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2007
ABSTRACT
of the
MINUTES



22nd ANNUAL SESSION
of the
WESTERN CLASSIS
Reformed Church in the United States

March 6-8, 2007

First Reformed Church
Yuba City, California

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

Reformed Church in the United States

22nd Annual Session
March 6-8, 2007



First Reformed Church
Yuba City, California

The Abstract of the 22nd Annual Session
of the Western Classis
Reformed Church in the United States
is affectionately dedicated to the memory of

Rev. Norman Jones
1930 - 2007

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

– The 22nd Western Classis

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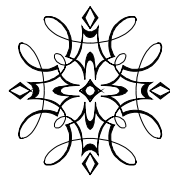
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2007 WESTERN CLASSIS DIRECTORY

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- Sawtelle, Rev. Gene** **Home (530) 790-0929**
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 E-Mail:
- Treick, Rev. Paul** **Home (209) 551-2407**
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- Voytek, Rev. Michael** **Home (209) 367-1902**
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 PO Box 643, Sutter, CA 95982
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Student under Care of Classis

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22nd ANNUAL WESTERN CLASSIS ROLL
For the Classical Year beginning March 6, 2007

Minister	Primarius Elder	Secundus Elder	Charge
Henry Bowen	Michael Peery		Faith, Anderson, CA
	Robert Wegis	Jeff Jones	Grace, Bakersfield, CA
Lloyd Gross	(Pastor Emeritus, Grace Reformed, Bakersfield)		Retired, Mesa, AZ
Gary Mancilas	David Helseth	Rick Lopez	Covenant, Chico, CA
Dennis Roe	Steve Wilbur	Frank Krivohlavek	Covenant, Grass Valley, CA
Jonathan Merica	(Associate Pastor, Covenant RCUS, Grass Valley)		Stockton, CA
Eric Bristley	(Associate Pastor, Covenant RCUS, Grass Valley)		Grass Valley, CA
Neale Riffert	Mark Reyna		Grace, Lancaster, CA
Michael Voytek	Wayne Lingenfelter	Case Van Egmond	Providence, Lodi, CA
Paul Treick	Earl Van Houten	Richard Fay	Trinity, Modesto, CA
Jim West	Thomas Lagomarsino	Wayne Johnson	Covenant, Sacramento, CA
Frank Walker	(Associate Pastor, Sacramento Covenant RCUS)		Elk Grove, CA
Guillermo Baloy	(Associate Pastor, Sacramento Covenant RCUS)		Covenant, San Diego, CA
Vernon Pollema	Ryan Spitzer	Clarence Goehring	Ebenezer, Shafter, CA
Jay Fluck	(Associate Pastor, Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter)		LaHabra, CA
	Joe Gross	Ken Bowen	Grace, Willows, CA
Thomas Mayville	(Associate Pastor, Grace RCUS)		Grace, Willows, CA
	Greg Stewart	James Ochsner	First, Yuba City, CA
Gene Sawtelle	(Pastor Emeritus, First RCUS, Yuba City)		First, Yuba City, CA

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS

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

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

(per communicant member)

Classis Dues	\$7.50
Benevolences	40.00
Home Missions	93.50
Publications	1.00
Home Missions Building Fund	5.00
Heidelberg West Youth Camp	<u>3.00</u>
TOTAL	\$150.00

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

Indicates Convener

Executive Committee: J. West; H. Bowen, W. Lingenfelter
Candidates and Credentials: P. Treick; D. Bender (1 yr); F. Walker, J. Fluck (2 yrs); D. Helseth, E. Van Houten (3 yrs)
Christian Education in the Church: V. Pollema, G. Mancilas (1 yr); B. Williams, J. Fluck (2 yrs); J. Merica, M. Reyna (3 yrs)
Missions: D. Roe, R. Spitzer (1 yr); A. White, P. Treick (2 yrs); J. Gross, W. Lingenfelter (3 yrs)
Interchurch Relations: G. Baloy, G. Mancilas (1 yr); M. Voytek, L. Gross (2 yrs); R. Wegis, D. Helseth (3 yrs)
Publications: C. Esparza, K. Bowen (1 yr); E. Bristley, D. Mettler (2 yrs); G. Mancilas, A. White (3 yrs)
Diaconal: M. Peery, J. Mills (1 yr); M. Voytek, J. Gross (2 yrs); V. Pollema, J. Warren (3 yrs)
Heidelberg West Youth Camp: J. Fluck, G. Stewart, (1 yr); T. Lagomarsino, C. Fellersen (2 yrs); G. Born, M. Reyna (3 yrs)

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/Wife/Children: Hank Bowen/ Patty/ Bethany, Marcus
 Home Address: 22452 Meadow Crest Lane, Palo Cedro, CA 96073
 Home Phone: (530) 549-5704 E-Mail: rcushank@sbcglobal.net
 Church Web Page: www.faihtrcus.org

BAKERSFIELD, CA - Grace Reformed Church

Church Location: 420 Columbus Street, Bakersfield (north on Union Ave. to Columbus St., east on Columbus to the church)
 Church Mailing Address: 420 Columbus St., Bakersfield, CA 93305
 Church Phone: (661) 325-0165
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:15 AM; Worship 10:30 AM and 3rd Sunday at 6:30 PM
 Pastor/Wife/Children: VACANT
 Home Address: 6407 Brooklawn Way, Bakersfield, CA 93309
 Home Phone: (661) 835-1842 E-Mail:
 Church Web Page: bakersfieldreformed.org

CHICO, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: Meeting at 1877 Hooker Oak Ave. (Adventist Church Building: Turn east on East Ave., proceed to Hooker Oak Ave., turn right; proceed through first stop sign and turn left into church parking lot)
 Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1612, Chico, CA 95927-1612
 Church Phone: (530) 345-2732
 Service Times: Worship 10:30 AM
 Mission Pastor/Wife: Gary Mancilas / Gloria
 Home Address: 2 Woodminster Ct., Chico, CA 95926
 Home Phone: (530) 893-5939 E-Mail: gmancilas@sbcglobal.net
 Church Web Page Address: www.crcchico.com

GRASS VALLEY, CA - Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley

Church Location: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA
 Church Mailing Address: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA 95945
 Church Phone/Fax: (530) 273-4673
 Service Times: Sunday: 9:45 AM - Bible Classes for all ages; Worship 11:00 AM.
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Dennis E. Roe / Julie / Joanna
 Home Address: 17355 Alexandra Way, Grass Valley, CA 95949
 Home Ph.: (530) 272-6693 E-Mail: pastor@crcgv.org
 Assoc. Pastor/Wife/Children: Eric Bristley / Kathleen / Matthew, Nathaniel
 Home Address: 15287 Brewer Rd., Grass Valley, CA 95949
 Home Phone: (530) 272-8792 E-Mail:eric.rcus@cebridge.net
 Assoc. Pastor: Jonathan Merica (See Stockton - Calvary)
 Church Web Page: www.crcgv.org

LA HABRA - Rehoboth Reformed Chapel

Church Location: 501 S. Idaho, Suite 120, La Habra (Between La Habra Blvd., & Lambert Rd.)
 Church Phone: (562) 947-4837
 Church Mail Address: 11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
 Service Times: Worship 10:00 AM; Sun. Sch. 11:30 AM
 Mission Pastor/Wife/Children: Jay E. Fluck / Loretta / Jeffery, Erin
 Home Address: 11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
 Home Phone: (562) 947-4837 E-Mail: jefluck@msn.com
 Church Web Page: www.RehobothReformedChurch.com

LANCASTER, CA - Grace Reformed Church (Antelope Valley)

Church Location: 211 E. Ave. K-6 Ste. C, Lancaster
 Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2331, Lancaster, CA 93539
 Church Phone: (661) 940-4669
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 10:45 AM
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Neale R. Riffert / Mary Elizabeth / Neale Jr.
 Home Address: 43850 20th Street East, Space 100, Lancaster, CA 93535
 Home Phone: (661) 945-4282 E-Mail: nealer@adelphia.net
 Church Web Page: gracereformedchurch.net

LODI, CA - Providence Reformed Church

Church Location: 245 E. Vine Street, Lodi
 Church Mailing Address: 245 E. Vine St. Lodi, CA 95240
 Church Phone: (209) 367-0552
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm.
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Michael Voytek / Rebecca / Joshua, Tabitha, Abraham, David, Timothy
 Home Address: 501 Falls Ave., Lodi, CA 95240
 Home Phone: (209) 367-1902 E-Mail: prclodi@softcom.net
 Church Web Page: www.prclodi.com

MODESTO, CA - Trinity Reformed Church

Church Location: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto (Briggsmore east; right on Coffee, right on E. Fairmont 2 blocks.)
 Church Mailing Address: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto, CA 95350
 Church Phone: (209) 523-3220
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM & 5:30 PM
 Pastor/Wife: Paul Treick / Karen
 Home Address: 4005 Masterpiece Dr., Modesto, CA 95357
 Home Phone: (209) 551-2407 E-mail: triwheeler@aol.com

SACRAMENTO, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: 2020 16th Avenue, Sacramento (from Fwy 99 take 12th Ave./ Sutterville Rd. Exit. Go west to Freeport Blvd., left to 16th Ave. and left to 2020 16th Ave. From I-5 Fwy take Sutterville Exit, go east on Sutterville to Freeport Blvd., left on Freeport and right on 16th Ave. to 2020 16th Ave.)
 Church Mailing Address: 2020 16th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822
 Church Phone: (916) 451-1190
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM & 6:00 PM

Pastor/ Wife: Jim West / Elaine
 Home Address: 5216 Locust Ave., Carmichael, CA 95608
 Home Phone: (916) 488-5569 E-Mail: jimwest3253@hotmail.com
 Assoc. Pastor/Wife/Children: Frank Walker / Christine / Bethann, Cathryn, Tari,
 Jonathan.
 Home Address: 6121 Pine Vista Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758
 Home Phone: (916) 320-0548 E-Mail: DrFHW@comcast.com
 Assoc. Pastor: Gil Baloy (See SAN DIEGO - Covenant)
 Church Web Page: www.covenantreformedchurch.org

SAN DIEGO, CA - Covenant Reformed Chapel

Church Location: 49 3rd Ave., Chula Vista, CA (Take I-805 South. Go west on Hwy. 54. Get off at Highland Ave. Turn left at light on Highland Ave. Turn left on 3rd Ave. We meet at the CVPOA Building on the left hand side.)
 Church Mailing Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977
 Church Phone: (619) 460-1321
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 10 AM; Worship 11 AM; Lunch 12:30 PM; Catechism Class and Prayer Meeting: 6:30 PM Wednesday.
 Mission Pastor/Wife/Children: Gil Baloy / Maricar / Ezra, Ethan
 Home Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977
 Home Phone: (619) 697-0272 E-mail: g_baloy@yahoo.com
 Church Web Page Address: www.covenantreformedchurchSD.org

STOCKTON, CA – Calvary Reformed Chapel

Church Location: 3473 W. Hammer Lane #101, Stockton
 Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 692426, Stockton, CA 95269
 Church Phone: (209) 470-7174
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM
 Mission Pastor/Wife: Jonathan Merica / Marsha
 Home Address: 9311 Snow Creek Circle, Stockton, CA 95212
 Home Phone: (209) 472-7941 E-Mail: jonmerica@sbcglobal.net
 Church Web Page Address: www.calvaryreformedchapel.com

SHAFTER, CA - Ebenezer Reformed Church

Church Location: 235 James Street, Shafter (next door to the City Library, Fire, and Police Depts.)
 Church Mailing Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263
 Church Phone: (661) 746-6907
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:15 AM; Worship 10:30 AM & (6:00 PM on 4th Sunday); Bible Study 6:00 PM (1st & 3rd Sundays)
 Pastor/Wife: Vernon Pollema / Betty
 Home Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263
 Home Phone: (661) 746-0211 E-Mail: vpollema@juno.com
 Assoc. Pastor: Jay Fluck (See LA HABRA - Rehoboth)

WILLOWS, CA - Grace Reformed Church

22nd Annual Session – March 6-8, 2007

Church Location: 148 W. Sycamore St. (corner: Butte & Sycamore – Exit Hwy 162; head east, right on Butte to Sycamore).
 Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 225, Willows, CA 95988
 Church Phone: (530) 934-2732
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM; Sun Bible Study - 6:30 PM
 Pastor: VACANT
 Assoc. Pastor/Wife/Children: Thomas Mayville / Carolyn / Sarah, Joshua
 Home Address: Mbale, Uganda
 Home Phone: E-Mail: thomasmayville@sbcglobal.net

YUBA CITY, CA - First Reformed Church

Church Location: 9882 Highway 99, 11 miles south of Yuba City - 1/4 mile south of Wilkie Ave. on the left.
 Church Mailing Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991
 Church Phone: (530) 755-2272
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 11:00 AM
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Mr. Sam Powell / Susan / Morgan, James, Matty, Carrie, Raymond, Amanda
 Home Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991
 Home Phone: (530) 671-7579 E-Mail: sampowell365@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES

22nd Annual Session – March 6-8, 2007

WESTERN CLASSIS

**Reformed Church in the United States
Annual Spring Meeting
March 6-8, 2007
First Reformed Church, Yuba City, California**

Jesus answered and said unto them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent . . . For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

John 6:29, 33

SERVICES

The Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States opened its 22nd Annual Session at First Reformed Church of Yuba City, California on Tuesday, March 6, 2007. It began with a devotion by Rev. Paul Treick, pastor of Trinity RCUS, Modesto. Delegates and visitors sang "*Dear Lord and Master of Mine.*" Scripture was read from 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and a message was given on "*The Nurture of the Church.*"

The Tuesday evening worship was held at 7:30 PM with Rev. Frank Walker of Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church, conducting the service. Elder Sam Powell, candidate for the ministry read Mark 12:38-44 and a sermon entitled, *The Search for Significance* was preached. Following the service the congregation welcomed the delegates and housing arrangements were given.

The Wednesday morning devotion was given by Rev. Thomas Mayville, pastor of Grace Reformed Church of Willows, California, who led the body in the singing of "*The Ends of All The Earth Shall Hear.*" *Revelation 19:19 - 20:6* was read and Rev. Mayville gave the sense of the text under the theme, "*An Angel Restrains Satan From Deceiving the Nations.*"

Elder Greg Stewart led the body in a closing devotion reading from Hebrews 6:10-20. All services were closed with prayer.

Each session was opened and closed with prayer to praise God and seek His blessing and guidance for this work of the Church. Following the reading of Parochial Reports, prayer was offered for the particular congregations and pastors. At other times prayer was called for individuals, congregations, and other denominations.

ORGANIZATION

Rev. Jim West, President of the Executive Committee of Western Classis, called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM on March 6, 2007. The Rev. Vern Pollema led the body in prayer. The initial roll call showed fourteen pastors and nine elder delegates present. The President declared a quorum was present and the meeting was open for business. The Bar of the House was declared to be the first six rows of pews. The President read the standing rules of the Western Classis as required in Standing Rule 5. Elders Tom Lagomarsino and Greg Stewart were appointed as tellers for the meeting.

The following men were nominated and elected to office for this Classical year: Rev. Jim West, President; Rev. Michael Voytek, Vice President; Rev. Henry Bowen, Stated Clerk; and Elder Chris Fellersen, Treasurer.

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

The assembly adopted the Agenda, Services, and Order of the Day. A Special Order of the Day was set for Wednesday, following the morning devotion for an ordination examination of Licentiate Sam Powell.

FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

Rev. Tim McCracken of the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America and the Rev. Wayne Forkner of the Presbytery of Northern California of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church were present as fraternal delegates. They were welcomed, seated in the Bar of the House, and extended privilege of the floor.

During the meeting several elders from Western Classis churches were present. They were welcomed, seated in the Bar of the House, and given the privilege of the floor.

RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS AND CHURCHES

The Rev. Gene Sawtelle was welcomed as a new minister of the Western Classis. Rev. Riffert offered a prayer of thanksgiving for Rev. Sawtelle's reception. There were no new churches added this year.

STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The President made the following appointments for the Standing Committees:

- A. Examination and Licensure: Walker, Fluck, Treick, Modesto Elder, Shafter Elder, Sacramento Elder
- B. Excuses: Mancilas, Merica, Sacramento Elder
- C. Finances: Pollema, Mancilas, Anderson Elder
- D. Judicial: Riffert, Sawtelle, Merica, Yuba City Elder
- E. Minutes of Synod: Bristley, Baloy, Grass Valley Elder
- F. Missions: Voytek, Bristley, Bakersfield Elder
- G. Nominations: Fluck, Mayville, Lodi Elder
- H. Benevolence: Treick, Roe, Willows Elder, Lancaster Elder
- I. Overtures: Mayville, Baloy, Chico Elder

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 Reports, Reports of Officers and Parochial Reports were read and if needed acted upon or referred to appropriate Standing Committees. The results of the Classis' actions to the various recommendations concerning these reports are printed in this Abstract as they were adopted.

PRESENTATION OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive Committee of Classis

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee received and handled the following requests in five circulars: There was a matter of paying the mileage for Rev. Gary Mancilas that he failed to submit during Classis. There were matters regarding the transfers of Rev. Gene Sawtelle, Rev. George Horner and Rev. Paul Henderson that were handled. Two recommendations from the Classis Missions Committee were circulated, and finally the matters regarding the 22nd Annual Session of Classis, including a request by the host congregation for help with the housing accommodations were communicated.

The following recommendations were made and no objections were received:

Recommendation 1: That Rev. Gene Sawtelle be received into the Western Classis.

Recommendation 2: That the request of the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church of Bakersfield for the resignation of Rev. George Horner and Rev. Horner's resignation be declared in order and that the pulpit of the Grace RCUS, Bakersfield be declared vacant.

Recommendation 3: That the resignation of Rev. Paul Henderson, the acceptance of the resignation by the consistory effective November 26, and a request from Rev. Henderson to be transferred to the South Central Classis be found in order, that the First RCUS, Yuba City pulpit be declared vacant, and that Rev. Paul Henderson have his credential transferred to the South Central Classis.

Recommendation 4: That Rev. George Horner have his credential transferred to the South Central Classis.

Recommendation 5: That support be given to Rev. Jonathan Merica beginning February 1, 2007 for housing and living expenses from the Western Classis Home Missions funds that were already budgeted for 2007 in the amount of \$1,800 per month for up to 6 months or until he receives a call or finds other employment, whichever comes first.

Recommendation 6: That support be given to Rev. Jonathan Merica beginning February 1, 2007 for housing and living expenses from the Synod Home Missions funds that were already budgeted for 2007 in the amount of \$1,800 per month for up to 6 months or until he receives a call or finds other employment, which ever comes first.

Recommendation 7: That the 22nd Annual Session of the Western Classis convene at First Reformed Church, Yuba City, CA, on Tuesday, March 6, 2007 at 1:00 PM, and conclude at the end of business on Thursday, March 8, 2007.

Recommendation 8: That the delegates make their own arrangements for staying in a local motel and that the local churches consider assuming the cost for the housing of their own delegates. Any congregation unable to bear this cost is to submit a request to the finances committee at Classis.

Recommendation 9: That the following schedule for services be approved:

Tues. March 6: Opening Devotions at 1:00 PM – Rev. Paul Treick

Tues. March 6: Evening Service at 7:30 PM – Mr. Sam Powell, preaching; Rev. Frank Walker, conducting.
 Wed. March 7: Morning Devotions – Rev. Tom Mayville
 Thurs. March 8: Morning Devotions – Rev. Gil Baloy
 Thurs. March 8: Closing Devotions – Elder from Yuba City

Respectfully submitted,
 Rev. Jim West, Chm., Rev. Hank Bowen, Elder Richard Fay

Classis Action: The report was received.

B. Missions Committee

Dear Brothers,

The responsibility of our committee this year mainly involved the following mission works that received support from Classis and Synod: Covenant Reformed Church at Chico, CA, Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, CA and Calvary Reformed Chapel at Stockton, CA.

A member or members from our committee were able to visit each of these works. We report as follows:

Covenant Reformed Church, Chico – The Rev. Gary Mancilas

Our committee, consisting of Elder Wayne Lingenfelter, Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Michael Voytek, and Rev. Dennis Roe, met in Chico, CA on December 6, 2006 with Rev. Gary Mancilas, Elder David Helseth, Elder Rick Lopez and Deacon Jim Gochnauer who are members of the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church at Chico.

Rev. Mancilas submitted the following information on the state of Covenant Reformed Church at Chico:

As members of the Consistory of CRC, we offer to the Western Classis Home Missions Committee the following grounds on which we find that the work of the church in Chico is a viable one and worthy of an increase of financial support from Classis and Synod:

1. That the mission work is an organized organic body of the RCUS with a unified functioning Consistory, consisting of a pastor, two elders, and one deacon.
2. That the church reported twenty baptized members on the 2005 Membership Statistics. Since then, four have been received, and three have been lost by dismissal, leaving a strong core membership of 21 baptized members (one unconfirmed member). One young family, with an infant, is attending regularly.
3. That there is a continued commitment among the members for the Reformed Faith
4. That the members are committed to the Confessions with a strong willingness to subscribe to them.
5. That the members continue to evidence spiritual growth and understanding of the doctrines of the Reformed Faith and our Confessions.
6. That the members demonstrate a loving unity in the faith and foster spiritual care for one another.
7. That the church witnesses in the community by personal witnessing, yellow pages,

internet, radio, and will soon resume broadcasting on TV.

8. That the financial giving of the members has been exemplary, as the treasurer will report.

9. That the church members sense a strong obligation to pay Classis and Synod dues and guidelines. The members continue to faithfully give through special offerings that are taken quarterly.

10. That the church members sense their responsibility to minister to visitors. In order to foster fellowship among members and visitors, a family is appointed every Lord's Day as greeters, and they provide refreshments for after worship. Comprehensive visitors packets are made available.

11. That the pastor and elder's, having the opportunity, approach visitors after worship and engage them in conversation. A follow-up welcome letter is sent to the visitors who leave their address, and follow-up phone calls are made when phone numbers are made available.

12. That the pastor and elders provide home Bible studies with visitors when possible.

13. That the Bible studies for men and ladies' fellowship meetings held semi-monthly are utilized for midweek Christian fellowship and evangelistic outreach.

Financial Status: By June 2007, the church will have depleted its savings, and the current tithing and support from Classis and Synod will not support the work. It is anticipated that there will be an estimated short fall of approximately \$1,450.00 per month.

Therefore, the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California, respectfully requests additional support in the amount of \$10,000.00 for year 2007, beginning July 1 and support in the amount of \$37,320.00 for the Synodical year 2008.

Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA – The Rev. Jay Fluck

Two committee members, Elder Alfred White and Rev. Dennis Roe, visited Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, CA on Sunday, September 17, 2006. Elder White and Rev. Roe submitted the following report:

Dear Brothers,

Your servants, Elder Alfred White and Rev. Dennis Roe, had the privilege to visit with the saints at Rehoboth Chapel, RCUS at La Habra on the Lord's Day, Sunday, September 17, 2006.

For your information: The Rev. Jay Fluck is the mission pastor with the work being under the oversight of the Consistory at Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, California.

Rev. Roe was given the opportunity to preach the Word at the morning service. His message was well received with many positive comments given later. The congregation was very attentive and exhibited a reverent deportment during the service.

The meeting place, although not very large (50-60 capacity), is very attractive and suitable to the congregation's needs at this time (happily the place was full!). It consists of a sectioned off main room, where the worship service is conducted, an additional area for fellowship and meals, a nursery/class room area and restrooms. The facility is in located on the ground floor, front section of an office building, with an abundance of parking and on a very busy and visible street.

Following the close of the worship service Rev. Roe and Elder White were given the privilege to conduct a meeting with the congregation. In addition to Rev. Fluck, elders Clarence Goehring and Carl Esparza were in attendance.

The meeting went very well. Both Elder White and Rev. Roe questioned the congregation directly about their assessment of the ministry. Everyone who spoke, which

was a good number, testified that they were very happy to be a part of the congregation. It was evident by the comments that Rev. Fluck and the chapel's ministry is vital to their lives and the community. One person stated they had been in Reformed churches for over 30 years, but it was not until they sat under Rev. Fluck's ministry that they really came to understand and appreciate it.

NOTE: A particularly heart warming testimony was given concerning Rev. Fluck's pastoral ministry privately that he was "a great pastor with a wonderful wife."

After the meeting the congregation hosted us with a wonderful fellowship luncheon and an array of culinary delights. Most especially, we enjoyed the fellowship of the saints.

We did note, as Pastor Fluck confirmed, that there are a number of families and individuals who regularly attend the services and are active in the congregation, but have not yet committed to membership. We do not believe this to be an unusual problem, but rather a reflection of the day in which we live. However, we should make this a matter of prayer as a committee.

It is our assessment that the Lord is building His church at Rehoboth Chapel and that we have a home mission pastor who is exemplary in his labors. We heartedly commend to the committee our continued support of this work and pastor.

Our greatest concern is their being able to find an even larger meeting place in the near future at an affordable price as we anticipate even greater growth!

Respectfully Submitted in Christ's Service,
Alfred White & Dennis E. Roe

We received the following request from the overseeing Consistory at Ebenezer Reformed Church at Shafter, CA: "The consistory of Ebenezer Reformed Church (Shafter) wishes to overture Western Classis for Home Missions support for Rehoboth chapel in the amount of \$28,500 for the 2008 calendar year. Further, the Ebenezer consistory requests that Western Classis overture Synod for home missions support in the amount of \$13,500 for the 2008 calendar year."

Calvary Ref. Chapel, Stockton, CA. -- The Rev. Jonathan Merica.

Three committee members, Elder Wayne Lingenfelter, Rev. Paul Treick and Rev. Michael Voytek, visited with Pastor Jonathan Merica and some of the members from Calvary Reformed Chapel on Tuesday, October 24, 2006. No written report was submitted.

The Home Missions Committee of the Western Classis met December 6, 2006 in Chico, California and one of the items on our agenda was the directive from Synod concerning the viability of the mission work in Stockton, California as per recommendation #7 in the 2006 RCUS Abstract of the Western Classis (pg. 78)) which states "*That the Western Classis assess Calvary Reformed Chapel at Stockton, CA to determine its viability as a mission work of the RCUS, and that this work, if approved, be supported for the calendar year 2007 in the amount of \$13,320.00.*"

The following was the finding of our committee:

1. The Western Classis Home Missions Committee determined that due to the loss of members, the subsequent reduction of offerings and the current active membership being only four baptized persons, the Stockton mission work is not viable as a Classical Home Mission work. Please note that the consistory at Grass Valley will work with the consistories of both Modesto and Lodi to provide oversight of the current members of the work.
2. We recommend that support be given to Rev. Jonathan Merica for housing and living

expenses from the Western Classis Home Missions funds that were already budgeted for 2007 in the amount of \$1,800 per month for up to six months or until he receives a call or finds other employment, which ever comes first, beginning February 1st, 2007.

3. We recommend that support be given to Rev. Jonathan Merica for housing and living expenses from the Synod Home Missions funds that were already budgeted for 2007 in the amount of \$1,800 per month for up to six months or until he receives a call or finds other employment, which ever comes first, beginning February 1st, 2007.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED: 1) The number of baptized members at Calvary Reformed Chapel is twelve, but due to ongoing church discipline several of the families involved no longer attend, leaving the current active membership at four.

2) Since the first worship service was held in March 2006, two new families and one single adult have attended regularly and are currently in membership classes, for a total of five perspective new members.

3) The average attendance has been eleven at the worship services from March 26 through December 3, 2006.

Finally, we have had a couple of contacts with individuals and one group of a few families in the Santa Cruz area. However, we have nothing concrete to report for this meeting.

Recommendations

1. That the Covenant Reformed Church, Chico be granted additional classical missions support in the amount of \$5,000.00 for 2007 beginning July 1.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 260th RCUS Synod for additional synodical missions support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, CA in the amount of \$5,000.00 for the 2007 calendar year beginning July 1.
3. That the Covenant Reformed Church, Chico be granted classical support in the amount of \$18,600.00 for 2008 calendar year.
4. That the Western Classis petition the 260th RCUS Synod for synodical missions support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico in the amount of \$18,600.00 for the 2008 calendar year.
5. That the Western Classis petition the 260th Synod of the RCUS to effect the upgrade of the existing Covenant Reformed Church, Chico Website (www.crcchico.com).
6. That the Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra be granted classical missions support in the amount of \$28,500.00 for the 2008 calendar year (an increase of \$8,640.00)
7. That the Western Classis petition the 260th RCUS Synod for missions support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA, in the amount of \$13,500.00 for the 2008 calendar year.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. Dennis Roe, Chm., Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Michael Voytek,
 Elder Ryan Spitzer, Elder Wayne Lingenfelter*

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

C. Christian Education in the Church Committee

Esteemed Brethren,

Your Committee was neither given nor received any mandate, did not meet, and did not conduct any business during the past classical year.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. Vernon Pollema(Chmn), Rev. Jonathan Merica, Rev. Gary Mancilas,
 Rev. Jay Fluck, Elder Bob Williams, Elder Earl Van Houten*

Classis Action: The report was received.

D. Candidates and Credentials Committee

Esteemed Colleagues:

As of the last Classis meeting, the Candidates and Credentials Committee had three students under its supervision: Mr. Scott Henry, Mr. Douglas Schlegel, and Mr. Carl Esparza.

Mr. Scott Henry was removed from our roll last year when he transferred to the South Central Classis in order to pursue licensure in anticipation of receiving a call from the Menno consistory. He was subsequently licensed and then ordained. Informal reports about his examinations indicate that he did very well and that he is now faithfully fulfilling his responsibilities as pastor of the Menno congregation.

Circumstances of Mr. Esparza's life have taken a different turn. A few weeks ago, he forwarded a letter to the Rev. George Horner in which he requests the Western Classis to remove his name from its list of students under care. Without offering any details, he cites "certain events [that] have occurred to my family" as the reason for his request. Your committee believes that his request should be granted.

Our only current student, Mr. Schlegel, reports that he has zealously pursued his preparation for the ministry at City Seminary of Sacramento, where he has completed seventy-seven credits with a GPA of 3.61. His studies have caused him "to stand in awe of the beauties of [God's] word and the glories of his redemptive acts in history." Mr. Schlegel further reports that, although the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church granted him a sabbatical for the 2006 calendar year, he nonetheless had occasion to preach in several congregations of the Western Classis, the OPC, and an independent Reformed church in Sacramento. He is considering the possibility of seeking licensure at the 2008 meeting of the Western Classis. Because City Seminary grants full tuition scholarships to RCUS students under care, Mr. Schlegel makes no request for student aid.

But the above does not mean that your committee can relax this year. Recently, First Reformed Church of Yuba City voted to extend a call to Mr. Sam Powell. Mr. Powell is currently a student at New Geneva Theological Seminary and a licentiate on the roll of the South Central Classis. Mr. Powell's transcript shows that he has thus far earned sixty-six credits with four more in process, and he affirms that he plans to finish his theological program after settling in Yuba City via a combination of distance education through NGTS and classroom instruction at City Seminary. The Consistory of First Reformed Church and Mr. Powell are jointly requesting that he be examined for ordination, as provided for in Article 24 of our Constitution. Assuming the successful completion of his exam and the approval of Classis, Mr. Powell plans to move to Yuba City in May of this year.

In preparation for a licensure/ordination exam, Mr. Powell has submitted several theological and exegetical papers to your committee, as well as a written sermon. These will

be available for your evaluation at Classis. Further, your committee has also acquired copies of his written language exams from the South Central Classis, which we believe satisfy the Constitutional requirements. We would note, however, that the South Central Classis did not require Mr. Powell to memorize and recite the Heidelberg Catechism. Although he is currently working on this, due to the shortness of time he may not be able to complete it.

This raises a question for your committee. In 1991 the Western Classis passed a motion charging “the Candidates and Credentials Committee with the responsibility of informing candidates for licensure to memorize the Heidelberg Catechism in its entirety prior to their examination.” Your committee respectfully requests the Western Classis to clarify this. For example, does this requirement apply only to the licensure examinations of students under care of the Western Classis, or does it also apply to licentiates and ministers of the RCUS transferring into the Western Classis from one of the other classes? We have not had the practice of requiring ordained ministers from other denominations to memorize and recite the catechism, yet Article 35 of the Constitution requires them to sign the formula of licensure, which presupposes a licensure examination. It has been our practice to give such men what is basically a licensure examination, but should that examination specifically include the recitation of the entire catechism? And further, should the Candidates and Credential Committee require the recitation of the entire catechism *before* the candidate may proceed with the licensure examination proper, as the adopted motion seems to suggest?

Another matter comes to the Classis through Rev. Gil Baloy, whose upcoming trip to the Philippines on behalf of Synod, raises the possibility that the Western Classis may be involved in examining and licensing Filipino pastors, perhaps as early as next year. However, since the Philippines are not located within the boundaries of the Western Classis, we believe that it would be good order on our part to request permission from the Synod to proceed as suggested. Rev. Baloy is preparing an overture to present to the Classis on this matter.

Lord willing, Mr. Justin Hoke, a native of Redding and a former student at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, plans to attend this year’s meeting of the Western Classis. Mr. Hoke is considering pursuing the ministry in the RCUS. Your committee plans to meet with him during Classis.

Recommendations:

1. That Mr. Carl Esparza’s name be removed from the roll of students under care, per his request.
2. That Mr. Sam Powell be examined on the floor of Classis as follows:
 - A. Bible
 1. English Bible — 15 minutes by Van Houten
 2. Hermeneutics — 15 minutes by Treick
* followed by questions from the floor
 - B. Theology and Creeds
 1. Prolegomena — 15 minutes by Fluck
 2. Theology Proper — 15 minutes by Fluck
 3. Anthropology — 15 minutes by Treick
 4. Christology — 15 minutes by Walker
 5. Soteriology — 15 minutes by Fluck
 6. Ecclesiology — 15 minutes by Walker
 7. Eschatology — 15 minutes by Fluck
 8. Three Forms of Unity — 20 minutes by Treick

* followed by questions from the floor

C. Church History, Philosophy and Apologetics

1. Church History — 20 minutes by Walker
2. Historical Philosophy — 15 minutes by Fluck
3. Apologetics — 15 minutes by Treick

* followed by questions from the floor

E. Pastoral Ministry

1. RCUS Constitution and Directory of Worship — 15 minutes by Walker
2. Practica — 15 minutes by Bender

* followed by questions from the floor

3. That Mr. Powell’s language examinations, written sermon and papers be considered by Classis for partial fulfillment of the licensure / ordination requirements.
4. That the practice of requiring candidates for licensure to memorize and recite the entire catechism before their examinations be referred to the Standing Judicial Committee for clarification and/or amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Frank Walker (Chmn), Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Jay Fluck,
Elder Don Bender, Elder David Stelpstra

Classis Action: Recommendation 2 was passed. Recommendations 1 and 3 were referred to the Examination and Licensure Committee, and Recommendation 4 to the Judicial Committee. The report was adopted.

E. Interchurch Relations Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

Our committee has endeavored to nurture our fraternal relationship with our brethren of other Reformed and Presbyterian churches by maintaining close communication with them. This has been accomplished by sending delegates to their assemblies, through phone, email, and “snail mail,” and through the exchange of pulpits. The following regional fraternal bodies have been invited to attend our 22nd Western Classis meeting; the Presbytery of Northern California, OPC; the Southern California Presbytery, OPC; the Pacific Coast Presbytery, RPCNA; the Pacific Classis East of the Canadian Reformed Churches in North America; and the Classis Southwest U.S. of the Federation of URCNA. Lord willing, it will be our pleasure to receive greetings from them at our meeting.

In order to reduce the cost of attending the various meetings of our fraternal churches, letters of greetings were sent to our fraternal brethren in lieu of having a delegate of the Western Classis present. Furthermore, members of your committee volunteered to attend the meetings of our fraternal brethren’s assemblies. Your fellow servant, therefore, would like to express a note of gratitude to all those who served as Western Classis representatives to various presbytery and Classis meetings. The following is a summary of the activities that we were engaged in, in order to fulfill our responsibilities.

Rev. Gil Baloy attended the Second Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California of the OPC held on May 5-6, 2006 at Bayview OPC, Chula Vista, California.

Rev. Michael Voytek sent a letter of greeting in lieu of sending a delegate to the Stated Spring Meeting 2006 of the Presbytery of Northern California of the OPC held on March 17-18, 2006 at Covenant OPC, San Jose, California.

Rev. Michael Voytek sent a letter of greeting in lieu of sending a delegate to the Stated Fall Meeting 2006 of the Presbytery of Northern California of the OPC held on September 15-16, 2006 at First OPC, Sunnyvale, California.

Rev. Michael Voytek sent a letter of greeting in lieu of sending a delegate to the Stated Fall Meeting of the Classis Pacific East of the Canadian Reformed Churches held on September 14, 2006 in Yarrow, British Columbia, Canada.

Rev. Michael Voytek attended the First Stated Meeting 2007 of the Presbytery of Southern California of the OPC held on February 2, 2007 at Calvary OPC, La Mirada, CA.

Your committee did not receive invitations to attend the meeting(s) of the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA and the Classis Southwest U.S. of the Federation of URCNA. Your fellow servant will attempt to rectify this situation.

The reports of fraternal delegates representing the Western Classis will be given when the Western Classis convenes on March 7-9, 2007.

We are thankful for the close relationship we enjoy with our fraternal churches and pray that the bond of love and unity will continue to prosper and grow. Your servant would encourage the Western Classis delegates to nurture a closer fraternal bond with nearby fraternal churches by having an exchange of pulpits, as well as uniting in other kinds of Christian fellowship.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Michael Voytek (Chmn), Rev. Lloyd Gross, Rev. Thomas Mayville,
Rev. Gil Baloy, Rev. Neale Riffert, Elder Greg Stewart*

Classis Action: The report was received.

F. Publications Committee

Dear Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

Your committee did not meet this year. However, the assignment to print the report on Paedocommunion was completed by the time Synod met in May. The title for the book is *Discerning Christ's Body: Requirements for Participation in the Lord's Supper and a Refutation of Paedocommunion*. The book was printed by an on-demand (low quantity) printer. Because of this, more can be printed as needed.

No other requests for publishing have been received by your committee. However, in consultation with members of the committee over the phone, the following are matters which the Committee is interested in pursuing in the year ahead:

1. To promote the book, *Discerning Christ's Body*, on the Internet through Amazon and Christian distributors, thereby making this important topic and our contribution to the discussion available to other churches and individuals.
2. To further develop the Western Classis section of the denominational (Synod) section of the website (www.rcus.org), and thereby assist the Classis in its work and help promote it as an organic part of the Reformed Church in the U.S.

For these purposes, we would desire Classis approval to proceed along these lines. It should be noted that Rev. G. Horner is no longer a member of the Committee since his credential was transferred to the South Central Classis.

In the service of Christ,

Eric D. Bristley, Chairman, C. Combs, C. Esparza, K. Bowen, D. Mettler

Classis Action: The report was received.

G. Diaconal Ministries Committee

Esteemed Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ:

The Diaconal Committee of the Western Classis did not meet this year, nor did we communicate via the phone. Yours truly tried to make contact via the e-mail, but there was no response. Neither did I receive any requests for Diaconal Aid for the year 2006.

May the Lord continue to bless the Western Classis with generosity and kindness toward her members as they continue to build up the Diaconal Fund.

Moreover, praise the Lord for all of our Deacons! It is apparent that they are faithfully caring for the needs of their members. Thank you gentlemen.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Paul Henderson (Chmn), Elder Michael Peery, Elder Joe Gross
Elder Steve Wilbur, Elder Jeff Mills, Deacon John Warren*

Classis Action: The report was received.

H. Heidelberg West Youth Camp Committee

Esteemed Brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ:

You may have read my report in the Reformed Herald about the camp. If you did, you will have a pretty good idea of my assessment of last years. It went very well. With 122 total in attendance by Wednesday, it was a large camp, but not too large. The covenant youth proved to be of a godly sort, there were no discipline issues or any matters of a more serious nature as we have had in the past that needed to be dealt with. The counselors were committed to their work and discharged their duties in a manner which was glorifying to our God.

The Christian fellowship was a particular blessing for the counselors, as well as the campers, and all were edified by the best preaching and teaching of God's Word that you will find anywhere.

The camp also happens to feed it's people pretty well. You might say we ate like kings and queens thanks to some home style foods prepared this year by the Yuba City ladies. Various campers helped out by washing pots, pans, and a few other of the larger items used in the kitchen thus relieving the ladies of some of the work load, which at times can be a little daunting.

There are many others that make the camp a great success, people who are involved in the organizing and seeing through of activities at the camp, the purchasing of many things such as tee shirts and consumable items that are used during camp events, and Mrs. Judith Reyna the camp registrar who is indispensable.

Lastly, due to rent increases by Camp Peaceful Pines there may be a need to raise the camp fee a couple of dollars to help cover the additional cost. We also have one recommendation to Western Classis.

Recommendation 1. - That the guideline be raised to two dollars for the 2007 Classis year.

Respectfully submitted:

*Elder Greg Stewart (Chmn), Rev. Thomas Mayville, Rev. Paul Henderson,
Elder Chris Fellersen, Elder Greg Born, Elder Rick Lopez*

Classis Action: The recommendation was amended to \$3.00 and approved. The report was adopted.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

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

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

As we meet for the 22nd annual session of the Western Classis, I am reminded of our first [California] Classis meeting some 22 years ago in Anderson, California. That first Classis meeting was an historic moment, and most of us older-timers were epistemologically-self-conscious (!). Yet, every Classis is an historic moment, especially when candidates for the ministry are examined, substantive theological issues are debated, and God's people and churches are prayed for. In this sense our 22nd annual session is just as important as the inaugural. What we do at our 22nd Classis will impact the West for the rest of this young century.

Your parochial reports were both instructive and edifying. It is a blessing to know that we are all on the same page theologically and that we are not theological islands in ourselves. We all need one-another in the body of Christ, as we fight the good fight of faith and war a good warfare. And, of course, we need each other especially when we become wary, weary, and wan. Mutual encouragement is necessary to chase away the Grinch of despair.

But what do the statistics tell us about the health of the Western Classis? The baptized membership dropped from 1,019 to 945, and the number of communicants decreased from 731 to 701—a decrease of 4.1% (the lion's share of this depletion coming from the number of members dismissed from Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento). Yet, the giving in the Western Classis increased from \$1,730,669 to \$1,911,002—a 10.4 % increase. Also, there were only four adult baptisms in 2006. This tells me that we are probably not reaching the lost with the Gospel, if we want to define "lost" as those who are so ignorant of Christ that they have never been baptized. Nevertheless, the statistics tell us that the Western Classis is more in the midst of a tilt-down than a melt-down. The light at the end of the tunnel is *not* a gorilla with a flashlight. Yet, our greatest challenge continues to be implementing ways to do effective evangelism.

Regarding your parochial reports, Pastor Gil Baloy reports about the ongoing work in Covenant Reformed Chapel in San Diego, which includes his preaching through Genesis, evangelizing in Balboa Park, and generous giving by God's people. He rejoices also about his youngest son, Ethan, becoming the first member there to be added by Confirmation. His morale seems high and even anticipatory, that is, anticipatory of a "mother-lode" of people-gold eventually to be discovered. Like the Apostle Paul, he is confident that "there is much people in this city" (Acts 18:10).

Pastor Neale Riffert speaks about the discomfort of having to relocate the place of meeting of the congregation, but also speaks of there being no falling off of attendance in either Sunday school or the worship services as a result of this relocation. Additionally, he speaks about conducting new membership classes, in which there are several families who may be brought in. Sadly, at least from our perspective, Pastor Riffert announces his intention to relocate to Sherman, Texas in June. This will complete his forty-first year in the Gospel ministry. While not being (as he might say) hoisted "with his own petard," we know that for each of us there is a time to come apart to rest. As the aphorism goes: If we do not come apart to rest, we may be in danger of *coming apart*. We will miss him dearly.

The Rev. Jay Fluck happily reports the good things that are happening at the Rehoboth Chapel in Los Angeles. He reports of dramatic increases in both attendance and giving. At the conclusion of his report he speaks of his physical strength waning after investing "8 years of the 5 year commitment asked of Home Missionaries." In short, his pastorate is "hampered" by a mending-tents-ministry that threatens to "unmend" him. He needs prayer for physical strength and vigor to carry on the work. At this Classis, a strategy to allay his physical woes will be discussed.

Pastor Paul Henderson, arguably the dynamo of good cheer in the Western Classis, reports of his work at First Reformed Church in Yuba City, before he vamoosed to Rock Springs, Wyoming. He praises God for the return of pastor Gene Sawtelle to Yuba City, and for the way the Lord showed himself to be Jehovah-Jireh regarding his elder, James Ochsner, who after the paring down of the Christian school, was able to find alternative employment (so that he could remain in Yuba City). With his famous Hendo-enthusiasm, he writes, "The Lord bless THE Western Classis!"

The Rev. Vernon Pollema reports with joy that by the grace of God his doctors have declared him to be cancer-free! He thanks the Classis for its prayers and concern, too. Yet, he also speaks of his intention to resign his pastorate sometime by the end of 2007, if not earlier. He reminds us, however, that (without using the word) this will be more of a *sabbatical* than anything else. The work at Ebenezer Reformed continues to be vibrant, with Lord's Day morning and evening services, catechism classes, men and women fellowships, vacation Bible school, etc. Particularly, he requests prayer that Church discipline might be dispensed with wisdom and understanding so as to achieve the goal of repentance and restoration.

Pastor Paul Treick writes of the prominence of the three marks of the church in Trinity Reformed Church in Modesto. He speaks of new members added; of fifteen catechumens who meet for two hours each week, and a building mortgage which has been reduced to \$38,000. He praises God for his many benefits, including a faithful Spiritual Council and Consistory. There is growth and godly stability at Trinity Reformed Church.

Retired minister Lloyd Gross speaks of his preaching journeys to places outside Phoenix, including several sermons preached in Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield. He continues to be available to preach God's word virtually anytime, anywhere. He also reports on the positive results of his radiation treatments for prostate cancer, for which he heartily thanks God.

Our other retired minister, Pastor Gene Sawtelle, writes of his retirement from the ministry after forty-three years. Although hamstrung by a series of physical problems, including his recent surgery for a rotator cuff tear, Pastor Sawtelle does continue to preach God's word. He praises God for using him to spear-head the work in Grace Reformed Church in Greeley, Colorado, which under his ministry, developed from Chapel to Church. He thanks us for our prayers, but covets our continuing prayers, even as his physical infirmities continue.

Pastor Gary Mancilas is now in his fifth year in Chico. He writes about the marks of the church not only being present, but also appreciated by all the members. He says that witnessing and evangelism are dominating emphases of Covenant Reformed Church. In particular, the church has high hopes of Access Cable Television, where Pastor Mancilas hosts a show called "The Hour of Reformation." The giving in the Church has been solid, even exemplary, so that they are striving to pay the guidelines in full. He also thanks God for the financial aid that the congregation receives from outside sources, including Classis, Synod, and Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento.

The Rev. Dennis Roe reports about the Church unity and love at Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley. He singles out the elders for special praise, as well as the Rev. Eric Bristley for assisting him in the work of the Gospel ministry. The worship services average from 60-70, including visitors, too. There were special services throughout the year, including the annual Reformation Bible Conference. He continues to chair the Synod's Web Site Committee and the Classis Home Missions Committee. Plus, he writes about the Church's commitment to their mission work in Stockton, California. His missions fervor is

well illustrated by his continuing on as General Secretary for Westminster Biblical Missions. He praises God for the tranquility and godliness that exists in the congregation.

Pastor Jonathan Merica's report includes information about the number of sermons preached and made available to the public via the internet. He reports that since 2002 there were well over 6000 (!) hits on their website and that the total number of sermons viewed "to date" is near 109,000! My initial reaction to this figure is that it had to have been a misprint, but apparently it is not. Yet, despite the traffic of the website, a few difficult discipline cases cut into the numerical size of the congregation (although recently some of their losses have been regained). Pastor Merica plans to continue preaching God's word at Calvary Reformed Chapel, and to mend tents, if necessary. He is thoroughly committed to the work there.

Pastor Michael Voytek cites Jesus' metaphor about the vine and the branches as descriptive of God's work in Lodi this past year. While he speaks about pruning, he also speaks about growing as a result of pruning. He praises God for the godly leaders in the congregation; he speaks about church discipline cases, and about some who embraced paedocommunion leaving, as well as the church's spearheading the Congo Economic Development Fund. A few of the members are very sick and the elderly in the congregation need prayer to weather the storms of old age. He also speaks of his teaching several courses in City Seminary, which not only requires lots of preparation, but lots of motoring between Lodi and Sacramento. His focus upon Providence Reformed Church as God's vineyard leads him to conclude that the Lord is at work in the church, despite some discouraging moments in 2006.

The Rev. Hank Bowen speaks of 2006 as a difficult year for Faith Reformed Church in Anderson. There was the loss of ten members, coupled with two deaths of long-standing members. Consistory meetings were held infrequently, and his one elder was hampered by his job and physical infirmities from participating in the work of the Spiritual Council as much as he [the elder] desired. Nevertheless, the Word of God is proclaimed at Faith Reformed Church and the attendance has rebounded a bit into the low forties. In hopes of turning the tide, Rev. Bowen attended an evangelism conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. He reports that the first team sent out in Anderson was used by the Lord to bring a family into Christ's kingdom, and that this family has been in church ever since. Recognizing that Faith Reformed Church is at a crossroads, the church is paying special attention to evangelism and godly leadership. He requests that we pray that God might give them confidence and boldness to achieve these goals.

Dr. Frank Walker speaks of his active pace at Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento and beyond. He preached 42 times in Sacramento and 29 sermons outside Sacramento, often turning down invitations to preach because of competing preaching invitations. He often teaches three courses per semester at City Seminary, visits God's people, and attends all the Spiritual Council and Consistory meetings. He is excited about teaching the Reformed Faith wherever he goes, especially to those students in the seminary who have never been exposed to the beauties of the Reformed doctrines. While he does not mention his annual battles with a virus that seems to zero-in upon his throat, he could certainly use prayer for what seems like a seasonal attack upon his physical frame.

My own [Jim West] report contains information about a down-time at the beginning of 2006 followed by a pell mell-like conclusion to the year, in which new communicants joined the congregation, with as many as ten others now in my membership class. What is more, two new elders have been added to the Spiritual Council after passing their theological examinations. Covenant Reformed Church also celebrated its 35th anniversary this past year.

The spiritual pulse of the congregation is strong, the leadership is very active, and the word of God is impacting people's lives.

The Rev. Tom Mayville's parochial report contains information about his anticipated resignation as senior pastor at Grace Reformed Church in Willows, with a view to be commissioned by Synod as a missionary-Professor to Uganda. He reports that he is now the Associate Pastor of that congregation, so that the church there is now without a full-time, "Senior" pastor. With the exception of a grievous church discipline case that resulted in an excommunication, the church continues to rejoice and to prosper. The people are zealous for God's word, the elders are faithful overseers, and the giving has been both super-exuberant and super-abundant.

After reading all your reports it is clear that great changes are afloat in the Western Classis. The most noteworthy are churches without pastors, or that *will be* without pastors. In addition, two of our ministers have announced their full/temporary retirement from the pastoral ministry. This translates into wholesale changes in pastoral and Classical personnel. Last year we saw Pastors Horner and Henderson move on; this year two of our hoary heads will retire, with one "almost gray-hair" dispatched to the foreign mission field. What a difference a year makes! This means that the personality of the Western Classis will change, although God-willing, the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ through His pastors and elders will continue to flourish, as the Lord fashions us into His ethical image. It is clear to your President that filling the pulpits of the Western Classis with men who are sound in doctrine should be the paramount concern of our prayers.

A second issue is the matter of missions. Although Pastor Merica plans to continue on in Stockton (despite the trimming of denominational financial aid), the prospect of entirely new mission works is non-existent. While we continue to fund the works in San Diego and Los Angeles, we must always remember that the worst thing an army can do is outrun its supply line. I have gone on record before emphasizing the importance and the expense of mission works located in large, metropolitan areas. Although Christ's church is composed of "living stones" regenerated by God's Spirit, and is not a building, we must not forget that a building affords incalculable advantages. Yet, not even the monies in the Home Missions' Building Fund are adequate (according to normal terms) to make a reasonable down-payment on a suitable building in a metropolitan area. In the future we are going to have to increase the Guideline figure for the Home Missions' Building Fund, which at one time (I remind you) was as much as \$50.00 per communicant. \$50.00 times 700 communicant members over a period of ten years equals \$350,000, plus interest and plus what we now have. \$100.00 per communicant over ten years is \$700,000, plus interest and what we now have. I think we need to aggressively plan for the future. At the same time I recognize that the individual churches *especially* have a responsibility to raise their own funds for their own building projects.

One hopeful sign for more churches in the Western Classis was a recent contact I made with Rev. Alan Camarigg of the OCRC in Billingham, Washington, who pastors a church that recently left the OCRC over the Federal Vision contagion. This church, along with another in Canada, is searching for a new denominational home. Each church has a membership of about 35 families. I invited Rev. Camarigg to our Classis, but he concluded that it was premature for him to do so until he informed his congregation about possible plans for the future. I also let him know that we would be most willing to visit there at his convenience.

As I read your reports, I also continued to be encouraged that the flag of the Reformed Faith continues to fly high. I sense no shortage of zeal to do missions and to faithfully

implement the three marks of the Church. Obviously, we can always do better. But nowhere do I see a criminal dereliction of duty. Plus, the heartbeat of the ministers of the Denomination seems strong and regular so that we should have no fear of capable replacements to fill our current, and soon to be, pastor-less churches.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pastor Jim West

Classis Action: The report was received and it was moved to have it printed in the Abstract of the Classis and in the *Reformed Herald*.

B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The minutes of the 21st Annual Meeting of the Western Classis were typed, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder along with all reports, overtures, and pertinent information. According to the Synod's Committee on the Minutes of Classis, the minutes were corrected as needed.

The Abstract of the 21st Annual Meeting of the Western Classis was prepared and 250 copies were printed, bound, and mailed to the delegates and the congregations of the Western Classis and the Synod within the time limits of Standing Rule #9. For the Western Classis one copy was sent for each delegate and six more copies for each congregation. Three copies were delivered to each of the congregations of the other three Classes of Synod and one to retired pastors. One copy was sent to Mrs. Betty Sander along with a letter expressing our condolences and deep appreciation for the years of service that she and Rev. Sander had invested in the RCUS. The total cost of producing, printing, packaging, and mailing the Abstracts was \$1,071.48 or \$4.29 per copy.

The President's Report on the State of the Church was printed in the Abstract and in the *Reformed Herald*. Three overtures along with copies of papers for information from the Western Classis were sent to Synod for consideration. They were acted upon and reported in the Synodical Abstract of the 260th Annual Session. A summary of all financial matters approved by the Classis was sent to the Treasurer.

Your clerk reports that there were three changes in matters pertaining to the Western Classis. The reception of Rev. Gene Sawtelle as a retired minister, and the dismissal of Rev. George Horner and Rev. Paul Henderson to the South Central Classis. The proper letters regarding these transfers were sent to the Clerk of the South Central Classis. The Rev. Gene Sawtelle has also been elected to the office of Pastor Emeritus of the First Reformed Church of Yuba City.

The Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster submitted changes to their local constitution to the Clerk to be noted at this Classis. A letter has been received from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Presbytery of Southern California informing us of their work in the area of missions within our Classis.

The Clerk wants to commend all of the delegates for their diligence in submitting all reports and communications on white 8½ x 11 inch paper. It greatly simplifies binding the records. Your Clerk also wants to thank those of you who have sent your parochial and permanent committee reports in an electronic format. It greatly reduces the time to prepare

the Abstract. Just remember that the signed hard copy must still be submitted to facilitate their inclusion into the bound record of the minutes in a timely manner.

With regards to the statistics or credentials, however, please be sure to submit those on the forms that are sent out in a timely manner. While most congregations have complied with the three week deadline for submitting statistics, there are always several who I have to call at the last minute. This places the Clerk and the President under the gun to prepare their reports for Classis. There also seems to be some continuing confusion regarding the inclusion of the home mission congregation's statistics in the overseeing congregation's figures.

To help rectify this problem I would recommend to amend Standing Rule 2 by adding the following sentence to the end, "The statistics of the home mission congregation are to be included in the overseeing church's statistics when the congregation submits them to the clerk of Classis."

Your clerk also made one addition to the Credentials form this year. Congregations with Associate Pastors (and/or Pastor Emeritus) are asked to include their information on the back of the Credentials form.

Your clerk has nothing further to report.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Henry P. Bowen

Classis Action: The report was referred to Standing Judicial.

C. The Executive Committee of Synod

Executive Committee's Report to the Classes

To the Stated Clerks of Classes, RCUS

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee of Synod reports that there is a matter requiring a Classis vote to amend the Constitution. This appears on page 72 of the Abstract of the 260th Meeting of the Synod of the RCUS. In the first sentence of Article 41 the two uses of "four" are to be changed to "two" according to the recommendation passed by Synod. The action of Synod is as follows:

That Article 41 of the RCUS Constitution be amended to read as follows: (The first sentence of the article would read) If two ministers and two elders of the church, representing two different Classes, present to . . . (the rest would remain the same).

Grounds:

- a. The new required number of office bearers necessary to seek the disqualification of a professor would better reflect the size and make up of the number of ministers and elders of the denomination.
- b. The new requirement about those raising concerns would ensure that a greater representation of the Synod be expressed if a charge against a professor is to be investigated.

Clerks are asked to remind members of their own Classis to check which Synodical Committees they may be on so they can be active in the preparation of their respective committee reports. These are printed in the Synod Abstract p. 18.

Delegates are reminded that the 261st Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS meets May 21-24, 2007 at Northland RCUS in Kansas City, MO. A circular is forthcoming from the Synod which is asking that congregations pay for the lodging costs for delegates from their local congregation. The cost is \$79 per night (double or single). Delegates need to make their own reservations.

In the Lord's service,
Paul H. Treick, Stated Clerk of Synod

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

D. Treasurer's Report

The Western Classis Treasurer, Elder Chris Fellersen, presented the following report:

BALANCE SHEET			
As of December 31, 2006			
	<u>12-31-06</u>	<u>12-31-05</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
ASSETS:			
Cash	\$183,845.67	\$176,608.87	\$7,236.80
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$183,845.67	\$176,608.87	\$7,236.80
LIABILITIES:			

Accounts Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$183,845.67	\$176,608.87	\$7,236.80
TOTAL LIABILITIES & SURPLUS	\$183,845.67	\$176,608.87	\$7,236.80
FUND BALANCES:			
General	\$7,894.13	\$6,202.95	\$1,691.18
Missions Bldg Fd	132,094.88	127,735.73	4,359.15
Missions 22,919.47	20,516.95	2,402.52	
Benevolence	17,221.00	16,964.11	256.89
Publications	2,742.37	3,226.63	(484.26)
Heidelberg Camp	973.82	1,962.50	(988.68)
TOTAL FUNDS	\$183,845.67	\$176,608.87	\$7,236.80

INCOME STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006

INCOME	C. Mem. 1-01-06	Dues	Bldg Fund	Hm Mis	Benev	Publ	Heid. Camp	Total Per Church
Faith -Anderson	36	\$270.00	\$180.00	\$2,718.00	\$1,512.00	\$36.00	\$72.00	\$4,788.00
Grace-Bakersfield	118	885.00	590.00	9,040.50	4,956.00	118.00	236.00	15,825.50
Covenant-Chico	20	150.00	0.00	1,701.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,851.25
Covenant-Grass Valley	52	547.50	93.50	839.35	465.40	3.70	82.40	2,031.85
Grace-Lancaster	41	315.00	47.20	713.00	396.48	9.44	18.88	1,500.00
Providence-Lodi	52	390.00	0.00	1,600.00	1,010.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00
Trinity-Modesto	53	397.50	265.00	4,001.50	2,226.00	53.00	106.00	7,049.00
Covenant-Sacramento	163	1,222.50	815.00	12,360.50	6,846.00	163.00	326.00	21,679.00
Ebenezer-Shafter	111	810.00	540.00	8,154.00	4,536.00	108.00	216.00	14,364.00
Grace-Willows	40	300.00	200.00	3,020.00	1,680.00	40.00	80.00	5,320.00
First -Yuba City	43	322.50	215.00	3,264.50	1,806.00	43.00	86.00	5,737.00
Publ Book Sales/Misc		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	329.00	60.00	389.00
F & M Bank-int Alloc		68.64	1,413.45	227.03	187.71	35.70	21.72	1,954.25
TOTAL INCOME	729	\$5,678.64	\$4,359.15	\$47,585.63	\$25,621.59	\$938.84	\$1,305.00	\$85,488.85

EXPENSES

Stated Clerk Expenses:			
Gratuity 2005-06 Clerk		\$400.00	
Abstract Expense & Mailing		1,071.48	\$1,471.48
Executive Committee Expenses:			
Classis Meeting-March 2006		2,312.73	
Special Committee Expense		61.25	
Executive Committee Travel			2,373.98
Benevolences:			
Faith -Anderson		8,100.00	
Grace-Lancaster		5,100.00	
Covenant-San Diego		12,000.00	
Rev. Mancilas Camp Mileage		164.70	25,364.70
Inter-Church Relations:			
Travel-Delegate to OPC-SoCal		142.00	142.00
Home Missions:			
Covenant Reformed-Chico		7,857.44	

LA Basin-Shafter	23,375.04		
Grace Reformed-Pleasanton	13,320.00		
Committee Expense	630.63	45,183.11	
Heidelberg Camp:			
Camp Expenses	7,993.68		
Camp Fees Received	(5,700.00)	2,293.68	
Publications:			
Discerning Christ's Body		1,423.10	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$78,252.05	
INCOME FOR YEAR			\$7,236.80
CASH ON HAND 12-31-05			\$176,608.87
CASH ON HAND 12-31-06			\$183,845.67

INCOME STATEMENT BY FUND

FUND:	General	Hm Mis Bldg Fund	Hm Mis	Benev	Publ	Heid. Camp	Total
INCOME:							
Giving	\$5,610.00	\$2,945.70	\$47,358.60	\$25,433.88	\$574.14	\$1,223.28	\$83,145.60
Book Sales/Camp Funds					329.00	60.00	389.00
Allocated Interest	68.64	1,413.45	227.03	187.71	35.70	21.72	954.25
Total Income	\$5,678.64	\$4,359.15	\$47,585.63	\$25,621.59	\$938.84	\$1,305.00	\$85,488.85
EXPENSE:							
Stated Clerk	1,471.48						1,471.48
Exec. Comm	2,373.98						2,373.98
Inter Church	142.00						142.00
Benevolences				25,364.70			25,364.70
Home Missions			45,183.11				45,183.11
Homes Missions Bldg							0.00
Publications					1,423.10		
Heidelberg Camp-Net						2,293.68	2,293.68
Total Expense	3,978.46	0.00	45,183.11	25,364.70	1,423.10	2,293.68	78,252.05
Income (Loss) Yr.	\$1,691.18	\$4,359.15	\$2,402.52	\$256.89	(\$484.26)	(\$988.68)	\$7,236.80
Balance 12-31-05	\$6,202.95	\$127,735.73	\$20,516.95	\$16,964.11	\$3,226.63	\$1,962.50	\$176,608.87
Subtotal 12-31-06	\$7,894.13	\$132,094.88	\$22,919.47	\$17,221.00	\$2,742.37	\$973.82	\$183,845.67
Balance 12-31-06	\$7,894.13	\$132,094.88	\$22,919.47	\$17,221.00	\$2,742.37	\$973.82	\$183,845.67

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Fellersen

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

PAROCHIAL REPORTS

Rev. Gil Baloy read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

I visited Sutter's Mine not long ago up north near Sacramento. That's when it dawned on me that the work of a home mission chapel is like hunting for gold. The passion of the search is of the essence. It is what keeps these treasure hunters going. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34). Deep down, what really is it that keeps the servants of God motivated? We hope to find the *mother-lode* of true Biblical reformation and revival in the establishment of the church. Our model may be found in the

early church. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

However, for us to go on, God must give us "spiritual gold fever," like he did the man in one of the kingdom parables. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matthew 13:44). Now, nuggets, smaller grains, or even gold dust won't be turned down along the way. Every advancement of God's kingdom, every soul added to the church, every step of progress made in the Christian life, is precious. Nonetheless, the quest is always for the *motherlode*. "But the Word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24). What are signs of our coming close to the *mother-lode*?

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3: 6). This is how home missions start out: God blessing a little with bright hope. But that's all right, as long as the fire has been lit. It may be a flicker, an ember barely hanging on, so long as it is alive. "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb (Psalm 19:10). That love for the Word of God: that's everything.

Our love of God's Word will lead us to the house of God each Lord's Day. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1). We are always concerned that our worship be glorifying to God. The Word of God continues to be faithfully preached from behind the pulpit at our morning worship service each Lord's Day. We have almost completed the study of the book of Genesis, covering a number of doctrines and themes: for example, the nature of true worship, progressive sanctification, prayer, perseverance of the saints, spiritual prosperity, biblical reconciliation, and the life of faith. It is, of course, essential to follow the history of redemption as it develops in this book and how the covenant of grace is unveiled progressively. This is the golden thread of the "Desire of the Ages," our Lord Jesus Christ, that brightens the tapestry.

Heidelberg Catechism #19 Question: "Whence knowest thou this?" Answer: "From the Holy Gospel: which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; afterwards proclaimed by the holy Patriarchs and Prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and finally fulfilled by His well-beloved Son."

On several occasions, such as around the holidays, we would take an "excursion" in other parts of the Bible. It is always a joy to preach at our Thanksgiving Day Service and at our New Year Fellowship gathering. In addition, I have covered passages in Romans chapters 6 and 7 pertaining to the Law of God in the Christian life in an expository and doctrinal preaching style. Also I am still going through key passages dealing with evangelism and missions. That happens when it is my turn to preach every other month in our monthly joint evening worship service with the local RPCNA church. Generally, it is Elder Alfred White and myself who preach the glorious gospel, and Deacon Angel Lontoc and his oldest son Eric who testify of the grace of Christ, in Balboa Park every second Sunday of the month. We are encouraging other men, including the up-and-coming teens and young men, to shine forth their light in a dark and unbelieving world. Why? "That others may live."

I continue to conduct a Bible study each Sunday morning at the Paradise Hills Convalescent Center before going to our meeting place for Sunday School. We enjoy Biblical teaching at our "Midweek Oasis" each Wednesday. The compassion and mercy of the Savior, as seen in various parts of the New Testament (the Old Testament too), became an all-consuming search in the Scriptures. Towards the end of the year we took a closer look at the topic of "Church Discipline" from Matthew 18, based on Jay Adam's treatment of the same. Variety is the spice of life and is necessary for the spiritual diet of the saints.

We have mentioned two of the marks of the true Church so far: the first being the faithful preaching of the Word, and the third the exercise of church discipline, which the Spiritual Counsel endeavors to faithfully do. That leaves the second mark of the church, which is the regular administration of the sacraments of the church. The Lord's Supper was held twelve times. There were no baptisms last year.

I taught the membership class to Ted Drummond, who later became part of our congregation through profession of faith. Presently, he works as captain of a beautiful yacht out of Cabo San Lucas most of the year. We talked almost every week by phone. My youngest son Ethan became our first member by way of confirmation. What a day of rejoicing that was. Hopefully, the other catechumens will be encouraged to follow Christ by following suit. At the end of 2006 I started a class of three pupils, which is still going on.

There is a now-retired OPC minister friend, Bruce Brawdy, whose regular salutation to your pastor is: "be steadfast." Is it within our power to continue steadfast? Only in so far as God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. We must seek the Lord for His help. Our midweek prayer meetings are solemn yet joyful times. The need for prayer is great with a number with life-threatening illnesses in our midst and amongst our kin folk. We saw how marvelously God answered prayer in restoring Noah Poncie. Next was his dad Gerard. The timing is of the Lord, that the burden would not be too great on the family. Gerard completed what is hopefully his last operation to remove his colon. In fact, he just recently returned home from the hospital. We thank God for His kindness shown to both of them.

The church needs prayer on several fronts: for purity of doctrine, for the peace and unity of the brethren, for the power of the Holy Spirit in spiritual awakening, and for more love for Christ and compassion for dying souls all around us. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good" (Psalm 122:6-9). The highlight of our New Year Fellowship is when we open the "Prayer Capsule" and rehearse the marvelous answers of our loving God to prayer over the past year.

This speaks of the amalgamableness (cohesiveness) of gold. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). We can't have enough of it. That is why we determined to keep our post-worship fellowship lunch, which we have enjoyed from the start of our meeting together eight years ago. We also have more fellowship after the Bible study and prayer in homes on three of four Wednesdays of the month. Again, wherever fellowship is, there is also food (an Oriental custom).

The brethren are our most precious commodity. For they are bought with the price of the righteousness and shed blood of Christ. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matthew 18:10-11). Sadly for us, I must report the departure of three members from our congregation. Three other members were removed from the rolls through administrative erasure. Though they are lost to us, we trust that they are not lost to Christ. We are blessed with 16 baptized members, and four unconfirmed members, for a total of ten families.

In the past, we held our own family camp a short way up the coast in Carlsbad State Park, at Cuyamaca State Park located in the nearby mountains to the east, and even at Yosemite National Park for three consecutive years. A few of us miss going to Sacramento's annual family camp. Last year, for the first time, some of our number, including our young people, enjoyed the joint rafting trip on the American River with the brethren of several Western Classis churches. A small group of us did make the celebration of the 35th Anniversary of Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church last Fall. What a memorable

occasion that was! There is something about fellowship to lift the spirits of one's fellow gold miners. It is a taste of heaven on earth! This leads me to a brief but vital matter... *"the gold of good health and good spirits."*

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). One has to keep up his health for the long haul. Spiritual gold mining is hard work. I have had some health concerns, which, God, in His mercy, has alleviated for now by the wise counsel of doctors and the concerned prayer of the brethren. I am grateful to God for the loving support of my wife and children in the ministry. What would I do without them! Their health, I might add, is relatively good so far. And for the most part, God has sustained the members of our congregation again this past year. Good health is a cause for our rejoicing.

How far would the California gold prospectors have gone without supplies? We are thankful to God for the cheerful giving of our church family here and in Sacramento. Special mention should be made of the tremendous help my family and I received from the generous support of our RCUS brethren in the churches of the Western Classis. "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity" (Philippians 4:15-16). What a testimony of their love for the minister and his ministry!

Finding gold is tough. You have to go through a lot of dirt to find a little bit of gold. The more rock, moss and dirt you go through the more gold you get. Even with the most up-to-date equipment to dredge the bottom of the river, it still comes down to the same long hours and hard work. Expect to roll up your sleeves and get your hands and face dirty and sweaty. Even after all that, at the end of the day you may end up with a few grains, and that's all.

Search for the lost is like searching for gold. It is difficult, painstaking and time-consuming work. It takes great determination and undaunted optimism. Lest we become weary in well-doing, we must remind ourselves from time-to-time of what we are about. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37).

We may have the tools of the multi-media, modern telecommunications, and hi-tech electronics to help out. We still spend long hours doing the ministry. For example, email is a quick and easy means to keeping in touch. When it is time for the pastor to check his email, it has the potential of occupying the better part of a day. But the Lord daily calls His under shepherds to the Word and prayer. Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

The evangelism of the church is not a one-man job, like gold mining was in "the good ol' days." Miners didn't trust each other very much. There has to be trust among the miners of God. You know, that is not natural with our natural "claim-jumper" mentality. But in the mining of God's kingdom it has to be different: we have to work together. That is the only way it will advance. A mission congregation must of necessity reach out. I am glad more of us are on the same page of planning, preparing and praying for the Lord of the harvest to send out more laborers with the gospel. It gladdens the heart of every pastor when others put their hands to the plow of service in the church.

The RCUS Synod of 2006 mandated to establish relations with three ministers, Edwin Puzon, Napoleon Narag, and Rey Domingo, along with their respective churches in the Philippines. Another mandate is to prepare the men to be licensed in the RCUS. Your servant is anticipating being sent there with Michael Voytek to help accomplish these mandates before the next Synod in May of 2007.

Actually, we are all after the same thing: God's grace in salvation. There is so much of that to go around. Mission work, whether at home or abroad, is not easy. We are called to help and support each other. When brothers in other sister churches need help, or when there is work in the Classis or Synod, we lend a ready hand. It makes for lighter work, not to mention providing opportunity for mutual fellowship. Presently, I serve on the Synod's Publications and Foreign Ministries committees. Also I am on the Interchurch Relations Committee of Western Classis. Besides our own spiritual counsel and consistory meetings, we join in those of the Sacramento Church each month. It is a *golden* opportunity for us to learn the ropes of shepherding and overseeing God's work.

I am thankful for Alfred White's willingness and ability to exhort the congregation when called upon to do so. His faithful teaching during Sunday School is to be highly commended. Eric Lontoc is excellent with the instruction and mentoring of the Junior High and High School age students. Maricar does a great job of teaching the children. We are considering training more teachers this coming year that we may meet the growing needs of the flock and anticipate new families and visitors. We trust in God to give the increase. When we do find gold, we must protect and take care of it. When I hear that others are successful in service, my heart is joyful for their growth. We are encouraged to go on. What a becoming name for the church: "Happy (blessed) Camp."

We need to know the true from the false. As the saying goes, "Not all that glitters is gold." There is much out there in the visible church like that. Truth is rare even in our day. "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands" (Psalm 115:4). Trials are a necessary part of finding out the true gold. Our Lord declared: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness does not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:18). Let's make sure that what God wants is what we are after as a congregation. Then we won't go wrong.

My brothers in Western Classis, we take courage by your example of faithfulness to God in the midst of hardships and discouragements. What a testimony so many of you are to our hearts. How encouraged we are to hear of those of you who pray for us often, and even daily. May this account of the Lord's work in San Diego give you clear indication of the wonder and the power and the love of our prayer-answering covenant-keeping God.

I attest that the above illustrations of spiritual gold are accurate and true. A little with the Lord's grace in it is better than much without. For "the blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22).

In Christ's love and service,
Pastor Gil Baloy

Classis Action: Take Note

Rev. Hank Bowen read his Parochial Report.

Beloved Brothers,

In Galatians 6:6-10 we read, *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary*

while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

The year of our Lord 2006 has been a hard year at Faith Reformed Church, a year where it would have been easy to become weary. In the early part of the year there was the loss of ten members who decided to leave Faith Reformed Church. This was coupled with the deaths of two long-standing members, and also the loss of another brother who had become a dear saint in our midst. At this point our current membership is 24. These losses in many ways took the wind out of our sails in moving ahead on our vision to become a growing vibrant church again.

With the decrease in our average attendance on Sunday mornings, there was a reduction in the general income of the church. But with the reserve that had been maintained and the faithfulness in giving by the membership, the day to day operations were covered. However, the progress toward weaning ourselves from denominational aid will have to be put on hold for this coming year as we pray that God will reverse the losses of the past year. Average attendance in the worship services has rebounded some and currently runs in the low forties.

Many concerns in the physical health of our membership were before us, especially those on the consistory. In the Bowen household this year, we literally “limped” through this year with Patty suffering a severe break of her left leg in February and my having a knee surgery at the end of August. Deacon Floyd Peery underwent a heart by-pass surgery and had residual concerns surrounding the surgery. Elder Michael Peery not only found himself physically worn out, injured and sick due to a heavy work schedule, he also went through changing jobs. All of this contributed to difficulties for the leadership of the church to be effective. Consistory meetings are held inconsistently, and visitation of members and the exercise of Christian discipline was lax at best. The Consistory did add one new deacon at our recent Congregational meeting, but the lack of qualified elders continues to be a major problem, demanding we pray continually for God to send men qualified to be elders.

Not all was discouraging though. There were several visitors who have become regular in their attendance over the past year. Our list of Adherents (members who are part of our church but yet to have formally joined) has grown to over a dozen. There are others who say they plan to visit and may be interested in becoming involved in the future of Faith church.

My pastoral duties kept me very busy. I preached 59 times this past year including series on John 4, the book of Jude and the Beatitudes. I preached once at Redeemer RCUS in Minneapolis. I also officiated at the funeral of a dear friend in Minnesota where the gospel was preached to around 250 friends from the hockey community. A Bible Study was concluded on the Covenant and a Study of Systematic Theology was started. I attended and taught at the Heidelberg West Camp. I have been active with work as the chairman of the Synod Publications Committee that is in the process of enhancing the visual appearance of the publications of the RCUS and considering ways to more effectively provide tools for the congregations of the RCUS to do outreach. I have tried to do my best in my duties as the Clerk of the Western Classis.

While the beginning of the year was filled with set backs and discouragements, the end of the year was cause for encouragement. In November the consistory sent me to a week long clinic on Evangelism Explosion training at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale. The Consistory is committed to building a foundation that emphasizes evangelism. The last quarter of 2006 was dedicated to introducing evangelism into Faith church as a way of life for our members. The fruit of that preparation took its first step in January when the inaugural Evangelism semester opened. The first night that the

Evangelism Team went out, a family who had been visiting the church made profession of faith and have been in church since that evening.

Several ideas of how to generate visibility are being considered. The first is to upgrade the website and make it more accessible including a message board, a library for MP3 sermons, and just a generally enhanced appearance. The website has become the number one way that people are being attracted to visit us.

There have been numerous discussions about whether the dollars we are currently spending on newspaper and yellow pages ads are an effective use of a limited budget. Over the past three years, almost all of our visitors came either through invitation or from our website. To this end we are considering shifting the advertising budget to cable television ads. A benefit with these ads would be increased name recognition for the church as we go out to evangelize in our community.

An evening service and prayer time were added in September. This opens the door to some visitors to become acquainted with us, as well as the blessing of a fuller sense of the Lord’s Day to open and close the day in worship. The inclusion of the prayer time is critical in light of the many needs we have as a congregation. With the demands of evangelistic outreach that lie before us, we must proceed forward bathed in prayer to our God who alone can bring the fruit from obedience to the great commission. To this end, all members are invited to become more engaged in all of the services of the church.

Faith Reformed Church is at a crossroads. The congregation understands that it cannot afford to sit back and wait upon God to bring new people. There are many key elements that must be added. The biggest still is the need for qualified elders, men of God filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit who will be able to teach and give proper oversight to the spiritual needs of the congregation. There is also the real need to increase the membership. There is a lack of young families with children. To this end the congregation has set a goal of reaching out to people who are currently unchurched that God may use us as instruments to lead the lost to saving faith. Should our Sovereign God be pleased to bring people to faith in Jesus Christ through evangelism it will increase the need for more officers and members to help these new Christians become vibrant members of the church.

To end on a personal note and evaluation, I do admit to a sense of timidity in the work that lies before me as a pastor in the Church of Jesus Christ. I often feel that I am alone in the decision making process of how to move Faith Reformed Church forward. The consistory is supportive, but I am convinced that Faith Church needs an aggressive and proactive counsel committed to a vision to move ahead. In light of this, I would ask your prayers for confidence in the demanding work of building up Faith Reformed Church, for wisdom in handling the problems that arise, and for co-laborers to work alongside of in the work of the ministry of Christ.

Your fellow servant in Christ,
Rev. Hank Bowen

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

Rev. Eric Bristley read his Parochial Report.

Dear Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

We began the year 2006 continuing to deal with my wife's medical condition after having had an operation for cancer at Christmas. God graciously provided for our needs, both financially through gifts from churches and individuals, and also in November when we received the 'all clear' evaluation from the doctor.

Continuing to provide pulpit supply, I have ministered to the church locally and regionally through supply preaching. I have preached and conducted worship at the RCUS churches in Modesto, Yuba City, Lodi, Stockton, Willows, Anderson, and Bakersfield. In the fall I spoke at Mission Fest at Shafter. In addition, I also supplied the pulpits of Orthodox Presbyterian Churches in Rocklin and Novato.

At Covenant Reformed I typically preach on average once a month, frequently join in helping with the public worship and leading in prayer. In preaching I have continued to focus on bringing messages from First Peter. When leading adult Sunday school I have given attention to providing instruction in the various biblical covenants. On Reformation Day I stepped into the shoes of Martin Bucer for a night, giving a lecture on his life and work in the first-person.

My pastoral labors in overseeing the flock are exercised toward the church here and in Stockton at regular meetings of the Consistory and Spiritual Counsel every month. Along with Elder Krivolavek I have had the opportunity to be involved in family visitation. A Tuesday morning prayer meeting by the elders continues to be an important area of ministry as we lift up to God the needs of the church and its members as well as the broader needs of the Reformed Church in the U.S.

Missions continue to be a key aspect of my ministry. I have continued to be involved in the ministry of Westminster Biblical Missions (WBM) during the past year, which now includes serving as President of the board. I have also labored with Rev. Victor Atallah in producing monthly newsletters for Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF).

As you know, I serve as associate pastor without salary. Due to this, I labor to support my family through other means. Part of that has been done through teaching at City Seminary. In Spring of 2006 I taught Christian Worldview; in the Summer of 2006, Evangelism, and this past fall, Missions. Presently I am teaching a New Testament Survey of the General Epistles.

I also labor in publishing and web design work. Since Synod, I have been working for the Publications Committee of the RCUS on a number of projects which include a revision of the *Three Forms of Unity* and a new design of the *Reformed Herald*. I have also been working on designing new websites for various congregations of Classis including Sacramento, Stockton, Anderson, as well as San Diego, Bakersfield, and Synod, which are in various stages of development.

One area of growing concern has been that of evangelism. Subsequent to teaching a course on evangelism at City Seminary, I have had a greater desire to pray and find opportunities to evangelize and help others carry out the Great Commission. I have sought to encourage greater diligence in this ministry locally and in discussions with various pastors and members of the Classis.

It is my fervent prayer that the Western Classis may abound in love, prayer, sound doctrine, good works, and evangelism. I will continue to serve Christ in assisting pastors, consistories, and congregations as you pray for me and my ministry and work. My hope is that in the year ahead we may see new blessings from the Almighty in the expansion of His church.

In the Service of Christ,
Rev. Eric Bristley

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Jay Fluck read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

The Lord said through Isaiah, "My word shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish the purpose for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). His word is not powerless, and this year has demonstrated that again. Our average attendance in January was 32, in November it was 51. We have done nothing different. The power of the Word has done it all. We had to purchase more chairs, Psalters, Hymnals, and copies of the Three Forms of Unity. The increase required the lengthening of our "tent cords" and the strengthening of the "tent pegs". It is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

We have been privileged to add six communicant members to our roll, and one non-communicant member. The Grahams are in the process of adopting John William born December 20th (some "Christmas present")! The additions give us a Membership Roll of 24 communicants and eight non-communicants. We are averaging 19 regular visitors. Sunday evening attendance averages 22 and Wednesday evening 12.

We administered the Lord's Supper six times during the year. I was privileged to proclaim God's word twice in Bakersfield, and twice from Ebenezer's pulpit this year, conducting the administration of the Lord's Supper once in Bakersfield and once at Ebenezer.

Our giving this year totaled \$72,033.00, which includes one significant gift above our usual giving. This represents an increase of \$18,000.00 over last year. The tithing of our congregation increased by some \$10,000.00 this year.

The Lord's hand has again been obviously and dramatically at work among us this year. He has caused us to prosper in every area of endeavor!

Our Sunday School program expanded to three classes this year. Elder Goehring continues to teach the older children, Elder Esparza teaches the adults from the Belgic Confession, and Pastor Fluck is attempting to teach the young children (2 three year olds and 1 two year old).

We continue to make use of every means of outreach we have strength and opportunity for, but the witness of our people as they speak to and live before their relatives and friends is still the most powerful witness the Lord has given to us. The website, managed ably by Matthew Davis is the second most cited source of contact. That web site is being updated and expanded (RehobothReformedChurch.org).

I have given membership instruction to six individuals this year and am currently preparing our nominee for the office of Deacon to "endure" his trials.

We continue to be grateful to Synod and Classis for their support and, although our giving has dramatically increased will still be in need of their support for the foreseeable future. The support in material terms and in loving attentive oversight of the Consistory of Ebenezer continues to amaze us bringing forth praises to our Lord for your care of us. We continually uphold you in prayer asking that the Lord will suit to you a blessing even greater than those which you have bestowed on us in His name.

Loretta and I were privileged to travel to Europe in April and May of this past year, by the kindness of Elder and Mrs. Clarence Goehring. Seventeen days is only enough to whet one's appetite, but what a taste! It was tragic to us to have a tour guide in Heidelberg who did not know of the Heidelberg Catechism, but such is Europe. How gracious our Lord has been to this nation.

As you pray for us, continue to remember our need to mature as a body growing to the fullness of the strength that the Lord has in store for us. As for Pastor Fluck, he continues to have sufficient strength for the task but realizes that the strength will not continue forever. He has given eight years of the five year commitment asked of Home Missionaries. Uphold him in prayer that the blessing of the Holy Spirit may sustain him and that the same Holy Spirit may continue to bless Rehoboth.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jay E. Fluck

Classis Action: Take Note. Elder Ryan Spitzer led the body in prayer.

Rev. Lloyd Gross' Parochial Report was read by Rev. Voytek.

Brothers in Christ,

It is with much thankfulness to God that I greet you, dear brothers in Christ, in another year that God has given me.

Once again my great joy was to preach a number of times in several different Reformed denominations. One of the highlights of my preaching this past year was to preach at the Trinity Reformed Church's 20th Anniversary and Reformation Day services in Colorado Springs, Colorado last fall. It has also been a joy to preach a number of times at Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield this past year since their pastoral vacancy. Another highlight of course was the privilege to preach at the 269th Annual Synod meeting of the Reformed Church in the U. S. held in Mitchell, South Dakota last Spring.

With much gratitude to God I completed a series of 43 radiation treatments last summer for prostate cancer. The results have been good so far and my wife and family and I give praise to God for His mercy. The treatments cost \$40,000.00 and after insurance payments it left me with about a \$6,000.00 bill which by God's grace we are paying off.

My prayers often go up to God's throne of grace for you dear brothers in your ministry in the midst of "a crooked and perverse generation." May God make us fearless in proclaiming His unchangeable truth until Jesus comes. May He come soon.

In our beloved Redeemer,
Rev. Lloyd Gross

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Paul Henderson's Parochial Report was read by Rev. Voytek.

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren of the Western Classis RCUS:

I pray that all is well with you, your families, and with the Flock of God that Christ has called you to serve. May the Lord continue to beautify His Bride, and to supply you all with His grace which is sufficient for thee, even as His strength is made perfect in your weaknesses.

My duties this past year continued the same as in years past. The preaching of the Word was faithfully proclaimed in much fear and trembling. I preached from a variety of Scripture passages during the worship service, and also in the Adult Sunday School class. The Word of God was received by the faithful, and yours truly was often encouraged with the kind and gracious comments made by the folk of First Reformed Church. I am truly humbled, as well as grateful that the Lord saw fit to use this weak and broken vessel to minister His precious gospel of grace in their midst.

Likewise, the proper administration of the Lord's Supper was administered and the table of the Lord was guarded with an eye for the "body of Christ" {His blood-atoning sacrifice} to be regarded as worthy, and not something to be trampled under foot.

The spiritual oversight and care of the flock was rightly maintained. Although the church continued to experience serious discipline issues with a few of her members, the elders remained firm and true to the honor of Christ's name, and to the guarding of the flock. I commend my brothers in the Lord for their faithfulness to God's Word, while remaining steadfast in their love for the brethren, especially those who wandered away, and were eventually excommunicated from the communion of Christ. The Lord continue to bless them for their faithfulness; and may the Lord in mercy grant forgiveness to those gone astray.

Although there were many other significant events that happened during this past year, I will only mention two. The first event was the blessed return of the founding pastor of First Reformed Church – The Rev. Gene Sawtelle! Although he and his dear wife Sharon desired greatly to continue in the full-time work of the ministry, the Lord had other plans. And as this 'transition' from full-blown service in the church to retirement has been trying at times for them, I know that the folks of First Reformed Church will be blessed by their return, and their participation in the continuing work in Yuba City! I pray God's richest blessings upon Gene & Sharon's "retirement" from the full-time ministry! May they enjoy many years of fellowship with their family and friends in California!

Secondly, the restructuring of Covenant Christian School was a major ordeal for many in the church. This school had played a big part in the life of this small church. It has (and still is) provided sound educational opportunities for many of the families of the RCUS. The Ochsner family, especially my dear brother James, who for over 12 years, faithfully sought to instruct our covenant young folk in the Lord, had to find new employment this past year. The Lord has graciously provided him gainful employment with a top position in the Sutter County Library. Praise God for His goodness to the children of men! The school has not 'officially' closed, for James' wife, Jenette, is still running it. The Lord knows exactly what He is doing, both for First Reformed Church folk, and for Covenant Christian School. His providential ways are often very mysterious, and certainly not known by us, but we know from His Word that He is our Shepherd, and thus we will never lack all that is necessary for body and soul. Moreover, in and through all of the 'evil' that He sends us in this vale of tears, He will turn it all to our good, for He is able to do it, being almighty God, and willing also, being our faithful Father! Amen!

We will miss the congregation there in Yuba City. After spending six plus years cutting my teeth in the preaching and praying and plugging away of the gospel ministry, I can only

hope that our Lord has used these blessed labors to increase and preserve His folk. May they all continue to grow in the grace and knowledge, and thus, in the love of Christ Jesus, all to the glory of His name!

The Lord bless them in the calling of their new pastor and family! Get the garage fixed up Greg! The Lord bless THE Western Classis! And please, come by and visit us in Rock Springs! Things are really going well for us now that we are unpacked! The congregation here has extended much warmth and friendship and continues to be a blessing to us all. We are thankful for His mercy and great faithfulness.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Paul H. Henderson

Classis Action: Take Note. Elder Wayne Lingenfelter led the body in prayer.

Rev. Gary Mancilas read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brethren,

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

In light of this passage, the Church has been established by a divine government ruled by Jesus Christ; and all should agree that no responsibility of Church Government is more fundamental than the responsibility of upholding the highest standards of biblical principles by those whom God has ordained and lawfully installed in office to care for His Covenant people. There can be no dissent from the principle that all pastors and elders of the Church of our Lord must act with unwavering integrity, absolute impartiality, and complete devotion regarding the membership’s rights and privileges. This principle must be followed, not only theologically but also practically among all its members. The Church of our Lord is not only a private institution but also a public one. Because the Church is a public institution, all members of the Church represent Christ in the world. In fact, the Church is divinely commissioned by Christ to go into the whole world proclaiming His message of the true Gospel. To this end, the Church of Christ must be exposed to the public, must be approachable, and must be confident that whatever it does is God honoring and God glorifying, and that its highest pursuit be an uncompromising commitment and of absolute fidelity to the Word of God.

Every branch of Church government is upon Christ’s *shoulder[s]*. As the Wonderful Counselor, Christ is present in the councils of the Church and with His officers as they deliberate the work of the Church. It is with great confidence that the officers do their spiritual work knowing that it is Christ, *“Who governs us by His Word and Spirit.”*

According to Article 81 of the RCUS Constitution, it is the duty of the minister of the Gospel to give a “full account of the spiritual and temporal condition” of his charge. Thereupon, I offer the following report of my labors as pastor of Covenant Reformed Church at Chico and my labors for our denomination:

Labors for the Denomination: In the broader service of the church, on behalf of Synod my labors included serving on the Permanent Publications Committee and serving as chairman of the Permanent Committee to Develop e-Books. In addition, it was an honor serving on the South Central Classis Ordination and Installation Committee by bringing the charge to Mr. Scott Henry, pastor-elect of Zion RCUS at Menno, South Dakota.

Labors of the Pastor and Spiritual Condition of the Church: This past Classical year marks my fifth year in Chico, and with confidence I report that the Spiritual Council of Covenant Reformed Church continues to be vigilant and faithful in its oversight of the preaching and teaching of God’s Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline. The members have expressed their appreciation in receiving *“the pure doctrine of the gospel,”* which has been faithfully preached to them by their pastor fifty-one times, mainly on a series of sermons on the topic of anthropology concentrating on the progressive sanctification of the saints. *The pure administration of the sacraments*, as instituted by Christ, has been administered on the first Lord’s Day of each month with sermons focused on the Lord’s Table. *Church discipline* has been properly exercised for the correcting of the soul, which has been evidenced to the saints by the work of their pastor and elders. For the spiritual well-being of all the members, the officers administered the comforts and privileges afforded the saints in Christ so that they should be able to serve God with cheerfulness and freedom of spirit. For this purpose, it was demonstrated that nothing is to be more importantly or diligently sought for, or carefully looked after, than the proper care of the members’ privileges and comforts.

In addition, your servant taught the adult Sunday school class on John Calvin’s work on the “Institutes of the Christian Religion” up until the month of September, at which time I began to teach the Sunday catechism classes preparing the youth for confirmation. Meantime, the elders have rotated teaching the adult Sunday school classes. Together with the elders, faithful visitation has been performed. As needed, personal and family counseling sessions have been provided. In my labors, the required administrative duties were carried out, including keeping a complete membership record.

Under the oversight of the Spiritual Council, Men’s Bible Study and Ladies’ Fellowship are held semimonthly. Our deacon leads the men’s study on the book, The Mystery of Providence, by John Flavel; and the ladies are studying and discussing the book, The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment, by Jeremiah Burroughs. These studies have been reported as being a great blessing to the congregation.

Temporal Condition of the Church: The congregation has demonstrated a high level of commitment to church growth. Our witness in the community remains to be through personal witnessing, the yellow pages, the Internet via our church website, the sermon and teaching tape ministry, and the local newspaper. Currently, Access Cable Television is airing “The Hour of Reformation,” and scheduled three days a week on KKXX AM radio station is an advertisement on Covenant Reformed Church and a fifteen-minute message excerpt from a collection of Lord’s Days’ sermons. The radio and television broadcasts are made possible through anonymous contributions.

Financially, the members’ giving is faithful and exemplary. The members recognize their obligation to meet the dues and guidelines payments to Classis and Synod; therefore, the Consistory continues to receive special offerings, which are scheduled quarterly. In 2006, the Consistory collected \$3,872 in special offerings for guidelines. As budgeted, the denominational dues and the Reformed Herald subscriptions were paid in full. The work of the church has been sustained through the faithful support of the members, Home Missions support from Classis and Synod, and the generous gifts of Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento. On behalf of the congregation, we are most grateful to those in our

denomination who have offered their prayers, support, love, and concern for us before God's throne of grace. We request that you continue to pray that the Lord will prosper our souls and use Covenant Reformed for His glory until the return of Christ.

In the providence of God, the financial status of the church is in God's hands; and as a congregation, we wait upon God to bless the church with the needed resources. Even during the trials of the church, the members have demonstrated a commitment to God's faithfulness by believing in His Word and standing firm on the promise that our Heavenly Father, for the sake of Christ, works out all things according to His purposes and our eternal good.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,
Rev. Gary Mancilas

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Tom Mayville read his Parochial Report.

Beloved fathers and brothers,

This past Classical Year has been one of new developments in the providence of our faithful covenant keeping God. Your servant preached through the first 7 chapters of the Gospel of Mark and preached occasional sermons for Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Mothers Day, Father's Day, Reformation Sunday, Thanksgiving, and New Years. I administered the Lord's Supper 12 times, and had the pleasure of seeing one catechumen confirmed. I thank you for your prayers over the years in behalf of my daughter Michelle. This year we saw her two children (3 and 9) baptized at a Presbyterian Church in Rancho Cordova! We saw one of our members marry this year and I was pleased to take them through premarital counseling. Another couple is about ready to prepare for marriage in this way. It is a blessing to our congregation to see another couple find their spouse within the ranks of the RCUS. One member who had lost her husband to death and moved to Michigan remarried and joined her husband's Reformed Baptist Church. Two members are living near San Jose and worshipping at the OPC in Sunnyvale, but are uncertain about how long they will live in that area.

Sadly, after lengthy attempts to bring about repentance, one of our members was excommunicated for desertion of her husband. Please pray for inactive Elder Ted vanTol as he strives to adjust to life without his wife, and pray for his two youngest daughters as they suffer the consequences of divorce. We have one young man in the present membership class. Another young man who has been regularly attending for about ten years is expected to join this year. An unsaved husband of one of our members is beginning to attend fairly regularly. I ministered to three of our members, and one frequent attendee who underwent surgeries this year. Elder Bowen had surgery on both knees about a month apart: one arthroscopic, and the other a knee replacement. Please pray for his full and speedy recovery. Four times a year, I minister to the old folks at Sun Bridge Rest Home.

This year, the Spiritual Council decided to divide up visitation between Elder Visits and Pastoral Visits with each family at least once per year. Your servant ministered to several families again through individual counseling on many occasions. I promoted

Family Life Today's *Weekend to Remember Marriage Conference*, and several couples were blessed by attending it. I attended the graduations of four High School and one Junior High students. Two of our members graduated from College this year. Both of these young men have expressed an interest in becoming Deacons at some future time, which delights the hearts of our officers. Please join us in praying that many of our young people will find adequate work opportunities, spouses and homes within driving distance of GRC in the years to come. This is no easy feat in a small town of 6,000.

I led our Sunday night Bible Study with the RC Sproul Video Series –*Dust to Glory*, an overview of the entire Bible. So far, we have studied Genesis to John the Baptizer. Once every other month, we spend our hour in prayer and singing God's praises. We restructured the Youth Group this year so that the Junior High and High School group meets every other week and the College group gets together for fellowship as their schedules permit. One hour per week I teach the Confirmation Class for four Catechumens who are working on completion of their memorization by April. At Heidelberg West Youth Camp I taught one Bible Study and led the Heidelberg Cup Competition. I will miss this very much. I promoted the rafting trip, but finally had to give up my oars. For the Reformed Herald, I wrote a news from Willows Article and an article on *Regeneration*.

Our exemplary Elders continue to be used by the Lord to promote the spiritual growth of the congregation. They have been a great blessing to the congregation in helping it through the agonizing excommunication of a long time member of the congregation related to many members.

We are hoping and praying that several men we have been approaching will be willing to serve as Deacons soon. Our only active Deacon has been serving over 20 years and needs a much deserved rest.

Due to my departure to Africa soon, I have resigned my position on the Pastoral Adjunct Board of North Valley Christian Schools, which now provides Christian Education for about 70 K-12 about 20 miles from our church. This past year I helped interview teachers in order to ascertain whether or not the Board is adhering to its stated Purposes, Goals and Policies. I also attended a monthly Pastor's Prayer Breakfast at the School.

For 2007, the members of GRC gave so generously that we easily met our budget, gave generously to our works in Africa, replaced our 5000 square foot roof and still ended up with substantial balances in our building fund, diaconal fund and checking account. Please keep our dairymen in your prayers. Five of our families are having the hardest year ever with high feed prices, low calf prices and low milk prices.

This year I helped our architect and another church member with designing building plans for our next phase of remodeling our 100+ year old building. God willing, we will be able to begin transforming the exterior this Spring. I also coordinated inspection of and repairs to our roof framing and replacement of our roof. We purchased a new TV, VCR and DVD player for Sunday night Bible Studies. I am nearing the completion of constructing an 8'X22' platform in our Sanctuary.

AFRICA: Upon my return from Kenya last Spring, I prepared a 12 page report for the Foreign Ministries Committee and attended their meeting in Sacramento. Prior to that meeting, I thought that my work in Africa was done. But our Lord had different plans. Beginning at that meeting I began to inquire as to whether the Lord, my wife, my family, my Consistory and my denomination wanted me to answer the Foreign Ministry Committee's call for a man to serve a 3 year term as Professor at Knox Theological College in Mbale, and liaison to the FRCK. It took a little while for Carolyn, myself, my

family and our Consistory to come to the place where we were ready to seriously consider this opportunity. The 2006 Synod approved funding and sending a man to do this work in 2007.

Having gained approval from Synod, and working with the OPC Foreign Missions Committee, the FMC of the RCUS sent Carolyn and me over to Mbale, Uganda for six weeks this past summer to test the waters, and to ascertain our ability to do the work there. Among other things, I taught a six week course at the College, with two FRCK students receiving instruction. I was also interviewed by the Uganda Mission of the OPC. Arriving home, we were told that the Mission voted to invite us to come to the work. At this time, we advised the congregation of our intention of pursuing the possibility of taking up the work in Uganda and Kenya. In September, we flew to Philadelphia for three interviews in two days with two subcommittees and the full Missions Committee of the OPC. They voted to ... *authorize the Executive Committee at its December 2006 meeting to approve the appointment of the Rev. and Mrs. Thomas B. Mayville to the Mission and to deal with any and all matters pertaining to such...* Around this time, I produced a DVD slide show on the FRCK and a 47 minute video on the work in Mbale.

In October, the Kenya Subcommittee of the FMC of the RCUS met with myself, Mark Bube, Gen. Sec. of the FMC of the OPC, while Revs. Dan Schnabel, and Phil Proctor of Knox Theological College in Mbale joined us by phone conference. At this meeting, an agreement was struck between the OPC and RCUS Committees to develop a plan for the RCUS FMC to help the FRCK support its own ministers, licentiate and students for the ministry through micro-financing of micro-enterprises. This is the tactic the OPC Uganda Mission is using with its indigenous officers.

On January 8, Mark Bube advised the FMC that the FMC of the OPC voted to appoint me and Carolyn as *associate missionaries of the (Uganda) Mission for an initial term of three years, beginning with their arrival on the field in the spring of 2007.*

At the request of Rev. Voytek, I laid out a proposal for gradually weaning the officers of the FRCK from RCUS support, simultaneously helping them with economic development to become self-supporting. All year I have been maintaining correspondence with Rev. Jeremiah Nyarango of the FRCK. Since January, we have been making preparations for departure to Uganda with a target date of April 25, in order to learn the ropes for a month before Rev. Proctor leaves for a nine month furlough in the States. Our youngest daughter (Sarah, 23) will be coming with us for a year. Our son Joshua will be in college until December. At this writing our house is on the market and we are praying it will be sold by mid-April. We are scrambling to get about half our possessions on a container to ship to Africa and the other half in storage.

By the time Classis hears this report, I will have resigned as Senior Pastor of GRC Willows and will have been called, God willing, to be their Associate Pastor to serve as an RCUS missionary to Africa for 3 years. Soon afterwards, the FMC plans to petition Synod to commission me, by Executive Circular, to be a missionary of the RCUS. Your prayers for our preparations, our future in Africa, and our Consistory's search for a new Senior Pastor are greatly appreciated. If you would like to be kept informed of developments, please send me an email and I will put you on our update mailing list (thomasreformed@gmail.com). I am hopeful that the Western Classis will establish a small guideline to help with Economic Development for the FRCK. I want to take this opportunity to express my love, my deep appreciation and thanks to the members of the Western Classis for your love and guidance these last 20 years. I will miss you all very much. We plan on vacationing in California each year and hope we will see some of you

then. If not, we hope that the Lord opens a door for us to serve in a Western Classis congregation in April, 2010. May the Lord bless the feeble labors of your servant.

Respectfully Submitted,
Thomas Mayville

Classis Action: The report was referred to Finance. Elder Joe Gross led in prayer.

Rev. Jonathan Merica read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren in Christ,

Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley is to be commended for their loving support, prayers, and spiritual oversight since your servant began laboring in San Ramon, CA, and then in Stockton, CA. The Western Classis and the RCUS Synod is also to be commended for their prayers and financial support as we labored together on the mission field. Your servant has found much comfort and blessing this past year in resting upon the rock of the Apostle Paul's words found in Ephesians 3:20-21, "*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*"

In carrying out my pastoral duties I preached each Lord's Day (except for the Sundays when I preached elsewhere and while on vacation). It was my privilege to preach at the First Reformed Church Mission Fest in Yuba City, CA on October 15, 2006. Bible Studies were conducted nearly every week from the books of Mark and Galatians. The Lord's Supper was served three times at Calvary Reformed Chapel this past year.

Over the past year Grace Reformed Chapel in San Ramon, CA and Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton, CA have been faithful witnesses to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many have heard the gospel presented to them by your servant in going door to door throughout the communities of San Ramon and Stockton. Gospel tracts and church fliers have been distributed. Radio announcements and the website on the internet have been employed. Since 2002 the weekly messages at Grace Reformed Chapel have been broadcast over sermonaudio.com at our website. The February 2007 sermon report indicates a total of 247 sermons are available for downloading. Home page visitors at our website were 6,544, the total sermons viewed to date are 108,953, and the MP3 downloads have totaled 13,328 worldwide. The many visitors who have attended our worship services came via the internet, the yellow pages, our radio announcements, and the local newspaper.

Funding from Classis and Synod for our labors at Grace Reformed Chapel in San Ramon ceased on January 31, 2007. By order of the Classis and Synod my labors transitioned from Grace Reformed Chapel in San Ramon to Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton. In making this transition Sunday afternoon services continued in San Ramon until June 4, 2006 and Sunday morning worship services began in Stockton on March 26, 2006, along with a midweek Bible study on Wednesday evenings. The remaining families in San Ramon found Bible-believing churches (non-reformed) to attend, and were erased from the membership rolls of Covenant Reformed Church in Grass Valley.

Only one family attends a reformed church in Antioch, CA. (an Orthodox Presbyterian Church)

The Lord graciously provided an adequate meeting place for Calvary Reformed Chapel at the Vagabond Inn. We were blessed with 18 souls present at our first service. Steve and Jan Wilbur were among those in attendance. The Lord's Supper was served that Sunday and Steve assisted in the administration of the Lord's Supper.

Providentially, this past year a discipline case developed that resulted in three families (8 persons) to stop attending regularly. Three individuals were placed under discipline. Later, two were removed from under discipline, and one of the individuals was excommunicated. Although our numbers were greatly reduced at our beginning, the Lord graciously began rebuilding by sending two couples and a single lady who attend regularly. God is still sending new visitors. After several months of membership classes on February 4, 2007 the two couples and the single lady were received into membership. Recently, two more young men began worshipping with us regularly. Our attendance averages 11-12 each Lord's Day. All who regularly attend are heartily committed to seeing the work in Stockton continue. As a note of update on the members who had ceased regular attendance, two members have indicated their desire to continue with Calvary Reformed Chapel.

Calvary Reformed Chapel's 2006 Budget was also blessed with a surplus of income that exceeded the expenditures at the end of this fiscal year. The closing balance for Calvary Reformed Chapel as of January 31, 2007 was \$6,292.28.

After nine months as a congregation in Stockton, CA the Western Classis Home Missions Committee on Assessment conducted an assessment of Calvary Reformed Chapel and concluded that it is not a viable Classical Home Mission work due to the decline in our members, financial giving, and the number of active members. The Committee's Assessment recommendation reads as follows:

The Western Classis Home Missions Committee determined that due to the loss of members, the subsequent reduction of offerings and the current active membership being only four baptized persons, the Stockton mission work is not viable as a Classical Home Mission work. Please note that the consistory at Grass Valley will work with the consistories of both Modesto and Lodi to provide oversight of the current members of the work.

Since this recommendation was circularized and the work declared not viable as a Classis and Synodical work, financial support for Calvary Reformed Chapel ceased as of January 31, 2007. However, sensing a burden for the families in Stockton, and the call God has given me to the work, I have requested of the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley to be allowed to continue my labors in the ministry with the group in Stockton, and to seek other employment for the support of my family. On January 11, 2007 the Consistory decided to continue the work of home missions in the Stockton, CA area under the oversight of the Grass Valley Consistory and that your servant continues as associate pastor of Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley to do this work. A letter, stating the intent to continue the work in Stockton, was sent to the Executive Committee of the Western Classis. At this time your servant is seeking additional employment outside of the pastoral ministry to provide the financial support needed for my family.

It is my prayer that the will of the Lord be done in the pastoral care and oversight of these precious souls. May the Lord bless our labors as we work together in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours in the service of Jesus Christ,
Rev. Jonathan Merica

Classis Action: Take note.

Rev. Vernon Pollema read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Brethren:

What's happening at Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter? This past year five covenant young people were received into communicant membership through the Rite of Confirmation and one child received the covenant sign and seal of Holy Baptism. The congregation was diminished by the death of five of its senior members. Although we count deaths as losses, it really is not so, for those who have died in the Lord have joined the numbers of the Church above. From a worldly point of view, as well as from the consumer-oriented, mega-church growth specialists, the above statistics are not very impressive or of any great significance. Furthermore, the fact that two members were removed from the rolls through the exercise of Christian discipline is looked upon as being not only unnecessary, but self-destructive. However, we trust that what was said of the church at Philadelphia, may be said of us as well: *"I know your works: behold I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name"* (Rev. 3:8).

Evangelistic outreach (*open doors*) continues in a couple of ways: through financial and prayer support of missionary pastor, the Rev. Jay Fluck, and Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA. (Rev. Fluck will report on the progress of the work there.); through the Grace and Truth Radio Broadcast which airs every Saturday and Sunday, 12:00 pm and 8:00 am respectively, over KERI, Bakersfield. This pastor continues to hear from inmates at the Corcoran State Prison who listen regularly as well as periodic comments from persons outside the congregation that they listen to the program. Another *open door* is the Shafter Convalescent Hospital, where Ebenezer along with other Shafter churches, takes its turn in conducting an afternoon worship service on assigned Sundays. This has become increasingly more frequent and the preaching well received.

Worship services were held each Sunday morning and an additional evening worship service on every fourth Sunday of the month. I was absent from the pulpit on eight of those Sundays: the Sunday of February 5, when my wife and I vacationed with family; the Sunday of May 21, when I preached at the CRC, Volga, SD, following the 260th Synod held at Mitchell, SD; the five Sundays of July, when I underwent and recovered from prostate surgery; two Missionfest Sundays, October 1 and 8, when Grace, Bakersfield, and Ebenezer worshiped together respectively. Since the prostate surgery, I have again been blessed with good health and strength and declared to be cancer free. Permit me this opportunity to express my appreciation for your concern and prayers on my behalf.

As was reported last year, 2006 was to be a year of transition for this pastor and his wife as they move from the parsonage to their house in Bakersfield. The transition is about complete with some continued dual residency expected. This pastor has announced his intention to resign as Ebenezer's full-time pastor by the end of 2007 or earlier if necessary. Does that mean he is retiring? Not exactly. However, he does desire a change of pace and time to engage in other aspects of the ministry as well as supply preaching. Furthermore, he believes it would be good for the congregation to see a new face in the pulpit and receive fresh watering (cf. I Corinthians 3).

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. Discipline and conformity to the local and denominational constitutions, as well as the Directory of Worship, continues to be time consuming and often grievous. The elders covet the prayers of the congregation for wisdom and understanding, that *"all things be done decently and in order"* (I Corinthians 14:40), and that discipline may result in its desired end, i.e., repentance and restoration of those found to be delinquent in doctrine and life.

Visitation of the widows, shut-ins, infirmed, sick and grief-stricken is faithfully attempted. The family visitation program, with each elder accompanied by a deacon and assigned a certain number of families, again fell short of its intended goal in 2006. Renewed commitment will be required as the Spiritual Council seeks to find a more effective way of accomplishing this goal.

The consistory in general, and the deacons in particular, have been diligent in their concern for the outward needs of the church, both locally and on the classical and synodical level.

A review of the learning activities and organizations of the congregation is as follows: The Sunday School consists of four classes of children (pre-school through eighth grade) taught by appointed teachers and elders, a class for the very young conducted by the parents, a class for young people (high school and college age) with appointed teachers, and a class for adults taught by the pastor. With regard to the adult Sunday School class, it is disappointing that not more adults avail themselves of this opportunity especially while the children and young people can attend their respective classes.

A confirmation class, consisting of five students taught by the pastor, is held on the first, third, and fourth Sundays of the month.

The Sunday evening Bible Study meets the first and third Sundays of the month. An adult Bible study, taught by elders, is held simultaneously with children's Bible studies and activities (pre-school through eighth grade) in the Fellowship Hall taught by parents with the assistance of the young people. This is preceded by a meal in the Fellowship Hall for all involved.

The pastor leads the Bible study at the monthly meeting of the Ladies' Society, where we are currently studying the book of Ruth. The Men's Christian Fellowship also meets monthly, individual members volunteering to do a devotional study on a portion of Scripture, and the pastor addressing a current topic(s) in the light of God's Word.

Vacation Bible School was held June 5-10 with 30 children, divided into four classes, taught by volunteer teachers and aids. Several young people and accompanying adults (counselors) attended the annual Heidelberg West Youth Camp at Camp Peaceful Pines.

On the Synodical level, this pastor serves on the Executive Committee and the Special Committee on Procedures for the Establishment of a Denominational Seminary.

Yes, Ebenezer has been given a little strength; she has sought to be faithful to God's Word, and has not denied His name. And thus she takes comfort in the following: *"Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have that no man take your crown"* (Revelation 3:10-11).

Respectfully submitted,
Vernon Pollema

Classis Action: Take Note. Elder Earl Van Houten led the body in prayer.

Rev. Neale Riffert read his Parochial Report.

The Honorable Western Classis
Reformed Church in the United States

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers:

The year 2006 began with the rude news that Grace Reformed Church of the Antelope Valley lost its lease to the property at 551 W. Avenue I. The landlord of that property wanted to increase the lease payment from \$1,500 a month to \$3,500 a month. An increase of that measure was simply out of the question for the congregation, so the decision was made to vacate the premises at the end of February (2006). Placing all our furnishings in storage we went on a pilgrimage meeting in various locations for worship until mid-summer when the Lord gave us the opportunity to share expenses with another small, struggling congregation. Our Sunday School started at 7:45 a. m., and the worship service at 8:45 a. m. as we had to be out by 10:15. Then in October that congregation was no longer able to meet their expenses, so we were offered a lease on the property for \$2,000.00 a month. While this was a bit more than we wished, the congregation committed itself to a three year lease, and we are presently fully settled in at 211 East Avenue K-6, Suite C, in Lancaster.

Throughout this period there was no drop in attendance in either the Sunday School or the worship service as the congregation bore patiently and cheerfully with the shuffling about and the time changes of our services. This is not to say that there were no ill affects on us. The extra expenses of moving, storage costs, and the increase in our monthly rent, put a strain on our budget, and we were unable to meet our Classis and Synod Guidelines. However, we are making a recovery from the year of the dog (Chinese calendar), and for what is future have good confidence in our Almighty God, whose hand has been graciously upon us (Rejoice, and again I say, rejoice). Our present location has its drawbacks. We have less space, but a much more pleasing environment. As a bit of an aside, we note that to date our previous building at 551 West Avenue I remains unoccupied. Much of the hassle that we went through in 2006 is owing to the prosperity of the Lancaster-Palmdale area. Real estate is booming in the Antelope Valley, and prices have skyrocketed.

As to my ministry to the saints, I preached through the book of Genesis, and entered the book of Exodus. In the Adult Sunday School I am continuing in the Heidelberg Catechism and will complete it this year. We have a Family Bible Study the first and third Sundays of each month (though this was suspended during our transition period in 2006). I teach the Catechetical class every Wednesday evening from September through April and presently have two students. We had no confirmation in 2006. Communion is administered four times during the year, and a fellowship luncheon is held after each communion service. I officiated at two funerals (elderly parents of a member of the congregation, both of whom died within six months of each other). Neither were members, but both attended services and functions of the church from time to time. We also had two infant baptisms the past year, one was the 12th grandchild of myself and Mary Elizabeth (proud grandfather speaking here).

My teaching emphasis in the Adult Sunday School on the Heidelberg Catechism is intentional as none of the members of our congregation have ever systematically studied the Catechism, Belgic Confession or the Canons of Dordt. Our members come from diverse church backgrounds, and have received this instruction appreciatively. The other Sunday School classes are using the Promise and Deliverance material.

The overall spirit within the consistory and within the congregation is good. It is a joy to labor among the people of Grace Reformed Church. We will be facing some challenges in 2007 as two of our families will be moving out the area, one to San Antonio, Texas where they will be dismissed to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the other to McCall, Idaho. However, the Lord has been pleased to send others to us, and we are preparing membership classes for two families (one a single man), and possibly three, and maybe four. That may sound a bit strange, but in recent weeks we've had a number of people express serious interest in our work here. In fact, we just about ran out of seating at our service on February 11th. We're thankful that we are starting again to see that people are able to find our new location. As to how all of this pans out we'll wait patiently on the Lord.

Earlier in this report I mentioned that I officiated at two funerals in 2006. These were of an elderly couple whose son and daughter-in-law are members of our congregation. In fact they moved to the Antelope Valley four years ago to care for his parents. In the past year and a half both suffered from deteriorating health and were unable to live without constant care. At the time they moved from their home to a care center, Mary Elizabeth and I were notified by our landlord that they were returning to Rosamond and we would have to vacate. This would be the second time since coming to the Antelope Valley that we would have to move. Their son graciously offered his parents house to us, which we now occupy, but it is part of his parents estate and since they are now deceased it will be put up for sale in May of this year. Our purchase of a home in Texas last year was somewhat hastened by the knowledge that this day would come. We are content that all of this is in the providence of the Lord, and are planning to move to Sherman, Texas in June of this year. Years ago an old pastor friend of mine told me, old pastors don't retire, they retread. So we're planning to *retread* in June. This is a difficult decision. I enter my 41st year in the pastoral ministry this year. While that may seem a long time to some, it seems but a short sojourn to me. In the course of those years, in preparing for the ministry and in the service of the kingdom of Christ, we have moved fifteen times. My faithful, loving, and patient wife has born these with great charity, but at this stage of our lives the steam has run out.

I have made known my intentions to the congregation and have set June 10th as my last day in the pulpit of Grace Reformed Church. My gratitude to God for His blessing through the years in the association with His saints in the ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States, and his saints in their respective congregations is unending. I greatly esteem you all. It has been a great privilege and honor to labor among you—all praise to Christ. I do ask that the Western Classis overture the Synod for ministerial aid for this humble servant and his family.

Respectfully submitted,
Neale R. Riffert

Classis Action: The report was referred to Benevolence.

Rev. Dennis Roe's Parochial Report was read by Rev. Voytek.

Dear Mr. President and Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ:

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

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD: In 2006 I continued to proclaim God's Word in an expository manner on the Lord's Day. In the morning services I continue a series of messages from the Apostle Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians. I also gave various messages for special occasions based on appropriate texts.

Our Sunday morning worship service continues to average sixty to seventy in attendance. I thank God for our visitors, and pray that He will add to our number in His time.

In our adult Bible Class on Sundays, I continued the series I began in 2004 on "Basic Christian Doctrine." I prepared approximately twenty lessons in 2006 with approximately ten lessons left in order to complete the series. Our adult classes continue to be well attended with an average of twenty to twenty five.

I continue catechetical instruction on Thursday afternoons. In May, four students recited questions forty four through eighty six before the elders and then the congregation. I began a new class in September in which we are studying the third and final section, questions 87-129, of the catechism. We are also studying church history focusing on brief biographical sketches. This session we have two students enrolled who are both in their final year of instruction.

We held a number of special services throughout the year with guest speakers. We again had our beloved friend Dr. Henry Krabbendam as the main speaker at our annual Reformation Bible Conference in November. He challenged us with a series of messages on "Revitalizing the Church in the 21st Century." We were also privileged to have in our pulpit numerous times throughout the year our associate pastor Rev. Eric Bristley. Dr. Frank Walker came and preached the Word for us as well.

We also hold services at a local nursing home in the afternoons on the third and fourth Sunday of each month with men from our congregation leading in devotions and hymn singing there.

In addition to preaching in Grass Valley, I had the opportunity to declare God's Word in Calvert, Maryland at First Presbyterian Church the Sunday following the annual banquet of Westminster Biblical Missions.

Although, I continue to serve on the faculty of City Seminary at Sacramento as an Adjunct Professor of Missions and Evangelism, I taught no classes this past year. I was recently appointed as Dean of Students for the seminary and look forward to serving in this capacity.

I continue my service as chaplain for the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Association, the unit I served with while in Vietnam. I had the privilege to conduct a memorial service and preach in the base chapel at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas with approximately 250 veterans and their wives in attendance.

It was my honor to perform the wedding ceremony in August for our third child and second daughter Esther (three down, one to go!). It is a wonderful blessing to see our children marry in the Lord.

I also conducted membership classes, personal and family counseling sessions, and called upon members and non-members in their homes and in the hospital.

II. THE MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENTS: It was my privilege to conduct the service for the Lord's Supper twelve times and to celebrate the sacrament of Christian baptism in the baptism of one covenant child.

III. THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS: Our membership saw a few changes in 2006. We lost two communicant members and two covenant children. Three were removed by administrative erasure and one was dismissed to another congregation. We thank God that there are no members under formal discipline.

We praise God that in His covenant mercy He added one young person by confirmation as a communicant member.

Our Spiritual Council and Consistory continued to assist Pastor Merica's efforts in church planting in the Stockton area. This year is a big transition for Pastor Merica as he goes without financial support from Classis or Synod. Pray that the Lord will provide the temporal needs for him and his dear wife Marcia. Pray for the Lord to add to the church there and for God's blessing on Pastor Merica's labors.

IV. MISC. DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES: On behalf of Synod, I serve as chairman of the Synod's Web Site Committee and I serve on the E-book committee. The Web Site involves me overseeing the denomination's web site and e-mail distribution list, updating the web pages, e-mail lists, addresses, posting publications and any other edits. I also maintain and post the web site for the denominational magazine, *The Reformed Herald*. Because I've been suffering some physical problems due to repetitive stress (many long hours at at the keyboard and mouse), I'm trying to relinquish more of the Web Site responsibilities to Rev. Bristley. Plus, he's much more competent than I am at this type of work.

On a Classical level, I served the Home Missions committee. I serve this committee as chairman. It is a fairly busy committee with the responsibility of working with our existing mission works, making assessments of the same, and helping to establish new works.

I continue to serve as General Secretary for Westminster Biblical Missions. In this capacity I work with all the fields. I made two international trips during 2006, to Egypt and Mexico, plus I traveled twice to the East coast for board meetings. I also maintain the missions' web site, <http://wbminc.org>, post the missionary newsletters online, and write a short monthly newsletter that accompany the receipts to the mission's donors. The Lord willing, I will continue in this service.

V. CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT: I thank God that our congregation is walking together in unity and the love of Christ. This is truly a gift from God the Holy Spirit. This past year brought some severe physical trials to some of our members. I commend our members for living out the Apostle Paul's exhortation to "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*" -- Galatians 6:2.

I cannot say enough on what a blessing it is to have faithful elders who are my co-laborers in the ministry. As well, it is encouraging to have Rev. Eric Bristley serving our congregation, the Western Classis and the Synod of the RCUS. He is always ready and able to faithfully preach and teach the Word of God whenever called upon.

I also commend Rev. Jonathan Merica's faithfulness in attending our Consistory and Spiritual Council meetings while laboring in church planting in the Stockton area.

I am happy to report that we have two men who are now being considered by the congregation to serve as deacons. I pray the Lord will bless these men to be examples to all of us in service and dedication to Christ and His people.

I again thank God for blessing me with a wonderful "helpmeet" in my dear wife Julie. I'm happy to say she is my closest companion and best friend. I thank God for her faithful service to Christ, His people, and to me.

In closing, I ask that you pray for me to fulfill the charge by the Apostle Paul to "*...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*" -- 2 Timothy 2:1-3.

Respectfully in Christ's Service,
Rev. Dennis Roe

Classis Action: Take Note. Elder Tom Lagomarsino led the body in prayer.

Rev. Gene Sawtelle read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" Ecclesiastes 3:1. After more than 43 years of serving as an ordained minister of the Word the time came, all too soon, it seems, to retire.

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" 1Corinthians 9:16. Just as that necessity, that constraint was laid upon me, God laid upon me the necessity to retire. Physically I could no longer serve as a shepherd for God's people.

I am thankful for the years that God gave me, and as He enables me I hope to be able to preach from time to time. I had rotator cuff surgery for a massive tear in my right shoulder October 23, 2006, and wore an immobilizer for several weeks. I am presently still having physical therapy several times a week, and will probably continue for six months.

Prior to surgery, by God's grace, I was privileged to preach in Modesto, Willows, Yuba City, in California, and two Lord's days in Hamburg, Minnesota, as well as Mission Fest in Emmanuel Reformed Church, Sutton, Nebraska.

From January through May 2006 I was able to continue to serve in the Synod Home Mission congregation begun by Rev. Dorman Savage, my brother-in-law, Colorado, Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, Colorado.

During the six years in which God gave me the strength to serve there, the chapel, which was under the oversight of the Blue Cliff Community Reformed Church, Karval, Colorado, for the first eight months after my arrival, was organized into a congregation of the South Central Classis. Three elders and two deacons were elected and trained. The church was blessed by God through the preaching of the Word with growth each year. A parsonage and church building were purchased from the RPCNA in the amount of \$300,000 and financing was obtained through a local bank. God's people gave faithfully to the support of the church, and the indebtedness was reduced to \$145,000 in three years. A Sunday school was organized, Bible studies for women, men and families were held weekly. Regular catechism and confirmation classes were started. Classis and Synod guidelines were fully paid, and a ten percent reduction in classis and synod support were enacted after the third year of support.

I thank God for my dear wife of a little over 46 years. Sharon has been my sweetheart, faithful and loving wife, devoted mother and wonderful help meet. As many of your wives have done, Sharon worked (as an RN) so that I could serve as a missions pastor.

We returned to California because of the proximity of the majority of our children and grandchildren. Another important factor that we considered was the wonderful friendship and fellowship that we enjoyed with God's people of First Reformed Church, Yuba City, for 13 years, and the same can be said for you, brothers in Christ, and your wives and families since 1969. Believe it or not, the cost of living is also less here in Yuba City than it was in Greeley, Colorado. We saved more than \$500.00 in auto insurance alone.

Travel bothers me, physically, even more now than before the last back surgery in February 2003, followed by prostate surgery in April 2003.

God's grace is sufficient! Please bear with my infirmities, and I will, by God's grace, look forward to your continued fellowship and friendship. Thank you for your prayers.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Gene Sawtelle

Classis Action: Take Note.

Rev. Paul Treick read his Parochial Report

Esteemed brothers in Christ,

“Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” (Ps. 103:1, 2) Mindful of all the blessings and benefits that the Lord bestows on His servants, I report on my labors during this past year at Trinity RCUS, Modesto, CA. In all things, it must always be said, “yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me,” (I Cor. 15:10), and again from Gal. 2:20, “yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

My office and calling are still clearly before me – to proclaim Christ and feed His lambs. By the grace of God I have attempted to do this faithfully and diligently. The Lord has maintained both my desire and my health. I am also upheld by my faithful wife who doubles as a good counselor.

The three marks of the church – the pure preaching of the Gospel, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the faithful exercise of Christian discipline are conscientiously adhered to in the congregation. I believe these reports and the questions to the Elders are have been designed by our forefathers to assure that these marks are clearly evident.

Over the past year I have preached 105 times, conducted Sunday School, catechism classes, membership classes, Bible Studies, and have held pre-marital counseling for the two weddings I conducted. I brought devotions to Bethany Nursing Home as scheduled, and had the privilege to preach at the funeral of a dear friend and fellow-pastor, Rev. Robert Sander. I preached several series of sermons, among them: a study of the book of Hosea, the message to the seven churches in Revelation, and the attributes of God.

I, along with the Elders, administered the sacrament of Lord's Supper four times. All visitors meet before the service with the elders and must receive their permission to partake at the Lord's Table. We also published a small pamphlet which is set out when the Lord's Supper is served explaining the nature of the sacrament and who should partake. We had two infant baptisms and one adult baptism this past year.

There are fifteen young people attending the weekly, two-hour catechism Classes. During the summer months I hold classes each week for those intending to be confirmed at the end of the summer. We had five covenant youth make a confession of their faith and were received by the rite of confirmation. Six other souls were received last year and added to the rolls of communicants. One family transferred their membership to the United Reformed Church in Ripon.

I have finished writing the lessons for the New Testament which we use in Sunday School for the upper grades and adults. I will now have to write the Teacher's Manual (answer key) which is a daunting project that will be done as time allows. We are using my Old Testament book now for these classes. In the post-confirmation teen class we have used various studies. At this time we are using *Every Thought Captive* by Richard Pratt. We have also discovered that copies of Leonard Coppes' book *Are Five Points Enough?* are still available and will be using this next. It seems to me that there is a shift taking place in the thinking of our younger members to want all the practical principles taught with less on the doctrinal teaching that directs these actions.

We began a Young Adults Bible Study which meets once a month. This is intended to foster a fellowship among the young married couples and those of that age who are not yet married. The response has been pretty good. Here, the group chooses the topic they want to discuss and then prepare to give their findings on the subject. We have dealt with topics like how to witness the Reformed faith to those who are not Christians or are Christians of different faiths. We have recently looked at the theology of the cult of *Scientology* and have studied the false teaching of *Paedocommunion*.

I continue to serve on committees of the Western Classis and Synod. I continue as Stated Clerk of Synod and Editor of the *Reformed Herald*. Rev. Bristley has come on board for the *Reformed Herald* to do the layout which has helped reduce my workload. I am still involved with the Radio Administration Committee of Reformed Faith and Life. Our congregation led in collecting money to buy hand-crank radios for the Congo. We were able to send \$3,100 to Rev. Kayayan to buy these radios and have them shipped to four regions of the Congo. Another \$2,000 was sent to RFL from our Sunday School offerings.

Financially, the congregation was able to pay all the bills and the guidelines for Classis and Synod. Our building indebtedness is now down to just over \$38,000. We have done some minor repairs and improvements on the church building, and have started a fund to put a new roof on the building. We bought a new video camera and TV this year – some money was used from a memorial of a member who passed away. We did examine the possibility of rebuilding with a steel building on the present property, but these costs still appear to be above our means at this time.

Out Youth Group meets twice monthly for devotions and outings. We sponsored a Rafting Trip and recently a Snow Trip. The usual Lighthouse trip over the winter was not held since there were not enough signed up. Usually, we invite the local RCUS congregations to join us in these major outings.

I am thankful for a faithful Consistory and Spiritual Council who labor diligently to oversee and conduct much of the work of the church. We rely on much volunteer help to keep up the building and yard, teach Sunday School classes, and provide for the

fellowship and refreshments that are held monthly or oftener. As a congregation, we are thankful to be a part of the Western Classis which gives us a larger fellowship to enjoy.

Once again, we are not forgetful of the benefits that are ours from the hand of our loving God. We are a congregation that knows we are a work of the Lord, and give Him all the glory. *“Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul.”*

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Paul H. Treick

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

Rev. Michael Voytek read his Parochial Report.

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

While preparing this report of my labors for Christ and His church, I paused and considered the variety of metaphors and similes that are found in Scripture that our Lord used to describe His relationship with His beloved people. One that commended itself in relations to the church here in Lodi is that of the vineyard. In case you were unaware, Lodi is famous for its grapes and the number of wineries in the general vicinity has grown to close to a hundred. Of the many aspects of this metaphor that we could consider, we will concentrate of two, namely that of the vine itself as well as its branches.

That our Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate vine is clearly taught in chapter 15 of the Gospel of John. In it He declared; *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 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. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love”* (vs. 1-9). He is the source of our life and it is through abiding in Him that we continue to live and to produce fruit to His glory.

Notice that our Lord stated that the vinedresser will apply his pruning instrument to the branches that produce fruit to enable them to produce more fruit. In the same manner, He will use that tool to remove unfruitful branches from the vine. This past year, we as a church have witnessed this masterful tending of His vineyard. One of the most notable events in the congregation was the recent marriage of one of our members to Rev. David Bush, pastor of Oak Hill Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Sonora, California. Four years ago, Jennifer was in desperate need when she first began to attend our church. Her husband had abandoned her and her five children to the street (the oldest child was 7 years old at the time). The congregation, moved by Christ’s love for our Christian sister and her family, responded by providing housing, food, and other resources to meet their needs. She was able to find work and over time was able to assume more and more of the

financial provision of her family. Ultimately, in God’s wise and merciful providence, He raised up a godly man like Boaz to provide for this woman who in so many ways exhibited the virtues of Ruth. Truly our Lord gave *“beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”* We rejoice in His provision although it meant the loss of a beloved family to another church.

For the past couple years, our Lord was busy pruning the congregation by removing two families and one single man who disagree with the doctrines and practice which are taught in Scriptures and are summarized in the Three Forms of Unity. One of the issues in particular was their desire to practice “paedocommunion” or what they called “covenant communion.” The elders were not able to convince them of their error. Please pray for the Lord to open their eyes and their hearts to the serious nature of their error. Furthermore, one of the purposes of pruning is to encourage further growth. We rejoice to note this growth evidenced by an outreach Bible study hosted by one of the families on the congregation on Sunday nights. We are excited to witness great interest in the truths of the gospel and the reformed faith by a number of individuals who have been invited to attend. May the Lord add these interested participants to the family here at Providence RCUS.

In order to produce good fruit, the branches also must be supplied with proper nourishment. This is primarily accomplished through the teaching and preaching of God’s Word. This past year, your servant completed a series of sermons covering the book of Philippians as well as continued to preach through the Book of Psalms. In the Psalm series, we are currently covering Psalm 119 (once a month) and in January of this year we began a series of sermons focusing on the book of James. It is my hope and prayer that the congregation is finding these sermons edifying and useful. In the Sunday school, we have continued to use the RCUS Sunday School curriculum and we are about to complete our studies in the Old Testament. On Wednesday nights, we completed our study in the book of Ephesians and have turned our attention to Paul’s letter to the Romans. Through the Confirmation Preparation class, five of our covenant youth are actively engaged in learning the great truths of the Scriptures through a survey the Old and New Testament as well a summary of the doctrines found therein recorded in the Heidelberg Catechism. Finally, the bimonthly Woman’s Fellowship Luncheons have had as their focus the development of older women mentoring the younger women using the insights found in Susan Hunt’s book *Spiritual Mothering*.

I continually give thanks to God for His provision of godly fellow laborers in His vineyard, namely the elders and deacons of Providence Reformed Church. The elders diligently care for each member and strive to uphold all three marks of the church found in our standards. The deacons are actively involved not only in the oversight of the resources of the church, but also in the welfare of the members of Providence and beyond (an example that comes to mind is the Congo Economic Development Fund). I would ask you to continue to keep these men and their families in prayer as our great adversary hates them and is actively engaged in attempting to destroy them and the church as well.

Finally, my report would be incomplete if I did not mention a few of the most pressing needs that have arisen in our midst and are the subject of our prayers. First of all there is the need of our beloved brother Delmar Miller. He has been diagnosed with liver cancer and is being treated by the doctors. Please pray that the Lord would grant him grace and comfort as he struggles with great pain as well as for wisdom for his doctors to know how best to treat this disease. Also pray for his wife Norma who is struggling with rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes. Secondly, there is the continuing struggle of Marcus

Whitmire, who is battling Huntington's disease (terminal genetic disease of the brain). By the grace of God, he continues to fight the good fight and has been an effective witness to the residents, staff and visitors of the Wine Country Convalescent Center. Thirdly, there are elderly among us who would covet your prayers as they also continue to live and serve their Lord even in the midst of failing health.

On a personal note, my wife Becky and I continue to home school two of our children, David and Timothy. Our oldest son Joshua is pursuing a master's degree in counseling at the University of North Dakota. Our daughter Tabitha is a junior at the University of the Pacific, majoring in Engineering Physics. Our son Abraham graduated from High School last year and is currently attending Delta Community College. I am currently serving on the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee and the Western Classis Home Missions and Interchurch Relations Committees. Furthermore, I taught four courses at City Seminary in Sacramento (*Old Testament Survey II*, *Old Testament Introduction* (Spring), *Old Testament Biblical Theology* (Summer), and *Introductory Homiletics* (Fall)). I am currently teaching one course this semester (*Hermeneutics*) and Lord willing, I am planning to teach *Hebrew I* this Fall. I am continually humbled and at the same time encouraged in this opportunity to minister the truth of God's Word among the larger body of Christ.

To close, your fellow servant offers praise and thanks to God for His faithfulness to His people and for the opportunity to serve Him by serving His church.

Your fellow bondservant in Christ,
Rev. Michael Voytek, Pastor

Classis Action: Take note.

Rev. Frank Walker read his Parochial Report

Brethren:

It is my firm conviction that the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the most important thing that takes place in the world today. It's far more significant, for example, than the war in Iraq or whether Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama becomes the Democratic nominee for the presidency of the United States. In an effort to be faithful to my calling as a steward of that gospel, I have labored over the past year to teach and preach the Word of God as fully and as accurately as possible.

In Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church, I preached the gospel forty-two times. I continued my series on Revelation and the Psalms, occasionally interspersing sermons on other passages. I also taught the adult Sunday school class a few times, mostly in the beginning of the year. Preaching invitations from outside the congregation also kept me busy. Last year I preached in other congregations a total of twenty-nine times. For a period of a month or so, I was turning down two preaching invitations for every one that I accepted. In any case, the total number of sermons I preached last year was seventy-one.

Several things in the life of the church are especially worthy of the attention of Classis. First, the congregation recently elected Mr. Greg Uttinger to serve as elder. I have no doubt that he will serve faithfully to the edification of the body. Second, the consistory recently tasked Mr. Al Esquivel, one of our deacons and Pastor West's son-in-

law, with the responsibility to develop a neighborhood outreach. This gives the congregation the opportunity to work together and pray together for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. And third, I am also excited about our congregation's involvement in Reformed Youth Services, as I believe it is critical for our young people to meet and work with other Reformed Christians from throughout the country. Another three or four RCUS congregations have also joined this organization.

My seminary schedule, although not quite as demanding as in the past, also kept me busy. I taught three courses in the spring (one of these was by independent study), and four in the fall (again, one was by independent study). This necessitated preparing and teaching about a hundred and twenty 100-minute lectures, in addition to organizing and monitoring the independent study courses.

It continues to amaze me how the Reformed faith impacts even those who do not come from Reformed backgrounds. In an Ecclesiology class I taught this past fall, most of the students were from various Baptist congregations. As soon as they saw the Scriptural requirement for a plurality of elders in the local church, a practice with which they were unfamiliar, they understood why their churches had the kinds of problems they did. On the same day, three of them, independently of each other, asked me the same question, viz., How can we address this deficiency in our churches? We spent the next class discussing this matter. Even the Reformed students expressed their gratitude for this because, as they said, it gave them a new appreciation for the practical side of Reformed church government.

When we came to the subject of baptism, I expected a more negative response from the Baptist students but was pleasantly surprised not to find it. In fact, their response can be summarized in a single word: WOW! They had never heard a discussion of continuity vs. discontinuity. It never dawned on them that Romans 6 doesn't say what they assume it says. They could not have imagined any basis for infant baptism other than the superstitious belief that it *ex opera operato* regenerates those who receive it. One student afterward remarked that it made him look at the Bible in a whole new light. Praise God! Perhaps the Lord will use these seeds to continue to reform his church toward greater purity. It's amazing how just opening the Bible and showing the students what the Bible actually says can have such a powerful impact on them.

With knowledgeable and competent elders, a zeal for evangelism and programs that encourage our young people to grow in their love and commitment to the Reformed faith, we are blessed beyond measure, as the celebration of our thirty-fifth anniversary this past September testifies to. But the Lord has also laid it upon our hearts to reach out into the city of Sacramento by training men for the gospel ministry. We believe that only the Reformed faith adequately equips men for the pastoral ministry. That's why it's such a great joy to see our students become more and more Reformed in their thinking. I long to see the effects of our work in years to come!

The privilege of participating in the work in Sacramento far exceeds both my desert and my ability to serve, which amount to nothing at all. I am humbled before my mighty God and Savior Jesus Christ. His mercies endure forever.

To Him be all honor and glory,
Pastor Frank Walker

Classis Action: Take note. Elder David Helseth led the body in prayer.

Rev. Jim West read his Parochial Report

Beloved Brethren of the Western Classis,

This past year (2006) saw many highs and some lows for our congregation in Sacramento. The lows included two gut-wrenching discipline cases which resulted in judicial erasure. The other low concerned multiple members who were dismissed or who relocated to other congregations because of job and educational transfers. This included elder Jamie Clark and his family, a pillar household in our Church for many years.

Yet, while the beginning and the middle of the year was characterized by saying “God-speed” to so many friends, the Lord chose to grace us with “summer” during winter. While Mark Twain said the coldest winter he ever spent was the summer he spent in San Francisco, I can almost say that the hottest summer I have ever spent is the recent winter in Sacramento (2006-2007)! Many new members were added to the church rolls, including nine communicants and five non-communicants just recently. What is more, I currently have ten potential communicants in my new membership class, which continues to meet each Lord’s Day morning. Additionally, the “ecclesiastical traffic” in the church has been heavy, even frenetic. There is many a Lord’s Day morning that I find myself racketed like a tennis ball, flying from new family to the next. Thus, when I get home from church I find myself physically and mentally taxed to the limit. Yet, I tell myself that this is the way it should be in a city church, and that I would not have it any other way!

During this past year I continued my preaching and teaching ministries both to our congregation and outside. I taught Anthropology and Soteriology in City Seminary. Even though I have taught these subjects in the past, I spend virtually every Tuesday tweaking my lecture notes. In addition, there are conferences with students, faculty meetings, tests to give and to grade, plus papers to read and grade. In the Church I began a series of sermons on Romans and Ecclesiastes; plus, I preached several sermons on the attributes of God. I continue to teach the catechumens each Wednesday afternoon with more deliberation and thoroughness than ever before. In previous years we would tackle two catechism questions and answers a week. Now, it seems that two is the exception, while one is normative. What is more, the catechumens are instructed each Lord’s Day morning, too. The focus during that class is Church History.

One governmental question that did develop this past year concerns catechumens: What does a church do with catechumens who do not profess faith in Christ? And when does the church act? Our policy in Sacramento is to allow the catechumens who have finished the three-year discipleship course to come to us, that is, to request a meeting with the elders for communicant membership. This has worked well over the years, except that recently there was one who did not come forward. In this case we chose to wait until the person reached the age of twenty-one before implementing erasure. Should this have been administrative erasure or judicial erasure? And, is twenty-one the correct age for us to act? The Constitution of the RCUS does not seem to speak directly to this issue. I am requesting advice from the Classis.

During the week I conducted a Wednesday Bible study, which was discontinued over the Summer. God-willing, that study will resume again soon, although probably at a different night of the week.

The congregation also enjoys a Bible study conducted by our newly ordained elder, Mr. Greg Uttinger, who also conducts a mid-week study to the north of Sacramento in Roseville. This study is so well-attended that some attendees almost have to be lowered

on a stretcher once the roof is dismantled. Just recently, I also started a men’s morning study in Dixon at the International House of Pancakes. As of this writing, it also appears that I will be teaching a Monday evening study in Dixon as well.

This past year I spent most of my time preaching in our own church, except for three times at the Evangelical Reformed Church, two occasions in Presbyterian churches, and in our sister church in Chico. The Presbyterian congregation in the Bay area was without a pastor and they greeted me with open arms. There was one little bump in the road, however; they wanted me to serve the Lord’s Supper, but when I discovered that they used a substance other than wine, I tried (diplomatically, I trust) to bow out of the mission, explaining this was a confessional issue with me. To my complete surprise, their elders conducted an emergency meeting, and agreed to go with wine for the first time in thirty-five years of their existence. When I arrived at the church, I imagined that my person would be radioactive, but their greeting was very warm and loving. There was, however, one member who after approaching me, said that he was suspicious of me. But after I preached, and greeted the brethren, his fears were allayed. He never explained why he was suspicious; perhaps he thought I would be drinking Budweiser while I preached?!

The second Presbyterian Church is located in Castroville in Monterey country-- a frisbee’s throw from the Pacific Ocean. (I discovered that I was recommended to this church by the previously-mentioned congregation). They have a fine minister, qualified elders, and a zealous congregation. Just recently I preached there again and taught the adult Sunday School class. Their pastor asked me to teach on the Westminster Confession’s doctrine of Justification by Faith alone and to apply it to the New Perspective on Paul and Federal Vision movements. I heartily followed his directive and the result was a very edifying study.

The giving of our Church in Sacramento has never been better. This enables us to fan out and support the work of the kingdom at large. It would not be too strong to say that many of our members are what Paul would call “hilarious” or “cheerful” givers (2 Corinthians 9:7).

During the year I also spoke at the high school graduation service at the Heidelberg Academy. It was a pleasure to do this and I must say that everything was done in such a slick and professional way. The graduates gave sparkling testimonies, even with the accompaniment of soothing violin music!

With regard to writing, I finished my booklet on paedocommunion, which is in the form of a catechism. I have received incalculable help from the Greg Uttinger’s and Eric Bristley’s, for which I am very thankful. Currently, I have one exegetical snag that I am trying to iron out before publication.

One of the major changes this past year was our dormant church website. The Church hired Rev. Eric Bristley to overhaul the site and the results have been very pleasing. We do have some tweaking to do, but the general consensus is not only appreciation, but even excitement. We have certainly traveled from the far country of mediocrity to the land of Wallstreet excellence. What is more, it appears that advertising in the phone book is increasingly, if not altogether, a dinosaur (as well as a virtual waste of money).

The Reformation Conference this past year was animated, even though I was not directly a part of this animation. There were too many topics on the schedule so I withdrew myself from the list of speakers. I imagined that there would be a lot less work to do, but found out that my workload actually doubled. We hosted Victor Atallah and I was put in partial charge of his California itinerary. We arranged for hospitality for the Rev. Hywel Jones from Wales. Dr. Jones’ messages were very D. Martyn-Llold-

JonesISH—who was one of the truly great preachers of the twentieth century. Pastor Atallah's messages were clear but also controversial. When the Conference ended I received a letter charging that Atallah was "a Muslim in Christian clothing." The writer of the letter seemed to equate Atallah's evangelistic compassion for Moslems as an implicit approval of terrorism. Also, the Conference was not well-attended—especially if we use "the good old days" as our standard. Neither of these men were big stars in the Reformed camp (although the Atallah-connection with the evangelization of Muslims should have attracted a bigger audience).

Regarding our own church, one of the concerns expressed last year was that there were not enough elders to do the work here. Since that meeting, elder Doug Schlegel has rejoined the Spiritual Council and Mr. Greg Uttinger (as already noted) was recently ordained. Also, Mr. Tom Lagomarsino was ordained and added to the Spiritual Council several months ago.

Probably the biggest event this past year was the 35th anniversary celebration, held in West Sacramento. A lot of perspiration and inspiration went into this project, and we are particularly grateful for the labors of Mr. and Mrs. Al Esquivel, who spear-headed the celebration, while pouring out their hearts and souls. We were treated to good food and drink, wonderful Christian fellowship, and the preaching of C.W. Powell Jr., from New Geneva Seminary in Colorado Springs. It was not only a celebration of the longevity of the Church, but of the sovereign grace of God working in our midst.

Two personal notes: I and my wife went through (and continue to go through) the wringer after my wife's mother suddenly died. I preached at the funeral in Cypress, California. The striking thing was the hopelessness of most of the family. When I arrived in Southern, California, I was driven to the house in Lakewood. Members of the family had just returned from the "Showing." Their demeanor was ghostly and their faces were ashen; it was clear that they were devastated by death. The Grim Reaper was grimmer than grim. At the funeral itself, I preached on Ecclesiastes 7:1-2, which says that "it is better to go into the house of mourning than into the house of feasting." The point is that death causes us to ponder the weightier issues of life; it delivers us from the superficiality of the Toy-factory of life. I was able to preach the Gospel, especially zeroing-in on Christ as the resurrection and the life. God mercifully helped both my wife and myself to testify for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second note pertains to my father, who continues to experience a weakening heart. He is 93 years old and I try to visit him once a month. This impacts our church in that it takes me out of town two days each month. Yet, thank God that his situation is different from the former, as he does not resist the overtures of the Gospel. Plus, he shows a vital interest in the Word of God and its message of salvation. Nevertheless, it is not honey and roses watching a loved one wither away!

With regard to the Church at large, I continue as President of the Western Classis. I have done this eight years running and my hints about getting new blood in the President's chair have fallen upon deaf ears. My logical "heir apparent," the Pastor George Horner of Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield has re-located to Colorado. Yet, I must say that I enjoy the work, even though I don't enjoy the avalanche of paper work.

On a Synodical level, I was placed on the Committee to study Federal Vision last year. My assignment was fairly light-weight, that is, to spruce up the Committee's study about Steve Schlissel's doctrine of Justification. God-willing, our report about the masterminds of Federal Vision will appear at the Synod meeting this year.

The overall spiritual health of Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento is robust and healthy. The three marks of the church are present and we find people coming from the north, the south, the east, and the west to feast upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We certainly praise our God for blessing us with His presence and with new numbers.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Jim West

Classis Action: Take note.

Elder Robb Wegis read a report on the activities of the Bakersfield congregation.

Dear Brother's in Christ,

"Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding. It shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land," declares the LORD" - Jeremiah 3:15-16a.

We need a pastor. We trust the Lord when He says "I will give you [a shepherd]." Please pray that we have the patience to wait for the man God will give us, and that we have the wisdom to respond when that man is before us.

Even though we have no pastor, the head of the Church is Jesus Christ and He continues to be gracious to us. In this time of transition, we have been blessed by the preaching and teaching of many of you. Rev. Michael Voytek, Rev. Vern Pollema, Rev. Jay Fluck, Rev. Eric Bristley, Dr. Frank Walker, and Rev. Lloyd Gross. Also, pastors from the O.P.C. Dr. Charles McIlhenny, Rev. Jay Nelken, and Rev. Mark Mueller. I cannot begin to express the gratitude our members have because of the sacrifice these men (and in many cases the congregations they serve) have made to bring us the very Bread of Life. It is in these times you become acutely aware of God's tender care and compassion.

The work of the church continues. We hosted our annual Mission Festival and Reformation Rally. We were thankful that Ebenezer invited us to their Thanksgiving and Christmas Day services. Ebenezer even switched their communion practice to accommodate us on Christmas Day. A tradition, I am guessing, that had never been broken in their history. In addition, our women's group just hosted a women's conference that was attended by ladies from the Shafter, and Lancaster congregation, as well as a few visitors.

We have had one baptism and the Lord's Supper has been celebrated twice. As I am writing this, Lord willing, we will receive two new members by profession of faith tomorrow (3/4). We have also had one funeral. We have continued to exercise church discipline with two erasures. Visitation has continued, but because all of our serving elders also work full time, it is very easy to neglect this aspect of the work of the church. Please pray that we are not distracted and do not grow weary in this task.

Sunday School is well supported with attendance often reaching fifty plus adults. Most times, the visiting pastor teaches adult Sunday School, but on occasions when that is not possible, each of the elders takes a turn teaching. This has been well received by the members. Confirmation class has continued, and Lord willing, three covenant children

will be examined for confirmation in May. Rev. Pollema has agreed to help us with the confirmation.

There is a lot of joy and enthusiasm amongst the people. Moral is good, the church is committed and strong, and giving to the Lord is consistent. We have an active outreach committee, women's group (Women of Grace), and the fellowship in and out of church functions is remarkable. This fellowship is a testimony to the love and unity the members have for one another. Also, it is a demonstration of the love they have for Jesus. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

It is my hope that this letter gives you insight to the spiritual condition of the congregation in Bakersfield.

On behalf of the Consistory of Grace RCUS, Bakersfield,
Elder Jeff Jones

Classis Action: Take Note. Elder Michael Peery led the body in prayer.

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ELDERS

The President addressed the Questions of Article 81 of the Constitution to the Elder Delegates of each congregation. The answers are as follows:

1. *Are the doctrines of the gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God?* All answered yes.
2. *Is careful attention given to the instruction of the youth for confirmation, the reception of members into the Church, and The Christian nurture of the members?* All answered yes.
3. *In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:*
 - a. *Is visitation faithfully performed?* All answered yes with the exception of Anderson who answered no, and Sacramento and Shafter who said needs improvement.
 - b. *Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution?* All answered yes.
4. *Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution?* All answered yes.
5. *In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship:*
 - a. *Are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?* All answered yes, except for Chico, Grass Valley, Lancaster, and Lodi who answered no.
 - b. *Are these monies sent promptly to the Classis treasurer?* All answered yes except for Lancaster who answered no.
 - c. *Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?* All answered yes, except for Chico, Grass Valley, Lancaster, Lodi and Yuba City who answered no.
 - d. *Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer?* All answered yes except for Lancaster.
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.

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

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

Classis Action: The report on Membership and Financial Statistics was received with the clerk to amend it as necessary.

REPORTS FROM CLASSIS' FRATERNAL DELEGATES

Rev. Voytek reported on the visits of the Classis Representatives to those bodies that we share fraternal relation with.

Rev. Voytek reported on his visit to the First Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California, OPC held in LaMirada, CA on February 2-3, 2007.

Rev. Baloy reported on his visit to the Second Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California, OPC that met on May 5-6, 2006 at Bayview OPC, Chula Vista, CA.

Classis Action: Take Note.

ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS

Rev. Tim McCracken brought greetings and words of encouragement to the body on behalf of the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA. Rev. Gross responded to Rev. England with words of gratitude and encouragement for our fraternal relations.

Rev. Voytek read a letter of greetings from Rev. Don Buchanan sent on behalf of the Presbytery of Southern California of the OPC.

Rev. Wayne Forkner brought greetings to the body from the Presbytery of Northern California of the OPC.

EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATE

A Special Order was set for Wednesday following the morning devotion for the purpose of examining Elder Sam Powell, a licentiate from the South Central Classis. The examination followed the procedure outlined in the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee Report. The outcome of the exam is reported in the Standing Examination and Licensure report.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

The following committee 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 that may have come from the floor relative to the committee's report. Unless otherwise noted, the motions below were adopted by the Classis.

A. Examination and Licensure Committee

1. That Carl Esparza's name be removed from the roll of students under care, and that he be encouraged to use his gifts, especially his bi-lingual skills, for the advancement of the gospel.
2. That Mr. Sam Powell's written exams and papers be declared satisfactory.
3. That Mr. Sam Powell's oral examination be declared satisfactory.
4. That Mr. Sam Powell, upon the clerk receiving his transfer from the South Central Classis, be enrolled as a licentiate of the Western Classis.
5. That the call of First Reformed Church, Yuba City, be placed on hold until Mr. Powell completes his Master of Divinity program and successfully completes the required internship.
6. That Mr. Sam Powell be permitted to serve as the Stated Supply of First Reformed Church, Yuba City, according to the terms of the call.
7. That Mr. Sam Powell serve his internship under Pastor Frank Walker.

B. Excuses Committee

1. That Rev. Dennis Roe be excused from all sessions of the Western Classis, March 6-8, 2007, due to surgery March 6th on his left hand.
2. That Elder Steve Wilbur be excused due to a conflicting work schedule, and Elder Frank Krivolavek (secundus) be excused due to a physical injury.
3. That Elder Michael Peery be excused from the session March 6, 2007 through the morning of March 7, 2007 due to a work schedule conflict.

C. Finance Committee

1. That the following travel expenses be paid to the delegates to the 22nd Annual Session of the Western Classis:

Gil Baloy	Air	238.96
Hank Bowen	280 @ .30	84.00
Eric Bristley	220 @ .30	66.00
Jay Fluck	292 @ .30	87.60
Tom Lagomarsino	150 @ .30	45.00
Wayne Lingenfelter	136 @ .30	40.80
Gary Mancilas	118 @ .30	35.40
Jonathan Merica	140 @ .30	42.00
Michael Peery	270 @ .30	81.00
Vernon Pollema	600 @ .30	180.00
Sam Powell	2,600 @ .30	780.00
Mark Reyna	780 @ .30	234.00
Neale Riffert	780 @ .30	234.00
Paul Treick	212 @ .30	63.60

Earl Van Houten	230 @ .30	69.00
Michael Voytek	130 @ .30	39.00
Frank Walker	270 @ .30	81.00
Robert Wegis	600 @ .30	180.00
Jim West	222 @ .30	66.60
Thomas Mayville	140 @ .30	42.00

TOTAL		\$2,689.96
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2. That a Kenya Economic Development Fund be established and promoted among the congregations of the Western Classis as a benevolent cause worthy of support.
3. That the Treasurer's Report to the Western Classis be adopted.
4. That the Treasurer of the Western Classis be authorized to invest monies held in the Home Missions Building Fund at his discretion.
5. That Standing Rule #7 of the Western Classis be amended to read: "The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis, or for delegates to Classis, at thirty-five cents (\$.35) per running mile per vehicle." **[Approved by 2/3 vote]**
6. That the guideline for Giving (per communicant member) for the Classical year 2007-2008 be set as follows:

Classical Dues	7.50
Benevolence	40.00
Home Missions	93.50
Publications	1.00
Home Missions Building Fund	5.00
Heidelberg Youth Camp	3.00
TOTAL	150.00

D. Judicial Committee

1. That the documents relating to the commissioning of Rev. Thomas Mayville as an RCUS missionary to Africa be declared in order. Note: These documents included his resignation from Grace RCUS, Willows; Acceptance by Grace RCUS of that resignation; the subsequent call by Grace RCUS of Rev. Mayville as an Associate pastor; Acceptance of that call by Rev. Mayville; Verification by the Foreign Missions Committee of the RCUS Synod of Rev. Mayville's commissioning as a missionary to Mbale, Uganda; and Rev. Mayville's acceptance of that commission.
2. That the amended article to the Constitution of Grace Reformed Church, Antelope Valley relating to Article 48 of the RCUS Constitution conforms to the RCUS Constitution. **Take note.**
3. That the unanimous election by the congregation of First Reformed Church of Yuba City of the Rev. Gene Sawtelle to the position of Pastor Emeritus be approved by the Western Classis.
4. That the matters relating to the Calvary Chapel, Stockton be discussed on the floor of Classis.

Reason 1: In as much as the Synodical Home Missions Committee has ceased funding of this work as of January 31, 2007 and the intent of Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley to continue this work, it is the Judicial Committee's opinion that this matter should be discussed by the Classis for clarification.

Reason 2: This request is urged by the consistories of Trinity Reformed Church of Modesto and Providence Reformed Church of Lodi which the Committee feels is reasonable and prudent.

5. That the documents pertaining to the call of Sam Powell to First Reformed Church, Yuba City be declared in order. Note: These include the Call and its Acceptance.
6. That the recommendation of the Stated Clerk to amend Standing Rule 2 by adding at the end, "The statistics of the home mission congregation are to be included in the overseeing church's statistics when the congregation submits them to the clerk of Classis." **[Approved by 2/3 vote]**
7. That the Western Classis approve the Synod's recommendation to amend Article 41 of the RCUS Constitution.

E. Minutes of Synod

1. No business came before this committee during Classis.

F. Missions Committee

1. That the request from Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, for additional classical support in the amount of \$5,250.00 for the 2007 calendar year, beginning July 1st, be granted.
Note: It is important for the Classis to take into consideration the fact that the consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California informed the Permanent Home Missions Committee that they have been drawing down funds from a savings account in order to meet its expenses and furthermore, that this fund will be exhausted by July 1st, 2007, thus creating a shortfall of \$1,450.00 per month after that date.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod for additional synodical support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, for the 2007 calendar year, beginning July 1st, in the amount of \$5,250.00.
3. That the request from Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, for classical support in the amount of \$18,600.00 for the 2008 calendar year be granted (Note: this is an increase from the 2007 calendar year amount).
4. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod for synodical support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, for the 2008 calendar year in the amount of \$18,600 (Note: this is an increase of \$8,640.00 from the 2007 calendar year).
5. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod to effect the upgrade of the existing Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, website (www.crcchico.com). **Take note.**
6. That the request from Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, California for classical support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, in the amount of \$28,500.00 for the 2008 calendar year be granted. (Note: this is a reduction of \$625.00 from the 2007 calendar year).
7. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod for synodical support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, for the 2008 calendar year in the amount of \$13,500.00 (Note: this is a reduction of \$500.00 from the 2007 calendar year amount).
8. That the request from the Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church for additional classical support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra in the amount of \$6,000.00 for the 2007 calendar year and an additional classical support of \$6,000.00 for the 2008 calendar year be granted.
Note: The consistory of the Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church has committed to send a matching amount of \$6,000.00 to support Rehoboth Chapel for each year specified.

9. That the Western Classis direct its Permanent Home Missions Committee to draft a letter to be sent to the Classis churches encouraging them to support the missions guideline to fund this particular need.
10. That the Western Classis direct its Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee to respond to Rev. Donald Poundstone acknowledging receipt of his letter and notifying him of the Western Classis Home Mission works existing within the bound of the Southern California Presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
11. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod to assign the responsibility for the examination for licensure of the three men from the Philippines: Edwin Puzon, Napoleon Narag, and Rey Domingo to the Western Classis. **[Ruled out of order].**
12. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod to budget an amount to cover the estimated expenses necessary to bring these men to the Western Classis for examination and afterwards back to the Philippines. **[Ruled out of order].**
13. That the Western Classis examine these men at its 2008 annual meeting, contingent upon Synod granting the previous two recommendations. **[Ruled out of order].**

G. Nominations Committee

1. The committee's recommendation for Permanent Committees is as follows (underline indicates convener):

Executive Committee: J. West; H. Bowen, W. Lingenfelter

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

Christian Education in the Church: V. Pollema, G. Mancilas (1 yr); B. Williams, J. Fluck (2 yrs); J. Merica, M. Reyna (3 yrs)

Missions: D. Roe, R. Spitzer (1 yr); A. White, P. Trieck (2 yrs); J. Gross, W. Lingenfelter (3 yrs)

Interchurch Relations: G. Baloy, G. Mancilas (1 yr); M. Voytek, L. Gross (2 yrs); R. Wegis, D. Helseth (3 yrs)

Publications: C. Esparza, K. Bowen (1 yr); E. Bristley, D. Mettler (2 yrs); G. Mancilas, A. White (3 yrs)

Diaconal: M. Peery, J. Mills (1 yr); M. Voytek, J. Gross (2 yrs); V. Pollema, J. Warren (3 yrs)

Heidelberg West Youth Camp: J. Fluck, G. Stewart, (1 yr); T. Lagomarsino, C. Fellersen (2 yrs); G. Born, M. Reyna (3 yrs)

H. Benevolences Committee

1. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month for Mrs. Betty Sander.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,200 per month for Rev. and Mrs. Gene Sawtelle.
3. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett.
4. That the Western Classis grant Faith RCUS, Anderson, benevolent aid in the amount of \$600.00 per month, and that the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod in the amount of \$600.00 per month in benevolent aid.

5. That the Western Classis grant Grace RCUS, Lancaster, benevolent aid in the amount of \$425 per month, and that the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod for \$425 per month in benevolent aid.
6. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod for the ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month each for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe and Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe.
7. That the Western Classis grant to Covenant Reformed Chapel, San Diego benevolent aid in the amount of \$1,000.00 per month.
8. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod for ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,500 per month for Rev. and Mrs. Neale Riffert beginning July 1, 2007.
9. That the Western Classis petition the 261st RCUS Synod that in consultation with Rev. Riffert, it aid in paying for moving expenses from Lancaster, California to Sherman, Texas.

I. Overtures Committee

1. Requests from Mrs. Betty Sander, Rev. Gene and Sharon Sawtelle, Mrs. Marjorie Duckett for ministerial aid were referred to Standing Benevolences.
The Documents relating to the resignation of Rev. Thomas Mayville from Grace Reformed Church in Willows and his call to be an Associate pastor there were referred to Standing Judicial.
A request from Grace Reformed Church of Antelope Valley to notify Classis of a change to their local constitution was referred to Standing Judicial.
A request from First Reformed Church of Yuba City to approve the election of Rev. Gene Sawtelle as Pastor Emeritus was referred to Standing Judicial.
A letter from the Regional Home Missionary of the Presbytery of Southern California, OPC notifying us of their activities was referred to Standing Missions.
2. A request from Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church inquiring as to the feasibility of additional support for Rev. Fluck and the work in La Habra was referred to Standing Missions.
A request from the Covenant Reformed Church in Grass Valley regarding the status of the mission work in Stockton was referred to Standing Judicial.
A request from Faith Reformed Church in Anderson for continued benevolent aid was referred to Standing Benevolence.
A request from Providence Reformed Church in Lodi and Trinity Reformed Church in Modesto requesting a floor discussion of the mission work in Stockton was referred to Standing Judicial.
A request from Rev. Dennis Roe to be excused from all sessions of Classis due to having a surgery on his hand was referred to Standing Excuses.
3. A request from Elder Steve Wilbur to be excused from all sessions of Classis due to a work conflict and Elder Frank Krivohlavek, secundus, due to a recent injury was referred to Standing Excuses.
A request from Rev. Gil Baloy to have Classis petition the RCUS Synod for authority to examine three men from the Philippines in the Western Classis, and for the Western Classis to appoint a Special Committee to help these men in their travel arrangements and prepare them for examination was referred to Standing Missions.
A request from Grace Reformed Church in Antelope Valley for continued benevolent aid was referred to Standing Benevolence.
A request for Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe and Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe was referred to Standing Benevolence.

- A request from Covenant Reformed Church in Chico for an increase in their current year support and for next year's support was referred to Standing Missions.
4. An excuse from Elder Michael Peery was referred to Standing Excuses.
A request from Rev. Gil Baloy for continued benevolent aid was referred to Standing Benevolences.
The documents pertaining to the call of Sam Powell to the First Reformed Church, Yuba City were referred to Standing Judicial.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

The Abstract of the 22nd Annual meeting of the Western Classis was dedicated to the memory of the Rev. Norman Jones who was called into glory during the time that this Classis was meeting.

The delegates of the Western Classis extended their deepest appreciation to the Rev. Neale Riffert for his 41 years of service in ministry in the RCUS. Rev. Riffert will be retiring this coming year and moving to Sherman, Texas. Rev. Treick prayed God's blessing upon Rev. Riffert and his family as he enters into this new stage of his life. The body then extended the right hand of fellowship to Rev. Riffert.

A. Expression of Appreciation to Host Congregation

The following statement of appreciation was given to First Reformed Church of Yuba City, CA, to be printed in next Sunday's bulletin:

We, the delegates of the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States want to extend our sincere appreciation to you, the saints of First Reformed Church. Your hospitality and labor of love and service on our behalf have made our time in Yuba City a most pleasant one. May God bless you richly as you continue in the Lord's service.

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

Classis Action: All of the above were adopted.

THE READING OF THE MINUTES

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:20 PM on March 8, 2007, the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Western Classis was adjourned to the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Western Classis to be held at Faith Reformed Church, Anderson, CA, at a date and time to be approved by Executive Circular.

- A. Roll Call** - The roll call was taken at the beginning and end of each business session. The closing roll showed fourteen ministers and ten elders present.
- B. Devotions** - Elder Greg Stewart led the body in a devotional reading from Hebrews 6:10-20 and closed in prayer.
- C. Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Benediction and Doxology** - The President led the delegates in the confession of our catholic faith through the Apostles' Creed and in the Lord's Prayer. He then pronounced the Benediction and all joined in the singing of the Doxology.

*Rev. Henry P. Bowen
Stated Clerk, Western Classis*

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. The statistics of the home mission congregation are to be included in the overseeing church's statistics when the congregation submits them to the clerk of Classis. ('87, '07)
3. The writ of certification for Delegate Elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two (2) weeks before the session of Classis.
4. All congregations shall present an accurate report on confirmation instruction, Sunday School and weekday school. The period of instruction shall, if possible, be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire Catechism before Confirmation. The course of instruction shall include Bible history, Catechism, Bible readings and the study of the books and contents of the Bible; also, singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
5. The Standing Rules shall be read immediately after the defining of the Bar of the House.
6. If pastors, elders, and members of congregations request information from the Executive Committee of Classis concerning constitutional matters and procedures, as provided in Article 91, the answer shall, if the request is in order and in written form, be presented to the parties concerned only in written form and relevant only to the item in question. This correspondence shall be part of the official minutes of the Executive Committee.
7. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis, or for delegates to Classis, at thirty-five cents (\$.35) per running mile per vehicle." ('07)
8. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
9. The Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an Abstract of the Classical Minutes and shall send a copy to each delegate to the Classis plus six (6) additional copies to each charge within sixty (60) days after Classis. The Stated Clerk shall receive a gratuity of four hundred (\$400) per year. ('91)
10. The Classis shall have Permanent Committees as follows: Executive, Missions, Christian Education in the Church, Candidates and Credentials, Interchurch Relations, Publications, Diaconal Ministries, and Heidelberg West Youth Camp. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. ('97)
11. The complete Classis statistics shall be made a part of the minutes at the spring meeting of Classis.
12. Nominations for all officers of Classis shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names of the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.
13. Every charge that will not have an Elder Delegate at the Spring Meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send in the answers to the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. This copy shall be signed by all elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk.

14. The report and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the churches at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis.

15. The religious services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circularized before Classis. (*90)

16. Students for the Ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Classis to attend only such seminaries as are listed as institutions receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States. Only students who attend institutions so listed shall be eligible for student aid while preparing for the Christian ministry.

17. It shall be the practice of Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry to require an internship for them to be spent with a pastor who has served in the Reformed Church in the United States for at least five (5) years. During this internship, particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the distinctives and practices of the Reformed Church in the United States. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed.

18. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Classis two (2) weeks in advance of Classis shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Classis at any time. (*90)

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

20. All ministers licensed and ordained in any of the other Classes of the RCUS desiring to accept a call to a congregation of the Western Classis will undergo an examination in Orthodoxy and Purity of Intent. Such examination will take place either before the whole Classis or before the Committee on Candidates and Credentials, as that Committee shall determine in each case. If the examination is before the Candidates and Credentials Committee alone, the recommendation of the Committee must be approved via Executive Circular. (*01)



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2006 Western Classis Statistics	Faith Anderson	Grace Bakersfield	Cov't Chico	Cov't Gr Vly Stockton	Grace Lancaster	Providence Lodi	Trinity Modesto	Cov't Sacto* S. Diego	Ebenezer Shafter LaHabra	Grace Willows	First Yuba City	2006 Totals	2005 Totals	% Chg	Rehoboth LaHabr	Cov't Chapel S. Diego	Calvar Stockton
1. No. of Elders	1	4	2	2	2	3	4	5	5	2	3	33	33	0.0	1	1	0
2. No. of Deacons	1	4	1	0	1	4	3	7	6	1	2	30	28	7.1	1	1	0
3. Comm. Last Year	36	118	20	52	41	52	53	163	111	40	45	731	755	-3.2	23	19	18
4. Rec'd by Confirm	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	4	5	1	1	17	12	41.6	0	1	0
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	2	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	3	12	6	100.0	0	0	0
6. Rec'd by Prof.	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	7	6	0	0	16	20	-20.0	6	2	0
7. Tot. Received	0	3	3	1	0	0	11	11	11	1	4	45	35	28.6	6	3	0
8. Tot. Old/New Mbr.	36	121	23	53	41	52	64	174	122	41	49	776	792	-2.0	29	22	18
9. Lost by Dismissal	10	0	3	0	0	2	2	17	0	1	2	37	25	48.0	0	0	0
10. Lost Eras/Disc	0	2	0	9	3	0	0	6	6	1	3	30	29	-3.4	5	1	9
11. Lost by Death	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	8	7	14.3	0	0	0
12. Total Lost	12	3	3	9	3	2	2	23	11	2	5	75	61	23.0	5	1	9
13. Comm. this Yr	24	118	20	44	38	50	62	151	111	39	44	701	731	-4.1	24	21	9
14. Unconfirm. Mbr.	4	29	1	22	20	15	22	74	33	16	8	244	288	-15.3	8	7	2
15. Total Bapt. Mbr.	28	147	21	66	58	65	84	225	144	55	52	945	1,019	-7.3	32	28	11
16. No. of Families	13	63	10	21	20	29	26	69	55	17	21	344	365	-5.8	13	14	5
17. No. of S.S. Child.	4	18	1	22	12	6	20	63	38	10	6	200	236	-15.3	8	7	0
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	4	1	300.0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	3	0	1	2	0	2	6	1	0	0	15	14	7.1	0	0	0
20. Total Baptisms	0	3	0	1	2	0	3	9	1	0	0	19	15	26.7	0	0	0
21. No. Rec. LS	30	77	23	46	34	49	62	151	105	39	44	660	674	-2.1	22	21	10
22. Times LS. Served	12	4	12	15	4	12	4	12	6	12	12	105	105	0.0	6	12	3
23. Reg. Offerings	55,721	117,113	35,722	127,351	87,043	80,718	103,063	408,119	181,264	94,643	78,317	1,369,074	1,353,936	1.1	72,033	33,002	25,157
24. Special Offerings	267	12,303	3,404	27,631	2,704	2,375	816	180,163	5,045	6,692	21,376	262,776	176,124	49.2	0	0	5,242
25. Other Sources	16,800	18,565	36,068	33,208	13,527	8,161	5,529	86,959	1,451	1,162	0	221,430	200,609	10.4	62,040	18,919	33,208
26. Total Receipts	72,788	147,981	75,194	188,190	103,274	91,254	109,408	675,241	187,760	102,497	99,693	1,853,280	1,730,669	10.7	134,073	51,921	63,607
27. Giv. to Syn Guidl.	7,443	25,595	2,570	2,684	1,500	4,850	11,117	35,320	19,409	8,470	7,003	125,961	123,222	2.2	3,985	4,180	360
28. Giv. to Cla.	4,788	15,825	1,852	1,882	1,500	2,950	7,049	21,679	11,837	5,320	5,737	80,419	77,171	4.2	2,527	2,527	135
29. RCUS no-budget	286	0	156	0	1,075	447	4,436	21,007	4,986	4,263	1,200	37,856	74,040	-48.9	2,409	260	0
30. Non-RCUS cause	0	13,642	0	28,852	0	11,835	0	20,452	0	540	0	75,321	62,540	20.4	0	2,203	0
31. Other Expenses	66,638	112,812	70,616	156,452	95,009	66,050	83,920	387,206	125,169	75,281	63,169	1,302,322	1,299,146	.2	117,021	35,944	58,736
32. Total Expenses	79,155	167,874	75,194	189,870	99,084	86,132	106,522	485,664	161,401	93,874	77,109	1,621,879	1,639,119	-1.1	125,942	45,114	59,231
33. Val. of Ch. Bldg.	500,000	500,000	N/A	439,000	N/A	238,233	350,000	297,614	500,000	550,000	280,000	3,654,847	3,569,310	2.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
34. Val. of Parsonage	N/A	490,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	150,000	N/A	127,000	767,000	461,282	66.3	N/A	N/A	N/A
35. Impr on Prop'ty	5,000	0	0	11,234	0	0	404	0	0	2,596	3,302	22,536	29,407	-23.4	0	0	0
36. Pres Prop'ty Debt	0	0	0	75,150	0	0	38,120	0	0	0	52,500	165,770	198,368	-16.4	0	0	0
37. Debt Paid Last Yr	0	0	0	11,485	0	0	15,431	0	0	0	10,897	37,813	30,210	25.2	0	0	0
38. Syn guidl/comm	207	217	129	52	37	93	210	217	175	212	157	Avg. 172	Avg. 145	11.9	173	220	20
39. Clas guidl/comm	133	134	93	36	37	57	133	133	107	133	127	Avg. 110	Avg. 90	12.2	110	133	8
40. Tot. RCUS/Com	348	351	229	88	99	159	426	479	326	451	310	Avg. 334	Avg. 315	10.6	388	367	28

* includes City Seminary receipts of \$298,023, expenses of \$214,225