, and my 8 hours or so per week working on the building renovation, phase 1 of the building project is virtually completed. Just a few odds and ends remain. I brought about a delay in the project due to breaking my leg because I was not careful enough while working on the building, and took a fall from about 8' off the floor. THE STATE OF THE CONGREGATION

As is the case with every congregation, ours has had its ups and downs in the last twelve months. We have together been grieved to see one of our members suspended from the Lord's Supper and his family now in the process of divorce. As a Spiritual Council we are also grieved to see a long term lack of attendance to the worship services by some of our communicant and baptized members.

Despite these difficulties, we rejoice in what the Lord is doing in the congregation. God is increasing His church, though we may not be able to count as many heads as we would like to. Our Lord did provide a spouse and a new home for one member and we saw one young lady confirmed this year. This coming year, we look forward this to the confirmations of four more young people, God willing. We also thank God that one of our members in the Navy will be returning to Southern California in the near future. We thank God that He was pleased to add a new family from the community to our congregation this year, and we are hopeful that we will see others joining us in 2000. It has been a real privilege to have Elder Helseth from Chico on board the Consistory and Spiritual Council this year. The spirit of unity in the congregation is a blessing to me, as is their faithful giving to the work of the Lord here, and beyond through their Synodical and Classical Dues and guidelines. They gave more to Synod and Classis this year than ever before in their 12 year history. The faithful attendance to both Sunday School and the worship service by the majority of the members is exemplary.

At our congregational meeting this year, I challenged each family to take time together each day to read a portion of God's word and pray together. I also challenged them to be diligent in seizing every opportunity the Lord gives to invite a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker, a business associate, or an acquaintance to church, and or an in home Bible Study.

GOALS

My vision for Grace Reformed Church includes some of the following goals for both the near and distant future. 1. A Christian School or Christian/Homeschool Co-op. 2. A radio ad for our church. 3. A web page for our church 4. Completion of the building renovation. 5. An evening worship service (when I no longer need to do carpentry work). 6. An organized evangelism campaign designed to reach out to the people of Glenn County with the Gospel. 7. A second elder. Please pray for us as we contemplate each of these goals.

In closing, I am thankful to God for calling me to be the shepherd of His people in Willows, and for the graciousness of the congregation in putting up with my shortcomings this past year. Please pray for me that the Lord will enable me to be a better shepherd and pastor with each passing year.

Your servant,
Rev. Thomas Mayville

Classis Action: Take Note.

Licentiate Steven Richert read his Parochial Report

Esteemed Brethren,

Psalms 27:14 Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

This year has been a busy year of service to Covenant Church in Grass Valley. Yet, it also was a year of waiting on the Lord regarding a call to pastor a church. I candidated in Freeman, SD in May. In August, the congregation voted, but the vote was not sufficient to issue a call. This resulted in some soul searching on my part. After much prayerful deliberation, I came under the conviction that my work in Grass Valley was not finished and that I should remain here until it was. In the meantime, I had been in contact with the Ashley congregation and because of the conviction to remain in Grass Valley, I asked that my name be removed from consideration in Ashley.

I have preached on a monthly basis in Grass Valley. I have also supplied the pulpit in our Lodi, Modesto, Sacramento, and Willows churches. I teach a Sunday School class for our catechumens and have assisted Pastor Roe in the weekly catechism class. Grass Valley hopes to add another elder by the time classis meets. We are also looking forward to moving into our new building in May. With these and other issues settled, I may again, Lord willing, be available to candidate. I will wait upon the Lord to see where he will have me to serve him.

Respectfully submitted,
Licentiate Steven Richert

Classis Action: Take Note. (Rev. Fluck led in prayer for Rev. Mayville and Lic. Steven Richert.)

Rev. Paul Treick read his Parochial Report

Esteemed brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

This report to the honorable brothers of the Western Classis is to give an account of my labors within your bounds and to assess the health of the congregation of Trinity Reformed. As soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ, we continue to do battle

against the Devil, the world, and our own flesh. Often we have failed in our struggle, and at other times we have prevailed by the grace of our God. I am reminded of the encouraging words of Psalm 11 where his enemies and those who were weak in the faith advised David that in time of trouble he should find his strength apart from His God. We read, *“In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”* (Vv. 1-3) The Lord is our foundation upon whom we stand, and no other. In Christ we can do all things.

Recognizing that foundation, we are bound to examine the underpinnings of the congregation. Consistent with the teachings of the Belgic Confession of Faith, it has been our endeavor fully and self-consciously to exhibit the three marks of a true church – the true preaching of the gospel, the pure administration of the holy sacraments, and the faithful exercise of Christian discipline. This must be foremost in the life of the congregation, and as the focus of the labor of its pastor. It is my humble conclusion that the congregation of Trinity Reformed has fulfilled these qualifications. As a pastor, that has been my continued endeavor as well.

On a physical level this has been a difficult and trying year. For the first time in 29 years I have had to excuse myself from preaching due to illness. I am thankful for having had good health in the past and also thankful that I am presently continuing to recover from my back ailments. I want to thank you, my brothers, for your prayers and encouragement. Special thanks to Rev. Jim West who met with me for prayer the day before my surgery. How very indispensable and precious is the communion of the saints! How priceless is the sufficiency of God’s marvelous grace! At this time I am happy to have returned to all my duties again.

Due to a larger number of absences from the pulpit I was only able to preach 83 times. For most of those Sundays when I could not preach, that faithful warrior and dear brother, Rev. Robert Sander, brought the Word of God to the saints. Our Elders were also quite active during these times, teaching Catechism Classes, Sunday School, and conducting the Worship Services. I greatly admire both their willingness and ability in this. Besides regular preaching, I preached and lectured at Heidelberg Youth Camp, led chapel services at the Christian School, and gave devotions at Bethany Home.

Lord’s Supper was served three times in 1999. We postponed the December celebration of the Supper to February of this year. The Elders were careful to guard the Lord’s Table. We had one adult baptism and two infant baptisms last year.

The elders had a difficult year with various situations among people of the congregation. In one case disciplinary erasure removed a member. One family sought dismissal to the United Reformed Church. The elders visited every family in the congregation and often met as a body with individuals during the year. Five of our young people were added to the communicant rolls by the rite of Confirmation. We had no funerals in the congregation during the year.

Total communicant membership stands at 63 and the total baptized membership is 106. We conduct five Sunday School classes each week and have eleven children attending Catechism Classes on Thursday nights. I am continuing to write the Sunday School lessons -- *“Our God and His People in the New Testament.”* On the first and

third Wednesday of the month we have a Bible Study held at the church. The attendance at this could be much better. We finished a thorough study of the Book of Romans and have begun a study of the history and teachings of the cults. The Senior Youth Group meets twice a month and the Junior Youth Group meets once. They held several recreational outings and many attended the Youth Camp this year. In October I preached at our 15t’ Annual Reformation Day Service on the subject of *“The Reformation and the Regulative Principle of Worship.”* A number of people from area Reformed Churches attended this service.

We are happy to have one of our members seeking to enter the Gospel ministry of the RCUS. Jerry Loverin, a senior at Dordt College, plans to attend Mid-America Reformed Seminary next Fall.

This year we finally tackled the long awaited restroom renovations. We built two complete restrooms and in the future will need to convert the old men’s room into a handicapped-accessible restroom. This was a dusty and difficult job, but we did it all with volunteer help.

This year will be our congregation’s last year on Synodical Mission aid. It will be very difficult financially, but our trust is in the Lord that He will not leave us wanting. We are humbly thankful for the help that we received from the Synod over the years, and for the monthly gift that Ebenezer Reformed sends us monthly. The Synodical Debt-Reduction offering amounted to \$10,573 this year. Our building indebtedness stands at \$132,238 for the main mortgage and \$5000 in a private note (for which we have money designated monthly so we may pay it off in 2001.) Our deacons have actively encouraged the people to exercise good stewardship in their giving and the overall response has been good.

Besides my work in the congregation, I serve as your Stated Clerk and on the Executive Committee, the Heidelberg West Youth Camp Committee, and the Candidates and Credentials Committee. On the Synodical level I am serving as a member of the Special Committee on the Authority of Position Papers, and the Foreign Missions Committee. Rev. Grossmann and I serve also on the Radio Administration Committee which oversees the French radio broadcast of Rev. Eric Kayayan. This new radio work is going very well. Eric is well-suited for the work and is fulfilling his function very well. He may be in California as part of his trip to the states in October. I am hoping that he will be able to preach in Modesto and will notify the Western Classis congregations if those plans materialize. This June I will be completing my last term as a member of the Board of Trustees at Westminster Theological Seminary in California. In this there are times of real blessings to me and times of frustration.

The Lord has been good to me and to the congregation the Lord called me to serve. I believe the spiritual health of the congregation is good. In a day when many have actually *“fled as a bird to their mountain,”* we are content to rest in the strength of the Lord. He has never forsaken us, and it is both our duty and our resolve never to forsake the Lord. The Psalmist asks rhetorically, *“If the foundation be destroyed, what will the righteous do?”* His comforting and awe-inspiring answer to us is found in the very words which follow: *“The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD’S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.”* That certainly secures both our future and that of every enemy of Christ’s. We will hold ground for

the Lord's sake and remain at peace in His presence. Our *Heidelberg Catechism* has said it so well: "... and for what is future have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love, since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move!"

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Paul H. Treick

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Gene Sawtelle read his Parochial Report

Esteemed brothers,

Jesus said, in John 15:5, "*I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*" We are continuing to learn the meaning of total reliance upon our faithful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We labor in His vineyard here in the Yuba-Sutter area for the purpose of seeing a solid Reformed church established. The labor in the Lord's vineyard is not easy, and sometimes we become discouraged because the harvest is not as abundant as we, humanly speaking, want it to be.

We are, however, also encouraged because we have the Holy Spirit as our comforter, and He abides with us forever. First Reformed Church is the Lord's, and He will build it with living stones. While it is tempting, at times, to look only at numbers, we must remember that our Lord has called us to fulfill the great commission. We must proclaim God's Word in its purity. "*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it,*" Isa. 55:11.

Five years ago, on January 22, 1995, Elder Doug Schlegel of Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento, California, conducted the meeting here for ratification of our constitution. The vote was unanimous to adopt the constitution. The memorial to organize as a congregation was signed as well. In the years that have followed God has certainly blessed First Reformed Church! We want to thank our brothers and sisters in Christ in each of the congregations of the RCUS for their generous financial help, encouragement and especially for praying for us. Because of their faithful prayers and sacrificial support God has enabled us to continue to proclaim His Word as a mission church of the RCUS. We could not have continued without the support of God's people of the RCUS.

During 1999 our communicant membership increased by three, from 48 to 51. Unconfirmed membership decreased from 18 to 17. Our total baptized membership increased from 65 to 68. Seven new members were received, 5 by profession of faith, and 2 by letter of transfer. One family of 4 was dismissed to Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento, California. One covenant child was baptized.

It is cause for rejoicing that God has given His people of First Reformed Church a love for the preaching of His Word. There has been growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that is evident in the lives of His

people. There has been a maturing in the faith. The proof of that maturity is ample. The worship service is attended faithfully, averaging 70, each Lord's day. The Sunday school classes are well attended by adults and children. God's people are given to hospitality and willingly bear one another's burdens. There is zeal to bear witness to the lost and to sow the seed of the Word of God. The names of the lost are brought regularly before the throne of grace with the prayer that God will call out His elect. Neighbors, friends, loved ones and strangers are invited to church to hear the Word of God preached. Visitors are greeted and friendship and hospitality are extended to them. The Apostle Paul reminded the Galatians, "*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not,*" Galatians 6:9.

Seven of our covenant young people attend catechism class weekly, and there are 2 in confirmation class.

The church building and parsonage have been maintained. The roof on the North side of the fellowship hall was replaced. The heating/cooling units were replaced in the fellowship hall and in the Sunday school wing. Church cleaning has continued on a monthly rotation, but there will be some modifications made to the cleaning schedule by the deacons for the coming year. Workdays have been called by the deacons, as needed, and will be called with more regularity this year.

The Lord's work here has been supported as generously and cheerfully as God has prospered and enabled His people to do. We began the year with a healthy surplus which included \$5000.00 designated by Synod to help us with roof repair on the fellowship hall. The surplus was used to enable us to replace the two-heating/cooling units. We were able to pay Classis and Synod guidelines. In addition we participated in several special offerings for other RCUS congregations. We also paid out close to \$8,000.00 in diaconal help. God has been gracious to us, and we praise Him for providing for us. We finished the year in the black.

As we look ahead we are anticipating a \$5,429.00 budget deficit. The budget committee of consistory has put together a realistic financial picture for the coming year. For this reason the consistory has instructed me to request from the Synod Home Missions Committee that they recommend no decrease in Synod support for Yuba City for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2001. We were scheduled to receive a 10% reduction in support for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2000, but in reality it computes to a little over 11%.

We were blessed to have Paul and Tina Henderson with us for the summer. Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, California generously provided support so that Paul could do his student internship here. Paul is in his last year at MARS. He preached several times, taught the adult Sunday school class, taught a Sunday evening Bible study during June and July, helped with teaching at the Heidelberg youth camp and was also a counselor, and he assisted with our annual elder/deacon family visitation.

Several of our young people and adults attended the Heidelberg West Youth Camp in June at Camp Peaceful Pines. Elder Greg Stewart did a good job as camp director. The many adults who volunteered their time and talents to cook, serve as counselors, help with crafts, recreation, preaching and teaching made this a time of spiritual blessing and great benefit to everyone who attended.

We are thankful for our treasurer, Ed Otto, who has done yeoman's work in

getting us squared away in all things financial. He has been diligent keeping us up to date with monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual financial reports. The bills are paid on time and the deposits made in a timely manner.

God has been gracious and enabled me to do the work of the ministry. I was not out of the pulpit even one time for physical reasons, from the beginning of February 1999 through the end of the year. Thank you for your prayers on my behalf. I learned that I have 2 more herniated discs in my lower back, but God has given me the strength to continue to preach and teach His Word. I do not plan to have more back surgery, the Lord willing.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Gene Sawtelle

Classis Action: Take Note. (Rev. Mancilas led in prayer for Reverends Treick and Sawtelle.)

Rev. Jonathan Merica read his Parochial Report

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

In contemplating the power of God in divine providence to direct everything in our lives according to His will, the Word of God calls us to *“Consider the work of God.- for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.”* (Eccles. 7:14) All events and happenings of life are so controlled by the power of God that no man may alter or thwart the counsel of His will. God so wisely mixes prosperity and adversity for the good of His people that they may neither be corrupted and ruined with pride by continual prosperity, nor overwhelmed with despair by uninterrupted adversity.

The Lord’s leading of your servant’s ministry at Providence Reformed Church has been a mixture of prosperity and adversity that is humbling, and yet not overwhelming. The Lord has afforded me many opportunities to proclaim the Word of God. It has been my honor and privilege to preach during the morning and evening worship services and teach the adult Sunday School class each Lord’s Day at Providence Reformed Church. I have also conducted a Tuesday evening Bible Study in Lodi from the books of Galatians and I Peter. Each Thursday in Pleasanton, CA, I have conducted a weekly Bible Study from the book of Romans.

The Lord has blessed Providence Reformed Church with many visitors this past year. Some of the visitors expressed an interest in church membership and your servant has been busily engaged in conducting membership classes. Added to the heavy workload of teaching two weekly Bible studies, an adult Sunday School class and preaching two Lord’s Day messages, I have been busily engaged with counseling, involved in family visitations, hospital visits and endeavoring to keep up with the committee work of the RCUS Synod and Western Classis. I conducted one funeral and performed two weddings this past year.

The Lord granted your servant opportunities to minister His Word in places outside of my local congregation. It was my privilege to give a charge to the congregation of Grace RCUS in Willows at the installation of Tom Mayville last March. I was honored and blessed to preach the morning and evening worship services on Reformation Day, October 31, 1999 at Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield. From time to time I preach to a small group of elderly folk at a local rehabilitation hospital, and I occasionally write sermons for the Sunday edition of the Stockton Record Newspaper.

Providence Reformed Church continues to conduct confirmation classes. This year two covenant children were received by rite of confirmation. Presently, the class size is six in number.

The Grace Reformed Bible Study in Pleasanton is continuing to progress well. The Bible Study began in June of 1998, and it is hoped that the Thursday Bible Study will soon become the beginning of Grace Reformed Chapel with worship services conducted on Sunday afternoon. The core group consists of three individuals and three families. The Chinese Bible Church has graciously consented to allow our group the use of their facility for Lord’s Day worship services. Various means of outreach have been employed. Radio announcements, distribution of flyers, the internet via e-mail and the use of door hangers. Grace Reformed Bible Study has a voice mail box for interested persons to leave a message. An ad in the Tri-Valley yellow pages lists our work in Pleasanton as Grace Reformed Chapel. There are approximately a half million people in the Tri-Valley area, and there is no truly Reformed Church in the area. We are hoping that once we begin worship services more individuals will be interested in attending the Pleasanton work.

Amidst the blessings of the Lord in the work for His kingdom, there have been disappointments as well. Providence Reformed Church lost two of its active elders this year. Elder Steve Wilbur moved out of the area to Olympia, Washington, due to a job transfer. Another elder resigned for personal reasons. Two of our inactive elders, Dean Zoetewey and Case Van Egmond were reactivated.

Providence Reformed Church is now enjoying its eighth year since it organized as a congregation in the RCUS. In that brief history we have seen, in a very practical way, the work of God’s providence in action before our eyes. The Lord has taught us to “...be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and for what is future have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love, since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.” (Heidelberg Catechism, Question 28)

“This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” (Lam. 3:21-23)

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Jonathan Merica, Pastor

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Vernon Pollema read his Parochial Report

Esteemed Brethren:

Temporally and spiritually the Ebenezer Reformed Church of Shafter has been blessed this past year. Three communicant members were received by letter of transfer and two by instruction and profession of faith. The congregation witnessed the confirmation of four of its covenant youth, who, after completing the required course of instruction and having reached the age of accountability, publicly professed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Four covenant children were baptized and three more covenant children received by way of transfer. The congregation was also saddened by the death of three of its aged members but comforted by the fact that the death of a believer is “only a dying to sin and an entering into eternal life” (H.C. #42).

I was blessed with another year of good health and absent from the pulpit only when doing supply preaching at Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, Rehoboth Chapel, La Mirada, or away on vacation. On a couple of those Sundays the congregation was blessed to have one of its own, seminarian Paul Henderson, supply the pulpit. Paul, and his wife, Tina, spent the summer at First Reformed Church, Yuba City, where Paul interned under the Rev. Gene Sawtelle. The internship was financed by Ebenezer. Paul is presently completing his final year at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Dyer, IN.

This past year I began preaching a series of sermons from the prophet Jeremiah and continue to do so this year. The inspired words of Jeremiah to the peoples and nations of his day are as relevant today as they were then, re-affirming that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:16). The sermons have been well received and stimulated me to “preach the word, (to) be instant in season, out of season; (to) reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine” (II Tim. 4:2).

The elders remain vigilant and faithful in their oversight of the preaching and teaching of God’s Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline. Visitation of the sick and infirm is diligently attended to; regular family visitation has been sporadic and continues to need improvement.

The deacons have been diligent in their concern for the outward needs of the church, both locally and beyond. They continue to cultivate a spirit of liberal and cheerful giving.

The past year the consistory has had the added responsibility of the spiritual and administrative oversight of the Rehoboth Chapel, our mission outreach to the LA Basin. This work has increased the membership of Ebenezer by 12 communicant and 4 baptized members. The Rev. Jay Fluck will report further on his labors there. Ebenezer is in the process of amending its constitution to enable the congregation to call Rev Fluck as an assistant, associate or mission pastor for this work

Outreach and evangelism continued this past year through the Grace & Truth Broadcast which airs every Sunday at 8:00 AM over KERI, Bakersfield (1180 AM), and through monthly preaching services in the A, B, & C Chapels of the Corcoran State Prison.

The radio ministry is hard to assess. There are regular listeners and every so often I am surprised and heartened by the comment, “Oh, I listen to you on the radio.”

I also promote the broadcast in the preaching services at CSP, and hear from a good number of inmates that they are listening.

How many listeners there are remains unknown. We pray that God will bless the effort and are encouraged that “*joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance*” (Luke 15:7).

Attendance at the prison chapels continues to be good as well as enthusiastic. Within each yard there are a number of inmates with a knowledge and zeal for the doctrines of sovereign grace and thus a desire and appreciation for Reformed preaching. Inmates Mark Casson and Greg Ramos (communicant members) have teaching positions in their respective institutions and are instrumental in promoting the Reformed faith. Mark continues to take seminary courses through a Distance Learning Program offered by Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS.

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

The Sunday School consists of five classes of children and one class for adults. Among the five classes for children is one for the very young or beginners which is comprised of three to four-year-olds. The children’s classes, except for the oldest class, are using OUR. GUIDE, a curriculum prepared by the Protestant Reformed Churches. The oldest youth class, taught by the elders, is being catechized. The adult class, taught by the pastor, suspended its study of the book to Proverbs to do a study of the book of Daniel.

The present Confirmation Class numbers 4 compared to 7 a year ago, of which 4 were confirmed. The next rite of Confirmation is anticipated in 2001.

The Sunday evening Bible Study meets the first and third Sundays of the month. A new study began on the book of Judges and attendance has increased, although there remains room for improvement. Opportunities for learning and growing in the knowledge of God’s Word must be provided but are also to be sought after.

The fourth Sunday of the month there is a stated evening worship service. Attendance at this service is about half the number attending in the morning.

Vacation Bible School was held June 21-25 with 19 children, divided into five classes, taught by the pastor and volunteer teachers and aids. The early (old) OPC materials are used.

The youth group is now meeting twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesdays. This group is lead and taught by volunteer young couples of the congregation.

The Berean organization is studying the book of Ruth every first Wednesday of the month. They also attempt to come together for (or sponsor) a social each month which have been times of good Christian fellowship.

This year the Ladies’ Society will conclude its monthly study of the *Women of the Old Testament* by Abraham Kuyper. This group remains active in using its gifts for the welfare of the congregation. They arrange the women’s service groups which function throughout the year, oversee the kitchen facilities and supplies, and provide food and meals for the congregation and individual families when the occasion requires it.

The Men’s Christian Fellowship also meets monthly, and for many years has reviewed the latest issue of *The Reformed Herald*. In order to spark new interest and

increase attendance, it has decided to change its format. This will include an opening devotion and prayer by one of the members followed by the presentation and discussion of a current issue or event in the light of God's Word. They also intend to host some social events for the congregation.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:12,13).

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Vernon Pollema

Classis Action: Take Note. (Elder Spitzer led in prayer for Reverends Merica and Pollema.)

Rev. Jim West read his Parochial Report

Dear Fathers and Brethren,

This past Classical year I preached the Gospel twice each Lord's Day, conducted at least two catechism classes each week, taught the men each Wednesday morning at our weekly breakfast from Calvin's *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Also, I conducted several membership classes for adults, who desired to know more about the doctrines of the church. This past year I decided to offer a membership class on Sunday mornings from 9:45-10:30. We began with three adults. Now that this class has been completed, I will be starting a second class with about four other adults. This seems to be a most convenient time for everyone concerned. The results are immediate and no one has to jockey his weekly schedule. What is more, if a visitor cannot be present Sunday morning, it is unrealistic to expect him to attend the church faithfully. In order to make this an up front item, information about the membership class goes into the bulletin virtually every Lord's Day.

This past year I also conducted one funeral service, participated in the confirmation of several young people, distributed the Lord's Supper some 16 times, and baptized five children into the name of the Triune God. As for the preaching ministry, I all but finished preaching through the Gospel of Mark (except for a few passages near the end of the book which I preach when we celebrate the Lord's Supper). Also, I started a series on the Ten Commandments, which is now near completion. Additionally, I preached about fourteen sermons on Christian Apologetics. Our annual Reformation Bible Conference featured three of our own ministers: Frank Walker spoke on The Framework Hypothesis, Dennis Roe on The Creature-Creator Distinction, and yours truly lectured on the Life of Charles Darwin ("the wizard of ooze"). The following Lord's Day your servant preached on Christ: the Mediator of Redemption, in which he tried to show that redemption itself is a new creation. Once again, many visitors attended the conference.

Although the attendance has been historically good at our conferences, the attendance has been particularly good at our morning and evening worship services.

The number of visitors is often staggering and it is virtually impossible for me to meet them all. One of the things we have done (as reported last year) is to establish an Elder's Hospitality Plan. Once a month each elder invites to his house all the visitors present for the worship service. In addition, each elder is assigned a certain number of people in the church to wine and dine. They are told beforehand about the dinner and will be asked to bring a main dish, and salad or dessert. Thus the elders are both in touch with the members and the visitors are in touch with all the church. In addition, the elders visit the members the third Monday of every month. As you can see, all the elders are in the vanguard of the church and are not content to have a "discuss and vote syndrome." During the early part of this year, your servant saw a sign with the sermon title: "The Huddle is Not the Game." I assume that the title had something to do with the Super Bowl. It dawned on me that we are sometimes proficient about the huddle, but forget that the huddle is not the game (or at least, not the *whole* game). I am grateful to God that the leaders in Sacramento realize that "the huddle is not the game."

As for writing, I am thankful that our church published my book called *The Glorious Foundation of Christ* (which is sub-titled, *The Missing Clincher Argument in the Tongue's Debate*). Also, I wrote a critique of Greg Bahnsen's book on Van Tillian Apologetics, an article in R.C. Sproul's *Table Talk*, and in Michael Horton's *Modern Reformation*. It should be noted that I am currently putting the finishing touches on my little booklet *Drinking with Calvin and Luther!*, which is now up to 190 pages. This will be a major expense for whoever is brave enough to publish it. I also started a paper on Paedo-Communion, which I would like to attach to the back of the Classis book, *The Baptism of Infants in the Old and New Covenants*. I am hoping that Classis will give me permission to republish the book myself, but with this addition.

Your servant also had the opportunity to minister the Word of God in Lancaster last year. He was asked to speak several times on the thesis of his book, *The Glorious Foundation of Christ*. He found the questions from the congregation very challenging and discerning. He also was impressed with the pastoral oversight of the church, which he was able to witness first hand.

With regard to Missions, we continue to be active in our work in Grass Valley. Yet, by the grace of God, Covenant Reformed Church of Grass Valley will soon be severing its formal organizational ties with us. They have two elders, with a third about to voted upon. Recently, we also agreed to help our brethren in San Diego, as they have indicated their strong interest in the RCUS. Your servant trekked down to San Diego, conducted two classes for Church membership, with the help of one of our elders interviewed prospective members on another day, and on the Lord's Day these "interviewees" became communicant members. There are now eleven communicant members of Covenant Reformed Church from San Diego (Chula Vista), and six baptized children. The Lord's Day, January 23 was a festive day for all of us, as I preached the Gospel from from the Book of Jonah, and several joined the church and five were baptized. It must also be noted that weeks before that, Mr. and Mrs. Gil Baloy flew up Sacramento, where Gil preached, and he and his wife Maricar were heartily received into communicant membership. Also, on February 13 the Rev. Michael Voytek, who was visiting Westminster Seminary in California in behalf of Synod, preached in San Diego from the prophecy of Habbakuk. He also served them

their very first Lord's Supper. God's people there received his ministry with great enthusiasm. So, please be diligent to spread the word about this new Reformed congregation in San Diego!

It should also be said that the brethren there covet the preaching of other RCUS ministers too. As of this report, two Lord's Days in August are available (the 13th and the 20th).

Unlike some of our ministers, by the grace of God, my health seems to be hardy and hale. I give thanks to God for this, even though mental work does wear me down, sometimes to the point of despair. But when I arise in the morning, I am usually refreshed enough to try to take on the world.

The one prayer request I have pertains to the stickability of so many visitors. While I have remarked already that the attendance is sometimes staggering, there is a danger that the fishing nets may be so full that they may break. Thus the rise of the morning membership class and elder's hospitality. Yet, our goal is not to build a crowd, but to build a church. Pray that our Lord and Savior might add to the numbers of our local church through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Jim West

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. West read the Parochial Report of Rev. Robert Sander

Dear Brethren,

"Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou has done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward. They cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." Psalm 40:5

Betty and I continue to be happy in our new residence in San Jose, California. This is a guarded community for those fifty-five and older. It is in the hills on the east side of San Jose. We qualified being 78 and 79 years old. The community is called the Villages. We have been well physically, except when I fell backward and broke my right arm below the wrist. We seem to be visiting a physician or a dentist or an audiologist or an orthodontist or a chiropractor during every month.

Now we must get down to the real purpose of this report, that is, my labors in Christ's vineyard. I continue to preach the precious gospel of Christ's grace whenever I am called upon to do so. All my messages this past year have been delivered to either a Reformed Church in the U.S. or in an Orthodox Presbyterian Church. They have been 28 in number in six different cities. The distance traveled around trip has been from 30 to 600 miles. It is a privilege to preach God's infallible Word at anytime, especially when the congregations are so receptive.

I will close with saying my desire and prayer is for my Lord and Saviour to continue to use me.

In His marvelous grace.
Rev. Robert Sander

Classis Action: Take Note. (Elder Peery led in prayer for Reverends West and Sander.)

Rev. Jay Fluck read his Parochial Report

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

What a wonderful day was June 20, 1999! We had been constituted by action of Synod, Classis and Consistory as of June 1st, but that day we were publicly received into membership, baptized three of our children and celebrated the Lord's Supper for the first time in more than a year. Since then Rehoboth Chapel has met each Lord's Day and I have proclaimed God's word both morning and evening. I have also taught Sunday School finishing the Heidelberg Catechism, studying through Joshua and Judges, and most recently embarking on a study of the Belgic Confession.

The year has seen three families leave, one of our eldest saints be called to glory, as well as a new family and two singles come. This has meant both encouragement and discouragement; both have been measured out to us by the hand of our gracious king.

We continue to meet in our home, which is not the best of situations but certainly is the cheapest. We have begun advertising in local papers, writing "letters to the Editor", taping "meditation at mid-day for the local Family Radio station as often as they will allow. We have done a measure of door-to-door calling as well as recalling old friendships to make our presence known. The congregation continues to invite friends, relatives, and compatriots to worship and some come. One of the "single" young men now coming is family to one of our member families.

We administer the Lord's Supper each second month, and Baptism as appropriate. Consistory believes that the Word is consistently proclaimed. Consistory is also wrestling with a change in the congregational constitution to allow the calling of a "Missionary Pastor", which would further regularize my status. As it is I remain Regular Supply to Rehoboth Chapel.

I cannot leave this report without our (and my) thanks to Classis for your aid and support in this year. Nor can I leave it without a plea for your continued prayer for us with sage counsel regarding this work. I do not desire to draw off more money than we can afford. I love this small group, but it is small and Los Angeles is expensive. While we have met the expected contributions for this past year, it remains to be shown whether or not we will be able to continue to do so.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Jay E. Fluck

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Gary Mancilas read his Parochial Report

Esteemed Brethren,

In our Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism, question number fifty-four asks, “What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Catholic Church?” And the answer reads “That, out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, the Son of God, by His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion, in the unity of the true faith”

The visible church consists of God’s covenant people. As covenant members, we profess that the Reformed Faith is most consistent with the Word of God. Therefore, in keeping with our profession, we are to be thankful to God that He has revealed by grace this precious “*true faith*” to us, and we must be diligent in proclaiming this precious “*true faith*” to others. As members of the visible Church, our prayer should always be that God would continue to gather from out of the world, through His Son and through His Spirit and Word, His chosen people, a holy communion “*in the unity of the true faith*.” Moreover, as members of the visible Church, we have been called to be active and determined to do the will of God as in service to Him by taking the Reformed Faith to our communities.

God continues to use His people at Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster to spread the gospel. To this end, they have been willing to take the opportunities that God has given to reach others for His glory, knowing that “... *we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” Ephesians 2:10

As your servant in Lancaster, it has been my joy that it has pleased our sovereign God for me to serve one more year among the saints at our Lancaster congregation. It is because of the faithfulness of our RCUS churches that God’s people in Lancaster have been able to proclaim the Reformed Faith to others in the Antelope Valley. Our motive for others to hear the Reformed faith should always be that God receive the glory. As God enables us as His humble servants to manifest to others what it means to be Reformed, we know God too can enable others to find delight in the comfort of trusting in a sovereign God, as we have. It has been this motive to glorify our God that has moved us to be active in such a manner as to proclaim the gospel, and it has been only by the grace of God that has enabled us to persevere to take the truth to others even when at times it resulted in bringing reproach, contempt, and adversity on some of us. But more importantly, we need to always keep before us that whatever we have done for His kingdom has only been our duty to do, “*All to the glory of God*” (1 Cor. 10:31).

The witness of the true gospel in Lancaster continues only by God’s grace; the gospel has been preached every Lord’s Day this past year. As a congregation, we are praying that God will continue to renew our commitment and zeal for personal and church outreach to our families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and to our community at large with the gospel message and Reformed Faith. In an effort toward evangelism, the Rev. Jim West was invited to give lectures on “The Glorious Foundation of Christ,” at our Missionfest Conference November 6 and 7. The community was also invited.

On April 18, 1999 the service for my ordination and installation took place at Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster. It is with profound appreciation and joy that I

express my gratitude to all who came out to celebrate with the Lancaster Church and me at this solemn occasion. It was an honor that the Rev. Frank Walker presided over the “Charge to the Pastor-elect” and the Rev. Vernon Pollema presided over the “Charge to the Congregation.” During my ordination labors, especially the three months of 1999, I cherished your prayers and support. You were a great source of strength and encouragement to our congregation, my family and me.

In my labors, your servant performed the required administrative duties; taught the covenant youth preparing them for confirmation; visited the sick, carried out pastoral counseling and personal and family counseling sessions and family visitation. My wife Gloria and I had the privilege of hosting God’s covenant people in our home as time permitted. In addition to duties in Lancaster, your servant served as a member of Classical and Synodical Committees.

Currently Grace Reformed Church has two (2) acting elders and two (2) acting deacons, with an additional elder and deacon to be ordained. It is an answer to prayer that God has blessed us with elders in the Consistory and Spiritual Council who have a true love and concern for the sheep and who are men of the Word and prayer. They are vigilant in their oversight of the preaching and teaching of God’s Word. It is also in answer to prayer that the Lord has blessed our congregation with deacons who are laboring among us to promote the welfare of the Church. To God be the glory.

“The marks by which a true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the Gospel is preached therein; If it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; If Church discipline is exercised...” In observation, your servant preached from the Lancaster pulpit forty-nine (49) times, the Lord’s Supper was celebrated four (4) times, and one (1) covenant infant was baptized. In addition, our elders exercised faithfully the Office of the Keys. Two discipline cases ended with the judicial erasure of two (2) families. The Spiritual Council continues to concern itself with the careless and wayward. We thank God that the discipline through the preaching of the Word has brought spiritual growth to God’s people, and a good spirit prevails among the members.

This past year, the Consistory dismissed two (2) communicate members and their family by *Certificate of Dismissal* to the congregation of Covenant Presbyterian Church, OPC, Forest, Mississippi. It is with praise and thanksgiving that the Lord blessed by adding seven (7) communicant members, three (3) by profession of faith and four (4) by confirmation, which has increased the total membership to thirty-eight (38). Several families have expressed a desire to receive instruction for the purpose of joining with us in membership.

Additional opportunities are made available to advance the congregation in personal and spiritual understanding. Bible studies are held every other week, during which time we use “*Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still*” as a textbook. A study on “Introduction to Systematic Theology” is taught the alternate week. Sunday school classes are conducted for all ages each Sunday. With much interest, the adult class, taught by your servant, has been going through a Bible survey. Our Sunday school has become better organized with the appointment of a Sunday school superintendent. In keeping God’s commandments, our congregation also ministered to one another by faithfulness to the worship services, which have been well attended. The congregation also continues to be committed to the hearing of the Word and the Reformed Faith.

Prayer meetings are held on the first and third Sundays following worship service. The reports of answered prayers have been encouraging to us all.

Under the oversight of the elders and deacons, the Ladies' Auxiliary continued to meet monthly. The ladies also meet for a monthly Bible study taught by your servant, who instructs the ladies in their covenantal roles as women.

Further, our covenant youth are seeking to learn more of the Reformed Faith through Bible studies and Heidelberg Camp, of which four (4) youth attended in 1999. Upon return, they each reported their appreciation for the camp and that they were taught the Word of God, along with fellowshiping with other RCUS youth. They, indeed, are looking forward to our next camp.

Again this past year, we praise God that we were able to meet our budgeted financial obligations. In 1998, the Lancaster Consistory budgeted for 1999 to meet the full amount of our Classical and Synodical guidelines for giving. It is in our budget for the year of 2000 to once again reduce both Classical and Synodical financial aid. This would reduce our net drain on Synod and Classis resources from *Nine Thousand Dollars (\$9,000)* to almost *Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000)*. It is our fervent prayer and hope that in a short time we shall become self-supporting. We are persuaded that God will meet our needs if we remain faithful in doctrine and life.

As always, the saints at Lancaster desire to express their sincere gratitude and heartfelt thankfulness to the churches of the RCUS through the Synod, Western Classis and to Ebenezer Reformed Church of Shafter for their monthly support that makes it possible for us to continue proclaiming the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our congregation has also been faithful in giving financially, and continues to be encouraged in faithful giving. Therefore, it is, once again, with great joy in Christ that we come to Classis this year asking for a reduced amount of financial aid from both Classis and Synod. From Classis, we are respectfully requesting up to *Three Hundred and Thirty-five Dollars (\$335)* per month, realizing a reduction of *One Hundred and Sixty-five Dollars (\$165)* per month from last year's aid. From Synod, we are respectfully requesting *Eight Hundred and Thirty-five Dollars (\$835)* per month, realizing a reduction of *One Hundred and Sixty-five Dollars (\$165)* per month from last year's aid. For your consideration, we have provided Classis with a three-year budget, reflecting a reduction of Classical and Synodical aid for each year and full amount of our financial obligation to Synod and Classis (Attachment "A").

On October 7, 1999, the Lord providentially took our son-in-law, John Sanchez, to be present with Him in glory. John was a member of First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of San Francisco, of which the Rev. Charles McIlhenny is pastor. Our daughter, Melanie, who still holds her membership in San Francisco, is living with us at this time. We, again, express our sincere appreciation to all of you who blessed us with your care and concern during this time. God's grace is sufficient

Respectfully submitted in Christ,
Pastor Gary Mancilas

Classis Action: The report was referred to Benevolences Committee. (Rev. Clark led in prayer for Reverends Fluck and Mancilas.)

Rev. Frank Walker read is Parochial Report

Brethren:

It is with great joy that I present my fifth parochial report to the Western Classis of the Reformed Church. The Lord has been gracious to your servant and to Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield. Great is His faithfulness!

The matters that were of concern to me last year (viz., complaints about the length of the worship service and sermons being too pedantic) do not seem to be issues anymore. As I mentioned in my last report, I had exhorted our members to consider what they are really saying when they complain about the length of the service, and I have worked hard to prepare sermons that address the congregation's needs from Scripture. To both of these, I believe the congregation has responded very positively, evidencing that the Word of God has taken deep root in the lives of the people.

This change of attitude in the congregation made it possible for the Consistory to begin a new Bible study in the southwest part of Bakersfield with the hope of using this to start a daughter congregation. We are advertising this both in the newspaper and on the radio (the newspaper ad seems to be the most effective). Many contacts have been made as a result, and our average attendance is between fifteen and thirty. The greatest joy for me personally is to see how our people are supporting the work both financially and in their prayers. We are anxious to see how the Lord will prosper the work in the future.

One thing that has probably affected our church more than anything else began last February when the Lord laid in on the hearts of a few women to start praying for our church. This small group, rarely more than three or four, gets together one afternoon every other week to thank the Lord for his goodness and to lift up our needs as a congregation. Following their example, a second prayer group formed in the fall. This one, composed of men and women, gathers for prayer at 6:30 AM each Tuesday morning and then has breakfast together. I believe that the Lord has blessed our church richly through the prayers of his people.

We also had the privilege of jointly hosting Synod last year with the Shafter congregation. Everything ran very smoothly. The ladies did an outstanding job planning, preparing and serving the meals. Travel and housing were well coordinated. Indeed, the entire congregation worked together beautifully, exemplifying the doctrine of the communion of the saints which we hold so dearly.

As pastor, I continue to preach and teach the Word of God at stated times and when opportunities are available. In my preaching this past year we covered the following: Philippians, Nehemiah, the parables of Christ, and the importance of evangelism. We also had special sermons for the church holidays and Communion. Sunday school lessons focused on Ecclesiastes, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and Hebrews. Our afternoon Bible studies (first and third Sundays) cover a greater variety of subjects. The southwest Bible study has been exploring 1 Thessalonians. I also taught one membership class, Vacation Bible School and a class on hermeneutics (principles and practice of interpreting the Bible). This past year (and especially the last four or five months) I have been busier with counseling than at any other time

since my ordination. At times I feel rather drained spiritually, but the Lord has always sustained me in this as well.

In addition to my duties as pastor of Grace Reformed Church, I also serve as Stated Clerk of Synod and as chairman of the Candidates and Credentials Committee of Classis. Both of these positions are rewarding but very time-consuming, especially the former. I am truly honored that the brethren have given me these responsibilities.

One of the highlights of this past year was the opportunity to address the Framework Hypothesis at the annual conference of the Sacramento congregation in October. My first lecture was basically a critique of the three articles written by Kline and Futato in defense of the Framework. Though both Kline and Futato deny having been influenced by modern language philosophy, their approach to the first chapter of Genesis is very similar to it. Indeed, they appear to be “playing games” with Scripture — playing games is a theme of language philosophy, which Calvin warned against more than four hundred years ago. The second lecture focused on the purpose of Christ’s mediatorial role in creation, especially as it affects the church.

The statistics of the congregation reveal the following: two confirmations, one profession of faith, two transfer to other congregations, eleven erasures, and one death. The net result is eleven fewer communicant members this year than last year. Our communicant membership now stands at one hundred and twenty-six. The financial statistics show both an increase in income and an even greater increase in expenses. The increase in expenses is primarily caused by two things: building improvements and significantly higher Classical guidelines. Last year our Classical guidelines rose by almost 50 percent (from \$84.00 per communicant member to \$125.00). This increase alone accounts for \$5,740.00. We have encouraged our people to keep in mind that these guidelines are a necessary part of the ministry of the Word.

In conclusion, I look forward to serving in Bakersfield for another year. The congregation has received my work well and I appreciate the wonderful fellowship that we have in Christ.

In the service of the Savior,
Rev. Frank H. Walker

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Dennis Roe read his Parochial Report

Mr. President and Co-laborers of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Warmest Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all our sins. I thank God that He has enabled me to be in my fifth year ministering the Word of God among God’s people in the Grass Valley and Nevada City area.

I report the following regarding the congregation and my ministry on behalf of Christ in Grass Valley:

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

I continue to proclaim God’s Word in an expository manner each Lord’s Day. This past year I finished a series of messages on the Ten Commandments and began a new series of messages on The Epistles of John. I am presently in the 4th chapter of 1 John. In this first Epistle we are reminded over and over again of the necessity to love one another as a reflection of true love for God. Our morning worship service averages approximately eighty in attendance. We continued our practice of holding a fellowship luncheon after the morning service. However, on the last Sunday of the month, we now forgo this practice in order to invite a family or families to our homes for more personal fellowship. We call this last Lord’s Day of each month “Hospitality Sunday”. These times have been a source of joy and encouragement as we have grown in our friendships and love for one another.

I finished a series on Church History in the Adult Bible Class and then began a study on the Book of Romans. In our other Bible classes, Nancy Richert teaches the preschool class, Julie Roe teaches our first through fifth graders, Elder Steven Richert teaches the Jr. High through High School aged children. In the summer, we had a separate class for the high school students taught by Chris Caughey. We employed a number of Bible class curricula—J. R. Beeke (on the Catechism), Great Commission Publications, and Paul Treick’s study on the Old Testament. Our Sunday morning Bible classes are not well attended in spite of the excellent material offered.

Our catechetical instruction continues on Thursday afternoons at our home. We began our new class in September and are on the second section of the catechism. We have nine students enrolled. In August eight students recited Questions 1-43 before the elders and the congregation. Please pray that God the Holy Spirit will make this the life long confession of their faith in Christ.

We also have a family Bible study in the home of one of our members on the first and third Friday evenings of each month. I am leading in a study on the Book of Revelation. These are fairly well attended with lively participation by all who come. (No, our study guide is not *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey!)

We held a number of special services throughout the year with guest speakers. Dr. Paul Lindstrom of Christian Liberty Academy and Pastor Jonathan Merica of Providence RCUS came for our Reformation Bible conference in January. We were happy to welcome Rev. Sardar Din, missionary to Pakistan, to our home and congregation in August. His visits are always a refreshing encouragement to our souls.

I will be remiss if I do not mention the labors of Elder Steven Richert, who faithfully provided pulpit supply in my absence. He is an invaluable asset to the Lord’s work in Grass Valley. Also, his wife Nancy has helped organize a ladies’ meeting once a month, called “Women Encouraging Women.” The mothers and daughters meet to learn a new craft or homemaking skill each month, and one of the ladies leads in devotions.

We continue to hold services at a local nursing home in the afternoon on the third Sunday of each month. This usually consists of a hymn sing and a short devotional message. The residents, who are shut-ins, and the staff, frequently express their appreciation to us for this ministry. We are happy to have this opportunity to serve the Lord in this manner.

In addition to preaching in Grass Valley, I had the opportunity to preach four times

for the local radio station, KEBR.

I also enjoyed the privilege of filling the pulpit at CRC of Sacramento on numerous occasions.

As chaplain for the 25th Infantry Division Association, I spoke at its annual memorial service which was held at the Valley Forge National Park in Pennsylvania this past September. This year marked the 50th anniversary of the Association. The memorial service was attended by approximately 300 veterans and family members.

As well, my responsibilities also consisted of numerous membership classes, premarital counseling sessions, many personal and family counseling sessions, and calling upon members and non-members in their homes. In order to further the maturity of our congregation, I provided deacon and elder training.

In June, I had the joyous privilege to conduct the marriage ceremony of Dale and Elizabeth Pettyjohn. We now eagerly await the birth of their new baby in March

II. THE MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENTS

We celebrated the Lord's Supper once each month.

I baptized one covenant child, Bailey Renee Caughey, daughter of Chris and Tiffany.

III. THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS

Humanly speaking, you can say this was not a year of growth for us. We lost ten communicant members, four by dismissal and six by erasure or discipline. We know that God does not measure the growth of a person or congregation by physical size or quantity. We trust these matters to the good providence of our Sovereign God who orders all things according to the counsel of His own will. (I will add, that in January of this year, we received four communicant members and baptized two covenant children.)

Presently we do have one discipline case being adjudicated. Please pray for a godly resolution of this matter.

I thank God for Spiritual Council and Consistory of Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church. Their oversight an invaluable source of wise council and encouragement.

IV. MISC. DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES

On behalf of Synod, I began serving in a new capacity as chairman of its Web Site Committee and continued to serve on its Home Missions Committee. My work involved with the Web Site Committee has proven to be extremely time consuming. However, it has already shown itself to be an asset in supporting the ministry of the RCUS. I have had numerous favorable comments from some of our pastors and elders throughout the U.S. that visitors and new members have come as a result of seeing our web site. The Home Missions Committee necessitated trips to Chico and Yuba City to visit our mission congregations, as well as a trip to Modesto.

On a Classical level, I serve on our Candidates and Credentials and Home Missions Committees. Although these committees have not involved much work in the past year, it was necessary to make a trip to San Diego.

I continued to serve as General Secretary for Westminster Biblical Missions. I made no international trips during 1999, but did travel twice to the East Coast for board meetings. I am happy to report that I have not had to miss any Lord's Day services because of these trips. The Lord willing, I will continue in this service.

(Matthew 9:37-38 "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord to send out laborers into His harvest.")

V. CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT

This past year, on the one hand, was a very difficult one, as the congregation faced its first cases of discipline. God's discipline is not pleasurable, as we all know, and it is often painful for a season. But it is necessary for our spiritual well being and we trust that our Sovereign God will bring good even out of this adversity (Romans 8:28-31, Hebrews 12:4-17). On the other hand, this past year was an exciting one as we were faced with the challenges of securing our own building. It was humbling to see how God wonderfully provided and we were able close on the purchase January 14 of this year. I give deepest thanks to the congregation in Grass Valley, as well as to the congregation and officers in Sacramento, and to our brothers and sisters of the Western Classis of the RCUS for your extraordinary commitment of prayer, counsel, time and finances in helping us secure the building. We look forward to moving to our new home in April or May.

VI. PERSONAL

I must say the past year was rather difficult for me personally. My family, especially my dear wife, began the year continuing to care for my grandmother in our home who was suffering from cancer and Alzheimer's disease. She passed away in February. Later in the year my mother became ill from asthma and died rather suddenly of respiratory complications.

Of great sadness to my soul was the lightning strike and subsequent death five months later of my dear young friend, David Bristley, the son of Eric and Kathey Bristley. My family and I have wept with his parents and we can only begin to share their grief. We shall sorely miss him.

However, these deaths were not as trying to me as were the discipline matters within the church.

This past year has been one of deep waters and finery trials, yet what a comfort to know God's all sufficient grace and His presence with us. God has supplied in our time of need.

After this season of discouragement (caused more by my own sin and lack of faith), I am greatly encouraged about the ministry in Grass Valley. My hand is on the plow, my eyes are looking straight ahead, and by God's grace, I remain your servant in Christ.

May the Lord bless us greatly as we labor together in His kingdom.

Respectfully,
Rev. Dennis E. Roe, Pastor

Classis Action: Take Note. (Rev. Merica led in prayer for Reverends Walker and Roe.)

Rev. Dale Clark read his Parochial Report

Esteemed Brothers in Christ:

"It is good to give thanks to the Lord; And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, And your faithfulness every night," Psalm.92:1 2

We give our great and, faithful God all the praise and glory for this year that has passed. By His mighty hand he has kept us and sustained us in spite of our failings and shortcomings. He has given us the strength and encouragement to continue.

This past year has been a year of steady work in serving the church. By God's, grace growth has happened spiritually and physically within the congregation and myself. Paul calls us to not grow weary in doing good, and to some extent there has been weariness in the service of Christ, yet joy also as lights click on over some new understanding in others and one's self.

I have preached 49 times this year in Chico and once Anderson and a few times in Willows. I finished the series of sermons on 1 Corinthians and then did a series on the Ordo Salutis with a few extra sermons that fit into the theme. Three sermons on the attributes of God and three Advent and Christmas sermons rounded out the year. Since the New Year I have started a series on the Ten Commandments.

We also have Sunday School and this fall we finished R. B. Kuiper's book "*The Glorious Body of Christ*." It would have been better if more had attended, but it was an excellent book with much to teach us. David Helseth and I shared the teaching of this book. Since then we have started to work on a History of the Church. I have been teaching this one and the plan is to work through the Old Testament, then take a break, follow with the New Testament and continue with history to the present with other breaks to relieve boredom if any should arise.

We changed the day we meet this summer to try and include more people from Thursday to Sunday evening. This has worked out better as some from Paradise also join us to sing the praises of our God, pray and study. We finished the book of Hosea on Thursdays and started to study Revelation. The reasoning was with Y2K and other events happening in Chico a Reformed view was needed.

Other ways I have been active in the greater church has been serving on Classis and Synod committees, Church Unity, Christian Education and Diaconal. I have also opened a City Council Meeting with an invocation.

One of our members has undergone two major surgeries this year and is now recovering from the last one. Other sickness has affected us, one family was absent for a month with the flu and Thomas, my son, has had a continual headache that only recently are we getting some sort of idea of why he has it.

At present there are 15 communicant members and 4 non communicant members. This includes one person who has moved away and two who were received into membership in November. There are 5 more in a member's class with 2 children in tow. One more family is attending on a fairly regular basis and another family on a sporadic basis. David Helseth was elected as an elder for Grace Reformed Church and is intending to be married. His fiancée is planning on attending and joining following this joyous event. All of this has occurred without much success in a more active outreach into the community. They have come to us by various means.

Additional statistics are also encouraging. Financially we have received in tithes and offerings \$5,553 more than was budgeted for this past year. This has come mainly as a result of visitors and especially those who have joined or are joining. Many of

those who are now attending are from or have had an association with the PCA Church in Paradise, which has had its troubles of late. But there are more visitors as a whole. The number of visitors in attendance has been, by quarter, 16, 34, 31, and 58. This past year attendance has been up. Average attendance has been over 18 for the year compared to nearly 16 last year. But in the last quarter the average was almost 23.

The composition of the congregation. is still mainly mid-life and older. There are only my 4 children and one family with two children and two families with teenage daughters, one of whom comes sporadically. We do need younger families to bring stability and longer term growth. This however is from our human perspective.

This past year we have been advertising in the local paper twice a month since April. These ads were the same ads used the previous year on the five Solas of the Reformation. Last year they didn't seem to do anything, but this year many of the visitors marked on their Visitor Cards that the paper ad was how they heard of us. Others came as a result of the Yellow Pages ad and others by word of mouth from friends who were attending. We hung about 800 door hangers in the area of the place where we meet, but have seen nothing from this activity. We will continue to do this.

My concern is for the University. It is not just the students but also the faculty, which needs to hear the gospel. We have had very few students come, though there are some contacts through one of the members. We looked into office space near the University to start something, but financially we are not able to do this at this time.

The activities of the congregation have been Sunday morning worship at 10:00 preceded by a Bible class for everyone. This has worked fairly well and some of the new people are attending regularly. Times of fellowship have been planned for each month. Soup Salad Sandwich **Lunch** is a time following the service on the first Sunday of the month when we have a lunch together. Since the summer we have not had monthly fellowship meals, but we hope to have fewer of them, but better planned with more notice in advance. This year has also seen us seeking to resolve a difference in understanding over the call to the pastor. This has been accomplished and we press on to do the work Christ has set for us.

There has been spiritual growth in the members, but more is always the desire. One area that we struggle with is the organic connections between the members. We have tried but nothing has so far caused this social/organic union. The years of relative inactivity have simply persisted. Some movement has happened but not nearly enough.

In terms of goals for the future, the main one is to come before Classis in 2001 and request to be made a congregation of the RCUS. To this end we need to have officers and a constitution. Some of the preliminary work has been done for this. We are also restructuring and organizing the local men to have them, under the oversight of the Willows Consistory, organized to do more of the work. This would be a training ground for officers and get every male member involved in the functions of the church. There will be three committees, Financial, Outreach, and Diaconal. The ladies, are also to be grouped together to deal, with the social aspects to the congregation. We also desire to reduce our Classical and Synodical dependence starting in the 2002. We look to our Great High Priest and King to accomplish these things.

We as a congregation want to thank the Classis for their prayers and financial aid. Our God has been faithful and provided more than we deserve. It is by His grace that we continue to labor, trusting Him for the increase, spiritually and physically. To Him belongs all the praise and glory for this past year as ever.

Respectfully submitted
Rev. Dale Clark

Classis Action: Take Note. (Rev. Pollema led in prayer for Rev. Clark.)

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ELDERS – Article 81

The President addressed the Questions of Article 81 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States to the Elder Delegates of each congregation.

The following answers were given:

1. *Are the doctrines of the gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God?* All answered “Yes.”
2. *Is careful attention given to the instruction of the your for confirmation, the reception of members into the Church, and The Christian nurture of the members?* All answered “Yes” except for Anderson, “Yes, with the exception of Confirmation.”
3. *In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:*
 - a. *Is visitation faithfully performed?* All answered “Yes” with the exception of Lancaster and Shafter, “Needs improvement.”
 - b. *Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution?* All answered “Yes” except Anderson, “Working diligently to correct weaknesses.”
4. *Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution?* All answered “Yes.”
5. *In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship:*
 - a. *Are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?* All answered “Yes.”
 - b. *Are these monies sent promptly to the Classis treasurer?* All answered “Yes.”
 - c. *Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?* All answered “Yes” with the exception of Modesto, “No.”
 - d. *Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer?* All answered “Yes.”
6. *Are the Church records properly kept?* All answered “Yes.”
- 7a. *Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge?* All answered “Yes.”
- 7b. *Is the temporal contract between minister and people adequate to meet his temporal needs?* All answered “Yes.”

REPORT OF MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

The Stated Clerk handed out the report on statistics as they were sent to him. These appear in the Appendix of this Abstract with changes made at the meeting.

REPORTS FROM CLASSIS’ FRATERNAL DELEGATES

Rev. Jonathan Merica reported on his fraternal visit to the Presbytery of Northern California, OPC hosted by Oak Hill OPC meeting March 19-20, 1999 at Murphys Camp, CA.

Rev. Jonathan Merica read a letter sent to the Presbytery of Southern California, OPC meeting October 15-16, 1999 in Westminster, CA.

Rev. Vernon Pollema gave a report on being an Observer from the Western Classis

to the Classis Southwest U.S. of the Federation of United Reformed Churches in North America meeting September 20-21, 1999 at First United Reformed Church in Chino, CA.

Rev. Neale Riffert gave a report on his fraternal visit to the Presbytery of Northern California, OPC meeting September 24-25, 1999 at New Covenant OPC in South San Francisco, CA.

Rev. Gary Mancilas gave a report on his fraternal visit to the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA meeting February 25-26, 2000 at First Reformed Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, AZ.

E. Zane Wood reported on his fraternal visit to the Presbytery of Southern California OPC, meeting February 4-5, 2000 at Grace OPC in Carson, CA.

ADDRESSES FROM DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS

Rev. Calvin Malcor, Associate Pastor of Covenant OPC of San Jose, representing the Presbytery of Northern California, OPC, brought fraternal greetings to the Classis. Rev. Dennis Roe responded on behalf of the Western Classis.

Rev. John McFarland, Pastor of Christ Our King Fellowship of Orange, California, representing the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, brought fraternal greetings to the Classis. Rev. Frank Walker responded on behalf of the Western Classis.

Rev. Alrick Headley, Pastor of Zion United Reformed Church of Ripon, CA, an observer from the Southwest Classis of the United Reformed Churches of North America, addressed the Classis. Rev. Vernon Pollema responded on behalf of Classis.

EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATE

On Wednesday, March 8, following the morning devotions time, Mr. Guillermo (Gil) Baloy presented himself for a partial licensure examination. Mr. Baloy is a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary in California (M.Div in 1991). He and his family live in the San Diego metro area and he has been exhorting in a small independent group of believers meeting in Chula Vista. Following contact with our Executive Committee, this group of people have indicated their desire to become a part of the Western Classis of the RCUS. The Baloy family has joined Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento, which has taken the oversight of the mission in Chula Vista.

Gil is desirous of becoming a minister in the RCUS and has requested the examination. He was given a satisfactory preliminary examination by the Candidates and Credentials Committee and has been placed on the Roll of Students Under Care of Classis for the ministry via Executive Circular.

Mr. Baloy gave the Wednesday morning devotion/sermon as partial fulfillment of his licensure examination. Because of the length of time that he has been out of Seminary he has requested that he only receive a partial examination at this meeting of Classis, and will receive the remainder at a later date to be announced.

The Special Order of the Day for this examination began at 10:30 AM on

Wednesday. He was examined for 15 minutes in Prolegomena (Rev. Walker); 15 minutes in Theology Proper (Rev. Walker); 15 minutes in Anthropology (Rev. Roe); 15 minutes in Christology (Rev. Roe); 15 minutes in Soteriology (Rev. Roe); 15 minutes in Ecclesiology (Rev. Treick); 15 minutes in Eschatology (Rev. Treick); 25 minutes in Church History (Rev. West); 20 minutes in Apologetics (Rev. West); and 20 minutes in Historical Philosophy (Rev. West). Questions from the floor were allowed after the completion of various sections of the examination.

The examination results are presented in the report of the Standing Committees – Examination and Licensure Committee – found later in this Abstract.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

There were no Special Committees appointed by last year's Classis, and, thus there are no reports at this year's meeting.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

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

A. Examination and Licensure Committee

1. That Mr. Jerry Loverin, a member of Trinity Reformed Church of Modesto, CA, be placed on the roll of Students Under Care of the Western Classis.
2. That the Western Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS to provide Mr. Jerry Loverin with \$3,000 tuition and \$250 for books to attend Mid-America Reformed Seminary.
3. That the book allowance for Mr. Jerry Loverin be supplemented by \$250 from the funds of the Western Classis.
4. That the partial licensure examination of Mr. Gil Baloy be sustained.
5. That Mr. Gil Baloy prepare for the remainder of his licensure exam in the areas of English Bible, Reformed Hermeneutics, the Original Languages of Scripture, RCUS Standards, and Practica; and that he present a written sermon and two theological papers (one exegetical and one topical).
6. That Mr. Gil Baloy be re-examined in the areas of Theology Proper, Christology, Soteriology, and Ecclesiology for his ordination examination.

B. Excuses Committee

1. That Elder Cornelis Van Egmond be excused from the March 8th session of Classis.
 2. That Elder Richard Fay be excused from the March 9th session of Classis.
- In both cases, Secundus Delegates were present to fill their positions.

C. Finances Committee

1. That travel expenses be paid in the following manner:

Mr. Greg Stewart	178 miles	\$35.60
Rev. Jim West	180 miles	36.00
Rev. Jay Fluck	757 miles	151.40
Mr. Steven Richert	200 miles	40.00
Rev. Frank Walker	480 miles	96.00
Rev. Gene Sawtelle	150 miles	30.00
Rev. Robert Sander	210 miles	42.00
Mr. Jeff Mills	735 miles	147.00
Rev. Dennis Roe	200 miles	40.00
Mr Chris Fellersen	70 miles	14.00
Mr. Michael Peery	394 miles	78.80
Rev. Neale Riffert	380 miles	76.00
Rev. Gary Mancilas	674 miles	<u>134.80</u>
Total		\$921.60

2. That Mr. Baloy’s travel expense of \$14 be paid for 70 miles.
 3. That Providence Reformed Church of Lodi be paid \$1000 for lodging expenses incurred for hosting the 15th Session of the Western Classis, which is less than 50% of the actual cost of housing the delegates.
 4. That the *Classical Guideline for Giving* (per communicant member) in the 2000-2001 Classical year be as follows:

Classical Dues	\$12.00
Benevolences	\$37.00
Home Missions	\$63.00
Publications	\$00.00
Building Fund	\$8.00
Heidelberg Camp	<u>\$00.00</u>
Total	\$120.00

D. Judicial Committee

1. That Classis return all rights of publication for the volume, *The Baptism of Infants in the Old and New Testaments*, to the Rev. Jim West.

E. Minutes of Synod Committee

1. The committee found nothing to bring to the attention of the Classis and made no recommendations.

F. Missions Committee

1. That the Western Classis provide \$9450.00 from the Western Classis Home Missions Fund for Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico, CA, for the next classical year.
 2. That the Western Classis petition the RCUS Synod to provide \$8400 for Covenant

- Reformed Chapel, Chico, CA, for the next synodical year.
 3. That the Western Classis continue to provide \$1,985 per month for Home Mission support of Rehoboth Chapel for the next classical year.
 4. That the Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod to continue supporting Rehoboth Chapel at \$14,200 per year for the next synodical year, and that the Western Classis Home Missions Committee support this overture with a letter to earnestly appeal to the Synod to continue its support of this vital mission effort.
 5. That Rehoboth Chapel continue to diligently seek an adequate place to conduct worship services.
 6. That our congregations be kept apprized of the fledgling works in Pleasanton, South Bakersfield, and San Diego that they may be lifted up in prayer before the Throne of Grace.
 7. That the Consistories of Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento, and Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, be commended for taking up the oversight of Covenant Reformed Chapel (formerly Gospel Presbyterian Fellowship) of San Diego and Rehoboth Chapel, respectively.
 8. That note be taken that Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto, will be fully self-supporting at the end of this year, and that prayerful thanksgiving be rendered to God for His blessings upon the congregation, and for their continued strengthening in their kingdom labor.

G. Nominations Committee

1. Classis approved the following Permanent Committees:
 Executive Committee: Jim West, Paul Treick, Wayne Johnson
 Candidates and Credentials Committee: D. Roe, P. Treick (3 yrs); F. Walker, R. Fay (2 yrs); J. West, R. Spitzer (1 yr)
 Missions Committee: J. Merica, F. Walker (3 yrs); N. Riffert, E. Merz (2 yrs); D. Roe, M. Peery (1 yr)
 Christian Education in the Church: V. Pollema, R. Fay (3 yrs); J. Fluck, G. Mancilas (2 yrs); D. Clark, J. Mills (1 yr)
 Interchurch Relations Committee: J. Merica, G. Mancilas (3 yrs); N. Riffert, E. Merz (2 yrs); T. Mayville, D. Mettler (1 yr)
 Publications Committee: W. Johnson, D. Clark (3 yrs); T. Mayville, M. Peery (2 yrs); V. Pollema, T. Van Tol (1 yr)
 Diaconal Committee: V. Pollema, R. Eddington (3 yrs); J. Fluck, W. Stricker (2 yrs); R. Sander, C. Van Egmond (1 yr)
 Heidelberg West Youth Camp Committee: T. Mayville, S. Richert (3 yrs); P. Treick, G. Stewart (2 yrs); N. Riffert, G. Williams (1 yr)
 (Indicates chairman)

H. Benevolences Committee

1. That the Western Classis petition Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$900 per month for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett.
 2. That the Western Classis petition Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,000

per month for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe.

3. That the Western Classis petition Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month for Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe.

4. That the Western Classis provide \$1,420 (\$335 per month) for Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, and petition Synod for \$10,020 (\$835 per month) of benevolent aid.

5. That the Western Classis provide \$15,180 (\$1,265 per month), and petition Synod for \$8,880 (\$370 per month) in benevolent aid for Faith Reformed Church, Anderson.

6. That the Western Classis petition Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,300 per month for Rev. Robert Sander.

I. Overtures Committee

The Overtures Committee handled nine overtures that came to it. A summary of these overtures and their dispositions are as follows.

1. A request from the Consistory of Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church requesting ministerial aid for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett. Referred to the Benevolences Committee.

2. A request from the Spiritual Council of Trinity RCUS of Modesto asking Classis to overture Synod to establish a special committee for a post-seminary course for licentiates. The following motion was adopted: "That the Western Classis overture Synod to have the Permanent Synodical Committee on Christian Education in the Church, which would report back in 2001, study the feasibility of establishing a mandatory post-seminary course of instruction for students who seek licensure for the ministry in any of the classes of the RCUS."

3. A request from the Consistory of Trinity RCUS of Modesto asking for financial help to provide seminary education for member Jerry Loverin. Referred to the Licensure and Examination Committee.

4. A request from the Spiritual Council of Grace RCUS of Bakersfield requesting ministerial aid for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe and Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe. Referred to the Benevolences Committee.

5. A report from the Consistory of Ebenezer RCUS of Shafter regarding the L.A. Basin work. The report was referred to the Standing Missions Committee.

6. A request from the Rev. Jim West to Classis for permission to republish his booklet on Infant Baptism. Referred to the Judicial Committee.

7. A request for an excuse from Elder Case Van Egmond. Referred to the Excuses Committee.

8. A request from Faith Reformed Church of Anderson for benevolent aid. Referred to the Benevolences Committee.

9. A request from Rev. Robert Sander for ministerial aid. Referred to the Benevolences Committee.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

Miscellaneous: The following motion was passed: "That Classis overture the Synod to ask whether it is appropriate for a Student under the Care of Classis to solicit funds

from congregations or individuals."

A. Expression of Appreciation to the Host Congregation

The Western Classis adopted the following statement of appreciation to Providence Reformed Church of Lodi, the host congregation for this year's annual meeting:

"Beloved Congregation of Providence RCUS Church at Lodi, we the delegates of the 15th Annual Session of the Western Classis, RCUS thank you for your sweet and precious hospitality and fellowship. Truly, we have richly and, quite probably, voraciously partaken of your culinary delights. Surely, our waist lines will bear testimony to your gracious provisions for years to come. But more importantly, our hearts will carry the witness of your love in Christ forever. May the Lord return your kindness many times over."

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

The Stated Clerk's Report, the Executive Committee's Minutes, and the Overture Committee's Report were all adopted.

READING OF THE MINUTES

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

ADJOURNMENT

The 15th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis, RCUS, was adjourned to the 16th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis to meet at Trinity Reformed Church of Modesto, CA, at a date and time to be approved by Executive Circular.

A. Roll Call

The closing roll call showed thirteen pastors and nine elder delegates present.

B. Devotions

Elder Cornelis Van Egmond led in the closing devotions with the reading of Acts 1 and leading in prayer.

C. Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Benediction, and Doxology

The President led the delegates in the recitation of the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. He pronounced the benediction and all sang the doxology together.

– Stated Clerk, Western Classis, RCUS



APPENDIX
TO THE
ABSTRACT
OF THE MINUTES

*MEMBERSHIP
AND
FINANCIAL STATISTICS*

*STANDING RULES
OF THE
WESTERN CLASSIS*

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

1. Classical dues shall be paid not later than the first day of December of the current year. ('89)
2. The Parochial Reports and Reports of Statistics shall be submitted at least three (3) weeks before the Spring Meeting of Classis; the Parochial Reports to the President of the Executive of Classis; the Statistics to the Stated Clerk of the Executive of Classis. ('87)
3. The writ of certification for Delegate Elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two (2) weeks before the session of Classis.
4. All congregations shall present an accurate report on confirmation instruction, Sunday School and weekday school. The period of instruction shall, if possible, be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire Catechism before Confirmation. The course of instruction shall include Bible history, Catechism, Bible readings and the study of the books and contents of the Bible; also, singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
5. The Standing Rules shall be read immediately after the defining of the Bar of the House.
6. If pastors, elders, and members of congregations request information from the Executive Committee of Classis concerning constitutional matters and procedures, as provided in Article 91, the answer shall, if the request is in order and in written form, be presented to the parties concerned only in written form and relevant only to the item in question. This correspondence shall be part of the official minutes of the Executive Committee.
7. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel in behalf of Classis, or for delegates to Classis, at twenty (\$.20) per running mile, per vehicle. ('90)
8. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
9. The Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an Abstract of the Classical Minutes and shall send a copy to each delegate to the Classis plus six (6) additional copies to each charge within sixty (60) days after Classis. The Stated Clerk shall receive a gratuity of four hundred (\$400) per year. ('91)
10. The Classis shall have Permanent Committees as follows: Executive, Missions, Christian Education in the Church, Candidates and Credentials, Interchurch Relations, Publications, Diaconal Ministries, and Heidelberg West Youth Camp. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. ('97)

11. The complete Classis statistics shall be made a part of the minutes at the spring meeting of Classis.
12. Nominations for all officers of Classis shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names of the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.
13. Every charge that will not have an Elder Delegate at the Spring Meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send in the answers to the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. This copy shall be signed by all elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk.
14. The report and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the churches at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis.
15. The religious services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circularized before Classis. ('90)
16. Students for the Ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Classis to attend only such seminaries as are listed as institutions receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States. Only students who attend institutions so listed shall be eligible for student aid while preparing for the Christian ministry.
17. It shall be the practice of Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry to require an internship for them to be spent with a pastor who has served in the Reformed Church in the United States for at least five (5) years. During this internship, particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the distinctives and practices of the Reformed Church in the United States. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed.
18. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Classis two (2) weeks in advance of Classis shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Classis at any time. ('90)
19. Only male members who have reached the age of twenty-one, or who are male heads of a household, shall constitute the voting membership of the congregations of the Classis. ('97)