

The
Reformed Church
in the
United States

Abstract of the Minutes
264th Synod

May 17-20, 2010
Ebenezer Reformed Church
Shafter, California

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**DIRECTORY OF CONGREGATIONS
2010**

ARKANSAS

BENTONVILLE, AR (479) 876-6649
Grace RCUS, La Quinta Inn, 1001 SE Walton Blvd, Bentonville, AR 72712
Mail: 15 Kensington Drive, Bella Vista, AR 72714

Service Times: Worship: 10:00 a.m., Sun. Sch. 11:30; Prayer Service: 1p.m.
Pastor: Wesley Brice /Ginger
Web page: www.gracereformednwa.org

CALIFORNIA

ANDERSON, CA (530) 365-6874
Faith RCUS, 3291 Rupert Rd. (off Stingy Lane)
Mail: P.O. Box 902, Anderson, CA 96007
Service Times: ; Worship 10:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:30 a.m.
Pastor: Hank Bowen / Patty
Web page: www.faithrcus.org Fax: (530) 365-6874

BAKERSFIELD, CA (661) 587-3676
Grace RCUS, 420 Columbus Street, Bakersfield (north on Union Ave. to Columbus St., east on Columbus to the church).
Mail: 420 Columbus St., Bakersfield, CA 93305
Service Times: Worship 9:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 11:00 a.m.; and third Sunday at 6:30 p.m.
Pastor: Tracy Gruggett / Michelle
Pastor Emeritus: Lloyd Gross / Claire
Web page: www.bakersfieldreformed.org

CHICO, CA (530) 345-2732
Covenant RCUS, Meeting at 1877 Hooker Oak Ave. (Adventist Church Building: Turn east on East Ave., proceed to Hooker Oak Ave., turn right; proceed through first stop sign and turn left into church parking lot).
Mail: P.O. Box 1612, Chico, CA 95927-1612
Service Times: Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:30 a.m.
Pastor: Gary Mancilas / Gloria
Web page: www.reformedchico.org

GRASS VALLEY, CA (530) 273-4673
Covenant RCUS, 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA
Mail: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA 95945
Service Times: Worship 11:00 a.m.; Sunday: 9:30 a.m. - Bible Classes for all ages
Pastor: Dennis E. Roe / Julie
Assoc. Pastors: Eric Bristley / Kathleen; Jonathan Merica / Marsha
Web Page: www://crcgv.org Fax: (530) 273-4673

LA HABRA, CA (562) 947-4837
Rehoboth Chapel RCUS, 501 S. Idaho, Suite 120, La Habra (Between La Habra Blvd. and Lambert Rd.)
Mail: 11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
Service Times: Worship 10:00 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 11:30 a.m.
Mission Pastor: Jay E. Fluck / Loretta
Web page: RehobothReformedChurch.com Fax: (562) 947-5958

LANCASTER, CA - (Antelope Valley) (661) 940-4669
Grace RCUS, 211 East Avenue., K-6 Suite C, Lancaster
Mail: P.O. Box 2331, Lancaster, CA 93539
Service Times: Worship 10:45 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:45 a.m.
Pastor: Jay Nelken / Mandy
Pastor Emeritus: Neale Riffert / Mary Elizabeth
Web page: www.gracereformedchurch.net

LODI, CA (209) 367-0552
Providence RCUS, 245 E. Vine Street, Lodi
Mail: 245 E. Vine St., Lodi, CA 95240
Service Times: Worship 10:45 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:30 a.m.; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 p.m..
Pastor: Michael Voytek / Rebecca
Web page: www.prcloidi.com

MODESTO, CA (209) 523-3220
Trinity RCUS, 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto (Briggsmore east; right on Coffee, right on E. Fairmont 2 blocks.)
Mail: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto, CA 95350
Service Times: Worship 10:00 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:00 a.m.
Pastor: Paul Treick / Karen

SACRAMENTO, CA (916) 451-1190
Covenant RCUS, 2020 16th Avenue, Sacramento (from Frwy 99 take 12th Ave/Sutterville Rd. Exit. Go west to Freeport Blvd., left to 16th Ave and left to 2020 16th Ave. From I-5 Frwy take Sutterville Exit, go east on Sutterville to Freeport Blvd., left on Freeport and right on 16th Ave. to 2020 16th Ave.
Church Mailing Address: 2020 16th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822
Service Times: Worship 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:45 a.m.
Pastor: Jim West / Elaine
Assoc. Pastors: Frank Walker / Christine; Gil Baloy / Maricar
Web page: www.covenantreformedchurch.org

SAN DIEGO, CA (619) 460-1321
Covenant Chapel RCUS, 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.)
Mail: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977
Service Times: Worship 11 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Lunch 12:30 p.m.; Bible Study and Prayer Wed. 6:30 p.m.
Pastor: Gil Baloy / Maricar
Web page: www.covenantrcus.org

SHAFTER, CA...... (661) 746-6907
Ebenezer RCUS, 235 James Street, Shafter (next door to the City Library, Fire, and Police Depts.)
Mail: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263
Worship Times: Worship 9:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 11:15 a.m.
Pastor: Paul Henderson / Tina
Pastor Emeritus: Vernon Pollema / Betty
Associate Pastor: Jay Fluck / Loretta

STOCKTON, CA...... (209) 470-7174
Calvary Chapel RCUS, Clarion Inn, 4219 E. Waterloo Rd., Stockton, CA
Mail: P.O. Box 692426, Stockton, CA 95269
Service Times: Worship 11:00 a.m.; Sunday School: 10:00 a.m.
Pastor: Jonathan Merica / Marsha
Web page: www.calvaryreformedchapel.com Fax: (209) 472-7941

WILLOWS, CA...... (530) 934-2732
Grace RCUS, 148 W. Sycamore St. (Exit Hwy 162; head east 1 mile, right on Butte to Sycamore.)
Mail: P.O. Box 225, Willows, CA 95988
Service Times: Worship 10:00 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:00 a.m.; Sun Bible Study - 6:30 p.m.
Pastor: Vacant
Assoc. Pastor: Thomas Mayville / Carolyn

YUBA CITY, CA...... (530) 674-8797
First RCUS, 9882 Highway 99, 11 miles south of Yuba City - one quarter mile south of Wilkie Ave. on left.
Mail: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991
Service Times: Worship 11:00 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:30 a.m.
Pastor: Sam Powell / Susan
Pastor Emeritus: Gene Sawtelle / Sharon

COLORADO

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO..... (719) 590-1477
Trinity Covenant RCUS, Grace Presbyterian Church, 2511 N. Logan Ave.
Mail: 6050 Del Paz Dr. Colorado Springs, CO 80918.
Service Times: Worship: 11:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 1:00 p.m..
Pastor: C.W. "Bud" Powell, Jr. / Penny
Web page: www.trinityrcus.com

GREELEY, CO..... (970) 336-9927
Grace RCUS, 1501 10th Ave.
Mail: 1505 10th Ave. Greeley, CO 80631. Location:
Service Times: Worship 11:00 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:45 a.m.
Pastor: Jon Blair / Wendy
Web page: www.reformedgreeley.org

LIMON, CO..... (719) 775-8842.
Providence RCUS, 725 Michigan Ave.
Mail: P.O. Box 848, Limon, CO 80828. Location:
Service Times: Worship 10:00 a.m.; Sun. sch. 11:30 a.m.
Pastor: Matthew Powell / Andrea

IOWA

GARNER, IA..... (641) 923-3060
Peace RCUS, 1905 200th St., Garner, IA 50438 (3 miles south of Garner)
Mail: 1905 200th St., Garner, IA 50438
Service Times: Worship: 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:30 a.m.
Pastor Harvey Opp / Carol
Mailing Address
Web page: www.peacereformedchurch.com

MINNESOTA

GOLDEN VALLEY, MN..... (763) 417-9835
Redeemer RCUS, 1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley 55422
Mail: 3101 Virginia Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55427
Service Times: Worship: 10:15 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:00 a.m. (Sept. - May)
Pastor: James Sawtelle / Thelma)
Web page: www.redeemerrcus.org

HAMBURG, MN..... (952) 467-3878
St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS,
Mail: 15480 Co Road 31, Hamburg, MN 55339
Service Times: Worship: 9:30 a.m., Bible Study & Sun. Sch. 8:30 a.m.
Pastor Rev. Dan Schnabel / Marie
Web page: www.stpaulsrcus.org

MISSOURI

KANSAS CITY, MO..... (816) 420-9700
Northland RCUS, 2901 NW Cookingham, Kansas City (Exit 40, I-435, North one mile)
Mail: 2901 NW Cookingham, Kansas City, MO 64164
Service Times: Worship: 9:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.; Sun. Sch. 11:00 a.m.
Pastor: Rev. Randall Klynsma / Julie
Web page: www.northlandreformed.org Fax 816-420-9700 (call first)

NEBRASKA

LINCOLN, NE..... (402) 477-7289
St. John's RCUS, 1101 South 26th St., Lincoln
Mail: 1101 South 26th St., Lincoln, NE 68502
Service Times: Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:30 a.m.; July & August Worship: 10 a.m.; No Sun. Sch.
Pastor: Lee Johnson /Jenny Jo
Web page: www.stjohnsrcus.com

SUTTON, NE..... (402) 773-4218
Emmanuel RCUS, 110 S. Way Ave.
Mail: P.O. Box 362, Sutton, NE 68979
Service Times: Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:30 a.m.
Pastor: Joe Vusich / Gioia

SUTTON, NE. (402) 773-4330
Hope RCUS, 311 E. Hickory
Mail: P.O. Box 372, Sutton, NE 68979
Service Times: Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:00 a.m.; Family Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
(2nd & 4th Sun.)
Pastor: Darrell Kingswood / Lori

NORTH DAKOTA

ANAMOOSE, ND. (701) 839-9778
Kassel RCUS, meeting at St. Martin’s Lutheran Church, Anamoose, ND 58710
Mail: 1915 1st Ave. SW, Minot, ND 58701
Service Times: Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 11:45 a.m.
Pastor: Dale Clark / Sandra

ASHLEY, ND (701) 288-3265
Salem RCUS, 209 1st Ave. SW, Ashley, ND
Mail: P.O. Box 345, Ashley, ND 58413
Service Times: Worship 9 a.m.
Pastor: James Grossmann / Michelle

MINOT, ND (701) 838-0605
Harvest RCUS, Minot City Auditorium – Room 204
Mail: P.O. Box 804, Minot, ND 58702
Service Times: Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:15 a.m.; Sunday Evening Study 6:30 p.m.
Pastor: Phil Poe / Karen
Web page: harvestreformedchurch.org

OHIO

NAPOLEON, OH (419) 599-3106
Peace RCUS, 638 Huddle Rd.
Mail: 638 Huddle Rd., Napoleon, OH, 43545
Service Times: Worship 10:00 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:00 a.m.
Pastor: Rev. Steven Altman / Bianca

PENNSYLVANIA

WAYMART, PA (570) 785-4012
Heritage RCUS, Lower Level of Waymart Presbyterian Church, 200 Belmont St., Waymart, PA 18472
Mail: 136 Grand Ave., Forest City, PA 18421
Service Times: Worship: 10:30 a.m.; Bible Study 9:30 a.m.
Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter / Sharon
Web page: www.heritagercus.org

SOUTH DAKOTA

ABERDEEN, SD (605) 225-6120
First RCUS, 818 9th Ave. SE
Mail: 1002 Diamond St., Aberdeen, SD 57401
Service Times: Worship 9 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.
Pastor: David Dawn / Colleen
Web page: aberdeenrcus.org

EUREKA, SD. (605) 284-2396
Eureka RCUS, 310 F Ave.
Mail: P.O. Box 456, Eureka, SD 57437
Service Times: Worship 9 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 10:15 a.m.
Pastor: Richard Stetler / Heidi
Fax: 605-284-2396

HERRIED, SD (605) 437-2414
First RCUS, 601 Main St. North
Mail: P.O. Box 316, Herreid, SD 57632
Service Times: Worship 10 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 11 a.m.
Pastor: Vacant
Web page: firstrcus.org

HOSMER, SD (701) 288-3265
Hosmer RCUS, 201 West 5th St.
Mail: P.O. Box 345, Ashley, ND 58413
Service Times: Worship 11 a.m.
Pastor: James Grossmann / Michelle

MENNO, SD (605) 387-2816
Zion RCUS, 220 South Pine St.
Mail: P.O. Box 387, Menno, SD 57045
Service Times: Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:30 a.m.
Pastor: Scott Henry / Maria
Web page: www.zionreformedchurchrcus.com

MITCHELL, SD (605) 996-7439
Grace RCUS, 1021 S. Davison
Mail: P.O. Box 252, Mitchell, SD 57301
Service Times: Worship 10:00 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:00 a.m..
Pastor: George Syms / Debbie
Web page: www.gracereformed.com

PIERRE, SD (605) 945-1070
Hope RCUS, 317 S. Garfield
Mail: 105 Lakeview Dr., Pierre, SD 57501
Service Times: Worship 9:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 10:45 a.m.
Pastor: William Haddock / Ferne
Web page: www.hopercus.com

RAPID CITY, SD (605) 399-1711
Grace RCUS, 5626 North Haines Ave.
Mail: 5626 Haines Ave., Rapid City, SD 57701
Service Times: Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:00 a.m.; Bible Study Sunday 6:00 p.m.
(except summer)
Pastor: David Fagrey / Bonnie
Web page: www.gracereformedrapidcity.com

SIOUX FALLS, SD (605) 331-0500
Trinity RCUS, 7301 S. Louise Ave.
Mail: 415 N. Joseph, Tea, SD 57064
Service Times: Worship 10:00 a.m.
Pastor: Ron Morris / Sheri
Assoc. Pastor: Maynard Koerner / Marcia
Web page: www.trinityrcus.org

VERMILLION, SD (605) 624-4337

Providence RCUS, 830 E. Madison
 Mail: 830 E. Madison, Vermillion, SD 57069
 Service Times: Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 9:30 a.m.
 Pastor: Robert Grossmann / Polly
 Web page: www.providencereformed.com

WATERTOWN, SD 605-882-9704

Covenant RCUS, 15 12th Ave. NE, Watertown, SD
 Mail: 434 30th St. NW, Watertown, SD 57201
 Service Times: Worship 10 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 11:30 a.m.
 Pastor: Michael McGee / Jenny
 Web page: www.watertownrcus.org

WISCONSIN

MANITOWOC, WI (920) 726-4940

Salem Ebenezer RCUS,
 Mail: 6524 County Trunk C, Manitowoc, WI 54220
 Service Times: Worship 10:00 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 8:45 a.m.
 Pastor: Rev. Kyle Sorensen / Donielle
 Web page: www.salemebenazer.org

WYOMING

ROCK SPRINGS, WY (307) 362-5107

Providence RCUS, 1007 9th St.
 Mail: 1007 9th St., Rock Springs, WY 82901.
 Service Times: Worship 10 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 11:30 a.m.
 Pastor: George Horner /Mary Jo

DIRECTORY OF DELEGATES

Ministers

- Steve Altman** (419) 356-2095
 1153 County Rd. 15, Napoleon, OH 43545
 Email: thealtmans@sbcglobal.net
- Gil Baloy** (619) 697-0272
 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977
 Email: gilbaloy@gmail.com
- Jon Blair** (970) 336-9927
 1505 10th Ave., Greeley, CO 80631
 Email: jwblair83@msn.com
- Henry Bowen** (530) 549-5740
 22452 Meadow Crest Lane, Palo Cedro, CA 96073
 Email: rcushank@sbcglobal.net
- Wesley Brice** work (479) 876-6649 or (479) 876-1064
 15 Kensington Dr, Bella Vista, AR 72714
 Email: wesbrice@yahoo.com
- Eric Bristley** (530) 272-8792
 15287 Brewer Rd., Grass Valley, CA 95949
 Email: eric.rcus@cebridge.net
- L. Dale Clark** (701) 839-9778
 1915 1st Ave. SW, Minot, ND 58701
 Email: L.Dale.Clark@gmail.com
- David Dawn** (605) 229-5953
 1002 Diamond St., Aberdeen, SD 57401
 Email: aberdeensd@gmail.com
- Warren Embree** (402) 474-9129
 3410 Gregory Court, Lincoln, NE 68521
 Email: wembree@neb.rr.com
- David Fagrey** (605) 399-1711
 5626 N. Haines Ave., Rapid City, SD 57701
 Email: dfagrey@juno.com
- Jay Fluck** (562) 947-4837
 11502 La Serna Dr., Whittier, CA 90604
 Email: jeffluck@msn.com
- Lloyd Gross** (480) 854-3701
 215 N. Power Rd. #453, Mesa, AZ 85205
 Email: rcuslloyd@cox.net
- James Grossmann** (701) 288-3265
 P.O. Box 345, Ashley, ND 58413
 Email: jmsgrssm@gmail.com
- Robert Grossmann** (605) 624-4337
 818 Madison, Vermillion, SD 57069
 Email: rcusbob@juno.com
- Tracy Gruggett** (661) 587-3676
 7016 Rhone Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93308
 Email: tgruggett@bak.rr.com
- William Haddock** (605) 945-1070
 105 Lakeview Dr., Pierre, SD 57501
 Email: whaddock@pie.midco.net

- Howard Hart** (605) 995-1964
1705 N. Minnesota, Mitchell, SD 57301
Email: bhart40@juno.com
- Paul Henderson** (661) 746-6998
235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263
Email: hendorcus@yahoo.com
- Scott Henry** (605) 387-2816
P.O. Box 387, Menno, SD 57045
Email: shenry3@goldenwest.net
- George Horner** (303) 304-9301
1007 9th St., Rock Springs, WY 82901
Email: george.horner@comcast.net
- Lee Johnson** (402) 477-7289
3930 Mason Dr., Lincoln, NE 68521
Email: rev.lee.j.johnson@gmail.com
- Darrell Kingswood** (402) 773-4462
P.O. Box 372, Sutton, NE 68979
Email: dlkingswood@windstream.net
- Randall Klynsma** (816) 532-4256
15420 Rule Lane, Smithville, MO 64089
Email: rjklynsma@yahoo.com Fax: (816)-420-9700
- Maynard Koerner** (605) 595-5850
4800 S. Shields Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57103
Email: maykoerner@gmail.com
- Gary Mancilas** (530) 345-2732
2 Woodminster Ct., Chico, CA 95926
Email: gmancilas@sbcglobal.net
- Thomas Mayville** (209) 551-1481
2005 Majestic Oak Ct., Modesto, CA 95355
Email: thomasreformed@gmail.com
- Michael McGee** (605) 882-9704
434 30th St. NW, Watertown, SD 57201
Email: mcgeenme@gmail.com
- Jonathan Merica** (209) 470-7174
9311 Snow Creek Circle, Stockton, CA 95212
Email: jonathanmerica@yahoo.com
- Ron Morris** (605) 553-7971
415 N. Joseph, Tea, SD 57064
Email: rmmorris@sio.midco.net
- Jay Nelken** (661) 943-9695
4237 Jonathan St., Lancaster, CA 93536
Email: nelken@jslink.net
- Harvey Opp** (641) 923-3060
1905 200th St., Garner, IA 50438
Email: opp@commlnet.net
- Chester Ploeger** (641) 923-6026
490 W. Lyon St., Garner, IA 50438
Email:
- Phil Poe** (701) 340-7666
1624 Foothills Dr., Minot, ND 58701
Email: P6Kar@aol.com
- Vernon Pollema** (661) 589-8680
8514 Sun Harbor Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93309
Email: vernpollema@sbcglobal.net
- Ron Potter** (570) 785-4012
136 Grand Ave., Forest City, PA 18421
Email: reformed@nep.net

- C. W. Powell** (719) 590-1477
6050 Del Paz Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80918 Fax: (877) 815-6984
Email: budpow@ureach.com
- Matthew Powell** (719) 775-8842
490 G. Ave., Limon, CO 80828
Email: mattpowell74@gmail.com
- Sam Powell** (530) 674-8797
9882 Garden Hwy, Yuba City, CA 95991
Email: sampowell365@yahoo.com
- Neale Riffert** (661) 886-5503
122 Willow Ridge Circle, Sherman, Texas 75092
Email: nriffert@yahoo.com
- Dennis Roe** (530) 272-6693
17355 Alexandra Way, Grass Valley, CA 95949
Email: pastor@cregv.org Fax: (530) 273-6280 (call first)
- Dan Rogers (suspended)** (402) 773-4486
P.O. Box 74, 309 S. Main, Sutton, NE 68979
Email:
- Gene Sawtelle** (530) 790-0929
1402 Stafford Way, Yuba City, CA 95991
Email: elgrande64@juno.com
- James Sawtelle** (763) 417-9835
3101 Virginia Ave. N, Crystal, MN 55427
Email: redeemercus@usfamily.net
- Dan Schnabel** (952) 467-3872
15480 Co. Rd. 31, Hamburg, MN 55339
Email: dm7schnabel@gmail.com
- Kyle Sorensen** (920) 726-4464
7411 Center Rd., Manitowoc, WI 54220
Email: kydoso@juno.com
- Richard Stetler** (605) 284-2396
309 H. Ave., P.O. Box 456, Eureka, SD 57437
Email: hrstetler@valleytel.net
- George Syms** (605) 996-7439
505 S. Davison, Mitchell, SD 57301
Email: star5177@yahoo.com
- Paul Treick** (209) 551-2407
4005 Masterpiece Dr., Modesto, CA 95357
Email: triwheeler@aol.com
- Herman Van Stedum** (605) 213-0405
602 E. Willow, Harrisburg, SD 57032
Email: hermanvs@sio.midco.net
- Michael Voytek** (209) 367-1902
501 Falls Ave., Lodi, CA 95240
Email: prclodi@softcom.net
- Joe Vusich** (402) 773-4218
P.O. Box 100, Sutton, NE 68979
Email: jvusich@windstream.net
- Frank Walker** (916) 320-0548
6121 Pine Vista Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758
Email: drfhwalker@gmail.com
- Jim West** (916) 488-5569
5216 Locust Ave., Carmichael, CA 95608
Email: jimwest3253@hotmail.com

Primarius Elders

- Ron Abbink** (605) 886-9557
 1016 N. Arrow Ave., Watertown, SD 57201
 Email: rabbink@wat.midco.net
- Kenneth Armbruster** (419) 592-1130
 14027 Co. Rd. L, Napoleon, OH 43545
 Email: kendora@henry-net.com
- John W. Bender** (605) 226-0799
 1108 10th Ave. NE, Aberdeen, SD 57401
 Email: jcbender@abe.midco.net
- Darrell Bentz** (605) 437-2317
 31848 108th St., Artas, SD 57437
 Email: dbtz@valleytel.net
- Bill Borgwardt** (920) 758-2240
 12626 Newton Rd., Valders, WI 54245
 Email: jborg@lakefield.net
- Alan Fickbohm** (605) 224-0358
 304 N. Harrison Ave., Pierre, SD 57501
 Email: alfalf@aol.com
- Mark Fisher** (816) 790-3615
 19380 Hwy. B, Edgerton, MO 64444
 Email: mark@tcdparts.com
- Roger Gallimore** (605) 787-9134
 4511 Elk Creek Rd., Piedmont, SD 57769
 Email: myonlycomfort@msn.com
- Andrew Gilman** (507) 645-7716
 321 Aster Dr., Northfield, MN 55057
 Email: andygilman@earthlink.net
- Jim Gochnauer** (530) 342-0446
 1265 Yosemite Dr., Chico, CA 95928
 Email: jim@hignell.com
- Dan Griess** (402) 773-4734
 2231 Road 323, Sutton, NE 68979
 Email:
- Joe Gross** (530) 473-2712
 840 J. Street, Box 445, Williams, CA 95987
 Email: ja144@frontier.com
- Spencer Gross** (605) 996-1919
 723 E. 2nd, Mitchell, SD 57301
 Email: thunehdw@midconetwork.com
- John Heerema** (209) 847-5811
 9940 Victory Rd., Oakdale, CA 95361
 Email: JnJHeerema@Fire2Wire.com
- Steve Heinbigner** (402) 464-3644
 5018 Aylesworth Ave., Lincoln, NE 68504
 Email: swh1fb@aol.com
- Fred Hofmann** (402) 773-5474
 2411 Road 1, Sutton, NE 68979
 Email: fhofmann@mainstaycomm.net
- Jeff Jones** (661) 310-1631
 9715 Gold Dust Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93311
 Email: jljones@aspecteg.com
- Myron Koerner** (605) 925-7195
 P.O. Box 471, Freeman, SD 57029
 Email: mymkoern@gwtc.net

- Donald Larson** (515) 379-1037
 2673 120th St., Livermore, IA 50558
 Email: delarson@wmtel.net
- Wayne Lingenfelter** (209) 727-5735
 18869 Arrowhead Dr., Lockeford, CA 95237
 Email: waymar1441@att.net
- Keith Lorentzen** (701) 626-1655
 P.O. Box 121, Butte, ND 58723
 Email: dakotakeith@gmail.com
- Gary Maassen** (605) 582-6469
 717 Parkview Blvd., Brandon, SD 57705
 Email: g_maassen@sdfuneral.com
- Jean McClay** (719) 574-3225
 1254 Atoka Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80905
 Email: jbmccclay@comcast.net
- Leroy Neifer** (605) 577-6604
 11704 343rd Ave., Hosmer, SD 57448
 Email:
- Ewald Ochsner** (970) 674-9089
 807 Scotch Pine Dr., Windsor, CO 80550
 Email: elsieoch@gmail.com
- James Ochsner** (530) 755-1691
 P.O. Box 643, Sutter, CA 95982
 Email: jeochsner@yahoo.com
- Vern Ochsner** (605) 437-2772
 10118 309th Ave., Herried, SD 57632
 Email: vochsner@valleytel.net
- Melroy Panning** (952) 467-2347
 112 Poplar Ridge Drive #203, Nya, MN 55397
 Email:
- Michael Peery** (530) 347-9294
 P.O. Box 1973, Cottonwood, CA 96022
 Email: michaelpeery@sbcglobal.net
- Mark Reyna** (661) 726-0826
 559 Woodington Dr., Lancaster CA 93535
 Email: markreyna@hotmail.com
- Tim Rott** (701) 288-3767
 4865 100th St., Ashley, ND 58413
 Email: bil1_58413@hahoo.com
- Jim Rydell** (605) 624-2130
 309 S. Crawford Rd., Vermillion, SD 57069
 Email: jim.rydell@sd.usda.gov
- Ted Schieffelin** (719) 775-2791
 P.O. Box 521, Limon, CO 80828
 Email: tschieffelin@covcs.com
- Douglas Schlegel** (916) 690-4555
 8135 Pixley Way, Sacramento, CA 95828
 Email: Contramundum1517@gmail.com
- Jim Snyder** (701) 838-7083
 2300 19th Ave. NW, Minot, ND 58703
 Email: thesnymyers@srt.com
- Earl Starks** (307) 382-5279
 112 Mountain Rd., Rock Springs, WY 82901
 Email: earlstarks@lycos.com

- Steve Wilbur**..... (530) 346-6811
 18388 Dog Bar Rd., Grass Valley, CA 95949
 Email: swilbur@usa.com
- Bob Williams**..... (661) 823-4071
 21531 Old Town Dr., Tehachapi, CA 93561
 Email: bob_williams@earthlink.net

Secundus Elders

- Joshua Berg**..... (719) 650-2141
 3854 Smoke Tree Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80922
 Email: Joshua.a.berg@gmail.com
- Greg Born**..... (209) 599-6786
 1687 Bailey Dr., Ripon, CA 95366
 Email: RickyLucy1977@gmail.com
- Ken Bowen**..... (530) 473-2755
 837 I Street, Box 445, Williams, CA 95987
 Email: pegbowen@frontiernet.net
- Emil Broers**..... (641) 829-3691
 306 E. Lake St., Ventura, IA 50482
 Email:
- Jim Connelly**..... (970) 330-4774
 26779 WCR 45½, Greeley, CO 80631
 Email: jimcol2@mindspring.com
- Robert Davis**..... (402) 781-2362
 1101 N. 202nd St., Eagle, NE 68347
 Email: prcdrus@windstream.net
- Dick DeGroot**..... (605) 362-1752
 26783 Country Acre Dr., Sioux Falls, SD 57106
 Email: ddegrootsd@gmail.com
- Rod DeJong**..... (605) 882-4071
 3517 4th Ave. SW, Watertown, SD 57201
 Email: rodejong@wat.midco.net
- Lyle Dewald**..... (605) 990-2024
 1808 Thomsen, Mitchell, SD 57311
 Email: dewald@yahoo.com
- Justin Goehring**..... (605) 437-2247
 10118 309th Ave., Herried, SD 57632
 Email: jgbooboo@yahoo.com
- Lynn Goehring**..... (605) 224-4209
 1808 Grandview St., Pierre, SD 57501
 Email: ljgoehring@hotmail.com
- Curt Griess**..... (402) 773-4764
 710 S. Saunders Ave., Sutton, NE 68979
 Email:
- Doug Haak**..... (605) 225-3817
 801 S. Aldrich St., Aberdeen, SD 57401
 Email: ddhaak@abe.midco.net
- David Helseth**..... (530) 893-0277
 420 Autumn Gold Dr., Chico, CA 95973
 Email:
- Marlin Holzwarth**..... (605) 925-4668
 43218 278th St., Freeman, SD 57029
 Email: marlinmh@svtv.com

- Richard Honaker**..... (307) 362-6305
 453 Quadrant Dr., Rock Springs, WY 82901
 Email: rhonaker@wyoming.com
- Mark Honeck**..... (419) 592-5631
 955 Daggett Ave., Napoleon, OH 43545
 Email: mrmhoneck@yahoo.com
- Wayne Johnson**..... (916) 424-0290
 837 West Cove Way, Sacramento, CA 95831
 Email: Wayne@theagency.us
- Raymond Jung**..... (605) 283-2253
 12684 347th Ave., Roscoe, SD 57471
 Email:
- Curtis Kroells**..... (952) 467-2443
 15780 158th, Hamburg, MN 44339
 Email:
- Jay Kroese**..... (763) 383-7653
 11325 47th Ave. N., Plymouth, MN 55442
 Email: jlkroese@comcast.net
- David McPherson**..... (605) 720-1517
 P.O. Box 126, Sturgis, SD 57785
 Email: mcpcinc@gwtc.net
- Ron Meidinger**..... (701) 288-3374
 615 Center Ave. N, Ashley, ND 58413
 Email:
- Earl Melhaff**..... (605) 284-2698
 P.O. Box 483, Eureka, SD 57437
 Email: emelhaff@valleytel.net
- Stephen Mettler**..... (661) 589-7036
 2101 Old Farm Rd., Bakersfield, CA 93312
 Email: Mettpays@att.net
- Don Ribbens**..... (402) 773-4463
 303 Clay St., Saronville, NE 68979
 Email: tycosrvcl@yahoo.com
- John Savage**..... (719) 446-5461
 19600 County Rd. E, Ordway, CO 80163
 Email: johnsavage@coairnet.com
- Ryan Spitzer**..... (661) 871-6388
 5300 Muirfield, Bakersfield, CA 93306
 Email: ryanryanspitzer@aol.com
- Greg Stewart**..... (530) 751-2151
 2495 S. Walton Ave., Yuba City, CA 95993
 Email: rcusstewart@sunset.net
- Steve Stuebbe**..... (920) 898-9048
 2313 Hickory Lane, New Holstein, WI 53061
 Email: stuebbe14@verizon.net
- Case Van Egmond**..... (209) 369-9379
 7518 E. Liberty Rd., Galt, CA 95632
 Email: cmvanegmond@sbcglobal.net
- Greg Van Holland**..... (605) 665-4149
 30626 446th Ave., Mission Hill, SD 57046
 Email: greg@teamcssi.com
- Marc Wiersma**..... (816) 214-6618
 14100 NW 73rd St., Parkville, MO 64060
 Email: wiers99@gmail.com

Secundus Elders Present at All or Part of the Meeting

- Joshua Berg** (719) 650-2141
 3854 Smoke Tree Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80922
 Email: Joshua.a.berg@gmail.com
- Ken Bowen** (530) 473-2755
 837 I Street, Box 445, Williams, CA 95987
 Email: pegbowen@frontiernet.net
- Emil Broers** (641) 829-3691
 306 E. Lake St., Ventura, IA 50482
 Email:
- Robert Davis** (402) 781-2362
 1101 N. 202nd St., Eagle, NE 68347
 Email: prcdrcus@windstream.net
- Dick DeGroot** (605) 362-1752
 26783 Country Acre Dr., Sioux Falls, SD 57106
 Email: ddegroot@gmail.com
- David Helseth** (530) 893-0277
 420 Autumn Gold Dr., Chico, CA 95973
 Email:
- Marlin Holzwarth** (605) 925-4668
 43218 278th St., Freeman, SD 57029
 Email: marlinmh@svtv.com
- Mark Honeck** (419) 592-5631
 955 Daggett Ave., Napoleon, OH 43545
 Email: mrmhoneck@yahoo.com
- Don Ribbens** (402) 773-4463
 303 Clay St., Saronville, NE 68979
 Email: tycosrvcl@yahoo.com

Licentiates

- Douglas Schlegel** (916) 690-4555
 8135 Pixley Way, Sacramento, CA 95828
 Email: Contramundum1517@gmail.com

Students under Care

- Jim Connelly** (970) 330-4774
 26779 WCR 45½, Greeley, CO 80631
 Email: jimco12@mindspring.com
- Gil Garcia** (818) 373-9343
 5500 Newcastle Ave. #28, Encino, CA 91316
 Email: gilgarcia1517@yahoo.com
- Jimmy Hall** (248) 912-8410
 2905 E. Lincoln Hwy., Lynwood, IL 60411
 Email: jimmermwj@yahoo.com

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Officers of Synod

- President**
 Rev. Vernon Pollema (661) 589-8680
 8514 Sun Harbor Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93309
 Email: vpollema@sbcglobal.net
- Vice President**
 Rev. James Sawtelle (763) 417-9851
 3101 Virginia Ave. North, Crystal, MN 55427
 Email: redeemerrcus@usfamily.net
- Stated Clerk**
 Rev. Paul Treick (209) 551-2407
 4005 Masterpiece Dr., Modesto, CA 95357
 Email: triwheeler@aol.com
- Treasurer**
 Mr. Ted Griess (402) 773-4169
 PO Box 350, Sutton, NE 68979
 Email: tsgruess@mainstaycomm.net

Permanent Synodical Committees

- Archives:** J. Fluck, G. Van Holland, R. Wegis, H. Van Stedum
- Board of Trustees:** D. Clark, K. Lorenzen, Tim Rott
- Christian Education:** L. Johnson, D. Fagrey, R. Abbink, (1yr); J. Blair, J. Grossmann, J. Gochnauer (2 r); D. DeGroot, J. Jones, H. Hart, CW Powell (3 yr)
- Sub-Committee - Confer with Dordt:** S. Henry, R. Morris, D. Van Peurseem, E. Broers
- Sub-Committee- Sunday School Curriculum:** K. Sorensen, T. Gruggett, S. Henry, M. Reyna, N. Riffert, E. Bristley
- Diaconal Ministries:** T. Savage*, B. Davis (1yr); M. McGee, A. Gilman (2 yr); K. Armbruster, S. Altman, F. Walker, J. West (3yr)
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- Foreign Ministries:** M. Voytek, W. Lingenfelter, T. Schieffelin (1 yr); G. Baloy, W. Johnson, A. Haller (2 yr); D. Schnabel, R. Grossmann, D. Schlegel (3 yr)
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- Publication and Promotion:** J. Johnson, B. Tjeerdsma, S. Powell (1 yr); H. Bowen, P. Henderson, G. Stewart (2 yr); R. Klynsma, W. Haddock (3 yr)
- Sub-Committee - Website:** M. Powell, F. Walker, J. Drewes
- Develop eBooks:** G. Mancilas, J. Fluck, J. Jones, E. Bristley

Special Committees

Committee to Study BC 9, (“and the Spirit appeared in the shape of a dove”): F. Walker, R. Grossmann, J. Sawtelle, J. Ochsner, J. Rydell, D. Helseth
Committee to Study “Promoting a Biblical Sexual Morality”: P. Poe, T. Mayville, S. Powell, D. Kingswood, R. Gallimore, S. Wilbur

SYNODICAL GUIDELINES	
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Total Per Communicant Member	\$190.00
<i>Reformed Herald (per subscription)</i>	\$18.00

**Abstract of the Minutes of the 264th Synod
of the
Reformed Church in the United States**

*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him
who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings
of good things, who proclaims salvation,
who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”
Isaiah 52:7*

I. Services

The 264th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States was hosted by the congregation of Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, California.

The Synod convened on Monday, May 17, 2010, with a 7:00 p.m. worship service conducted by Rev. Maynard Koerner (Heidelberg Theological Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD). Rev. Paul Treick (Trinity RCUS, Modesto, CA) preached the sermon entitled “*Courage for the Conflict*” from II Corinthians 4:5-7.

On Wednesday evening a 7:00 p.m. worship service was conducted by Rev. Jim West (Covenant RCUS, Sacramento, CA). Rev. Kyle Sorensen (Salem Ebenezer RCUS, Manitowoc, WI) preached the sermon entitled “*Who Will Fight This Giant?*” from I Samuel 17:45-47.

Morning devotions were held at 10 a.m. The Tuesday morning devotion was conducted by Rev. Randall Klynsma (Northland RCUS, Kansas City, MO) with a message entitled “*Be Devoted or Be Irrelevant*” from Revelation 12. On Wednesday, Rev. Howard Hart (retired, Mitchell, SD) conducted the devotion entitled “*Living Letters*” from II Corinthians 3:1-3. On Thursday, Rev. James Grossmann (Salem RCUS, Ashley, ND) conducted the devotion entitled “*The Friend of the Bridegroom*” from John 3:22-36.

The closing devotion was conducted by Elder Bob Williams (Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter, CA) who read Psalm 33 and 133 and led in prayer.

The assembly paused for special prayer many times during the meeting for specific matters and needs of individuals during the meeting.

II. Organization

Following the opening worship service on May 17, the President of the Executive Committee, Rev. Vernon Pollema, called the meeting to order. The Stated Clerk, Rev. Paul Treick read the roll which showed 42 ministers and 29 elder delegates present. The roll was called each morning. The closing roll call showed 44 ministers and 26 elders present.

The Bar of the House was set as the first 14 rows on either side of the aisle.

Tellers appointed for the meeting were: Rev. Jon Blair, Rev. Jay Fluck, Elder Andrew Gilman, and Elder Doug Schlegel.

The President appointed Rev. Thomas Mayville as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*. Elections by ballot were held for men to serve in the following capacities:

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

On motion, the oral reading of the Standing Rules of Synod was suspended.

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

The Agenda and the Order of the Day were adopted, with the following Special Orders: fraternal delegates and representatives of institutions would address the body after morning devotions on Wednesday. The report of the Special Committee on Synod Procedures would be heard on Wednesday after the Noon recess.

IV. Announcement of Standing Committees

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

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

The Permanent Committee Reports were sent out prior to the meeting. They were forwarded to their respective Standing Committees as per the Agenda. Overtures and communications previously sent to the Synod were given to the Overtures Committee who referred most of them to the relevant Standing Committees. Some were dealt with by the Overtures Committee itself. Following this dispersal, a recess was taken, as prescribed in the Agenda, until the Overtures Committee was ready with its initial report. The Permanent Committee reports are printed below and their recommendations are handled by the Standing Committee they are referred to..

A. Archives Committee

The Archives committee received only the official copies of the minutes of the 263rd Synod.

The committee purchased a used 4-drawer fireproof filing cabinet for \$700.00, and transported the files and cabinet which had been stored at Grace RCUS Bakersfield to Rehoboth RCUS in La Habra, CA, at a cost of \$123.30. The committee spent \$823.30 of the \$1,000.00 budgeted by the 263rd Synod. In addition two external hard drives were donated and contain the current files of the Stated Clerk, one resides with the clerk and the other with the stored files of the committee.

A project for the coming year is to catalog the archives and post the catalog on the denominational web site.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jay Fluck, Elder Greg Van Holland, Elder Robert Wegis

B. Board of Trustees

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Your Committee did not meet. No business was brought before it and your committee makes no recommendations.

Respectfully,

Rev. L. Dale Clark, Elder Keith Lorentzen, Elder Tim Rott

C. Christian Education Committee (and Sub-Committees)

Esteemed brethren:

Your committee was given two mandates from the 263rd Synod, relative to visiting Mid-America Reformed Seminary, and investigating Covenant College.

Mid-America Reformed Seminary

The mandate from the *Abstract of the Minutes of the 263rd Synod* reads: “That the Permanent Christian Education Committee be instructed to visit Mid-America Reformed Seminary to reassess continuing to list them as a seminary worthy of support and report to the 2010 Synod.”

Rev. Lee Johnson visited the Seminary, and the following is his report:

I visited Mid-America Reformed Seminary (from now on referred to as MARS) on February 22nd and 23rd of 2010. Unfortunately, I was unable to coordinate my trip with anyone else from the committee. I met with the available faculty (Dr. Strange was ill and Dr. Kloosterman out of town), a group of students, and sat in on a chapel service, and two courses: Old Testament and Doctrine of God and Man. I also met separately with our RCUS student at Mid America, Jimmy Hall. The seminary was very open and helpful in answering my questions and allowing me to get a good sense of the seminary.

MARS seems dedicated to orthodoxy and confessional subscription, and teaches this to their students. MARS has several practices in place that help this commitment such as requiring subscriptions from their professors as well as board members. The subscription is to the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Confession of Faith. The subscription does not include the Westminster Catechisms. I asked to make sure that they held to the creation within the space of 6 days, as the Westminster Confession puts it, as literal 24 hour days and they do indeed hold to that view. In that respect they are very much in line with the RCUS position paper on the subject. MARS has recently published a work against the Federal Vision theology, and it is also in line with the position papers adopted by the RCUS Synod. The seminary also had a clear commitment to turning out preachers who follow the classic Reformed practice of expository preaching and they do indeed reject the ultra-Redemptive-Historical method of preaching that denies application in sermons.

The teaching in each class was sound, orthodox, and engaging. The text books required were usually the classic reformed texts so that the students can learn not only from their teacher, but also from the masters and fore-fathers of the faith. I was also impressed with how much the original languages of Greek and Hebrew are integrated into each class. MARS also has a practice of requiring Proficiency Exams before graduation is allowed. This helps ensure that students know and remember the material and prepares them for oral licensure exams at the Classical level. All of these things speak well of MARS.

One possible concern is that MARS, although independent, would push a denominational agenda. Four of the five full time professors are URCNA, and the other is OPC. Yet, the students did not feel the seminary was pushing any agenda from a particular

denomination. MARS does seem to go to out of its way to train the students in their own denomination by requiring a Denominational History and Polity Course that must fit with the student's own denomination. The MARS library is equipped with the Reformed Herald, *Leben* magazine, and other RCUS history books. Also MARS had up advertisements for job openings at RCUS churches. Still, this is one area where improvement could be made. Perhaps the Synod or local Classis can find ways to aid the students during their taking of this course so that RCUS men can help teach our students the RCUS Constitution and history. I am sure that MARS would be open to any such aid as the stated point of the class is to get students familiar with their own history and polity in preparation for ministry.

In my opinion the biggest concern about MARS is the lack of an RCUS church close by. The closest church is either Manitowoc, Wisconsin or Napoleon, Ohio. Neither is an option for students to attend on any sort of regular basis. This means our students will spend their Sundays at a different denomination for the three years they are attending MARS. The risk of losing a student to another denomination goes up when we have no presence in the area. It also makes oversight harder as for three years our knowledge of the student is little to none. One cannot blame MARS for this, and they did state they were always willing to give updates and their opinion on a student's development. Also their internship program seems to give opportunities for students to spend at least summers in an RCUS church. Our churches should be reminded that they can make use of students at MARS.

One thing of note is the retirement of Dr. Nelson Kloosterman. He will continue to teach a few classes here and there for the seminary, but is planning on concentrating on other ventures. This leaves an opening at MARS -for a professor of NT. Dr. Venema did mention his openness to an RCUS person teaching NT. And perhaps now would be a time for the Synod to revisit the possibility of funding or partially funding a professor that would then work at MARS. The closeness of MARS to Chicago, a place where the RCUS has had contacts in the past, certainly raises a possibility of a professor doing double duty in trying to gather together contacts for a church plant. The possible advantages of such a scenario are many. We ought to discuss such things.

In my opinion MARS is still an institution worthy of Synodical Support.

Respectfully Submitted, *Rev. Lee Johnson*

RECOMMENDATION: That Mid-America Reformed Seminary continue to be listed as a seminary worthy of support.

Covenant College

The mandate from the *Abstract of the Minutes of the 263s Synod* reads: "That the Permanent Christian Education Committee be instructed to investigate Covenant College with the goal of deciding whether they should be put on the list of recommended colleges and report to the 2010 Synod."

In order to more clearly define what was intended by the mandate to *investigate* Covenant College, two members of the standing Education and Student Aid Committee of the 263rd

Synod were consulted, Rev. Robert Grossmann (chair) and Rev. Kyle Sorensen. It was determined that the mandate was not necessarily for a formal visit to the college, nor for recommending guideline support, but only for assessing at this point whether to publish Covenant College as an institution recommended as worthy of support. Accordingly, we have investigated Covenant College via information gleaned from the college website, phone conversations with administration and faculty personnel, and interviews with those from the RCUS who have attended. All quotations in the following report are taken from the website.

Covenant College is currently located on Lookout Mountain, Georgia, adjacent to Chattanooga, Tennessee. The college was founded in 1955 in Pasadena, California, where it quickly outgrew its space and thus was forced to relocate in St. Louis. Over the next eight years the college increased in size again and consequently outgrew its facilities a second time. In the early 1960s the Lookout Mountain Hotel that was built in 1927 appeared on the market for sale. Covenant purchased and occupied the Hotel in 1964.

Affiliation and Purpose:

The college is a Christian liberal arts institution and is billed as "the college of the Presbyterian Church in America" (PCA). The school is viewed as contributing "to the Denomination's efforts within the Church Universal to build up the body of Christ." The school is also accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The purpose of Covenant College is "to explore and to express the preeminence of Christ in all things." Indeed, the motto of Covenant is, "In all things Christ preeminent" (Colossians 1:18). A part of this mission is "to educate Christians to engage culture and cultures, to examine and unfold creation, and to pursue Biblical justice and mercy in community." Covenant is also very much up front about implementing both the Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:28 and the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. These two mandates are viewed as a total life calling for *every* Christian. This means that Covenant views itself as "a community to the Bible as the inerrant Word of God, and everything we do is grounded in our Reformed theology and worldview." Cultivating a Christian worldview is an obvious emphasis throughout the curriculum.

Government:

The government of Covenant College consists of a Board of Trustees who have the "ultimate authority for the operation and oversight of the college and primarily exercises its control through the creation of policy and through the selection of the college president." The Board itself is appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America and is "composed of teaching and ruling elders." Thus, all the Board members are officers in the PCA, serving four-year terms and for no more than two consecutive terms, after which at least one year off is required.

The school also has a President and three vice-presidents. The President prescribes the course of study and selects the teaching faculty and administrative staff; except that he must submit his choices to the Board for approval. All new faculty members and senior administrators are examined extensively on their understandings of the Westminster Confession of Faith. If a faculty member is unable to subscribe to any part of the Confession, he must in writing take "exception" to the Confession. Prospective faculty members are examined by the President, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, three members of the Board of Trustees, the chair of the Biblical Studies Department, and the Dean of the area into which the candidate is being hired.

Like other Christian colleges, the President of the school has great influence. Over the years Covenant has had five Presidents, beginning with Dr. Robert Rayburn in 1955, who was a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church: Evangelical Synod (before the merger with the Presbyterian Church in America.) The current President is Dr. Niel B. Nielson, who is an ordained ruling elder in the PCA.

Academic Programs:

Covenant College is accredited to award associate, bachelor, and master degrees. It offers "a rigorous liberal arts education" with twenty-two majors in its undergraduate

program (the top six include English, History, Biblical & Theological Studies, Community Development, Education, and Sociology). The Biblical & Theological Studies program includes courses in biblical languages, biblical studies, missions, philosophy and religion, pre-ministerial, secondary education program in Bible, and youth ministry. Covenant also offers a Master of Education graduate program.

Admission Requirements:

In order to enroll at Covenant, every student must be a confessing Christian. In addition to academic transcripts, references, and standardized test scores, the application form includes questions relative to church membership, as well as requiring a 1-2 page personal testimony concerning one's conversion, assurance of salvation, and personal walk with the Lord. A church reference form is also required (to be completed by a pastor, youth pastor, or church officer), assessing the student's Christian commitment, character, and awareness of calling as a Christian.

Enrollment Statistics and Tuition:

The total undergraduate student enrollment for Fall 2009 was 998, representing 41 states and 23 countries. The Student-Teacher faculty ratio is 14.6 to 1. For 2009-2010, tuition cost is \$24,520, average room and board is \$7,170, and the estimated annual cost of attendance is \$34,740.

Student Conduct:

Application for admission to Covenant includes *Standards of Conduct*, to which students must agree for enrollment and abide throughout their tenure, with the consequence of disciplinary action if violated. Some representative statements from the Standards are: -Students are expected to worship in a local church regularly." -Students must conduct themselves in a way which reflects a commitment to holy living: doing what the Bible requires, abstaining from what the Bible forbids, and carefully discerning the will of God in every area of life." Students are also required to abstain from all activities which violate Biblical teachings such as: theft, drunkenness, slanderous or profane language, all forms of dishonesty including cheating, and sexual sins (such as premarital sex, adultery, homosexual behavior and the use or possession of obscene or pornographic material).- With strict exceptions, "students are prohibited at all times whether they are on or off campus—from the possession and use of alcohol and/or tobacco.

Chapel:

Chapel is considered one of the key components of the education at Covenant. All-school chapel services are normally held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 11:00 am. Students are required to attend chapel, though allowed some excuses per semester. "The primary activity of chapel is the reading and preaching of Scripture. Chaplain Messner personally engages in the weekly exposition of Scripture, and his regular preaching ministry is complemented by the preaching of visiting guest preachers from around the globe.- All speakers at chapel are confessing Christians.

Campus and Church Landscape:

The Covenant campus consists of 300 acres, including 4 residence halls, 5 classroom buildings, a library, 2 athletic buildings, along with common halls and administration buildings. Reformed churches in the broader Chattanooga area include 18 PCA's (ranging in worship styles from more traditional to more contemporary), and one OPC.

Faculty and Theological Teaching:

Covenant presently has 58 full-time teaching faculty, and professors are required to sign a

commitment to the Westminster Standards (Confession of Faith and Catechisms), holding to them according to the standard Presbyterian form of subscription. This means that exceptions are allowed whereby the professors may differ from the standards, and these differences are stated to the college. One former professor noted that the most common disagreement with the Standards is when they teach a strict sabbatarian view. Professors also note that they are called to show by their lives the grace of God to them as sinners. There is no requirement for the professors to attend a church of specific denominations.

According to Dr. Dan MacDougall, chair of the Biblical Studies Department, every year each professor in that department must sign a statement holding to the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture as the inspired word of God, which is taken very seriously. The hermeneutical approach is described as grammatical, historical, and covenantal, with a redemptive-historical focus on Christ. As to apologetic approach, all the professors in the Biblical Studies and Philosophy departments are pre-suppositional. Higher textual criticism (including the JEDP theory) is critiqued. No professor in the department holds to the New Perspectives on Paul or Federal Vision teaching, and these views are critiqued in the classroom. In keeping with the PCA's report on creation, which allows four views (six-day, framework, day-age, analogous days), no official position is taught at Covenant. While some professors hold to the six ordinary days creation teaching of Genesis 1, others hold to the framework hypothesis.

Perspective of Former Students:

In interviews with six students from the RCUS who have graduated from Covenant, all spoke very highly of the college and recommended it for its excellent education and biblical commitment. One student who has attended multiple institutions of higher learning noted that professors are more interactive with the students than other colleges. The professors apply their Biblical worldview in all disciplines, not solely in Bible classes. The quality of doctrine and Bible classes are attested to be excellent.

Greatly encouraging about Covenant is that students are challenged by their professors to apply the Bible to all of life. The professors set heretical ideas before their classes and see how they would apologetically answer those ideas.

The professors then teach how the heretical views might be better answered. One student attested that further encouragement about the college is to be found in that the school has gotten more conservative in nearly every manner in recent years.

Problems within the student body are dealt with in an open, Biblical basis, rather than ignored and allowed to fester. The students interviewed were unanimous in stating that the school challenged them to grow in their Biblical faith and life

RECOMMENDATION: That Covenant College be put on the list of recommended colleges as an institution worthy of support.

Also, attached is the report of the Sub-Committee to Confer with Dordt College. The report of the Sunday School Curriculum Sub-Committee will be submitted separately.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jon Blair (Chairman), Rev. James Grossmann, Rev. Lee Johnson, Rev. David Fagrey, Rev. Jim West, Elder Jim Gochnauer, Elder Ron Abbink, Elder David Helseth, Elder Jim Rydell

To Confer with Dordt College

Dear Brothers,

On Thursday, March 4, 2010, your committee met with Dr. Carl Zylstra, Dordt College President, Mr. Wes Fopma, Director of Alumni & Church Relations, and Mr. John Baas, Vice President for College Advancement. RCUS committee members present were Rev. Scott Henry, Rev. Randy Klynsma, Elder Dan Van Peursem, and Elder Emil Broers. Also present at the meeting was Rev. Harvey Opp. Your committee was cordially received by Dr. Zylstra, Mr. Fopma & Mr. Baas. Dr. Zylstra opened the meeting with a devotional from Jeremiah 29, emphasizing God's plan for His covenant people, and then prayed for God's blessing upon our meeting.

At this year's meeting, having no mandate from Synod, your committee dialogued with Dr. Zylstra, Mr. Fopma and Mr. Baas about several topics pertaining to the ability & commitment of Dordt College to adequately provide RCUS students with a Reformed world & life view consistent with the teaching of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity. The topics discussed were as follows:

1. Dordt Professors' Agreement, Commitment & Submission to the Three Forms of Unity:

a. Dordt requires that their professors be members of a Reformed Church that holds the Three Forms of Unity or the Westminster Confession.

2. Dordt's Position on the Doctrine of Creation:

a. Your committee continues to raise concerns regarding biology professor Dr. Tony Jelsma, who rejects 6 day creation in favor of Intelligent Design. Dr. Jelsma wrote the following words in an article entitled "Is Creation Science Reformed": "To apply this concept to the second day of creation, God knew very well that there is no such thing as a hard firmament holding up waters but he inspired Moses to write Genesis in this way because that was the cosmological understanding at the time. Saying anything different would only have confused the Israelites." The "concept" he refers to above is Calvin's "mode of accommodation", which Dr. Jelsma says ought to be applied in Genesis 1. Dr. Jelsma, who is a member of Sioux Center URC, also believes in a localized flood, and that animals died before the Fall.

b. Dr. Zylstra said that Dordt does not have a stated position on the doctrine of creation. Therefore professors are at liberty to hold a position other than 6 literal 24 hour days, with the exception of evolution, and still maintain professorship at Dordt.

3. Student Involvement at Chapel service & Sunday morning worship:

a. Your committee raised this issue last year and Dr. Zylstra said that student attendance at chapel was very poor. He also said that a number of students were unfaithful on the Lord's Day. Your committee raised this issue again this year as a follow up from last year's discussion.

b. Mr. Baas responded by saying that attendance at chapel service has greatly improved this year. He cites two areas that have led to this improved attendance:

i. Chapel service is held once a week on Wednesdays this year rather than twice a week as practiced last year.

ii. Chapel is conducted solely by Rev. Aaron Baart, pastor of Bridge of Hope CRC, Sioux Center, IA, rather than a rotation of different pastors as in previous years. Mr. Baas said this has led to more continuity in the chapel services.

c. Dr. Zylstra also said that student attendance in worship on the Lord's Day has improved, and Dordt's evening campus worship service, which is called GIFT (Growing in Faith Together), is attended by more than 500 students.

4. Concerns over Student Newspaper Article:

a. Your committee discussed an article written in the student newspaper under the column "Perceptive Polly" regarding homosexual students at Dordt College. One student wrote that he is a homosexual and "has wanted to come out now for quite some time, but knows where the school stands on homosexuality and doesn't feel safe speaking with anyone in Student Services about it." His question was stated as follows: "Should I just come out and get it over with or just bottle it up like many of the other gay & lesbian students do on campus."

i. Column Response: "Dordt's policy forbids homosexual activity or promotion of it (just as it forbids heterosexual activity outside of marriage or promotion of it), but there would be no discipline for someone who has the same sex attraction." Dr. Zylstra affirmed this position.

ii. Your committee was also disturbed to read in the response the concluding words: "Finally, the most important thing you (homosexual) need to remember is that you are a child of God. God still loves you and is willing to guide you through this struggle."

1. Scripture is clear: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

5. Concerns with Two Dordt Professors:

a. Jason Lief, Assistant Professor of Theology

i. Your committee has been keeping close tabs on Prof. Lief since our 2008 meeting. Prof. Lief is very supportive of N.T. Wright, and has also written some greatly disturbing things. The following quotes were taken from his blog (<http://liefism.blogspot.com/>): "I love the theology of Karl Barth. There...I said it. I realize that for some in the circles to which I belong Barth is a 4-letter word. So I always have to be careful with whom I share my secret "man crush." Every time I engage his ideas I come away joyfully exhaling. Oh, I should also say I have been delving into the writings of Thomas Merton lately. I have this attraction to Roman Catholicism that I can't quite shake - remnants of my time at Newman Catholic High School I'm sure." "This weekend I attended both a Roman Catholic and a Greek Orthodox Worship service with the Foundations of Worship class I teach on Tuesday nights. Wonderful services...very rich with symbol, ritual, and the gospel. If you listen to the liturgy...if you stay "attentive" as the orthodox priest kept telling us - the gospel is there."

ii. These troubling comments were raised to Dr. Zylstra by your committee. Dr. Zylstra clearly understood our concerns regarding Prof. Lief.

b. Bobbi Sutherland, Assistant Professor of History

i. Prof. Sutherland has raised concerns by teaching that all the writings of the OT were written post-exilic. While she believes that the Pentateuch is "Mosaic material", she also believes the JEDP theory taught by Graf & Wellhausen. JEDP: Jehovah, Elohim, Deuteronomy, Priestly are so called underlying documents that grew out of the critical approach (source criticism) to the OT. These documents are said to be supplemental fragments that underlie the Pentateuch. By these documents men began to hypothesize of certain dates of the Pentateuch. The theory doesn't regard Scripture as being revelation from God, but rather evolutionary and therefore regards the early cultures as if they were "stone age" people without intelligence and language. The basic presupposition of the J, E, D, P documents were a later date and therefore assert the Pentateuch could not have been authored by Moses, but must have been written post-exilic - thus the disunity of authorship.

To hold to the JEDP hypothesis one would have to reject the witness of the New Testament, which says that Moses wrote the Pentateuch.

ii. Dr. Zylstra said that Prof. Sutherland's assumptions have been challenged by other Dordt faculty members, and he also said they would continue to monitor this matter.

1. One of the greatest concerns of your committee, with regard to some of the teaching at Dordt College, is that our kids would walk out of the classroom questioning the attributes of Holy Scripture, namely: inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy, perspicuity & sufficiency. It is the conviction of your committee that if the RCUS continues to support Dordt College then we must become even more vigilant as a denomination with regard to the doctrines taught at Dordt.

Miscellaneous Information:

a. Dordt plans to include "Advanced Reformed Thought" into their core curriculum in at least three areas: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences & the Humanities.

b. Dordt has developed a new major in the field of Construction Management.

c. Dordt is building a new residence hall to help relieve overcrowding in other dorms.

d. Financial position is strong despite economy. Alumni giving increased substantially this year.

e. Tuition costs will increase 4% a year over the next few years.

f. Freshman enrollment was down this year (approx. 330). At present, Dordt has approximately 1330 students; 6 students are from the RCUS.

g. Dordt has more pre-seminary students this year than previous years. (approx. 25-30)

h. Enrollment requirements were discussed when it was learned that two Hindu students are attending Dordt.

Overall, your committee was satisfied that the responses given by Dr. Zylstra, Mr. Baas & Mr. Fopma, the doctrine of creation excepted, were consistent with the Three Forms of Unity. Your committee is well aware of the fact that Dordt College has flaws, as do all schools, but the general consensus of your committee is that Dordt College is conscientiously striving to hold to a Reformed world & life view. At this point in time, your committee believes Dordt College is capable of providing a good education for RCUS students. However, we need to continue monitoring the issues mentioned above, and be vigilant concerning the doctrines taught at Dordt College.

Recommendations:

1. RCUS Guideline for Giving to Dordt College continues at the present amount of \$2.25 per communicant member in the coming year.

2. RCUS pastors warn parents of RCUS students attending Dordt to be aware of the problematic teachings of the three Dordt professors mentioned above, and also the areas of concern referred to in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Scott Henry, Rev. Randy Klynsma, Elder Dan Van Peursem,
and Elder Emil Broers*

Sunday School Curriculum Sub-Committee

Brothers of the Synod of the RCUS,

Last year Synod was at a crossroads with the Sunday School Curriculum project. Having reached the point where RCUS congregations had used the entire course of the five-year long survey of the Bible, Synod decided that the feedback which had been received

and the revision attempts which had been made warranted the stoppage of all revisions and gave the following mandate to your committee: "That the Permanent Sunday School Curriculum Sub-committee reevaluate the current curriculum project in light of the original mandate and pedagogical approach approved in 1998, and investigate alternatives, and report back to the 2010 Synod."

Here is the strategy your committee followed. We first read the 2009 Sunday School Sub-Committee report for historical background to our current task. Then we read the 1998 Synodically approved pedagogical approach. Using this criteria and context, three committee members reviewed the OT lessons and three reviewed the NT lessons. Twenty-four lessons were selected for evaluation from the 240 different lessons in the RCUS curriculum (12 from the OT and 12 from the NT). They were on key passages on the covenant or major points in Christ's life and the history of the apostolic church. Additionally, those on the committee with experience or access to alternative materials investigated potential curricula which might match our approach.

On the mandate to investigate alternatives, we found that there are not really any suitable alternatives which match our approach with its desire for an integrated curriculum across grade levels, so that an entire family could study the same Bible lesson in a given week, each at their own level of reading and understanding.

The most suitable alternatives are found among resources created specifically for pre-school and early grade-school children. Many resources are available within the conservative Reformed and Presbyterian world, which even stay away from violations of the second commandment and will not depict our Lord Jesus, though one must always be careful. We have not had opportunity to review every page and illustration of these alternative materials. Most of these do have sample chapters for preview online.

Leading Little Ones to God (Eerdmans) by Mariann Schooland is a fine introduction to main Bible doctrines for 4 to 8 year olds. Also, *The Big Book of Questions and Answers* (CF4KChristian Focus) by Sinclair Ferguson is an excellent tour of Bible doctrines for 4 to 8 year olds. Also published by Christian Focus is a series aimed at 2 ½ - 4 year olds: *Beginning with the Bible*, a two-part series of workbooks for the Old and New Testaments from Christian Focus. Three more workbooks follow in a series titled "On the Way for 3 to 9's". These are reproducible.

When one looks for alternative curriculum which covers all Sunday School ages, or focuses on say 3rd grade and higher, we discover that nothing quite does what our curriculum tries to do, or accomplishes in its finest moments.

A Bible Survey curriculum by the Protestant Reformed Church is available online. It is multilevel, and has basic review questions, but no real application or discuss/decide questions. It does share our Reformed confessions and our zeal for memorization.

Another source is the brand new OT Commentaries for Children *Herein is Love* (Shepherd Press) by Nancy Ganz. Mrs. Ganz is Reformed. Her husband is Dr. Richard Ganz, a Seminary Professor and Minister in the RPCNA. This does what ours tries to do, but is more effective for both teaching and learning. However, only a few volumes have been completed (Genesis through Deuteronomy). She suggests activities and projects regularly which seem tasteful, but best suited for the home school or Christian School than Sunday School. It is a great Summer Bible School Resource, I would think.

Other Sunday School resources are available online from various evangelical churches. Some have good Bible Survey material which can be printed out for free. However, they have no real application or discussion, leaving that to each church to add as they see fit.

While many people teach Sunday School to children, there is nothing out there that quite fits the mold of what we have set out to do in the RCUS. Some materials do a better job explaining certain Bible stories and their content, but in those cases they do NOT have any reference to the creeds, nor to discussion of the meaning and application of the Scriptures. While we all agree that specific discussion questions are perhaps the biggest area of weakness in the RCUS curriculum, the inclusion of discussion and Bible-based application questions are also our greatest strength compared to the other materials on the market!

On the mandate to re-evaluate the current project according to the original mandate and approved pedagogical approach, our conclusion is both clear and daunting. YES, it is clear that the curriculum which Synod hired RCUS authors to write was faithful to the originally approved approach. What is daunting is that the execution of that approach succeeded in many ways, but also has its shortcomings in the areas of teachability and historical relevance, as discovered through its usage in RCUS congregations and as found by various Synod committees in recent years. Some of these shortcomings are also due to the original approach not being specific enough in how the theories would be put into practice. It is the opinion of this year's Sunday School Curriculum Subcommittee that the curriculum project should not be scrapped, but revived and refocused. Here are some specific explanations of where we would refocus the current curriculum.

First, the overall pedagogical approach needs to account for the fact that God's covenant is revealed to us throughout the entire Scriptures, not only in historical sections. For example, you will find little discussion of the wisdom literature, prophetic literature, or the doctrinal writings of the Apostles. Yet these are essential parts of Scripture that need to be taught. This is not a specific weakness in our RCUS authors, but is a limitation in the approach of the source materials found in S. G. DeGraaf (a brief essay explaining this is available from Rev. Eric Bristley). Therefore, we would need to write a few new Bible lessons on parts of the Bible in both Old and New Testaments which De Graaf never discusses. The RCUS' duty is to teach the Holy Scriptures, not DeGraaf or any other theologian's compilation of Bible lessons, however worthy they may be. The specific covenantal framework which we would use is outlined in the proposed revised pedagogical approach. For more information, see the essay by Bristley.

Secondly, the issue of age-appropriate lessons is always a concern. This concern can be addressed by varying the method of the lessons. In the earliest grades, focus on the Bible Stories for those who have little or no reading skills, but then move on to Bible survey and Bible Study, more along the lines of a workbook like Paul Treick's *Our God and His People*.

Thirdly, the curriculum needs to depend upon direct study of the Bible. The RCUS curriculum as it stands now does not sufficiently teach children how to read their Bible and find answers to theological and practical questions out of the Bible text itself. Students can often get away with only reading the story summary and not the Bible text itself, despite the intentions of the original RCUS authors. We all can agree that the Scriptures should be the text, and the curriculum is just the workbook. Fill in the blank questions and comprehension questions that plot out the method of Bible interpretation are needed.

Fourthly, the curriculum buries the blessings offered by its authors by overloading the students with too much information or not having a common teaching style and clear line of questioning. We want to unearth this hard work of the authors. We will limit the questions to a smaller number and make certain that they are truly teachable and clear. Perhaps a few lessons need to be split into two weeks. In the revision process we would set

a specific number of discussion questions per lesson (perhaps 3-5) rather than the usual 6-10. Other changes to the lesson format have been discussed, which would include eliminating or reworking the Lesson Aim and Lesson Truth sections, and incorporating the Family Section and Preview of Next Week's Lesson in different ways. We do not intend to tinker with the curriculum forever, but sometimes a good idea just doesn't work out in practice.

Fifthly, the RCUS curriculum as it stands also does not effectively use the creeds. While a confessional reading is referenced each week, it very rarely is used in any of the discussion questions or anywhere else in the lesson. A great opportunity to connect the dots between Bible, doctrine, and life, is thus missed. A revision of the curriculum would need to address this.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Synod adopt the above revised pedagogical approach for its integrated Sunday School curriculum.
2. That Synod mandate the Subcommittee on Sunday School Curriculum to oversee the development of a curriculum based on this approach. Due consideration shall be given to the excellent materials completed thus far by previous RCUS curriculum authors and editors, lest their labors be in vain. Specific consideration shall be given to the findings of this 2010 Subcommittee report.
3. That Synod commission qualified and able RCUS members who can write this curriculum.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Kyle Sorensen, Rev. Tracy Gruggett, Elder Mark Reyna, Rev. Eric Bristley,
Rev. Scott Henry, Rev. Neale Riffert*

Developing a Covenant Bible Curriculum

The Need for a Comprehensive Covenantal Approach

At key points the significance of God's covenants in the Old Testament needs to be more fully explained, developed, and correlated in the present curriculum. While most Reformed believers would affirm covenant theology there has not always been a clear agreement on the details. The dangers we face are twofold: either we so stress the unity of the Bible that we obscure its diversity and historical development, or we so emphasize the distinctive periods and diversity that we lose its underlying unity. The strength of the covenantal approach is that it shows both the unity and the diversity of the Bible. These reflect the nature of the Trinity itself as it is God who reveals Himself in the Bible.

God's eternity is the among the most fundamental beliefs of the Reformed Christian, and surely this is true in relation to history. Biblical history is filled with change and variety as various personalities, events, and transitions come before us. But God remains the same in every age. The Bible reveals the God who transcends and rules over human history according to His eternal purpose and decree (Eph. 3:9-11). But it also speaks of the manifold wisdom of His providence. God has been pleased to reveal Himself and His purposes over a period of one-two thousand years in various portions, literary genres, historical situations, and to different people (Heb 1:1-3). This fabric of biblical history can only be truly grasped when it is seen as the unfolding of the eternal plan of God.

The Bible is much more than a record of the history of revelation, it is revelation itself. It is God's Word—it is God speaking. God interprets His own actions and his providential guidance of historical events. Behind the change of history lies the one eternal covenant

between the persons of the Trinity. This one everlasting covenant is manifest through the various historical covenants in which God reveals His purposes step-by-step to men chosen by Him.

The approach found in the volumes of S. G. DeGraaf is good as far as it goes, but it seems limited to the historical parts of the Bible. You will find little discussion of the wisdom literature, prophetic literature, or the doctrinal writings of the Apostles. And yet these are essential parts of Scripture that need to be taught. In fact it is in these portions of the Bible where we learn the most about God and His ways. To stress the historical in a one-sided fashion falls short of the genius of the Reformed stress on the eternal Sovereignty of God. The Redemptive-historical perspective discussed in the Netherlands after 1930 focused predominately on historical texts and was helpful in correcting the danger of moralistic preaching. But it came short of grasping a fully covenantal approach to the Bible. A modified version of this viewpoint has been popularized in Reformed circles in the United States by such men as Meredith Kline and Richard B. Gaffin. As such it has combined two different approaches to the Bible: the Covenantal and the Biblical-theological (*heilsgeschiede*).

The aim of a more robust Reformed approach to Bible teaching and curriculum should treat every part of inspired revelation in a more thorough-going and integrated covenantal fashion. For this reason we suggest the use of additional resources to aid us in developing such a covenantal curriculum. The work by Gerard Van Groningen, *From Creation to Consummation* (3 vols, Dordt College Press, 1997-2005) provides a recent Reformed approach to the Old Testament which is comprehensive and integrated through the use of the three-fold themes of Covenant, Mediator, and Kingdom.

While fundamentally covenantal it integrates the centrality of Christ with the development of the Kingdom of God. Van Groningen's work on *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Baker, 1997) provides additional perspective and exegesis. A comprehensive Covenantal framework has also been developed in some detail by O. Palmer Robertson: *Christ of the Covenants* (1980), *Christ of the Prophets* (2004), and *The Israel of God* (2000). His works provide a well-worked out Reformed understanding of how we should formulate a covenantal understanding of the Scriptures. The ten volumes of *Search the Scriptures* by Cornelis Vanderwaal (Paideia, 1978) also provides us with a Reformed/Covenantal survey of the books of the Bible.

Unity of the Biblical Covenants

To explain the covenantal approach to the Bible in more detail it is important to emphasize God's single authorship and the resulting unity of Scripture. A proper understanding of inspiration provides us with a view that the various texts of the Bible reveals the unity of God's revelation amidst diversity. The following points explain this:

A. *The Eternal Inter-Trinitarian Covenant.* This foundational and all-comprehensive program provides the unity and basis of all of God's various historical covenants. It is the counsel of God in eternity between the three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) in which the plan of salvation is made according to God's good pleasure (decree) and the roles of each person in that plan are defined. It has been called the Covenant of Redemption and sometimes the Covenant of Grace. Seen in Jn. 10:18; Eph. 1; Heb. 6:17, 13:20, Heb 10:5-7f (role of Christ).

B. Only by seeing how God unfolds his everlasting covenant in history can teachers and students accurately relate the Old with the New Testaments. A comprehensive Covenantal approach shows how Christ and His apostles interpreted and applied the Old

Testament to explain the fulfillment of God's eternal purposes. The New Testament is the key for interpreting the Old Testament, and the Old Testament is the only context in which the New Testament is to be understood. The book of Hebrews is the specific guide for how this should be done. As students see the Old Testament taught in the light of the New Testament then they can grasp the profound character of Reformed theology.

C. Failing to study Scripture with its covenantal unity leaves a vacuum which gives rise to individualistic interpretations.

Various forms of 'biblical theology' and dispensationalism leave the student deficient in grasping the relationship between Old and New Testaments and has left many open to the 'new' perspective on Paul and legalistic views on justification. Without understanding the broader covenantal context, interpretations will reflect the interpreter's own agenda or the cultural milieu in which he lives. The interpreter will tend to project his own worldview into the text and thereby miss God's overall program of grace.

D. Without a sense of how each book relates to the others covenantally, interpretations and applications are fragmented. Verses or books might be taken out of their larger Biblical context. The Bible is treated as if it were just a series of stories and the true nature of the Biblical text as given by one Holy Spirit is obscured. Texts need to be seen in their immediate literary-historical context (chapter and book) and then interpreted within the context of the entire Bible by connecting them to the covenant context in which they are given. These will be further elucidated as the student learns how these covenants connect with one another culminating in the New Covenant in Christ. The tendency of speculative Christocentricity can then be avoided as passages are indirectly related to Christ through covenant.

Diversity of the Biblical Covenants

The various historical covenants unfold God's eternal purposes established in the inter-Trinitarian Covenant:

A. *The Covenant of Creation* (Adam). Made by God with Adam before the fall as the federal head of all mankind (Genesis 1-2, Ps. 8). It is also called the Adamic Covenant, Covenant of Works, or Covenant of Life. Three aspects establish man's purpose in creation: a. man's relationship to God (religion/service), b. man's relationship to man (society/family), and c. man's relationship to earth (culture/work). The Sabbath and the Tree of Life are signs of this covenant. Seen in: Hebrews 2:5-18 (Ps. 8) which presents the true humanity of Christ as the second Adam (Rom. 5, 1 Cor. 15).

B. *The Covenant of Grace* (Messianic Seed). The promise of salvation is made by God after the fall with Adam in providing the seed of the woman for the elect (Genesis 3). Salvation is provided by God's gracious provision of Messiah, judgment on sin, and the destruction of Satan. The provision of animal skins establishes religion based on sacrificial redemption. Often called the *proto-evangelion*, it is the first historical revelation of the Covenant of Grace.

C. *The Covenant of Peace* (Noah). The promise made by God after the flood with Noah as federal head of humanity (1 Pet. 3:20) and with the earth itself (Genesis 9, Isa. 54:9-10). It was a Covenant *renewal* of the original covenant of life and dominion. It also develops God's covenant of grace by preserving humanity through common grace, human government and judicial law. It provides the prolongation of history for God's purposes of grace to be fulfilled for the church.

D. *The Covenant of Promise* (Abraham). It was made by God with Abraham after destruction of Babel (Genesis 12-17) as the father of believers (Rom. 4). It is also called the

Promise (Gal. 3), since it develops the Covenant of Grace *more specifically* in regard to the seed and the international blessing of salvation through faith. It is pictured in Abraham's offering of Isaac, a type of Christ. Melchizedek is a type of the priesthood of Christ. It is also called the covenant of circumcision, after its sign. Seen in: Rom 4; Gal. 3; Heb. 2:13-20, 2:16, 6:12-18, 7:1-10, 8:6-9.

F. *The Covenant of Law* (Moses). It was made by God with Moses at Mt. Sinai as mediator of the a chosen nation of Israel (Exodus 19-40, Leviticus-Deuteronomy). It comprises three parts: moral, judicial, and ceremonial. The Covenant of Levi or ceremonial law (Mal. 2) is a picture of salvation through atonement. Salvation will come through the Messiah's total fulfillment of the law. The Ark of the Covenant and the Sabbath are signs of the covenant. Many renewals of this covenant are evident in the OT. It is discussed in some detail in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews in the NT.

G. *The Covenant of the Kingdom* (David). It was made by God with David as head of the everlasting Kingdom of God (2 Sam. 7, Ps. 2, Ps. 89, Ps. 132). It expands on the Mosaic Covenant by the provision of a theocratic king and the building of the temple. It is developed through detailed Messianic prophesy in Psalms and in the Prophets. The three-fold office is seen as converging in Messiah. The Messianic-Covenant line is through the seed/Son of David, also called the Branch.

H. *The New Covenant* (Christ). God made the New Covenant with Christ (seed) as federal head of the elect (Eph 1; Rom. 5). This covenant is the fulfillment of all previous covenants and builds on them (Gal. 3-4, 2 Cor. 3). It was promised in the OT, particularly in Jeremiah 31:31-34. In fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant, as the Church is the international people of God, the Kingdom of Christ, the City of God (Heb 12:18-29). The whole book of Hebrews is the NT interpretation of the *fulfillment* of all the covenants by Christ in the New Covenant.

Age-Appropriateness: From Bible Stories, to Bible Survey, and Bible Study

Another way in which the curriculum can be improved is by focusing more directly on the study of the Bible. In younger ages it is appropriate to provide Bible stories, particularly for those who cannot read. But as soon as a child can read, we should bring them into direct contact with the Bible. Younger children should be given a well-developed curriculum that guides them through a survey of the Bible. Old teenagers and adults should be engaged in in-depth Bible study of particular books to deepen their grasp of the Word.

One of the weaknesses of DeGraaf is that he focuses on Bible stories. As children mature they should move beyond the mere hearing of stories and come into direct contact with the text of God's Word. Even summaries can sometimes become a substitute for the Word. Since the Bible is one of the chief means of grace, students should learn to handle Scripture accurately by using it. The focus of the curriculum should be on the Bible itself not the curriculum or stories composed for such. The resources provided should train the teacher to properly understand and interpret it.

Consequently our curriculum should have a two-fold development. Labor should focus on developing teacher training resources which will help teachers of various classes teach the Word of God covenantally. These resources should contain a series of outlines, notes, and teaching points which will assist the teacher in the preparation for instruction on Sunday.

In regard to student materials the focus should be on helping them read the Bible and understand difficult parts. The inclusion of maps and explanations of unknown terms and ideas should be given to help them prepare for the class. They should not be able to prepare without actually reading the Bible. The following curriculum can be used: *The Bible Guide*

by Christian Schools International, Paul Treick's *Our God and His People*, Edward Bossenbroek's *Old Testament Studies*, Francis Breisch, Jr's *The Kingdom of God and The Ministry of Christ*, J. Gresham Machen's *The New Testament: An Introduction to Its Literature and History* (1976), and William Hendriksen's *Survey of the Bible* (1976).

Eric D. Bristley

D. Diaconal Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

During the course of this synodical year, your committee had one item it considered, which addressed the request for financial aid for Rev. Tom and Carolyn Mayville. This matter was brought to our attention by the elders of the RCUS work in Willows, CA and the chairman of the Foreign Ministries Committee.

As you are aware, Rev. Mayville was serving at Knox Theological College in Uganda as well as laboring with the saints in the Free Reformed Church of Kenya. Due to various challenges, Rev. Mayville had to terminate his involvement in Uganda and move back to the United States approximately six months prior to the completion of his three year commitment to Knox Theological College. Because of this unforeseen circumstance, the Mayvilles were in need of diaconal assistance in the amount of \$3,000 per month for May and June to help with the cost of housing and medical insurance.

An inquiry was made into the financial and employment situation of the Mayvilles, it was learned that Rev. Mayville has continued to be funded by the Foreign Missions Committee for the remainder of his contract, which ended in April. He has been looking for work and has sought opportunities to preach. Furthermore, Rev. Mayville has been in contact with the RCUS work in Modesto, CA and is being considered as a ministerial candidate for that work.

Your committee saw this matter as an instance which warranted assistance to be dispensed for the Mayvilles and therefore instructed the Synod Treasurer to send \$3,000 to them for the month of May to cover their housing and medical expenses.

Because the Synodical budget runs from June to May, your committee thought it best to bring the request for \$3,000 for the month of June to the 264th Synod for consideration.

Therefore, we would make the following recommendation: That benevolent aid in the amount of \$3,000 be granted to Rev. Tom and Carolyn Mayville for June 2010, in order to cover their medical and housing expenses.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Michael McGee (chairman), Ron Morris, John Bender,
Robert Davis, Andy Gilman, Thomas Savage*

E. Editorial Advice Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Your committee did not business and did not meet this year.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. David Dawn, Rev. Richard Stetler, Rev. Darrell Kingswood,
Elder Greg Van Holland*

F. Executive Committee

Esteemed brothers in Christ,

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

Recommendation 1: “That the Synod Treasurer, Ted Griess, be authorized to sign any and all documents necessary to cash in Annuity # 0930075312445004 with Ameriprise, which became the property of the Reformed Church in the United States as a result of the death of Arthur Mehlhaf. That such funds when received will be held in the treasury of the Reformed Church in the United States until the next annual meeting of Synod at which time the body shall direct how it is to be invested.”

Recommendation 2: “That the Synod gratefully accept the invitation from Ebenezer RCUS, and that the 264th Synod meeting of the Reformed Church in the United States be held at Ebenezer Reformed Church of Shafter, CA, from May 17-20, 2010, beginning with a worship service at 7:00 p.m.”

Recommendation 3: “That the FMC be allowed to spend an extra \$2,000 from FMC funds to cover the cost of travel for Rev. Gil Baloy to the Philippines, accompanied by Revs. Fluck and Voytek, in January of 2010, and that this unbudgeted amount be factored into next year’s budget from the FMC.”

Recommendation 4: “We recommend the following order for services at the 264th Synod of the RCUS:

Monday Worship:	Rev. Maynard Koerner - Conducting Rev. Paul Treick - Preaching
Wednesday Worship:	Rev. Jim West - Conducting Rev. Kyle Sorensen - Preaching
Morning Devotions:	Tuesday - Rev. Randall Klynsma
Wednesday	Rev. Howard Hart
Thursday	Rev. James Grossmann

Recommendation 5: “That the FMC be allowed to send two Representatives from the RCUS to Uganda/Kenya to meet with various Synod representatives of the FRCK and those who have broken away.”

The Foreign Ministries Committee also asked the following statement be published and noted: “The FMC sent Rev Mayville to serve as a foreign missionary in Uganda and Kenya. Our considered judgment is that he did this work faithfully under our authority and counsel and according to what we expected of him.”

Your committee would also place the following recommendation before this Synod:

Recommendation: “The Executive Committee recommends that the present Agendas used by the Classes and the Synod be adopted and included in the next printing of the Constitution, et. al.”

Grounds: Article 103 of the Constitution requires that the Synod prepare various forms for the use of the Reformed Church in the U.S. These forms have been published in printed form and appear as Revised Forms Year 2000 along with The Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States, The Rules of Order and Church Records (published in 2000). Due to either an oversight or some other unknown reason, the form for the order of business (Agenda) was not included.

We are grateful to Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter, CA, for their invitation to host this year’s

Synod. Grace RCUS in Mitchell, SD, also generously offered to host the meeting, but since it was there so recently, the decision was made to accept the Shafter invitation. We have no invitation for next year’s Synod at this writing.

There was no other business that came before the committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Vernon Pollema, Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Paul Treick,
Elder Jay Kroese, Elder Ted Griess*

G. Foreign Ministries Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Your committee met in Sacramento on March 29th & 30th to discuss the work of the RCUS in foreign missions, review the previous year as well as plan for the upcoming year. We also met during the year through teleconferencing. As always your committee continues to thank God for the prayers and support of the congregations and individuals of the RCUS. Your prayers and support enable us as a denomination to obey Christ’s command making disciples of all nations for His glory.

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

Kenya & Uganda

Once again, we rejoice with you and give thanks to God for His care of missionary Thomas Mayville and his wife Carolyn as they finished up their 31 months of work in Mbale, Uganda. Again this year, they want to express their deep appreciation for your prayers as well as your support and gifts.

Pastor Mayville continued his work according to the cooperative agreement with the OPC (Orthodox Presbyterian Church) until leaving Uganda Dec. 4. He taught at Knox Theological College; made several trips to Kenya, oversaw the completion of the dormitory construction, participated in evaluation of student preaching, participated in chapel devotions, taught Sunday school and assisted in leading worship at the Mbale OPCU. Rev. Mayville, the FRCK, and your committee continue to be blessed by the council and assistance of many involved in O.P.C. foreign missions.

You have received more than one slanderous email from a minority faction within the FRCK accusing our missionary of very sinful actions. As recently as November 26 in Mbale, eight days before his departure, Pastor Mayville reported that nine FRCK (Free Reformed Church of Kenya) Synod delegates present expressed loving appreciation for helping them become more reformed in their Ecclesiology over the past 2.5 years. Officers representing 5 FRCK congregations continue to do so. On April 5, your committee sent the following evaluation of Pastor Mayville to the Executive Committee of the Western Classis, and the Executive Committee of Synod also sent it out as an Executive Circular on April 14: *The Foreign Missions Committee of the RCUS, after the approval of the Synod, sent Rev. Mayville to serve as a foreign missionary in Uganda and Kenya. Our considered judgment*

is that he did this work faithfully under our authority and counsel and according to what we expected of him.

Serving as a Professor at Knox Theological College in Mbale, Uganda, along with Pastor Phil Proctor, and Dr. Brian Wingard of the OPC, Pastor Mayville taught several classes. These were: Continental Reformed Ecclesiology—a study of the Three Forms of Unity and RCUS Directory of Worship, emphasizing similarities, and discussing differences between Reformed and Presbyterian Ecclesiology. For this class there were two FRCK and three OPCU students. He taught a General Church history course with three OPCU and 3 FRCK students. Ten days before leaving Uganda he finished teaching the History of Christian Doctrine with four FRCK students, one potential FRCK student and 3 OPCU students, plus two perennial OPCU students auditing.

Four Kenyan students will have finished the 2009-2010 academic year by the time Synod meets. One OPCU and one FRCK student will graduate in May. Both have a great love for the Lord and the reformed faith. This is a real milestone for the FRCK in that when Pastoral Elder Barton Osoro is ordained, he will be their first minister to complete a full three year course near seminary level. Elder John Omoke (a KTC student) will be ready for his Licensure exam by then. Other Kenyan men are waiting their turn to attend KTC in the coming year. Barton Osoro also translated the Heidelberg Catechism into Kiswahili in exchange for room and board at KTC. It was previously translated into Kisii.

Thomas worked very closely with the FRCK this past synodical year. He took three trips to Kenya to visit and work with them, and had the Synod delegates come and meet with him in Mbale in November. Since May, 2009, the meetings with the FRCK Synod delegates focused on promoting Reformed Ecclesiology. Together we are rejoicing in the reformation we have seen in the majority of Synod Delegates in the FRCK and in many within the OPCU. Those who love the reformed faith continue to work with us to transition to a fully reformed structure of church government.

In March, 2009, Rev. Phil Proctor accompanied Thomas to Kisii district for the first Synod of the FRCK for three days of meetings. The new FRCK Synod was having trouble with dividing up funds between the eight Consistories, and with the idea of dividing congregational funds between Classis, Synod and the congregations.

Pastor Jeremiah Nyarango reported that Heidelberg Pastors Training Center, offering Swahili theological education in Rionchogu had three students who will be ready for ordination examination soon. Under Thomas' direction, the FRCK Micro-enterprise Committee made it easier for seven elders and deacons to provide for their families facilitating the work of the ministry.

In June, Rev. Dan Schnabel, chairman of the RCUS FMC accompanied Thomas to Kisii district. The first day, Dan preached a sermon on the necessity of humility from Matthew 22. In his address to the body, he reminded the delegates that it is not good for Pastors or Synod to be the main managers of money in a denomination. We covered the topic of moving toward independent finances and accounts for each congregation. The body was still divided on the urgency of this matter. They are having a hard time getting away from top down (Episcopal) government when it comes to distribution of finances. Thomas helped the FRCK Microenterprise Committee set up a bank account. Working with the FMC and RCUS treasurer, Thomas got Microfinance funds to Uganda for transfer to Kenya as needed. In September the Microfinance Committee reported that loan payments would commence on September 30th. The committee reported on the success of most of the micro-enterprises, while some were struggling to make a profit.

On his final trip to Kenya in September, Thomas took his wife Carolyn with him at the request of the Kenyans. The purpose of this visit was a fact finding mission for the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee. He explained the survey which the Committee was asking each delegate to fill out in order to understand their thinking on practical applications of Reformed Ecclesiology. He asked them to answer the questions honestly from their understanding of the Bible, the Three Forms of Unity, their Constitution, and their newly adopted Bylaws.

Thomas read Chairman Dan Schnabel's letter addressed to the FRCK delegates. He reported to the body that in most of the survey questions there was agreement, but on several key questions disunity. He reports that there was almost three hours of friendly discussion on the various answers of the delegates for the following questions. *What is the purpose of the relationship between the RCUS and FRCK? Explain fully. Should every Synod delegate have a copy of the quarterly financial reports? Why or Why not? Why should every Consistory and Classis have its own Bank account and Treasurer? Should all Synod delegates be informed of correspondence with the RCUS, or just the Executive Committee of Synod?* Thomas reported that the body was divided, with most answering in a way which would fit RCUS polity, and a few answering according to their practice of a hierarchical Executive Committee handling all finances and correspondence. According to Thomas and six Synod delegates, the Chairman allowed one member of the Executive Committee to have virtually the final word from the FRCK—an abusive diatribe against Pastor Mayville.

Between September 23 and November 10, Thomas reported to us a radical and aggressive reaction of the Executive Committee of the FRCK Synod to our questionnaire on Reformed Ecclesiology and the 3 self church. With our consent, he continued frequent correspondence with all the Synod delegates on a way forward for independent finances for each congregation rather than a centralized distribution of funds from the Executive Committee.

As a result of dialoging with the RCUS FMC, a letter was sent to the FRCK delegates containing this paragraph. After a duly called meeting of the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee on October 22, 2009, the following decision was made: *To more productively aid the churches of the Free Reformed Church in Kenya (FRCK), the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee (FMC) will direct resources to individual churches.... Money will no longer be sent to the Executive Committee of Synod. Instead our support will be sent to individual churches who will then oversee its distribution (for example; pastors support, widows support, etc).*

At the end of November Thomas arranged for a meeting in Mbale of all FRCK delegates with himself and Pastor Proctor for three purposes: 1. To attempt reconciliation between the Executive Committee and the delegates who were being persecuted for promoting a 3 self church. 2. To require the Executive Committee to give a detailed account to the Kenya Subcommittee of the use of RCUS funds from March to October 2009. 3. To respond to an email by a son of one of the Executive Committee members sent to the Kenyan subcommittee bringing accusations and threats against Revs. Thomas Mayville, Dan Schnabel, Michael Voytek for things such as not sending Rev. Mayville to start a school in Kenya or send FRCK candidates for the ministry to the U.S.A. Thomas reports that at this meeting, Barton confessed some sins for which the Executive Committee had treated him extremely harshly. He asked and received forgiveness by all synod delegates except one, who remained silent. Two members of the Executive Committee also asked and received forgiveness for their harsh treatment of Barton. They also promised to change in their

attitudes and actions toward him, and the three other KTC students, working together as brothers and fellow laborers. One member of the Executive Committee refused to admit wrongdoing, and his brother had refused to come to Mbale for this meeting.

As instructed by the subcommittee, Thomas asked questions and recorded answers regarding each line item of their yearly financial report, as to how exactly RCUS money been spent. He also communicated the concern of the subcommittee regarding lack of progress in opening congregational bank accounts.

Lastly Thomas addressed written slander against himself in several emails. (mentioned above) Thomas reports that several delegates, including two members of the Executive committee asked forgiveness for these things, which he gladly granted, asking them to please follow through with action as well as words. They agreed to do so. This conversation was recorded on audio cassette. Thomas then informed them of his departure in December, and assured them of his love for them. He also let them know that Phil Proctor will do whatever he can for the FRCK delegates in his place. Thomas reports that there were embraces all around with loving words and warm handshakes, including from two members of the Executive Committee, who later authored slanderous emails sent out to all RCUS Synod delegates.

This past Synodical year Thomas was blessed to have missionary Deacon Andrew Dixon (RCNZ) supervise most of the construction and maintenance work at KTC. Thomas supervised Andrew and under his supervision OPCU Deacon Milton and helpers were able to pretty much finish the dormitory. Before Andrew left for a furlough in New Zealand they made plans for the next building, a 20'x20' Dining room and storage facility. After Andrew left, Milton was able to construct a stone walkway from the dorm to the latrine, further improve grading and drainage, bury the underground electrical cable between the dorm and the Library, and paint the floors in the Library and classroom.

Before leaving Uganda, December 4, Thomas set up Rev. Phil Proctor to handle our RCUS funds for the Kenyan students and briefed him on their transport to and from the College. He also shipped French Swahili catechisms to the Congo churches. Working with Phil Proctor, he got funds into the hands of two congregations to open bank accounts, since they were the only two which met the requirements set forth by the Kenya subcommittee. In behalf of the Kenya subcommittee, Thomas drafted a letter outlining funding for those two congregations mentioned above, and how to proceed with the other six congregations, which still had some work to do. This is the letter which caused such a backlash of slander by three members of the Executive Committee.

After taking his vacation he had earned from December 9 to January 6, Thomas has been: 1. Candidating for a call to a church, 2. Promoting the Uganda/Kenya work in the RCUS and OPC, 3. Doing pulpit supply in vacant RCUS pulpits, 4. Communicating with the Kenyan Subcommittee and FMC Chairmen, Kenyan students and Pastor Phil Proctor about the work in Kenya. 5. Grading exams for 8 KTC classes. 6. Overseeing the movement of his shipping container from Mombasa Kenya to Auburn, CA, and 7. Disinfecting many of the contents of the container due to mold and mildew and documenting damages for an insurance claim. He is candidating at Trinity RCUS Modesto on April 18, and they will vote on April 25 on whether or not to call him. Pastor Treick plans to retire at the end of June. Through the Executive and Foreign Missions Committees, the Diaconal Committee of Synod has decided to grant diaconal aid to Rev. and Mrs. Mayville in the amount of \$3,000 for the month of May. We will be making a recommendation to Synod in this report for \$3,000 aid for the month of June.

On April 14, the Executive Committee of Synod sent out the following circular in

behalf of the FMC: *That the FMC be allowed to send two Representatives from the RCUS to Uganda/Kenya to meet with various Synod representatives of the FRCK and those who have broken away.* (This trip may take place immediately before synod and will be paid for from current funds that the FMC has. Currently the trip planned will be made by Rev. Daniel Schnabel and Licentiate Doug Schlegel). There are several objectives for this trip. 1. To seek peaceful coexistence between the FRCK Executive Committee and the Pastoral Elders, Elders and Deacons from 5 FRCK churches who have left the denomination. 2. To help the FRCK officers who have left with their desire to establish a new denomination with Phil Proctor's assistance, including a Synod, and perhaps 2 Classes. 3. To help the FRCK officers who have left examine one KTC student for ordination and another for licensure, and to help a third Pastoral Elder prepare himself for a future ordination exam. 4. To meet with the ordained representatives of each congregation to solidify their budgeted distribution of RCUS funds among the congregations. 5. To discuss a way forward for the microenterprise program with this new body. 5. To plan, with Phil Proctor, quarterly trips to Kisii as our ambassador, including providing funds to help him buy a vehicle to do so. 6. To plan for up to four trips per year by one RCUS minister each time, to teach at KTC and accompany Phil to Kisii in the 2010-2011 Synodical year.

Rev. Phil Proctor has been alone in Mbale since Thomas left in December, while Dr. Wingard recovers from back surgery in the USA. Dr. Wingard hopes to rejoin him in the summer, God willing, but this is not definite. We pray, and the Kenyan brothers greatly long for, the work of Pastor Mayville to be continued. So we ask for your continued prayers that God would work and open the door for another RCUS minister to take his place.

Congo:

The big news is that on February 16, 2010, the United Reformed Churches of the Congo (URCC) was recognized by the government of the Congo as an approved church body! This is reason for great joy and thanksgiving since it finally allows those who wished to escape the dictatorship of Revs. Kishimba and Illunga, who had made themselves "Legal Representatives for Life" of the Reformed Confessing Church of the Congo (ERCC) contrary to and in disobedience of the action of the General Synod of the ERCC several years ago. The Synod had voted to make the Legal Representative a position elected by Synod for a limited term. The rest of the good news is that all of the churches in Kinshasa, Mbuji mayi and most in Kananga are with the URCC. Some in Lubumbashi are with Kishimba and group, but there are also some in Lubumbashi who favor the URCC. (A large problem there is that all the property of the Dutch Mission was and is in Kishimba's name as legal representative and he is able to rent out those properties for substantial sums, and thus keep some under his sway.)

Rev. Robert Grossmann has been in monthly and even more regular contact with the URCC leaders in the three areas where it exists. Rev. Grossmann has also been sending the funds approved by Synod to these areas for the support of the churches and several pastors. We send \$150 per month to Rev. Kabongo in Mbuji mayi, and to Revs. Abel N'tita and Philippe N'gandu in Kinshasa. Other pastors in the Mbuji mayi receive \$100 per month, which is sent through Rev. Kabongo. We also send \$200 per quarter to each of the ten churches in Kinshasa. This is sent to a committee of deacons who distribute it faithfully among the churches. Rev. Grossman has also gotten Rev. Kabongo to agree that we will change from sending the funds to him directly and send it to a committee in the Mbuji mayi area. Revs. N'tita and N'gandu are graduates of the Dutch theological college in Lubumbashi, and serve as ordained ministers who help all of the churches in Kinshasa.

All of our correspondents in the Congo report that the work of their churches is going

well, with new people being added periodically. We have seen an expansion from seven churches in Kinshasa a few years ago, to ten today. The same is true in the Mbujimayi and Kananga areas. Rev. Grossman has written to men in Lubumbashi requesting more detailed information on the situation there but has not received any direct responses recently. These are men Rev. Grossmann knew to be faithful Christians there, who have also applauded the recognition of the URCC.

The Dutch Deputies (Committee Members) from Spakenburg South (the local Church through which the GKN (Liberated) General Synod has worked in the Congo has plans to meet with Revs. Kabongo and N'tita about new arrangements for continuing their work in the Congo. This meeting was to have taken place in Brussels in March, but the Congolese were at last not able to obtain visas to visit Belgium. A letter from Rev. Kabongo (attached) explains this situation, and the fact that the Dutch are now planning to come to the Congo for such meetings.

While no one is without sin, we know that we have faithful pastors, elders and deacons serving in the URCC in all of the areas we support. We need to further our help to them where we can, perhaps by using distance learning for their leaders. Video materials from Heidelberg Seminary would be available to do this but it would require some extra work for oversight and proctoring of the classes that could be taken by video. There are English-speaking men, such as Revs. Kabongo and N'tita who could handle this, and a good number of Congolese men have some facility in English. This would need further study and planning to make it viable.

Philippines:

This summary attempts to note how closely the RCUS pastoral team came to fulfilling the recommendations of the 263rd Synod of May 11-14, 2009, as listed in last year's Synod Abstract.

1st Recommendation (#12a in the Abstract, page 68): "That the RCUS continue to work with and support the UCRCP..." According to this recommendation of the Standing Missions Committee, the Synod voted to reaffirm its willingness to work with and support its sister denomination in the Philippines.

2nd Recommendation (#9 in Abstract, p. 68): To fulfill the first recommendation, the RCUS budgeted \$5,000 for two ministers to travel to the Philippines. For what purpose would we visit the Philippines this time? The original recommendation (#9 in the Abstract) spells out the purpose of the trip as follows: "...to teach the UCRCP ministers and elders how to run their church's government and properly exercise Christian discipline according to the RCUS model." To be more precise, we were asked to guide the UCRCP leadership in their effort to establish their first classis. Rev. Michael Voytek and Rev. Jay Fluck volunteered for the task. However, the team added Rev. Gil Baloy to its number with the permission of the Executive Committee, which budgeted an additional amount up to \$1500. It was Rev. Fluck's first time to travel to the Philippines. It turned out to be a two-week visit in the first half of January, 2010. Essentially, we completed what we set out to do at the very first Reformed conference of December 2007 in Baguio City. All of the UCRCP pastors and elders gathered again in Baguio City to have a Reformed leadership conference. The lectures and discussions following challenged the attendees to build a classis similar in many respects to our own. Their willingness to change their name from "United Covenant Reformed Churches in the Philippines" to "United Covenant Reformed Church in the Philippines" (compare "Reformed Church in the United States") reflects their own commitment to the unity of the faith and to a more Presbyterian form of government.

In addition, we conducted seminars at three different locations: first, on the first weekend the three of us started out at Pastor Nap Narag's congregation in Laguna Province; after the Baguio leadership conference, we split up with Fluck and Baloy going to Pangasinan Province, and Voytek accompanied by Narag flying off to the Covenant Reformed Church of Davao City in Mindanao. In Laguna, God granted us a good opportunity to minister to visitors from the community on Saturday as well as to counsel with Rev. Nap and two elders Cesar and Ronald Commandante, who were ordained in the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines. The Pangasinan seminar took place in the church building of a CRCP minister by the name of Luis Garcia. Luis is a friend of Rafael Martinez and Jose "Boy" Cabugao, who seems favorable toward the Reformed Faith. The meeting was well attended by members of the San Carlos UCRCP and CRCP churches along with other invited visitors from the town.

Rev. Baloy did a solo trip to the Philippines in March 2009. The highlights of it may be read in last year's 263rd Synod Abstract (page 25). Later, he and his wife Maricar returned to the Philippines September 17, 2009, for the funeral of her father. Before his return to the U.S., he attended the quarterly meeting of the UCRCP held in Las Pinas City. This was a special Consistory meeting that voted to formally organize the Las Pinas City congregation sometime at the start of 2010. San Carlos City UCRCP, Davao City UCRCP and Las Pinas City UCRCP presently constitute the first Classis of the UCRCP which was finally organized in March 5-6, 2010. As it turned out, the classis did not conduct examinations of Vic Bernales as originally planned. From what we heard, Rev. Narag was absent owing to his wife's illness. But the presbyters established guidelines and procedures for the licensure exams. Mr. Benales is a recent graduate of Mid-America Seminary and regularly supplies the pulpit of Covenant Reformed Church of Davao City.

3rd Recommendation (#14 in the Abstract): "That the RCUS continue to maintain the three "S" Principle of a self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting in developing the mission churches in all foreign missions." It has taken time, but more and more the Filipino brothers understand the importance and necessity of maintaining the Three "S" Principle. The RCUS has not provided guideline support to the UCRCP until now.

4th Recommendation (#8 in the Abstract): "That the RCUS budget \$1704 for the 2009-2010 synodical year for the UCRCP quarterly meetings." The budgeted amount of \$1704 was sent. This was the exact amount which the UCRCP requested for their four meetings in the upcoming year. The Filipino brothers are aware that this may not be renewed the following year. It should be noted, that other monies have been collected for solicited diaconal and "denominational building" purposes from the love offerings of willing RCUS churches.

5th Recommendation (#12b in the Abstract): "...That the RCUS encourage other interested ministers and churches in the Philippines to join the UCRCP. Take note." We have from the start endeavored to do this. In 2005 we arranged for Rev. Remegio Lapid, and his wife Elizabeth, from Jireh Reformed Church in Cagayan de Oro, Bukidnon, Mindanao Island, to come to Manila as an outside observer of the initial proceedings of the UCRCP. Also, Lapid came with several other ministers, originally, like himself, from the Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches, to attend the 2007 Baguio conference. In this latest visit, the three of us met with Mr. and Mrs. Boyet Aquino in Laguna to interview Boyet about employment as a translator of Christian literature for a friend of Rev. Voytek. It turns out that several brothers in the UCRCP are familiar with this brother from their CRCP days. In this way, we hope to be a good example of the Savior to our Filipino brethren.

6th Recommendation (#13 in the Abstract): "That the following statement be noted in

the Reformed Herald, the RCUS website, and published in the minutes: ‘Because direct contributions to foreign mission works may have unintended consequences, the churches and the members are encouraged to make contribution through the foreign missions committee and keep the committee informed of any direct contributions.’” This may be accomplished in at least two ways: (1) Each time an article or report on the Philippine Missions is submitted, this statement should be annexed at the conclusion. This was not done with an article submitted by Rev. Baloy in the December 2009 issue of the Reformed Herald. We will make every effort to comply with future inserts in our church magazine, Synod abstracts and website. (2) The Editor of the Reformed Herald, the Stated Clerk, and Webservant will be informed by email about the inclusion of this statement in future issues of our magazine and Synod abstracts, as well as on the RCUS website.

Recommendations:

1. That the budget be adopted as follows:

Congo:

Elder-pastor support \$14,400 (same as last year)

Kinshasa aid \$11,600 (same)

Building and Diaconal aid \$2,000 (same)

Kenya:

Church Support \$11,000 (same)

Economic Development for pastor/elders \$2,000 (same)

Student/ministry expenses & travel \$5,400 (same as last year)

Reformed Faith and Life (French):

\$17,000 (same)

Committee Expenses:

Travel to Africa \$2,000 (same)

Travel to Europe \$1,000 (same)

Travel in USA \$ 3,000 (same)

2. That the RCUS continue to encourage the churches not to forget the Congo Economic development project but continue to support it by prayer and gifts when able. *Note: “The funds sent and the work done there has saved the lives of some of our Christian brothers and sisters.” These brothers and sisters have also been faithful to share the little they have with each other making these gifts go a long way.*

3. That the RCUS budget up to \$15,000 to assist Rev. Phil Proctor (OPC) with the purchase of a reliable vehicle in order to assist with quarterly meetings of those we support Kenya. *Note: Currently Rev. Proctors vehicle is not reliable. Since there have been so many problems recently in Kenya these visits will be very beneficial.*

4. That the pastors of the RCUS prayerfully consider the open invitation from Rev. Phil Proctor for men of the RCUS to come and teach a three week class in Uganda.

Note: We would provide for the travel and living expenses for this from the committee’s budgeted funds.

5. That the RCUS budget \$1700 yearly for UCRCP quarterly meetings. *Note: The three Pastors and the elders do not have the financial ability to meet. This is the same as last year.*

6. That the RCUS budget \$3,000 for a future trip to the Phillipines to meet with and hold conferences with the URCP. *Note: Last year this was budgeted at \$5,000.*

7. That the RCUS budget \$2400 for outreach expenses covering gas and travel expenses for the pastors of the URCP. *Note: this is short term aid for one year.*

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Schnabel (Chrmn), Gil Baloy (Philippines Subcommittee), Robert Grossman (Congo Subcommittee), Dick Kroells, Wayne Lingenfelter, Ted Schieffelin, Albert Haller, Doug Schlegel, and Michael Voytek (Kenya Subcommittee)

H. Home Missions Committee

Dear Brothers:

The Synod Home Missions Committee met at Bella Vista, AR on April 8-9, 2010. Committee members present were: Revs. Harvey Opp, Jay Nelken, Richard Stetler; Elders Jim Bruckschen, and Lynn Goehring. Elders Loren Huber, and Joe Gross were unable to attend the meeting, and there is no minister from South Central Classis currently on the committee. Home Missionaries present were Revs. Wesley Brice, Gary Mancilas, and Jay Fluck.

Mission Reports:

Grace Reformed Chapel, Northwest AR

Rev. Wesley Brice reports that congregation has experienced disappointment in that 3 communicants were erased from the roll in 2009. However, the remaining members are not discouraged, for which he is most thankful. A great blessing for them is that the Garner congregation elected Bobby Duncan, a member in AR, to serve as an elder for the work. This has been encouraging to all. In addition, the Steering Committee thought the congregation “needed to begin more earnestly to seek God’s face” on behalf of the work. Therefore, the second service on the Lord’s Day is now a “prayer and praise service”. An attitude of hope and confidence has resulted, and several wonderful answers, regarding member’s health issues have been seen. The people are thankful that they are “being fed and personal spiritual growth is evident” in their midst. Prayer was requested for wisdom in composing a follow-up letter to contacts. It is encouraging that a new family has been regular in attendance for some time, and becoming very comfortable there. It is hoped that this couple will become members this year. There are two other families that have attended a number of times. The offerings are quite good for the size of the work. And they look forward to having their first confirmation soon, thereby adding 2 communicants. Currently, there are 17 communicants and 4 baptized children. With the loss of members, the same support as currently received is requested for 2011, since they have had to use some of their savings to meet expenses.

Grace RCUS, Greeley, CO

Rev. Jon Blair forwarded his report, not being required to attend the meeting, since Greeley is on its last year of support. The Lord has greatly blessed the congregation over the past year, in receiving 10 communicants and 14 non-communicants in 6 households. They now have a total of 54 communicants and 24 non-communicants, in 32 households. There are also around 20 people who have been regular attenders. Comments are often made that there is “a genuine sense of love, warmth, and commitment together in the worship and body-life of the church.” The pastor and officers have been diligent in the various aspects of the teaching ministry of the church, including a midweek prayer and Bible study. The elders have shown faithful oversight, including diligence in family visitations. All are amazed at how the Lord has provided in just over 6 years with their building debt. Through faithful giving of the congregation, and with several times receiving the Day of

Prayer offering, their mortgage is now completely paid off, having had a \$300,000 loan. They sincerely thank the churches of the RCUS for all the prayers and financial support. By God's grace, they will "press on, seeking to be proactive in Christ's mission to build His church."

Providence RCUS, Vermillion, SD

Rev. Robert Grossmann forwarded his report, not being required to attend the meeting, since Vermillion is on its last year of support. He reports that spiritual and material life of the congregation is healthy and strong. Church attendance continues to be 100% of their member families on the vast majority of Sundays. Attendance at Sunday School and midweek Bible studies is also very good. They have had a number of visitors through the year, and have 4 university students who attend regularly. One family is considering membership. Currently they have 24 communicant and 7 non-communicant members. It is noted that Vermillion is a difficult field, with close to 35 families having passed through the congregation in the ten years of the work, but not making the commitment to join. In any case, they are asking for no support beyond 2010, trusting in God's enablement to maintain their sound financial condition in the future. They are thankful to have no debt, and that the deed to the church building and property should be passed to them, from the CRC, in July of this year. The consistory expresses "its sincere gratitude to the RCUS for its support over the years, and is looking forward to proclaiming the Gospel as a faithful church of Christ for years to come."

Covenant RCUS, Chico, CA

Rev. Gary Mancilas presented a report stating that the Spiritual Council has faithfully watched over the congregation, and that the members have remained committed to the work during the trials of the church. The congregation has various means of outreach, such as: personal witnessing, church website, audio ministry, and newspaper. Also, three days a week, they have a radio ad and 15 minute message, taken from Rev. Mancilas' sermons. This reaches the surrounding area, all at the low cost of \$200 per month. A local cable channel also airs their Hour of Reformation broadcast each Sunday afternoon. The men are beginning to receive some evangelism training. And there have been more visitors, than in recent years. As reported last year, 6 communicants joined in February 2009. Three were also 3 dismissed, to give a current total of 22 communicants and 3 non-communicants. They hope for growth in membership through 2 families that have been attending regularly. As for the financial status of the congregation, members were blessed during this economic crisis, and there was increased giving, beyond that of the last 5 years. They reported that: "The congregation recognizes that the viability of the church falls on its members, including its financial responsibility to sustain itself. Notwithstanding this great responsibility, the church continues to demonstrate its effectiveness by a Reformed presence in Chico." They are requesting support from Synod with the 10% reduction, as taken last year.

Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA

Rev. Jay Fluck presented a report stating that the past year has seen set backs in several areas. The troubled economy led 2 singles and 2 families to move away, and the offerings of others lacking work was curtailed. Two communicants and a baptized infant were added, so that the membership roll, as reduced from last year, is now 32 communicants and 14 non-communicants. There are still 5 regular visitors, and one of the families is reported to be moving back. Overall, this is the first year they have seen a drop in attendance. They hold a second service after lunch, but the attendance is about 20% of the morning service, and the Wednesday evening Bible study and prayer meeting is not well attended. Their giving in 2009 decreased by about \$7,000. Also, they had taken responsibility for all of their

expenses, which was "overly ambitious". The result was that they used up all their savings of \$30,000. With deficits foreseen in the next years, Western Classis has increased support for 2011, back to the 2009 level, and asks Synod to do the same with its support level. Classis also granted \$24,000 in benevolent aid, expecting the financial situation "to turn around this year". Ebenezer RCUS is greatly appreciated for the financial support they have given to Rehoboth, over its 12 years of existence. As for the fellowship of the congregation, some new occasions for such have been established. Their outreach has been "most successful when it is the membership inviting their family and friends." Their web site is second most effective. Rev. Fluck has regained strength, after a serious side effect of a cholesterol drug, but "the strains in the congregation are also draining." Rehoboth is very grateful for the support of Classis and Synod in prayer, time, and money. Rev. Fluck asks for continued prayer for faithfulness in the congregation, for additional officers to be added, and for their financial needs.

Committee Work:

1. The Classes Missions Committee Reports were reviewed and questions about such were then raised, and in meeting with the missionaries. Most classis visitations of the works were conducted with the missionaries, consistories, and congregation members. The 3-5 year plan for the mission endeavors of each classis was reviewed. Each Classis has at least one mission work that is not receiving Synod support, some supported by individual churches, as in Western Classis. New possibilities are also commonly considered, which we want to encourage.

The proposal for a regional missionary was almost approved by Northern Plains Classis. Although the efforts with a Bible study in Jamestown, ND have not borne much fruit, larger cities in ND are again being considered for such a missionary. With more specific direction, the proposal may be accepted. Their concern is that it may require \$50,000 of Synod support for a year, plus around a \$40 guideline increase for Classis members. Your committee would like to see Northern Plains continue to develop this proposal. We would encourage them that several classes have put aside money for future works, without having a definite mission proposal, at the time.

South Central Classis has approved a \$20 per communicant amount for future mission works. One possibility is that Rev. Neale Riffert has been working with a group in Sherman, TX, encouraging and instructing them in Reformed doctrine and practice. It is not at a point to seek any financial aid from Classis or Synod, but prayers would be desired. Also, last October, a meeting was held with a number of men in Omaha, NE, regarding their desire to start a Reformed congregation. A detailed presentation covered the history of the RCUS, and "all the major distinctions of the Reformed Faith in general and the RCUS in particular." The group then raised questions on a number of areas. Thus far, the group as a whole has not determined to pursue further involvement with the RCUS. Again, prayer for a door to possible missions in Omaha or elsewhere in the South Central Classis is in order, particularly since Greeley and Vermillion are on their last year of financial support. Both congregations thank the RCUS for its support. May all the RCUS also give thanks to God for His blessing in those mission works!

Last year, the proposal of Covenant East Classis for support of a new mission work to be started in the Metro Minneapolis area was approved, in the amounts of \$30,000 from Classis, and \$40,000 from Synod, for the first year, all from available funds. Since then, Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, has approved the plan to call a co-pastor at Redeemer, that a core group could be developed, before separate services would begin. The consistory hopes to be able to present a candidate to the congregation soon, possibly in May, or early

June. As for the funding, provided upon arrival of a minister, at least the first year of it would come from currently available Synod Home Mission funds, which total over \$170,000 currently. This money for new works has accumulated since our last work began in 2002.

From information in the three-year budget for Covenant RCUS, Chico, CA some concerns were raised. Your committee is glad to note that the congregation continues to take the 10%, or \$1,860 reduction each year as determined by Western Classis for 2009 and following. And though the recent economy has raised difficulties, the overall giving of the congregation increased in 2009, as did membership. However, any possible increase in giving appears as needed, in light of the following: The pastor has no IRA provision from the congregation, which is to be included in a call to a mission pastor. It appears that the housing allowance covers rent, but not utilities. Also, the guideline giving, while reported to have increased over the years, is still less than ½ the amounts due for Classis and Synod. Your committee discussed the weaning process for Chico, and is of the view that the church should be off of Synodical support in 2016. This would be somewhat ahead of the current schedule.

The committee had good discussion time with the missionaries present, and offered prayer for each work. Under miscellaneous business, the committee decided not to seek money for future works at this time, considering the funds currently available. We also discussed the use of sermonaudio.com as a means of outreach. It was reported that with one church established on the site, it was arranged that all of Northern Plains Classis ministers can upload sermons for the cost of 2 individual churches on their own, or about \$700 per year. There may be a lesser amount of biographical and church information that can be listed, but it may be a good provision for all the ministers of other classes to use the service as a mission outreach.

Annual Day of Prayer and Missions Offering:

As a reminder, the Annual Day of Prayer for Missions is the second Sunday of September. The 2009 debt reduction offering, was for Grace RCUS, Greeley, CO, whose debt has been retired. The congregation expresses much appreciation for the past offerings from RCUS congregations. Having no other work with building debt, your committee recommends that the offering be determined according to individual need of our works. We believe the 2010 offering should be designated to help defray rental costs of Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, CA.

Recommendations - The SHMC recommends the following to the 264th Synod of the RCUS:

1. That Synod provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas with \$5,760 in fiscal year 2011. [This is the current amount, to be kept the same, in light of their financial need.]
2. That Synod provide Covenant RCUS, Chico, CA with \$13,020 in fiscal year 2011. [A reduction of \$1,860, 10% of the 2008 base year amount.]
3. That Synod provide Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA with \$12,500 in fiscal year 2011. [An increase of \$2,384, in light of their financial need.]
4. That the Day of Prayer offering be determined according to individual need of our works, and that the 2010 offering be designated to help defray rental costs of Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, CA.
5. That the Classes, having done so, be commended for setting aside money for future mission works. Take Note.
6. That \$7,000 be budgeted for committee expenses.

7. The 2011 Home Missions budget, if approved as recommended, would be \$38,280, a reduction from \$82,684 for 2010. Take Note.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Harvey Opp (Chairman), Rev. Jay Nelken, Rev. Richard Stetler, Elder Lynn Goehring, Elder Jim Bruckschen, Elder Loren Huber, Elder Joe Gross

I. Interchurch Relations Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

Your Committee conducted its business by telephone, e-mail and sub-committee meetings. The following is the report of the Committee as a whole to Synod.

Business from the 2009 Synod of the RCUS

Your committee received the following assignment from the 263rd, Synod of the RCUS in 2009 (Abstract p. 70) *That the 263rd Synod charge the permanent Interchurch Relations Committee to explore how the RCUS, through its Interchurch committee, may pursue contacts and communications with church bodies of a Reformed background that may not be candidates for “fraternal relations.”*

The following was adopted by the IRC as a guide for the committee in how we might pursue contacts with groups of a Reformed/Presbyterian background who are not necessarily candidates for fraternal relations. *“That where there are RCUS congregations in the vicinity of such churches we believe to be of interest in communicating and interacting with, we ask our pastors and elders to make contacts, attend assemblies, etc, in order to get to know these groups and let them become more aware of us. In some cases, we might simply delegate a member of our committee or some interested pastor (including the use of retired pastors) to cultivate contacts where we might not be geographically represented.”*

Recommendation #1: Take note.

Relations with Churches in North America

Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC):

A sub committee of the IRC consisting of Rev.’s Koerner, McGee and Potter met with a sub-committee of the Canadian Reformed Churches committee for contact with churches in North America (CCCNA) November 17th, 2009 from 9:00 PM – 10:45 PM in grand Rapids, MI following a business session of NAPARC. The CCCNA committee consisted of Rev.’s Kampen, Pol, and Faber.

The CCCNA advised your Committee of their forthcoming Synod meeting in Burlington, ON, beginning May 11th, 2010. Since this Synod meeting will overlap our own Synod we will not have delegates present for their whole Synod. Rev. Jonathan Merica and Rev. Lee Johnson will represent the RCUS.

The CCCNA informed your Committee of their intent to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RPCNA. The CCCNA has consulted with your committee in the past concerning this proposed relationship.

The CCCNA also advised that the matter of women voting in congregational meetings will be taken up by their Synod. It has been the practice of the Canadian Reformed Churches since 1974 that women not vote in congregational meetings. A majority report in favor of women voting and a minority paper opposing women voting will be presented to the Synod. Your committee has these papers in hand and a sub-committee is studying them. In our meeting with the CCCNA the RCUS practice was reviewed and it was noted that though the RCUS has three study reports on the subject available on the Web and that the general

practice is not to include women in voting it is not in the Constitution and some churches do allow women to vote. Your committee would note that our inconsistency on this matter is often raised in these kinds of interchurch discussions. Your Committee also observes that there are differences between the RCUS approach and application to women voting and the CanRC approach and application to women voting.

The CCCNA did ask your Committee for input regarding the growing ties of the Reformed Church in Quebec (ERQ) with the PCA but since we are not in fraternal relations with either denomination we could provide no helpful input.

Your Committee sought for input regarding the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) and pending developments there. We were referred to the report being written by the Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad (CCCA) for their forthcoming Synod. A copy will be sent to your Committee.

Your Committee would observe that these annual sub-committee meetings facilitate our fraternal relationship with the CanRC and provide a venue for the exchange of information and updating on developments within our churches. The CanRC has cut back on its fraternal delegate visits to various assemblies and so a delegation to our 2010 Synod meeting is not expected.

The next sub committee meetings between the RCUS and the CCCNA will take place in November 2010 in Pompton Plains, NJ in conjunction with NAPARC.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

The following is the report of Rev. Michael McGee fraternal delegate to the 2009 General Assembly of the OPC.

The 76th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church met on the campus of Kuyper College in Grand Rapids, MI from May 27th – June 3rd, AD 2009. The meeting was called to order by Rev. Alan Strange, the Moderator of the 75th General Assembly. Each year, the assembly elects a new moderator, with this year's honors being given to Rev. Bill Shishko.

I was able to attend most of the days in which the Assembly met for business. I was well received and given an opportunity to address the delegates on Tuesday, June 2nd. In my address to the men, I assured them of our love and appreciation for them and noted our past history and the continuation of that history today, with regards to our practice of fraternal relations, the transfer of ministers between the two denominations and our cooperative efforts in missions. With regards to missions, I assured our brothers of our desire to find a man to take the place of Rev. Tom Mayville at Knox Theological College.

Some items of interest from the meeting are:

1. The completion to the revisions made to their Directory of Worship. The final revisions will be submitted to the presbyteries for their approval.

2. Two complaints were received by the General Assembly. These matters were handled with care and diligence.

3. A recommendation was made that a letter be sent to President Barack Obama, requesting that he would not establish a policy of nondiscrimination based on a person's sexual orientation. This matter caused a fair amount of discussion regarding Westminster Confession of Faith 31:4 and the use of the "humble petition". Although the delegates were unanimous in their disdain towards the policy of the current President in this matter, they did not agree that they should send a letter to him addressing this subject.

I was struck with several differences in the manner the OPC conducted the business of

the Assembly. Most notably:

1. As opposed to having permanent committees and standing committees, they utilized permanent committees and advisory committees. The work of the permanent committee was not "lost" in the standing committee, but rather the permanent committee was given time on the floor of the Assembly to present their work to the delegates. The advisory committee frequently noted that they did not have anything to add or change in the permanent report.

2. They did not have a Nominations Committee. Rather, as a committee presented their report and made recommendations, one of the items the committee addressed was the expiring terms and the nominees for new terms. Nominations were also made from the floor, with speeches to follow. The nominating ballot was closed and votes were then cast.

3. Overtures and Recommendations were brought to the various committees through the Stated Clerk. It was the Clerk's job to distribute the work of the committees as opposed to a committee designated only for Overtures.

4. The minutes were not read on the floor. They were distributed to the delegates for their consideration. A copy of the minutes was available for correcting. If any delegates had any changes that needed to be made to the minutes, they were encouraged to perform that work on their own.

Overall, I was impressed with the way in which the General Assembly of the OPC conducted their business. It was a blessing to have the opportunity for fellowship and interaction with like-minded Christians. May God continue to bless the relationship we have as we seek to advance the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ here on earth.

The Rev. Michael Voytek has been delegated to attend the OPC General Assembly meeting at Trinity Christian College, in Palos, Heights, Ill, June 7-14, 2010.

Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America

The Rev. Jonathan Merica was delegated to the 2009 Synod of the RPCNA. His report follows:

Your servant was honored to serve as the fraternal delegate to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America which convened June 22-25, 2009 at Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. I was warmly received by our fraternal brothers, and was given the liberty to participate in discussing the matters of business being addressed by the RPCNA Synod as well as to bring greetings on behalf the Reformed Church in the U.S., Synod.

The RPCNA Synod began on Monday, June 22, 2009 in the John White Chapel on the campus of Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. The Moderator, Dennis Prutov, called the meeting to order, and opened the worship service with a message titled, "*Preach Simple Truths That Strike Hearts and Change Lives.*" After the sermon, the Moderator led in prayer, and the roll was called and the delegates were seated. Synod honored all the servants of the church who had gone to be with Lord since the last meeting of Synod.

On Tuesday morning, June 23, 2009 the Synod convened in the Student Center on the campus of Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. The meeting opened with Rev. Steven Work leading in the morning worship. Rev. Work read Mark 9:14-29 and preached a message titled, "*The Crisis in the Church.*"

There was a discussion by the Synod whether to maintain its membership in the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). The following motion was adopted: "That the RPCNA immediately, i.e., as soon as possible, retract its membership from the NAE." Then on Thursday, June 25, 2009, a special resolution was received by a two-thirds vote and

adopted which stated, “That Synod direct the Interchurch Committee to write a letter to the NAE explaining our decision to withdraw our membership to the end of calling the NAE to repentance.”

The announcement was made at Synod that the new “*The Book of Psalms for Worship*” was available to each congregation by the Education and Publication Board. The Psalter Revision Committee had completed its work after almost ten years of intensive labor to improve “*The Book of Psalms for Worship*.” Appreciation for the work was expressed by Synod, and a special note of thanksgiving was given.

Representatives of the presbyteries presented the reports of the Alleghenies, Atlantic, Great Lakes/Gulf, Japan, Midwest, Pacific Coast and St. Lawrence presbyteries. Following each report an elder was appointed to pray. (“*Minutes of RPCNA Synod*”)

Regarding some of the actions of Synod, Items 1-7 of Communication 09-1 proposed procedural changes in *The Directory for Church Government* which were adopted. Communication 09-2 on Informal Worship was an appeal to Synod to appoint a study committee to urge Synod to insure all worship services in the denomination abide by the Regulative Principle, and not to allow any aspect of false worship. “*A Committee to study the Contents of the Cup of the Lord’s Supper*” arrived at three conclusions on this question:

1. “Individual sessions have the authority to define Scripture’s requirements for ‘bread’ and the ‘cup.’”
2. “Every session should be sensitive to both the health and conscience of the members of the congregation.”
3. “Scripture does not enjoin strict narrow conformity on the elements of the Lord’s Supper among the congregations of the denominations.”

The ecclesiastical, fraternal and observer delegates were given the opportunity to address the Synod as follows: *Ecclesiastical Delegate* - Andrew Quigley addressed the Synod on behalf of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. *Fraternal Delegates* - Kyle Sims addressed the Synod on behalf of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Steve Miller addressed the Synod on behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Jonathan Merica addressed the Synod on behalf of the Reformed Church in the United States. *Observer Delegate* - Sherman Isbell addressed the Synod on behalf of the Free Church of Scotland Continuing and its North American Presbytery.

In closing the meeting of the 178th RPCNA Synod, the Moderator led the delegates in singing Psalm 133A, The meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m., Friday June 26, 2009, and the Moderator closed with a prayer of thanksgiving unto our Lord.

Your Committee has delegated Rev. Ron Potter to attend the 2010 Synod meeting of the RPCNA which convenes on June 21st, 2010 at Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA..

United Reformed Churches of North America

A sub committee of IRC consisting of Rev.’s Koerner, McGee and Potter met with a sub committee of the URCNA Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (CERCU), at 7 am on November 18th, 2009 in conjunction with the annual NAPARC meeting. Representing the CERCU were Rev.’s Harry Zekveld; Bouwers and Freswick.

The CERCU sought to be undated regarding developments between the Interchurch Relations Committee of Covenant East Classis and the Classis Eastern U.S. of the URCNA regarding the reception of the former RCUS congregation in Carbondale, PA, into the URCNA. That reception will be affirmed by the URCNA Synod meeting in July 2010. At the time of this meeting discussions between the Covenant East Classis and the Eastern

Classis U.S. were still under way. The CERCU agreed that the ratification of the Carbondale membership should be held up until matters between our Classes were resolved and later proposed this to their Synod.

Following a visit of Covenant East Classis representatives (Rev. Sorensen; Rev. Brice) to the Eastern Classis U.S. of the URCNA in the fall of 2009 where the issues were set before the Eastern Classis Interchurch Relations Committee (and addressed on the floor of Classis). In addition discussion was held with the Carbondale representatives. Following additional follow-up written communication between the two respective classes, a request for forgiveness was received from the Carbondale Church by the Covenant East Classis at its spring 2010 meeting. This was positively responded to by a series of resolutions and forgiveness was extended by action of Classis. This communication was immediately hand carried to the Eastern Classis U.S. which was then in session at Long Island, NY, by Rev. Maynard Koerner of your permanent Synodical Interchurch Relations Committee. This communication was gratefully received by the Eastern Classis and the hindrance to the ratification of the Carbondale membership in the URCNA by the Synod of the URCNA was removed. This outcome was communicated to the CERCU of the URCNA by your permanent synodical Committee.

Your Committee observes that there are two major papers coming before the URCNA Synod this year. The first has to do with Justification and the Federal Vision. The Rev. Maynard Koerner recently sat under a 2 hour summary of this paper given by one of its authors, Dr. Venema. Your Committee will continue its study of the contents and advise its delegation accordingly.

The second paper concerns the reception of believers with non-baptized children into membership. Your Committee as of this date has yet to receive a copy of this paper to study though one is pending after Mach 31st, 2010. We have been given to understand that the majority of the study committee favors the reception of such believers with non-baptized children and that a minority report is proposed. Once we have those papers in hand and they are studied your committee will try to come to a consensus on how to advise our delegates to respond to the URCNA in the matter of reception of non-baptized members.

Relations with other Churches

Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

The 263rd Synod (Abstract p. 70) advised your Committee to send a delegate to observe the proceedings of the 37th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) if possible. This was a departure from our previous protocol which was to limit our contact with the PCA to NAPARC Council meetings. The Rev. George Syms represented the RCUS as an observer. His report follows:

The undersigned volunteered to attend the 37th General Assembly of the PCA in Orlando, Florida, as an ecclesiastical observer on behalf of the Synod Interchurch Relations Committee. The accommodations were second to none, and the arrangements were quite thorough for providing meals for the visiting observers. The actual location was the Disney Coronado Resort, part of the Disney World Magic Kingdom park where one of many Convention Centers is located. The communication from the Stated Clerk of the PCA, Dr. L. Roy Taylor, stated that the fraternal delegates would address the GA on Wednesday morning, June 17th, and that ecclesiastical observers would be introduced.

The convention hall was enormous, and all the modern technology was in use. The need for the projection of the assembly speakers’ images on two huge screens at the front of the hall on either side of the podium was obviously necessary, since there were in excess of one

thousand delegates present for the General Assembly. What became apparent through a little investigation is that the ratio of ministers to elders present was about three-to-one. The conducting of business did not include much debate, but the results appeared to be predetermined.

As I stated before, your servant was under the impression that he was an ‘ecclesiastical observer’ and therefore would not have to prepare to address the assembly. I was seated in the rear of the convention hall, which appeared to be about the length of at least two football fields. Then, unexpectedly, the speaker called for me to address the assembly and I began what seemed like a never ending hike to the podium.

With the moment thrust upon me to address the brethren, I introduced myself, greeted the Assembly in the Lord, and then told them something of the history of the RCUS in this country. Given the number of men present, I was surprised at the attention I was afforded. I affirmed to them our adherence to the Holy Scriptures and the Three Forms of Unity. I presented a review of our work in the area of home missions, foreign ministries, and the particular fields in which the Lord has opened up a door for us to work with indigenous pastors in preaching the Gospel. I noted that the RCUS is a member church of NAPARC along with the PCA, and commented on the good fellowship and interaction we enjoyed in the Council. In closing, I exhorted the brothers to remain faithful to the Scriptures and to their confessional standards.

Later during the afternoon, I was approached by many of the brothers who knew of the RCUS, or who had known some of our pastors through the years. Appreciation for my brief address was expressed, and in that I said nothing astounding, it definitely showed the brotherly spirit in which it was received. As the day wore on, my health began to deteriorate, and with temperatures near 100, and humidity at 90%, I attributed my lack of energy to the weather. It turned out to be something much worse.

Given the 2009 Synodical charge to this committee as set forth in the opening paragraphs of this report, your Committee will continue to take advantage of providential opportunities to interact with and communicate with the PCA at various levels as an observer. Certainly NAPARC continues to be the major venue for keeping updated on things that are transpiring in the PCA.

North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).

NAPARC met for its 35th, 4th, annual meeting at the Puritan and reformed Seminary in Grand Rapids, MI, November 17-18, 2009. The Revs Koerner, McGee and Potter represented the RCUS. The official reception of the Presbyterian Reformed Church brought the total number of NAPARC churches to 12. These 12 churches were represented by a total of 35 delegates.

The Rev. Lawrence J. Bilkes of the Free Reformed Churches in North America was elected Chairman; the Rev. Bartle Elshout of the Heritage Reformed Congregations was elected Vice- Chairman and Rev. Maynard Koerner and Rev. Ron Potter of the RCUS were again elected Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

Reports from each of the 12 churches were read. Questions were asked for clarification and each church was prayed for after its report was completed. Dr. Joel Beeke, President of Puritan Reformed Seminary conducted a tour of the premises and on the evening of the 17th, at the scheduled NAPARC banquet addressed the delegates and assembled guests on the subject of *Experimental Preaching*. This was followed by a question and answer time.

An election for the Interim Committee consisting of a delegate from each denomination or federation represented was held. This committee works with the secretary through the

year to provide advice and to deal with matters that come up between meetings.

NAPARC made its Web Site Committee a permanent Committee of the Council and provided a budget for this committee to proceed to seek a new server, a new web master and to archive, make backup copies and to digitize the NAPARC Minutes and supporting documents for the last 35 years. The secretary transferred all these documents to the climate controlled storage facilities at the Orthodox Presbyterian Church offices in Philadelphia and digitizing is now underway.

NAPARC also appointed a four man Web Site committee to be chaired by Mark Bube of the OPC with the Secretary serving as an advisory member. Communication between these members is via Skype. Documents pertaining to the Comity Agreement of NAPARC and documents pertaining to the Transfer of Members between NAPARC churches (*aka Fugitives from Justice*) were approved for posting on the NAPARC Web Site.

In light of the increased number of NAPARC churches the Council approved a reduction of annual dues from \$500 to \$300.

The Council set aside time for the delegates to discuss the future direction of NAPARC in light of its purpose and function. An *ad hoc* committee presented a brief overview of the purpose and function of NAPARC. As a result the following action was taken: “To appoint a *Committee of Review* consisting of 5 members to review the constitution, goals, activities and meetings of NAPARC and to report next year.” Mark Bube of the OPC will chair this committee.

The Council extended invitations to the following churches to observe NAPARC 2010: Korean Presbyterian Church (Kosin); Bible Presbyterian Church; Protestant Reformed Church.

The 2010 meeting of NAPARC will take place in Pompton Plains, NJ, November 16-17, 2010, to be hosted by the Free Reformed Churches of North America. Your Committee will have its contingent of delegates present.

Relations With Churches Abroad

Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated)

A sub-committee consisting of two ministers and two Elders of the permanent committee were charged with the acquisition and study of materials relative to the GKN(Lib). This sub-committee is under the chairmanship of Rev. Merica and reports as follows:

The sub-committee has received materials for review relative to developments in the Reformed Church Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated). These developments are also concerns of certain individuals in two other of our fraternal churches, and are being researched by our committee as to the validity of these reports. If these concerns are substantiated, it may suggest the GKNv is subtly heading in an undesirable direction. Further research is continuing. The two delegates of the RCUS scheduled to attend the Canadian Reformed Churches Synod in May 10-14, 2010 are Rev. Jonathan Merica and Rev. Lee Johnson. They will seek further input from our brothers of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Due to a conflict with our Synod in 2008 we were not able to have a delegate present at the GKN(Lib) Synod. It is important to have a delegate or two present especially at the scheduled time when foreign delegates meet together and the session is conducted in English. The Rev. Maynard Koerner is scheduled to attend the 2011 Synod meeting of the GKN(Lib) along with another delegate yet to be firmed up. Though this might possibly conflict with our own Synod your Committee believes it is imperative, in light of

developments in the GKN(Lib), to have a delegation present in spite of this conflict.

Churches in the Congo and Kenya

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

International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)

The Rev. Jim Sawtelle and the Rev. Maynard Koerner attended the 2009 meeting of the ICRC on behalf of the IRC. Their report follows:

The eighth meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches convened on Thursday, October 15, 2009 and adjourned on October 22nd, 2009. The opening meeting was a prayer service held at Bishopdale Reformed Church, of the Reformed Church in New Zealand, the host denomination for this year's conference meeting.

The assembly began its work on Friday, with the roll call showing 22 of the 25 member churches represented. During the conference five more churches were received into membership: the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), the Independent Reformed Church in Korea, the Heritage Reformed Congregations, the Reformed Churches of Brazil, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India. Thus the total number of churches stands now at 30. The application for membership by a church in Kenya was referred to the next meeting so that further information could be obtained from them about certain constitutional requirements needed for membership in the conference.

Business sessions were held each day from 8:30 am to 5 pm. At night, delegates were treated to excellent meals, and at times entertainment, from the host church, the Bishopdale congregation. After the evening meal special guest speakers delivered papers assigned to them, each dealing with the theme of the conference, "The Vitality of the Reformed Faith." These talks were open to a popular audience. On the day following each address, the conference delegates were separated in to workshops in which the papers were discussed and responded to. The papers were as follows: "The Vitality of the Reformed Faith: Facing the Challenge of the Charismatic Movement," by Dr. George W. Knight III; "The Vitality of the Reformed Faith: Facing the Challenge of Individualism in Church Life," by Dr. Nelson Kloosterman; "The Vitality of the Reformed Faith: Facing the Challenge from Islam," by Dr. Frank Van Dalen; "The Vitality of the Reformed Faith: Facing the Challenge of the Asian Context," by Dr. Mohan Chacko. The papers were well prepared and generally excellent. The discussions in response were vigorous and helpful.

Much of the business done in the business sessions was routine. However, two matters that were most noteworthy. The first was in the area of missions. The Missions Committee presented its report highlighting the growing number of regional mission conferences made up of member churches. Two things that our Foreign Missions Committee should take note of from the report and actions of the body regarding the work of missions. The ICRC Missions Committee will be investigating the possibility of developing a pool of teachers available for short-term theological training in various areas of the world in which ICRC churches are doing mission work. The idea is that member churches that may be short on available men to teach may be able to "borrow" teachers from member ICRC churches who could fill out theological training needs. The short-term nature of these assignments would mean such work could be done at lower cost to the church needing such teachers. The Missions Committee also adopted Protocols on how members may deal with major disasters and persecuted Christians.

The other significant item of business was to accept a proposal from one of the member churches to appoint a committee to review all aspects of the Conference. A proposed

amendment to the Constitution was also passed along to the Review Committee for study and evaluation. The thought behind this review committee's work is to evaluate, after 25 years of the Conference's existence, how the Conference is fulfilling its mandate and mission; how well the Constitution covers the Conferences needs and procedures; and how the Conference might better serve the member churches.

The next meeting of the Conference is scheduled for September 2013 in Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom, hosted by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales.

Reflections from your delegates

First, both of your delegates were impressed by the work done at this conference. Anecdotally, veteran attendees told us that this was the best Conference meeting of the eight Conferences held in the last 25 years. It was well thought out, there was a minimum of controversy, and there was much fruitful development of contacts and communication among the delegates. The papers were excellent, and on a useful theme.

Second, it appeared evident to your two observers that the RCUS can be well served by these conferences in developing a better knowledge of some of our foreign Fraternal Churches. In particular, in the areas of missions we would do well to develop better communication with and knowledge of the foreign missions committees of many of these ICRC churches. Not only could we learn much from those who have more experience in various part of the world where we now have mission work, but also we may be able to tap resources among member churches for theological teaching and disaster assistance. Further, if the work in the Philippines develops, we would have the only mission work among the ICRC churches in that country. Yet, there may be language resources that we could draw upon among some the member churches for things like educational or evangelistic materials needed for the Christians in the Philippines.

Third, your delegates had a steep learning curve to deal with since we were both first timers at the Conference. Many delegates have been Conference attendees for numerous meetings. It is our suggestion that synod maintain continuity with respect to delegates in order to better build on the contacts developed in this meeting. We believe the RCUS could get more out of this Conference if we maintain some continuity of delegates.

Fourth, your delegates were pleased to note a great deal of unity in theological commitment among the member churches. The fellowship we enjoyed with the brothers there was truly encouraging and uplifting. At the same time, it is clear that some of the member churches are facing great pressures in their various settings to water down their historic biblical principles, or to be somewhat overly accommodating to social trends in the various contexts. Some of the pressures and theological trends we noted were: fuzzy views of the ongoing manifestation of charismatic gifts, especially in terms of how these would be viewed in a "missionary" context. The Asian churches in particular are dealing with this challenge, but also some of the European churches. The challenge of the place of women in the church, in particular the place of women in office is clearly a pressure felt among the European churches. The Asian churches express some troubling views regarding church government, in particular the notion of the perceived need for "bishops" in certain mission contexts. And many churches mentioned the struggles with how to maintain historic practices in worship and how it should be conducted in the modern world.

Fifth, it was heartening to hear of the mission work taking place among the Conference churches. The challenge of doing missions among Islamic countries is being pursued vigorously by some, and with growing fruitfulness. Mission work among the people of China is slowly beginning to open up for some member churches. The first South American

Church was received at this conference, and mission work is undertaken on that continent by a number of member churches. At the same time, it is sobering to note that the entire membership of the ICRC churches is around 500,000 souls.

Proposed Budget

Your Committee proposes the following budget for Synodical year 2010 -2011. Please note that this budget includes set aside amounts to fund travel to the Netherlands in 2011 and to Wales for the ICRC in 2013. It also includes an amount for a committee meeting which has not been needed for the past several years

1. Delegation to NAPARC Nov. 2010, Pompton Plains, NJ	\$2,000
2. Delegate to the OPC GA July, 2010 Palos Heights Ill	600
3. Delegate to the RPCNA Synod June, 2010, Beaver Falls, PA	400
4. Delegation to CanRC Synod May, 2010	1,000
5. Delegation to the URCNA July 2010	1,000
6. Delegation to the GKN(Lib) 2011	1,000
7. Delegation to the ICRC 2013	1,000
8. Interchurch Relations Committee Meeting (if needed)	3,000
9. Interchurch Relations Committee misc. expenses	<u>300</u>
Total	\$10,300

Recommendation #2: That the proposed budget be adopted. (NOTE: Synod reduced item #8 to \$00.00)

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Ron Potter, Chairman, Rev. Maynard Koerner, Rev. Jonathan Merica, Rev. C.W. Powell, Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. George Syms, Elder John Heerema, Elder Vern Ochsner, Elder Jim Snyder, Elder Earl Van Houten

J. Ministerial Aid Fund Committee

Esteemed Brothers:

The subcommittee of the RCUS is pleased to inform the RCUS Synod that the fund reached its \$1 million goal in early 2010. Total value of the fund recorded on April 15, 2010 was \$1,002,499.81.

Activity of the subcommittee for the year includes:

1. Fund activities were audited by a CPA in April 2010. The audit resulted in a letter by the auditor recommending the following action:

a. Recommendation of Auditor to place full oversight of the funds involving deposits and withdrawals of funds under RCUS Treasurer accountability, where the RCUS treasurer would serve as the sole trustee of the fund. The subcommittee supports the recommendation.

2. The Subcommittee re-validated the set point for withdrawal on income (interest & earnings) for use for ministerial aid funding needs to only occur when the fund is at \$1 million or greater. Withdrawal of 80% of the income to be used only on Ministerial Aid Fund needs with the remaining 20% reinvested. The set point number and income numbers to be based on the calendar year end number.

3. The Subcommittee reviewed and approved financial proposals in two key areas of funds management.

These proposals were as follows:

a. All funds combined under one financial institution
 b. Funds movement within the account to be placed under the accountability of the RCUS Treasurer.

4. General agreement reached to conduct face-to-face meetings with three candidate financial managers.

Other financial institutions may be considered as the subcommittee evaluates appropriate options.

5. Mr. David McPherson indicated lack of interest in being involved in the subcommittee and offered to resign from the committee on April 29, 2010. His resignation email to the chairman of the MAF Fund committee was received on May 10, 2010.

The Subcommittee forwards the following recommendations for consideration by the RCUS Synod of 2010.

1. The Subcommittee recommends the RCUS Synod of 2010 accept the resignation of Mr. David McPherson.

2. The Subcommittee recommends that the RCUS Synod of 2010 express their thanks and appreciation to Mr. David McPherson for his involvement in guiding the MAP fund development for the past 15 years.

3. The Subcommittee recommends that Mr. Ralph Goehring from the RCUS Western Classis be nominated and accepted as the replacement for Mr. McPherson on the MAP Subcommittee.

4. The Subcommittee recommends the RCUS Treasurer serve as the sole trustee of MAF fund accounts on behalf of the RCUS. Direction for fund placement and withdrawal supported via guidance of the MAF subcommittee.

Sub-committee members: *Mr. Mark Fisher (Chmn.), Mr. David MacPherson, Mr. Spencer Gross, Mr. Ray Schnabel*

Respectfully submitted,

R. H. Schnabel, sub-com. clerk

K. Publications and Promotions

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

There was minimal work done by the Publications Committee this past year. The Committee did meet in Sacramento on February 25, 2010 to discuss the various projects that have been in the works and to meet with the Rev. Eric Bristley to discuss how to improve his involvement with the publishing projects of the Synod. Specifically we discussed obtaining an estimate for the work of completing the change over to the NKJV in all of the references in the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort in our Three Forms of Unity book. He has since supplied a bid estimate of \$350.00 to complete that project and make the Three Forms of Unity ready for the next time it is to be printed.

A bid was obtained for the reprinting of the Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism Workbook with the goal of bringing the per copy cost down. A quote has been obtained with the costs for 500 at \$4,467.00 or \$8.95 each; 1,000 for \$5,856.00 or \$5.85 each; and 2,000 for \$9,177.00 or \$4.58 each. There would be some added cost to this price for shipping. There were also numerous requests that a different kind of binding material be used in the future. This bid includes the plastic continuous spiral binding that is much

sturdier.

The Committee has been discussing whether the concept of utilizing a digital printing house for many of our publications would be more economical than the cost savings that only come with large runs. In particular the committee is thinking in terms of the printing of the Constitution when that is ready to be printed.

The reprinting of the New Trinity Hymnal was investigated, but the last of the Hymnal stock was just sold and there has been no other congregations expressing interest in obtaining this edition in the near future. Since the reprinting has been authorized, the committee will continue to monitor the need to republish more in the future and recommend we do so when there is a demand.

Following discussions with the Reformed Herald editor, there does not seem to be any need to make any changes in the current arrangements and budgets from last year. There was some discussion about going to publishing the Herald six times a year, with double type editions similar to that of this year's special Calvin edition. We are grateful for the work of Rev. Paul Treick as in his role as the Reformed Herald editor and appreciate his willingness to continue in that role for another year.

There have been several inquiries about whether the Traditional version of the catechism will be reprinted or not anytime in the near future. Currently there are over 2,000 copies of the Three Forms of Unity in the Traditional version, and 265 hard copies of just the Heidelberg Catechism. There has been only a minimal decrease in these numbers over the past several years indicating that only a handful of congregations are still using this version. An inventory of the current stock in the RCUS bookstore has been included for consideration.

Recommendations:

1. That Rev. Paul Treick be nominated to serve as the Reformed Herald editor.
2. That \$500 be budgeted for expenses incurred by the editor of the Reformed Herald.
3. That Olive Tree Publications be compensated at a rate of \$35.00 per hour limited to layout work done to publish the Reformed Herald.
4. That the Publications and Promotions Committee utilize the services of Rev. Bristley in making the changes to convert to the NKJV in all Bible references in the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Hank Bowen, Rev. Paul Henderson, Rev. Sam Powell,
Rev. Frank Walker, Elder Jess Johnson, Elder Brent Tjeerdsma,
Elder Tom Lagomarsino, Elder Greg Stewart*

Website Sub-Committee

Dear brothers,

The Synodical website committee received reports and invoices from Rev. Eric Bristley throughout the year. Rev. Bristley's invoices were according to a flat rate of \$300 per month for services and \$41.50 per month for the cost of web hosting and software upgrades. Rev. Bristley kept the committee well-informed, responding to questions a few times during the year for more detail regarding what he had been doing.

We therefore recommend that the current budget and process remain the same for the following year, and thank Rev. Bristley for his efforts.

Recommendation #1: That Synod contract with Rev. Bristley in the amount of \$3600

to maintain the RCUS website for the next synodical year.

Recommendation #2: That Synod approve a budget of \$500 for web hosting and software expenses for the website for the next synodical year.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Matt Powell, Rev. Frank Walker, Elder Jim Drewes

L. Develop eBooks

Esteemed Brethren:

The Permanent Committee to Develop eBooks submits this report of its labors to the 264th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States.

This past Synodical year, the committee members carried out its business satisfactorily by phone and e-mail.

The Synod delegated the following work to the committee:

Commissioned by the 263rd Synod:

In keeping with recommendation 17 of the Abstract of the 263rd Synod, page 72, "*That the permanent eBooks Committee establish a price for the cost of downloading eBooks from the RCUS website and report back to the 264th Synod for approval of their recommendation,*" the committee proposes that the Website Committee offer the RCUS Electronic Reference Library Collection on the RCUS Website as one unit for downloading at the current cost of \$35 for RCUS members and \$49 for non-RCUS members.

Commissioned by the 262nd Synod:

In keeping with recommendation 12 of the Abstract of the 262nd Synod, page 80, "*That the annual publication of the Reformed Herald and printed RCUS Abstracts of the Minutes of Synod be electronically upgraded annually and be developed with the built-in features and functionalities of searching globally across all the indexed issues,*" the committee commissioned Rev. Eric Bristley to upgrade the eReformed Herald and eRCUS Abstracts of Synod Collection.

As informed by Rev Bristley, the new upgrades that include the current issues to the eReformed Herald and eRCUS Abstracts of Synod Collection DVD disk will be made available at the 264th Synod and to the RCUS Book Depository for inventory.

The eReformed Herald and eRCUS Abstracts of Synod Collection DVD disk is set at a one-time cost of \$20.00; and thereafter, free annual upgrades of current issues will be made available for RCUS members at the RCUS Book Depository.

In keeping with recommendation 13, "*That the Committee to Develop eBooks maintain at its discretion, an RCUS Book Depository inventory of copies of CDRoms of the RCUS Electronic Reference Library and of the RCUS Reformed Herald collection,*" the Depository manger reports that there are 36 copies of the RCUS Electronic Reference Library Collection and no copies of the eRCUS Reformed Herald Collection on inventory.

Commissioned by the 260th Synod:

In keeping with the Abstract of the 260th Synod recommendation 3, "*That the Special Committee continue with the promotion of the sale of The RCUS Electronic Reference Library (version 2.0),*" your committee continues to promote the RCUS Electronic Library Reference Collection.

In the interest of promoting the RCUS Electronic Library References Collection, the

committee will be contacting several eBook developers that exclusively publish completed hard copies and electronic copies of Christian religious works.

There are three major developers that founded their companies in the late 80's and early 90's that aggressively and successfully promote their products: Logos Research Systems, WORDsearch Corp., and QuickVerse.

The committee plans to approach these three companies, and perhaps others, to initiate a possible interest in adding the RCUS Electronic Library Reference Collection to their collections and to report its findings to the 265th Synod.

Recommendation: that the Website Committee offer the RCUS Electronic Reference Library Collection on the RCUS Website as one unit for downloading at the current cost of \$35 for RCUS members and \$49 for non-RCUS members.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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

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

Fraternal delegates included: Rev. Mark Richline, fraternal delegate of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; Rev. Adam Kaloostian and Rev. Gregory W. Bero, fraternal delegates of the Synod the United Reformed Churches in North America. These delegates addressed the body as a Special Order of the Day on May 19. (See XII)

Institutional representatives were welcomed and later addressed the body. (See XII)

VII. Welcome of New Ministers

The President welcomed three new ministers: Rev. Phil Poe, pastor of Harvest RCUS, Minot, ND; Rev. Joe Vusich, pastor of Emmanuel RCUS, Sutton, NE; and Rev. Steve Altman, pastor of Peace RCUS, Napoleon, OH. The body extended the right hand of fellowship to these men and the assembly was led in prayer for the blessing of God as they enter the ministry of the RCUS.

VIII. Welcome of New Churches

There were no new churches received this year.

IX. Reports of Officers

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

Esteemed Brethren:

Excerpts from the reports of the Presidents of the Executive Committees of the Classes (cf. The Constitution of the RCUS, Art. 111), moving from the East to the West, provide the following synopsis of the state of the Reformed Church in the United States:

Covenant East Classis: "In Phil. 2:19 we read: *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know of your state.*" Although it was not the apostolic practice to require a parochial report from each of the

churches that they over-saw, apparently an inquiry was made in the case of the Philippian church, by the apostle Paul, as to their state. In other words, the apostle sought, under the Lordship of Christ, to inquire into *how things fared* within the parameters of the Philippian church (cf. Phil. 2:1ff.). . . . It is evident in reading the parochial reports that the apostle Paul would be comforted by the state of the Covenant East Classis if the three benchmarks that he consistently applied, of faith, hope and love, were applied to our Classis churches. What Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he could write to our Classis: *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God* (1 Thess. 1:2-4). . . . That is not to say we are without our problems and struggles even as the churches to which the apostle Paul wrote were not without theirs. But it is to say we are not contending with doctrinal errors or strife or divisions that threaten the peace and unity of the church. Where disturbances have arisen, the local consistories have handled matters in a godly fashion."

"[Covenant East Classis] has certainly developed a mission consciousness under the lead of our Home Missions Committee. It was not many years ago that we had no mission works within our jurisdiction; now there are two, one in the south and one in the east, with the prospect of a third in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The latter will be the first "daughter church" in our Classis as Redeemer RCUS forges ahead with plans to plant such a church. In addition, our ongoing contact with the Sovereign Grace Church of Gettysburg, PA, is resulting in closer ties that, Lord willing, may, in time, add another faithful congregation to our number, again in the East, but perilously close to the Mason-Dixon Line."

Northern Plains Classis: "In Matt. 16:18, Jesus declares: *I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* In faith that the church is safely in God's hands, we rejoice that the battle is the Lord's and He will prevail. Bearing this in mind, we turn to the state of our classis as we enter 2010. Looking at our statistics, we see that, once again, our communicant membership fell [although] the decline is one seventh of what it was in 2009. . . . We need to be in prayer that the Lord will prosper the preaching of the Gospel in our Classis."

"Surveying the state of our churches, what conclusions can we reach? As to the past, we see that God is faithful to His church. Certainly, we could be larger. God asks in Zechariah 4:10: *Who has despised the day of small things?* May it not be us. We need to be thankful to God for His great blessings to our classis. On the other hand, we are not ever to content ourselves with the status quo (large or small), but press on to be faithful to the mission which God has entrusted to us. As to the future, the details found in this report cannot be used as tea leaves to read what lies in store for us. However, as God has been with us in the past, so we can trust Him in the future."

"It remains only to say that what God requires of us is faithfulness and diligent attention to the duties laid upon us. As to the effects of our ministries, that is in God's hands. We read in I Cor. 3:7: *So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.* This is not to say that we are to take a fatalistic attitude. Rather, in the midst of all we do, we must fervently labor in prayer that God will prosper the work of our hands."

South Central Classis: "As we stand here today, we find ourselves in a time of economic and political uncertainty. Our government is trillions of dollars in debt; we have a high unemployment rate; and there is a political undercurrent of discontent among many citizens that I have rarely, if ever, seen. I am reminded of the words of the prophet Habakkuk who was also facing difficult political and economic times. He wrote: *Though the*

fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines, Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls—Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills (3:17-19). Ultimately, it does not matter who is in political control or how the economy is doing. Our hope comes from knowing the Lord. The Church of Jesus Christ must remain faithful to Him. . . . As we note the difficult times in our country, I have to say that things in our Classis seem to be going relatively well. . . . I see many positive things. . . . [One] is missions. Greeley is in its last year of mission support and Vermillion is going off of mission support this year. This leaves us with Limon as the only ongoing mission work of our Classis. However, there is the possibility of starting a work in Omaha. Omaha and Denver were two cities that we have somewhat “targeted” as major metropolitan cities in our Classis without an RCUS congregation, in which we would like to start mission works. We also have learned of a Bible study in Sherman, TX, with which Rev. Neale Riffert is working. Also, the Rapid City congregation has indicated that they would be desirous of starting a work in Scottsbluff, NE. . . . All in all, things are going well in the SCC. There is always room for improvement and we should continue to work and to pray for growth.”

Western Classis: “There is never anything humdrum or routine about reading your reports, since you are reporting the works of the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in the congregations. I am reminded of that massive tome, “The Great Works of Christ in America” by Cotton Mather, which pictures in two volumes the early settlement of America seen through the spectacles of this great man of God. Likewise, the works of the Lord in our churches is not any less ‘great;’ we still have ‘an errand in the wilderness,’ namely to preach the Gospel and to implement the Cultural Mandate of Gen. 1:26-28 (which I believe to be re-published in the Great Commission in Matt. 28:20). Also, every year marks new adventures: Christ does new things in each church and the Devil is always shooting new fiery arrows at us, too. Sometimes Satan’s arrows are doctrinal temptations; and at other times their goal is ungodly living. I am reminded of Psalm 64, which is the ‘Archer’s Psalm.’ The Psalm tells us that our enemies bend their bows to shoot bitter arrows at us, but verse 7 tells us that God shoots them with His own arrows so that ‘suddenly they shall be wounded.’ I witnessed a lot of archery in your reports!”

“After reading your reports, it was clear that the Obama stimulus package has not benefited the Western Classis. Yet, in the midst of this economic Pearl Harbor, the Lord has driven us to our knees, and made us rely upon Him more and more. There were wonderful answers to your George Mueller-like prayers, as the Lord time and time again demonstrated His covenant faithfulness! Yet, while Governor Schwarzenegger recently said that the worst of the recession was over, other economists are not so sure. A recent report in California said that about 47% of all California home-owners pay mortgages on homes that are worth less now than what they originally paid. If this is true, it would seem plausible that big trouble is still to come. One could ask: Is the so-called light at the end of the tunnel really a gorilla with a flashlight? I think our churches should practice financial vigilance in the near term.”

“I did hear a lot about prayer and I know that whenever God’s people pray, they pray for the salvation of lost sinners. Still, a good question I often ask myself is this: What specific person are we praying to be converted? If there are no names written on our hearts, then there is a defect in our ministries. Yes, I know that God has called us to be pastors, not evangelists. Yet every Christian is commanded by Paul to have his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace (cf. Eph. 6:15). My view is that if we are not on the

cutting edge of praying for the lost, then this is a telltale sign that we are lukewarm in missionary zeal. If there is little *passion* for evangelism, then there is little *compassion* for the sinners who need to be evangelized. . . . It seems that whenever a church (regardless of its size) determines to evangelize itself ‘out of existence,’ that it grows! This is because our God is exceedingly pleased with missions. No community suffers from too much Gospel preaching.”

Some additional comments on the State of the Church

Statistically and financially we continue to hold our own. One notable statistic was the number of members (88) lost by erasure or discipline, an increase of 37% over the previous year. Besides being a cause for sorrow, it also brings to mind a related question which would be a cause for joy and show the very purpose for discipline: Should we have a statistic column for members restored?

While we must be thankful that God has sustained us for another year, we cannot be content with the status quo. There are encouraging signs for future growth with the likely addition of a new congregation in PA and the projection of new works in all of the Classes along with available funding made possible now by former works having become self-supporting.

This brings up a critical need that should weigh heavily upon us, i.e., men to preach and teach in vacant congregations, in new works, and replacements for those who have, or are, retiring. While we believe the Lord will provide, are we earnestly bringing this matter to the Lord in prayer? We have the institutions in place to train and prepare men for the ministry. Where are the men or students? Should not the church be producing such? While we are and must be thankful for those ministers who come to us from other denominations, this is not and cannot be the norm. Consider why it is that Article 84 of our Constitution requires that “reception of a minister from another denomination shall not be final until it is confirmed by Synod.” Is it not because Synod has a vested interest in those who occupy its pulpits? The education and training of its ministers is the primary concern of Synod; the Synod is to approve and/or oversee the seminaries; it finances the seminary education of its students; it requires the Classes, through their respective Stated Clerks, to report to the Stated Clerk of Synod all licensures, ordinations, suspensions, depositions, etc., of ministers; whereas, none of this has been the case with ministers coming from another denomination. The original point being that we (ministers, elders, parents) must become proactive and diligent in encouraging our own young men to consider the Gospel ministry. This effort can only succeed if we begin by instilling in them a knowledge and love for the Reformed faith along with a zeal and the courage to defend and promote the same in the face of the false Arminian theology that surrounds us today. Is not this the purpose of our catechetical instruction and the reason for requiring confessional subscription of our members? That they will know that Heidelberg Catechism #20 defines the Gospel as truly as does Jn. 3:16? That they will be able to discern the true faith from that which is false and the true church from that which is apostate? To require of those who will become ministers and elders the following: “Do you honestly and in good conscience before the Lord declare that you believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine in the confessions of this Church, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt, are in complete and accurate agreement with the Word of God; and do you promise to teach and defend the same in good faith and reject all doctrines conflicting therewith?” May God give us, and those who come after us, the courage to be true to that vow! Should such a stand result in persecution and reproach, then God enable us to say as the apostle Paul when a prisoner appealing to King Agrippa: “*And Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian.’ Then*

Paul said, 'I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains'' (Acts 26:29).

While suffering set-backs, the Free Reformed Church of Kenya and the newly recognized United Reformed Churches of the Congo continue in spite of Satan's attempts to cause strife, hatred and division. Our comfort and assurance is that the Lord builds His church, which, at times, involves purging. May God give wisdom and courage to the Foreign Ministries Committee as it attempts to bring about reconciliation and as it continues to give counsel and direction to these sister denominations in transitioning to a fully reformed structure of church government. Also, may God raise up another missionary to carry on the labors of our brother, Tom Mayville. Another disturbing item to come out of the Foreign Ministries Radio Administration Sub-Committee Report is that Rev. Eric Kayayan "may be relocating to France, as the situation in South Africa is increasingly less safe." On an encouraging note, through the teaching and leadership of RCUS ministers, the United Covenant Reformed Church in the Philippines, continues to develop toward a more Presbyterian form of government.

Other matters of concern coming before Synod which may affect the state of the church: The Special Committee on Synodical Procedures has submitted its report and recommendations for more judicious use of Synod's time. Synod will decide if these recommendations have merit and accomplish the objective. There are two sub-committee reports attached to the Christian Education Committee Report. The Sub-Committee to Confer with Dordt College reports on concerns with the college and issues a warning with regard to some problematic teachings of three professors. The Sunday School Curriculum Sub-Committee is recommending that the current project not be scrapped, but refocused and revised.

There is an item of unfinished business from the Executive Committee Report reminding us that Synod must decide where to place or invest the monies received from the Arthur Mehlhaf estate.

The Interchurch Relations Committee brings the following concerns: This coming July there are two major papers coming before the Synod of the URCNA—Justification and the Federal Vision and the reception of believers into communicant membership without requiring parents to present their unbaptized children for the sign and seal of the covenant. This latter paper, it is believed, will be presented by an evenly divided committee, pro and con. A sub-committee continues to investigate reports of some disturbing developments within the GKN (Lib).

The Ministerial Aid Fund (MAF) has now reached the one million dollar mark. Decisions will need to be made as to how to proceed from this point forward.

In conclusion, the state of the church is secure in Christ. He will build His church and the "gates of hell" shall not prevail. In Christ we can be bold and "*not ashamed of the gospel . . . for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes*" (Rom. 1:16). "*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession*" (Heb. 4:14).

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Vernon Pollema

B. Stated Clerk's Report (and Necrology)

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

In accordance with the requirements of this office, your clerk has preserved the minutes

of the 263rd Synod with all supporting documents. An Abstract of the actions of Synod, dedicated to the memory of Rev. Aaron Kayayan, including reports was prepared and published in accord with Standing Rule 10. Copies of this Abstract and a Directory of Congregations (1,693 Abstracts and 1,317 Directories of Congregations) were distributed to all ministers and congregations of Synod, as well as to all churches with which we maintain fraternal relations. The Index of Positions and Resolutions included in the Abstract was updated.

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

The minutes and all supporting documents were scanned and saved on CD in Adobe pdf format. All Eureka Classis and Synod Minutes from 1983 through 2009 were saved on two separate external hard drives. One is kept by the clerk and one was sent to the chairman of the Synod Archives Committee. Hard paper copies are also saved, but are stored with the clerk in a fireproof file cabinet.

I was directed to contact Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF) for their financial statement. I wrote to them in this regard and was directed to their Website which has a financial summary by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. I was able to print out records from 2006 to 2008. After contacting them, they said they would notify me when the 2009 figures were available, but I have not heard from them at this time. Currently their Website only gives figures as late as 2008. These indicate their funds used as follows: 92.8% for Program Expenses; 1.7% for Administrative Expenses; and 5.5% for Fund Raising Expenses. In 2008 they fell \$20,233 short of expenses, but had an asset balance of \$69,417.

A letter was sent to Mr. Ted Griess regarding the Annuity of Mr. Arthur Mehlhaf which was passed by Executive Circular 263-1, authorizing him to deposit the money. Monies from this estate are to be held in the treasury at this time and should be dealt with by this Synod.

I was in contact with Rev. Phillip Poe who inquired about vacancies. I sent his resume to all the vacant churches in the RCUS. Rev. Jaap Steenkamp, a pastor in South Africa also contacted me as to what was required to enter the RCUS ministry. He states that his church affiliation is with the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa). He is 32 years old, married without children, and has been in the ministry for almost 4 years. He subscribes to the Three Forms of Unity, the Westminster Standards, as well as the historic creeds of the church – the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. I gave him some information as to how this would need to be done, and asked that he look at the RCUS Website for constitutional direction also.

I sent another letter to the IRS informing them of the list of RCUS congregations which fall under our Federal Identification Number 51-0202914 and the RCUS's Group Exemption number 2092. Last year I receive nothing back regarding this filing. This year I received a letter stating that each subordinate (church) was to have an Employer Identification Number or complete a form SS-4 for all who do not have an EIN. Thus far I have called their office and left information for a call-back, but have not received one to date. In a related matter we were also sent a separate tax due bill for just over \$15.00. Ted Griess and I are trying to trace that down since we don't file as a denomination, but our congregations do use the Fed ID number for exemption purposes. Hopefully these issues can be resolved soon.

The various Classes clerks sent their material to me in a timely manner and with few

problems. Once again, it is very helpful if all committees and others making reports could send me these in digital word-processing format as opposed to just a pdf. file, so I would not have to retype or scan them. Please do remember to have a copy signed by a majority of the committee members for the Clerk to put into the records. With emailing reports this is often being neglected.

I sent invitations to all churches with which we have fraternal relations and to institutions that we support, to attend this year's Synod meeting.

One Necrology that I have received accompanies this report. If there are others, please send them to the clerk.

Thank you all for your cooperation during the past year.

Sincerely in Christ,
Rev. Paul H. Treick

Necrology

Leo Markus Richert (1917 – 2009) was born January 17th, 1917 in Reedley, California to John and Martha Richert, one of six children. He graduated from Reedley High School in 1935. He was inducted into the Army in April of 1941 and served in the South Pacific during World War II with the first medical regiment as a surgical technician in a field hospital. He received a discharge on September of 1945.

He moved to Stockton, California in 1947 where he worked for Breuner's Furniture Store in the delivery department. He retired after 35 years. In 1950 he married Eva, the love of his life, with whom he raised two children (Steven and Angie). He was a lifetime member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Luneta Post 52 serving as adjutant, quartermaster, and commander. He was also a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association.

Leo was a kind and gentle man who spoke volumes with very few words, a godly man who witnessed to others through the way he lived. He was also a faithful and active Christian servant. He was a member of Eastside Presbyterian Church of Stockton (PCUSA) from 1957 to 1983 and later became a charter member at the founding of Providence Reformed Church of Lodi, California where he served as deacon and later as an elder. At age 91, he decided not to stand for another three-year term of office as elder, being the oldest active elder in the RCUS at the time. He continued as a faithful member of Providence RCUS until his passing into glory with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on July 4th, 2009 at the age of 92.

Preceding him in death are his parents, John and Martha Richert, and a brother, Talmon Richert. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Eva; Rev. Steven Richert and his wife Nancy of Brookings, South Dakota; and daughter, Angela Sonner and her husband, David of Lodi, California; and four siblings. He had four grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

As the Scripture declares; "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

C. Treasurer's Report

Esteemed Brothers:

The RCUS financial reports for the fiscal year 2009-2010 have been completed and copies are enclosed. Our cash balance increased by \$9,939.83 to \$496,918.60 as of January 31, 2010. This cash balance includes \$23,401.50 which the RCUS received as a distribution from the Arthur Mehlhaf Estate. Without those funds the cash balance would have decreased by \$13,461.67. As of that same date our outstanding notes increased by \$58,174.03 to \$102,857.14.

All of the churches with outstanding building loans are current on their loan payments. As approved by last year's Synod a \$50,000 loan to First Reformed Church of Aberdeen, SD, and a \$30,000 loan to Trinity Reformed Church of Modesto, CA were added to the outstanding loans. Following the close of the fiscal year Providence Reformed in Limon, CO paid off its loan.

This year the special missions offering went to Grace RCUS in Greeley, CO. The offerings which went through Synod amounted to \$10,064.37. The Treasurer of Grace RCUS informs me that they received additional funds in the amount of \$7,773.11.

The amount paid to the Ministerial Aid Fund to be invested was \$38,218.38. This past year all of those funds came from guideline payments. The Ministerial Aid Fund increased by \$259,167.52 to \$1,002,499.81 as of April 12, 2010. We would appear to be in a position where we can start drawing from the Fund.

Last year's Synod approved a recommendation that the Treasurer's books be subject to a "complete" audit. It was my opinion that the auditor should be someone close in proximity to my location, because a more complete audit would require my records being turned over to the auditor for a time. After reviewing a couple of proposals the Executive Committee agreed that the audit would be done by Amy Baumert, who is a member of the Emmanuel Reformed Church in Sutton. Copies of her work are included as a part of the Treasurer's reports.

As this is being written I am completing the Manual of Procedures for the Treasurer of the RCUS as directed by Synod. My intention is to have presented them to the Executive Committee by the time Synod meets, and to have them available during Synod for either the Finance Committee or any delegate to review.

Last year's Synod approved a recommendation that some arrangement be made so that the Treasurer's duties would be met in the event that for some reason I would be unable to do so. Dan Griess, who is an Elder and the Treasurer at Hope Reformed Church in Sutton, agreed to do so. We haven't spent much time reviewing the procedures of the office, but since Hope uses a similar program to what Synod is now using there should not be much difficulty for him if called upon to substitute for me.

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

Recommendations:

1. That Synod authorize the funds received from the Arthur Mehlhaf Estate to be transferred to the Ministerial Aid Fund.
2. That the various churches be reminded that the fiscal year of Synod ends on Jan. 31, and that guideline payments must be received by that date in order to be credited to the prior year.

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

To the Executive Committee Reformed Church in the United States,

I have reviewed the accompanying statements of assets and liabilities, cash basis, of the Reformed Church in the United States, a nonprofit organization, and the statements of revenue, expenses and fund balances, cash basis, for the twelve months ended January 31, 2010. My review consisted of inquiries of personnel, analytical procedures and transactions testing to ensure balances were accurate and complete. Based on my review, I am not aware

of any material modifications that should be made to the financial statements in order for them to be presented on the basis of accounting described in note 1, which has been applied in a manner consistent with prior years.

Amy J. Baumert, Accountant

STATEMENTS OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Cash basis	01/31/10	01/31/09
Current Assets		
Cash	\$0.00	\$0.00
Checking	\$496,918.60	\$486,978.77
Total Current Assets		
Other Assets		
Notes Receivable Unsecured	\$102,857.14	\$44,683.11
Total Assets	\$599,775.74	\$531,661.88
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES		
Liabilities	00.00	00.00
Fund Balances	\$599,775.74	\$531,661.88
Total Liabilities and Fund Bal.	\$599,775.74	\$531,661.88

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

Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting: The Reformed Church of the United States prepares its financial statement on the cash basis method of accounting

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

Note 2: Notes Receivable

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

FUND BALANCES

	Beginning Bal.	Income	Expenses	Ending Bal.
Building Fund	\$123,431.18	\$24,643.68	\$80,000.00	\$68,074.86
Checking Transfers		0.00	0.00	0.00
Deficit Reduction	426.92	0.00	0.00	426.92
Diaconal	5,230.08	6,802.14	1,896.20	10,136.02
Dordt College	-87.75	5,351.37	5,263.62	0.00
Foreign Ministries	78,285.70	130,586.09	118,718.51	90,153.28
General Benevolence	-3,498.11	43,854.29	39,200.00	1,156.18

Reformed Herald	-21,097.78			-21,097.78
General Publishing	77,859.07	56,075.88	48,941.74	84,993.21
Home Missions	153,082.33	88,740.61	68,173.47	173,649.47
Hope Haven	0.00	8,713.54	8,713.54	0.00
MERF	0.00	6,087.54	6,087.54	0.00
Ministerial Aid	525.00	37,693.38	38,218.38	0.00
Ministerial Relief	1,481.70	183,936.00	199,000.00	-13,582.30
Seminaries	0.00	17,805.83	17,805.83	0.00
Student Aid	8,929.20	2,636.23	3,250.00	8,315.43
Synod Dues	61,224.73	50,166.07	41,285.49	70,105.31
Other Assets	44,683.11	80,000.00	21,825.97	102,857.14
Unallocated Income	1,186.50	23,401.50	0.00	24,588.00

LOANS RECEIVABLE

	Beginning Bal.	New Note	Principle	Interest	Ending Bal.
Grass Valley, 3%	\$9,431.00		\$3,237.53	\$184.03	\$6,193.47
Rock Springs 3%	17,209.47		3,070.66	436.97	14,138.81
Limon 3%	4,643.79		3,517.78	82.22	1,126.01
Modesto 3%	13,398.85	30,000.00	12,000.00	0.00	31,398.85
Aberdeen 3%	0.00	50,000.00		750.00	50,000.00

PROFIT & LOSS SUMMARIES (2-2009 - 1-2010)

INCOME

Benevolence	\$43,854.29
Building Fund	24,643.68
Diaconal	6,802.14
Dordt College	5,351.37
Dues	50,166.07
Foreign Ministries	130,586.09
Home Missions	88,740.61
Hope Haven	8,713.54
MERF	6,087.54
Ministerial Aid	37,693.38
Ministerial Relief	183,936.00
Publications	56,075.88
Seminaries	17,805.83
Student Aid	2,636.23
Unallocated Income	23,401.50
TOTAL INCOME	686,494.15

EXPENSES	
Benevolence	39,200.00
Building - Expense	80,000.00
Diaconal	1,896.20
Dordt College	5,337.57
Dues	41,285.49
Foreign Ministries	118,718.51
Home Missions	68,173.47
Hope Haven	8,713.54
MERF	6,087.54
Ministerial Aid	38,218.38
Ministerial Relief	199,000.00
Publications	48,941.74
Seminaries	17,805.83
Student Aid	3,250.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	676,554.32
Net Income	9,939.83

MINISTERIAL AID FUND

Certificates of Deposit	
Dakota Bank	\$231,301.44
Wells Fargo	99,518.26
Total CD Value	330,820.70
Mutual Fund Accounts	
American Funds	534,172.86
Vanguard Funds	137,506.25
Total Mutual Funds	671,679.11
TOTAL MAF FUNDS	\$1,002,499.81

Manual of Procedures for the Office of Treasurer

[In 2009, the Synod requested the Treasurer to prepare a manual which outlines the duties of the treasurer of the RCUS. It follows.]

1. The first of each month checks are to be sent for those items which Synod has approved to be paid on a monthly basis. Examples of these include: Ministerial Relief, Benevolence, and Home Missions.
2. Other monies are distributed whenever requested by a Chairman or sub-chairman of a particular committee or when statements are received for items approved by Synod. Examples of these would include: Foreign Missions, Diaconal, and Reformed Herald Publication costs.
3. Remittance requests are honored if the individual requesting them appears to have participated in work approved by Synod. Examples of these would include: Mileage and Lodging expenses for attending meetings of Synod committees.

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

of Synod and the terms of the loan need to be set out in the motion approved by Synod. The terms should include a repayment plan, interest rate, and collateral taken, if any. As a part of the yearly Treasurer's report to Synod the report would include the amount remaining due on the outstanding loan and whether the payments are being made.

16. The RCUS makes loans to students for the ministry who are under care. The amount of the loan is approved of by Synod, and the funds are sent to the student when requested by him, together with the Student Loan Agreement. The student signs the Student Loan Agreement stating that he intends to serve the RCUS for a period of 5 years following graduation, and in the event that he fails to serve the RCUS for those 5 years, the student agrees to repay the loan within the 5 years following his separation from the ministry of the RCUS. The original of the Student Loan Agreement is sent to the Stated Clerk.

17. After January 31, the Treasurer should receive a report from the Ministerial Aid Fund showing the investments and the growth or loss within the fund for the prior fiscal year.

18. As soon as practical after the end of the fiscal year, the Treasurer's records and the report of the Ministerial Aid Fund should be forwarded to the Auditor for review. Any discrepancy found by the Auditor should be accounted for.

19. Before May 1, the Treasurer's report, audit report, and report of the Ministerial Aid Fund should be forwarded to the delegates to the next Synod meeting.

X. Membership and Financial Statistics

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

XI. Reports from RCUS Fraternal Delegates

All reports are included in the Interchurch Relations Committee report in this Abstract.

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

Rev. Mark Richline, fraternal delegate from the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, brought fraternal greetings to the assembly on behalf of the OPC. Rev. Adam Kaloostian, fraternal delegate from the United Reformed Churches in North America brought fraternal greetings to the assembly on behalf of the URCNA. A letter of fraternal greeting was read from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Liberated (GKN-Lib), written by Dr. M. H. Oosterhuis, general secretary of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. There were no greetings or representatives sent from the Canadian Reformed Churches (who are meeting at their synod at this time) or the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.

Dr. Carl Zylstra, President of Dordt College, Sioux Center, IA, addressed the body on behalf of the college and answered questions posed by delegates. Mr. Marlow Van Ginkel, representing Hope Haven, addressed the assembly regarding the work of Hope Haven. Mr. Mark Casson, Executive Director of Metanoia Prison Ministries addressed the body. Mr. Garry Moes, Development Director and Development of Recruiting, addressed the assembly on behalf of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Rev. C. W. Powell addressed the body for New Geneva Theological Seminary. Rev. Frank Walker addressed the body for City Seminary of Sacramento. Rev. Maynard Koerner addressed the body for Heidelberg Theological Seminary.

XIII. Reports of Board Members and Liaisons

Mid-America Reformed Seminary

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers:

It has been my privilege to serve another year as the RCUS representative on the Board of MidAmerica Reformed Seminary attended the semi-annual board meeting in September, including a banquet in honor of Dr. Nelson Kloosterman, professor of Ethics and New Testament Studies, for his twenty-five years of service to the Seminary. I also plan to attend the Annual meeting on Thursday and Friday of this week, along with the 2⁵th Annual Commencement. The Seminary is graduating seven men this year, including RCUS student Jimmy Hall from Peace Reformed Church in Garner, Iowa.

In addition to the Board meetings, I've served as the secretary of the Faculty Development Committee, which is focusing on filling a faculty position in New Testament Studies. Dr. Kloosterman has decided to discontinue his work as hill-time professor as of December 31, 2010, to which the Board acquiesced with regret. The following advertisement is currently being published in various periodicals, including the May edition of the Reformed Herald:

New Testament Position Available: Mid-America Reformed Seminary announces an opening in New Testament Studies. Applicants should be able to teach Greek and courses in New Testament exegesis and biblical theology, and ordinarily have a postgraduate research degree in New Testament. Membership in a Reformed or Presbyterian church is required, and ordination and pastoral experience is especially desirable. Applicants should send a copy of their curriculum vitae, including names of two references, to Dr. Cornelis P. Venema, President, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, 229 Seminary Drive, Dyer, Indiana, 46311.

I encourage any qualified ministers in the RCUS who might be interested to prayerfully consider applying for this position, and I'd be happy to share any more information that might be helpful.

Mid-America continues faithfully being engaged in its primary focus of training men for the gospel ministry, with the total student body continuing to number around twenty men enrolled in Master of Divinity and Master of Theological Studies degrees. The Seminary is thankful for an accreditation milestone reached this past year, with The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) awarding initial accreditation for a period of five years. Publications of note include Volume 20 of the Mid-America Journal of Theology, commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the birth of John Calvin; a book written by Dr. Cornelis Venema entitled, *Children at the Lord's Table?: Assessing the Case for Paedocommunion*, in which he affirms credo-communion over against paedocommunion; and a book written by Dr. J. Mark Beach entitled, *Piety's Wisdom: A Summary of Calvin's Institutes with Study Questions*.

In light of the situation with the economy, the Seminary has experienced a significant decrease in financial giving this past year, resulting in a sizeable deficit in the reserve fund, with individual giving declining about 27% from 2008 to 2009. In my judgment, the Seminary remains strong in teaching biblical and confessional reformed orthodoxy, over against the tide of doctrinal aberrations and innovations. As the RCUS has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Seminary, I heartily recommend that to continue, and that the Synod seriously consider investing further by increasing financial support for this institution that has served us so well, is in need of increased support, and is worthy of such

support.

Recommendation: That the guideline for Mid-America Reformed Seminary be set at \$4.00 per communicant member.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Jon Blair

Dordt College

Esteemed Brethren,

I regret that I cannot be with you at the Synod meetings this year, but please accept this written report with regard to my service on the Dordt College Board of Trustees.

Last year the 263rd RCUS Synod nominated me to serve on the Dordt College Board of Trustees, to succeed Rev. Herman Van Stedum, whose second three year term on the Dordt Board was expiring that fall. The Dordt Board acceded to this and elected me to a three year term as a member of the Board of Trustees at its October 2009 meeting. The full Dordt Board of Trustees meets semiannually, in October and April. Since I was elected in October, I have only attended one meeting, the recent meeting held April 22 — 23 at the College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

At this meeting the Board conducted interviews of ten current professors who the administration recommended be offered two or extended year contracts. Each professor submitted a personal statement or, for those more experienced professors receiving an extended appointment, a paper each had written in his teaching area. I participated in three interviews, and was encouraged by the testimony of the professors and their commitment to a reformed world and life view. On a related note the Executive Committee of the Board in the past year has discussed and identified the value the faculty interview process brings to the Board, to the College and to the administration, noting that the most effective way for the Board to impact the working out of the mission of the College is to impact the faculty — the people who carry out the mission. An ad hoc committee of the Board has been tasked to review and rewrite the objectives of the faculty interviews and to determine how the interview process can be made more effective.

Given the world economy, the past 12 — 18 months have been financially challenging, but the College believes it is emerging from the economic distress stronger than it was when the downturn began. The College will open a new residence hall on campus this fall. Rev. Rod Gorter, Dean of the Chapel (or perhaps functionally the campus pastor), will be leaving this summer and is pursuing a pastoral position within a church once again. A search is underway to fill this position by this fall. There is much focus this time of year on fall enrollment numbers, and the administration is hopeful that the freshman fall enrollment goal is within reach. Dordt graduated 274 undergraduates and two graduate students from the Masters in Education program this May.

Dr. Zylstra, President of Dordt College, plans to be present at Synod once again this year, and I am sure he will be willing to respond to any questions you may have. I also welcome any questions or concerns you may have about the Board or the College, and you may contact me at 952-984-3616 (day) or jlkroese@comcast.net.

My experience and service with the Dordt Board has just begun, but I look forward to serving you and the College, and thank you for the opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Kroese

Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Being my first year on the Board of Trustees for Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary I was careful(to do more listening and very little speaking.

Arriving at the campus I was quite impressed with the facilities. Listening during the meetings I was impressed with the mind set that the Seminary must remain faithful to the Scripture regardless of the changing culture of the day.

Dr. Pipa reported that the Seminary had received \$158,000 of the \$200,000 goal set for year-end giving and that this past December we received the second highest amount of donations, which enabled us to pay off most all of our back debts. The last report I had was that the income was \$38,000 over budget.

For the rest of my report this is information taken from an article in the GPTS e-newsletter by Dr. Shaw, Associate Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament. His report provided information that I felt would be helpful to share here with you in my report.

Over the past two years, under the direction of the Board of Trustees, the Faculty at GPTS has reviewed the curriculum. Some consideration was given to perhaps move away from a four-year program to a three-year program. With further study, it was determined that there would be no change in the number of hours needed for graduation.

The primary changes made to the curriculum are as follows: In the Old Testament department, Beginning Hebrew Exegesis has become Exegesis of Hebrew Narrative, while Advanced Hebrew Exegesis has become Exegesis of Hebrew Poetry and Prophecy. This is really a change in name to reflect more accurately the content of the courses. In the New Testament department, Greek Exegesis I focuses on the Gospels and Acts, whereas Greek Exegesis II deals with the Epistles and Revelation.

The Historical Theology department remained untouched. In the Systematic Theology department, the course that was formerly Ecclesiology & Polity has been divided. There is now a two-hour course entitled Ecclesiology. The polity portion of the course has been moved to the Applied Theology department, and combined with the study of Roberts Rules of Order, and church offices under the name "Polity, Roberts Rules, and Church Offices."

In Applied Theology, Christian Education and Evangelism have been combined into one course, and Missions has become a course in its own right. (In the previous Catalog, Evangelism & Missions were combined in one course separate from Christian Education.) Also in Applied Theology, we have added the course Reformed Spirituality, which will be taught by Dr. Carrick. The faculty considered that given the divergent views of "spirituality" in our day, such a class was necessary, particularly in helping our students in their own spiritual development.

Finally, two new courses have been added to the Apologetics & Ethics portion of the Curriculum. The first is Islam, which will be taught by Dr. Anees Zaka of Church Without Walls in Philadelphia. The faculty was strongly of the opinion that such a required course is a necessary part of seminary training, considering our current situation. The second new course is Christianity and Its Competitors, which will be taught by Dr. McGoldrick. In essence, it is a critique of the cults, well-informed by church history as well as theology.

These changes, which have been approved by the Board, will go into effect with the Fall 2010 semester, further strengthening what we believe to be already one of the strongest seminary curricula available.

Your servant in Christ,
Rev. Wesley Brice

Hope Haven

Esteemed Brethren,

This past year marked the 45th anniversary of Hope Haven. It began in 1964 as a school for exceptional children with special needs but has grown and broadened its ministry over the years. In their first year, Hope Haven served 17 children, last year they served almost 600. In addition to serving these exceptional children, they also helped those children's parents and siblings. In all, over 1200 people are currently being served by Hope Haven.

In addition to children, Hope Haven conducts adult group homes for those with special needs as well as promoting and providing community based employment for those with disabilities. For example, their Double RH Manufacturing provides employment and opportunities as they manufacture things such as trailer hitches which are then sold on the open market.

One of the major ministries of Hope Haven is the building, refurbishing and donating of wheelchairs. Many used wheelchairs are donated to the ministry and then refurbished by volunteers. In addition to refurbished wheelchairs, Hope Haven also constructs new wheelchairs with a special design developed by some college students some years ago. Over the years, volunteers have donated nearly 415,000 hours of service. Also, the South Dakota State Penitentiary (SDSP) has a Hope Haven wheelchair facility. The inmates get to contribute to the help of a person with disabilities by providing them with a free wheelchair, and the inmates also get community service credit for their work. SDSP inmates have contributed over 736,000 hours to building/refurbishing wheelchairs. The wheelchairs are distributed around the country and around the globe. Last year alone, over 6200 wheelchairs were given out. In total over 80,000 wheelchairs have been distributed in 105 countries.

In 1964, Hope Haven's first budget was \$17,000; this year it is over \$23,000,000. These monies go to helping many people with a variety of needs. One development on the horizon is an expansion and renovation of the Hope Haven Rock Valley, IA facilities. This will give them more space in which to operate and will provide their clients with a nicer, brighter and cleaner facility in which to live and work.

It is a delight and a joy to serve on the board of Hope Haven and it is my hope that the Synod of the RCUS would continue its support of this worthy ministry.

Sincerely Submitted,

Rev. Ron Morris

Radio Administration Committee

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The work of the Reformed Radio Administration Committee (RRAC) which oversees the production of *Reformed Faith and Life – French* (RFL) radio broadcast remains active in promoting and guiding the work of bringing the Gospel to the lost. We are in our eleventh year of this radio mission enterprise. The target areas are in various places where the French language is understood. This is primarily in French-speaking Africa, France, Madagascar, the Carribean, and Quebec, Canada.

The RRAC met on Tuesday, September 29, 2009, at the Lynwood URC in Lynwood, IL. The ladies of the church supplied a lunch for us. Committee members from the RCUS in attendance were Rev. Dan Schnabel and Rev. Paul Treick. Rev. Eric Kayayan, associate pastor of Rietvallei Reformed Church in South Africa, was present to meet with the committee which was composed of URCNA and RCUS representatives. An observer from

the OPC was also present and has experience in this work from his past.

Eric reports, "The production has grown steadily this year, and we have now about 450 programs available. A series on Church history focusing on the life and work of John Calvin (11 programs) has been produced these past months. The series on the Gospel according to John has grown to 31 programs and will still continue. The series for children also continues on a regular basis (132 programs produced thus far).

New outlets for radio are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kasai region), in South Africa, in Western Africa, and one station in France.

Financially, the work of Reformed Faith and Life is always a struggle, yet by the grace of God we are able to continue the work and not cut back on any broadcasts. Greater support would mean that more air time could be purchased in some regions, but we have not increased our expense budget for the coming year. TransWorld Radio assists in the production of the programs and FEBA Radio is one of the broadcast partners that has been reestablished.

The support in North America is primarily from the RCUS and URCNA (in the U. S. and Canada). The Rietvallei Church has also given good financial support in this work. The total budget for the entire work is about \$95,000 of which \$72,000 is expected to come from North America. Our Foreign Ministries Committee has a proposed budget of \$17,000 in this year's report, which is badly needed.

In an effort to reach to a broader base of support, it was decided to make the promotional DVD produced by Rev. Schnabel available to the churches of NAPARC and the ICRC.

We are very blessed to have Rev. Eric Kayayan as a committed Reformed broadcaster to the French-speaking world. He has worked faithfully and sacrificially to produce a variety of programs for broadcast. It is rare and a great opportunity to have a Reformed radio broadcast that is able to reach millions in the French-speaking world. Rev. Kayayan has also traveled to many places in Africa to meet with station managers and listeners. We were happy to have Rev. Kayayan speak at our last Synod meeting. Over the past year he has published a book and has given a number of lectures on John Calvin.

In terms of long-range planning, Rev. Kayayan may be relocating to France, as the situation in South Africa is increasingly less safe. The costs of such a move might be prohibitive for the near future, but the broadcasts can be produced anywhere.

To learn more about this work, check out the Website at www.foi-vie.org.za. We would urge everyone to give their support to our portion of the RFL budget, and remember this work in prayer in your congregations.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Paul H. Treick, Rev. Neale Riffert, Rev. Dan Schnabel

Reformed Herald - Editor's Report

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

Another year has passed as Editor of the *Reformed Herald*. This past year we ran a series of articles on the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, along with manuscripts of sermons. I believe these were useful for our readers. We try to run as much congregational news as possible since our congregations are wide-spread. However, these news items have been pretty sparse. Pictures to accompany the news is always welcome. If you have suggestions for articles, pass them on to me.

I am thankful for those who have contributed articles, some asked for and some volunteered. We ran the special Calvin issue for June/July and I think it turned out to be very attractive. That double edition may be an idea for summer months or just to publish all the classes reports together.

I was hoping to run a year-long series that would deal with the lives of young people, but most of these assignments were not finished, so this may be something to try again next year. These included the following subjects to which I may add some new ideas: *Choosing Your Friends as a Christian, Continuing Your Learning in the Church, Assessing Your Gifts, Let Your Faith be Known - Evangelism, I'm Confirmed, Now What?, Selective Viewing of TV programs, What can I do in the Church?, and What can Young People do for the Elderly?* I am hoping that in the next year, we can run more articles on church history, as that may be an area that many are unaware of. If I serve as Editor for another year, I will send out the schedule via email.

I trust that each congregation has looked over its mailing list this past year. If not, please do, and make sure that your congregation sends in the funds per subscription.

Again, I am grateful for the contributions received, and would ask that when you submit material, please take out all unnecessary formatting. We never use underlining, sometimes italics and rarely all-capitals. To see the format for Bible quotations, please refer to a previous issue.

Once again I am thankful for the work of Rev. Eric Bristley who puts the design and finishing touches on the Herald. He has done a great job. Rev. Frank Walker also faithfully updates the address list and sends it to the company in Canada that places the addresses on each issue.

I have indicated to the Publications Committee that I would be willing to serve as Editor for the next year, if that is the will of the Synod. I may have a little more time next year than in the past.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Paul H. Treick

XIV. Special Committee Reports

A. To Study Implementing a System of Church Visitation

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

Your committee received its mandate from the 262nd Synod of the RCUS; meeting in Hope Reformed Church, Sutton, Nebraska. In the abstract (2008) on page 79, recommendation #2 of the Judicial committee report states: "That Overture #15 be referred to a special committee to study the biblical basis, advisability and practical implications of the RCUS Classes implementing a system of church visitation in addition to our current article 81 questions." Reverend Warren Embree began the study with a brief historical investigation and a study of other of other Reformed and Presbyterian policies. The committee presented 3 recommendations regarding the manner of instituting such policies. The report was recommitted to the committee for further study at the 263rd Synod (page 67). This revision of the report will include biblical examples and arguments.

Brief Historical Investigation

Historically, there has been some form of "external" visitation—that is, visitation from an officer or officers outside the local consistory—from the start. Paul made it his practice

to visit the churches begun by his preaching and to receive from and address concerns sent to him from members of local bodies. However, this may have been a duty peculiar to the apostles as the men assigned the task of laying the foundation and establishing the New Testament Church. Nonetheless, keeping in mind that the "monarchical episcopate" system developed early as the primary form of government in the church, there is evidence that this practice of Paul was expected of a bishop with respect to those congregations under his charge. From the writings of Athanasius (*Apologia Contra Arianos*—"Defense against the Arians"), Chrysostom (in his first sermon on Titus), and Augustine (letter 144) there are clear indications that a bishop was to visit the churches within his jurisdiction, although the exact duties are not clearly discernable. The duty itself, however, was put into canon law at the Council of Turin (A.D. 401). This practice continued, more or less, during the medieval times, although it seems to have been assigned to archdeacons in most parts of the church. In reading the "registry" of these visitations, most of the matters covered were administrative rather than spiritual. It is of note that in the years leading up to the Reformation, bishops such as Grossteste attempted to use the practice of visitation as a means to work reform and spiritual renewal within the church.

Calvin drafted a rule called "Order for the Visitation of the Ministers and Parishes dependent on Geneva" for the "country" churches which required "two Lordships of the Council and similarly the Ministers two... who will be charged with going once a year to visit each parish" (1546). The first book of discipline of the Scottish church, which retained the office of "superintendent", states that one of the "chief points of his office" was "visitation of his churches" (1560). The second book of discipline, after a more Presbyterian system was adopted, included the article that "Every assembly has the power to send forth from them of their own number, one or more visitors to see how all things are ruled in the bounds of their jurisdiction. Visitation of more kirks is no ordinary ecclesiastical office in the person of one man; neither may the name of a bishop be attributed to the visitor only; neither is it necessary to abide always in one man's person; but it is the part of the eldership to send out qualified persons to visit pro re nata" (1578).

In our own history, the Pennsylvania Coetus of April 9-11, 1755 (Act 23), states "Resolved that a minister from our number shall annually visit all our congregations in this country, to learn in what condition ministers and congregations everywhere are. Thereupon Do. Schlatter was unanimously chosen by us for this purpose, with request that he would take with him the nearest brother of each congregation, and thus make a visitation of the congregations as opportunity might be afforded." (page 129, *Minutes and letters of The Coetus German Reformed Congregations In Pennsylvania 1747-1792*) This practice seems to have been replaced by the current practice of reading the questions from Article 81 of the constitution sometime in the early 1800s. It should be further noted that we also currently practice such visitation in the structure of our oversight of Mission Works, without offense or insult to the overseeing consistories where such are involved.

Other Reformed and Presbyterian Churches

Classical visitation of congregations was constituted the normal practice by the Synod of Dordt. Church Order of Dordt, Article XLIV: "Each Classis shall authorize two or more of the eldest, most experienced, and best qualified of its members, annually to visit all the churches belonging to its jurisdiction, both in the cities, and in the country..." This practice is continued by those denominations/churches with whom we have fraternal relations. OPC Book of Church Order: Chapter XVI, Paragraph 5, (section 2): "The Presbytery has the power..., to visit particular churches for the purpose of inquiring into their state and of taking proper measures to insure that the evils which may have arisen in them shall be

redressed...” RPCNA Constitution: Chapter 6, Paragraph 10:6.10: “It is the duty of the Presbytery to maintain a faithful supervision over all the congregations within its bounds and to provide for Presbyterian visitation,....” United Reformed Churches of NA: Article 27: “Each consistory of the Classis shall invite two experienced office-bearers appointed by Classis, either two ministers or a minister and an elder, to visit the council once every two years....”

Brief study of Biblical examples

1 Samuel 7:15-17 “And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. But he always returned to Ramah for his home was there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the LORD.” Samuel was prophet, priest and, as judge, king over Israel. His office required him to exercise discipline over Israel in all three offices: teacher, mediator, and trainer (both positive and negative). His “judging” was not, it would seem by the circuit, because the bailiff had scheduled a case, but a normal inspection tour. That tour probably included legal cases, as well as exposition of the law. It constituted a “spiritual check-up” of the congregations. (Israel was the Church in the Old Testament)

2 Kings 4:8 & 9 “ Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food. And she said to her husband, ‘Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly.’” Elisha made regular trips to this area apparently. Perhaps on the road to and from Jerusalem (even northern kingdom prophets would have done so), perhaps on a circuit as Samuel had done. At least he did not sit at his home so often that his trips would not be described as “regular”. It would be appropriate for the Prophet to travel to speak the Word of God to the people of God and such activity would be needed regularly.

Acts 14:21-26 “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. After they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.” This is the latter part of the first missionary journey, and the return to some of the churches might be expected simply because of the youth of these disciples, but Paul was closer to Antioch of Syria by land when he was at Derbe than the backtracking to Attalia to return by ship would require. We should ask, in the light of the latter part of the next chapter, whether or not Paul was establishing a pattern of unrequested visitation for the purpose of overseeing the progress of these congregations. For a rabbinical student like Paul, following the old testament pattern of the prophets would seem to be normal.

Acts 15:36-41 “Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.’ Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. The contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.” Here Paul takes up the uninvited

circuit visitation which becomes the practice of the Bishopric. He assumes the same authority over the churches that the prophets exercised. There was probably some discipline, but the intent was a taking of the pulse of these congregations to see what they needed for their growth and encouragement, and to provide that.

Acts 20 chronicles another of Paul’s backtracking episodes as he retraces his steps collecting the diaconal offerings for the saints at Jerusalem and bidding farewell to the Ephesian elders. He does, however, both demonstrate the normal pattern of his ministry and deal with issues which will affect the church, preparing them for the trials he expects to come. He is seeking to build them up by giving them instruction and encouragement which they had not sought.

Paul’s letters to the Corinthians indicate that he both responded to questions which they had posed and received reports which prompted visits for further investigation and encouragement to deal with issues; whether it is the sin of sectarianism, or the adulterous relationship of a man with his step mother, or the explanation of the nature of the resurrection, or the nature and requirement of forgiveness based on repentance, or the outworking of humility in a Christian life.

Paul tells Titus (1:5) “For this reason I left you in Crete...” and follows with the instructions for establishing the proper government of churches by follow up personal instruction and co operative labor.

Each of the men who carry Paul’s letters to the various churches report back on what they found, both of concern and delightful progress. Titus is such an example in 2 Corinthians 7:13.

James writes his general epistle in response to information from some source which indicates the necessity of the particular instructions. Jude also addresses his epistle as having been a change from the original missive he was preparing, indication that from some form of visitation (even if it is only complaints or appeals from involved parties). John’s epistles are sent to a particular church through a particular elder, apparently John had contact with both the congregation and the elder which were not solicited.

Should we not conclude that the normal practice of the Church, both Old and New Testament, was that there was mutual interaction between the congregations, and that those interactions were regular. Certainly the post apostolic Church understands that to be the case which led to the practices recorded above.

There is, however, a downside to such a conclusion; we must trust each other in the Lord enough to accept as well as give that kind of intimate and unsolicited encouragement and admonition. In the intimate relation of marriage such encouragement and admonition are normal. The spouses do not consider the admonition to be cruel or harmful, but receive them trusting the commitment of the other party. So must we, brethren, as Pastors, Ruling Elders, and Congregations of the RCUS, put aside our opinions and practices to respect and encourage each other; ever willing to learn from or be instructed by each other, as we expect of our Home Missionaries. To that end we propose the recommendations of this report.

Recommendation 1: That Synod request that each Classis set aside time during their respective Spring meetings to discuss any perceived impediments to such inter congregational visitations.

Recommendation 2: That each consistory report to its Classis any programs or practices which are particularly successful and profitable in their eyes but might not be usual among the congregations of the Classis.

Recommendation 3: That each Classis consider the erection of such a committee and

report its decision to the 265th Synod.

Take note: That each Pastor, consistory, and spiritual council recognize that Article 91 authorizes the Executive Committee of the Classis in which they reside to “... serve as advisors in the amicable adjustment of disputes in the administration of the affairs of the congregations or charges” and to contact the Executive Committees before problems escalate to the necessity of charges and trials. It is not the purview of this proposal to erect a committee to search out or prosecute judicial matters in any congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Jay Fluck, Elder Bill Borgwardt, Rev. Paul Henderson, Elder Mark Fisher,
Rev. Randall Klynsmas, Elder Ralph Kusler, Elder Steve Wilbur*

The first recommendation was defeated, and thus the rest of the report was declared moot and not adopted..

B. Changes to the Modern Version of the Heidelberg Catechism

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Your committee was erected to evaluate the document entitled the “Proposed Changes to Modern Version for Synod Adoption, May 11, 2009, submitted by the Permanent Publications Committee (“PPC”) to the 263rd Synod of the RCUS (herein after the document will be referred to as the “2009 Proposal” and attached as an addendum to this report). The committee communicated by email and met four (4) times by teleconference to conduct its business.

Since there was no mandate given to your committee by the 263rd Synod, the committee established the following guiding principles:

1. The primary principle employed by the special committee is that changes to the language of the catechism employ wording consistent with the New King James Version (“NKJV”);
2. That the work of the previous committee with regards to grammar, spelling and issues of the like be favorably considered.

Your committee first considered the Apostles’ Creed. After much discussion it was agreed by the committee that in consideration of the first principle above the language used in the Apostles’ Creed should conform to the language of the NKJV. Thus, the wording recommended by the 2009 Proposal, changes 8a and 8b, will be retained.

Your committee next considered the form of the Lord’s Prayer to be used. Though it was thought that the KJV ought to be retained, it was determined that the principle of using the NKJV and wording throughout the Modern Version should take priority. PLEASE NOTE: by retaining proposed change #20 in the 2009 Proposal, it in no way limits the local congregations as to what form would be recited in worship since both versions are retained in the two versions of the catechism.

Your committee next considered various specific recommendations in the 2009 Proposal that it believed may have been inconsistent with the two principles mentioned above; some revisions were made to the proposed changes, but for the most part the committee retained many of the proposed changes of the 2009 Proposal as being consistent with the mandate of the sub-committee of the PPC by the 2007 and 2008 Synods. However,

the committee also determined that there were some proposed changes that ought to be considered, but fell outside the scope of the original mandate of Synod and the principles adopted by your committee. Thus, your committee has divided the proposed changes into two groups: first, the group that the committee believes conforms to the principles and mandate of Synod; and the second group, which would be considered non-conforming proposed changes.

The following revised proposed changes are hereby submitted for consideration – revisions to the 2009 Proposal are noted by an underline of the number of the proposed change (i.e., 24.):

Revised Proposed Changes to Modern Version for Synod Adoption

That the 264th Synod of the RCUS adopt the following changes to the Modern Version of the Heidelberg Catechism [page references taken from red cover hard back 4th printing]:

1. Page 8: par. 3-4 - remove old English pronouns and capitalize “His dear Son” and “His blood.”
2. Page 11: par 3 – update Romans 8:35-39 from KJV to NKJV.
3. Page 20: HC #4 use NKJV in answer and use Matthew 22: instead of Matt. 22:
4. [Moved to proposed change #30.]
5. HC 10 use NKJV for Gal. 3:10 quote.
6. (Deleted by Synod)
7. Page 32: HC 21 use “Holy Spirit” for “Holy Ghost.” Change all occurrences of Holy Ghost to Holy Spirit to be consistent with use of NKJV’s exclusive employment of Holy Spirit (see also HC 21, 23, 24, 25, 31, 35 (2), 53, 65, 67, 71, 73, 74, 79, 80, 109).
 - 8a. Page 34: HC 23 [The Apostles’ Creed] update language “Ghost” to “Spirit”; “sitteth” to “sits”; “thence” to “there”;
 - 8b. Change “Holy Catholic Church” to “holy, catholic Church.” Change the terms to adjectival sense to lessen confusion with Roman Catholic Church (change also HC 54)
 - 9a. Page 36: HC 26 change word order from “with all that in them is” to “with all that is in them”;
 - 9b. Change “the same” to “them”;
 - 9c. (Amended by Synod: “troubled life” changed to “valley of tears.”)
 10. Page 57: HC 48 change the phrase “it is indeed beyond the bounds of the manhood which it has assumed, but is yet nonetheless in the same also, and” back to the traditional wording “the same is not limited with the human nature He assumed, and yet” This improves clarity and simplicity. It was the consensus of your committee, as well as the original committee that this change would improve the simplicity and clarity of the answer without changing the meaning, since it is already the wording in the traditional version. Therefore, the committee does not see where there is any conflict in what we confess, and at the same time agrees with the original mandate of Synod and the principles of your committee.
 11. Page 59: HC 50 change “sitteth” to “sits”.
 12. Page 62: HC 53 change “Holy Ghost” to “Holy Spirit” in heading.
 13. Page 64: HC 54 change “Holy Catholic Church” to “holy, catholic Church”
 14. Page 78: HC 70 change “unblamable” to “blameless”. This is consistent with the NKJV (see Col. 1:22, 1Thess. 3:13).

15. Page 79: HC 71 Use NKJV form of Matthew 28:19.

16. Page 86: HC 77 Use NKJV form of 1Cor. 11:23-25 and 1Cor. 10:17 in the answer. Your committee was reminded that Synod took action in the 1980's to translate 1 Corinthians 10:17 the way it currently reads in the Catechism. Further, it was the consensus of the committee that the current reading is a more accurate rendering of the Greek than either the KJV or the NKJV. Therefore, the last sentence of this catechism ought to be retained and not changed.

17. Page 89: HC 80 Change spelling of “ingrafted” to “engrafted” for modern usage.

18. (Deleted by Synod) (Amended: To print Q. 92 in the new edition with the NKJV wording.

18a. (Deleted by Synod)

18b. Pages 100-130: HCs 91 through 115 that the lower case be employed throughout these catechisms for “command,” “ten commandments,” and “law of God.” It was the common understanding of the committee that modern English usage would be to use the lower case. After a bit of research and comparison with previous historical translations used by the RCUS in the 19th and 20th centuries, it was discovered that the common practice in previous versions was not to capitalize the word “command” or “commandments” or “law of God” throughout the section dealing with the Ten Commandments. As such, the conclusion was that there is no theological point at stake by making this change.

19. Deleted. This proposed change would be included in 18b.

20. Page 134: HC 119 [The Lord's Prayer] Use the NKJV form of Mt 6:9-13.

21. Page 135: HC 121 delete “Who art” to read, “In heaven”. The NKJV reads, “Our Father in heaven.”

22. Page 136: HC 122 change old English pronouns. Answer will read as follows (underline denotes a change): “Hallowed be Your name”; that is, grant us, first, rightly to know You, and to sanctify (replace hallow), magnify and praise You in all Your works, in which Your power, goodness, justice, mercy, and truth shine forth; and further, that we so order our whole life, our thoughts, words, and deeds, that Your name may not be blasphemed, but honored and praised on our account.

23. Page 137: HC 123 change “Thy” to “Your”, “Thee” to “You”, and “Thou shalt” to “You will”.

24. Page 139: HC 124 change “Thy” to “You”, “in earth” to “on earth” [NKJV wording] and “gainsaying” to “~~arguing~~ disputing”. “~~Arguing~~ Disputing” is a more familiar term today in contrast to “gainsaying.” Your committee believed that “disputing” better expressed the meaning of “gainsaying,” which is to declare false; deny; to oppose, especially by contradiction.

25. Page 140: HC 125 change “Thou art” to “You are,” “Thy” to “You”, and “alone in Thee” to “in You alone.” Also change to: “that You are the only fountain of all good,” (add “that”).

26. Page 142, HC 126 replace “cleaves” with “clings”, and “Thy” with “You”. Modern language.

27. Page 143, HC 127 use “deliver us from the evil one” [NKJV wording], and “Thy” to “You”.

28. Page 144: HC 128 Change “Thine” to “Your”, “Thee” to “You”, “Thou art” to “You are”, and “Thy” to “You”.

29. Page 145 use NKJV form of Ephesians 3:20-21.

*The following proposed changes were found to be either outside the scope of the committee's established principles, or the mandate of the 207 and 2008 Synods, or were submitted previously by a member of the Synod and were already a part of the 2009:

30. (Amended by Synod) Page 24: HC 9 change “of this power.” to “those divine gifts.” This is more accurate to the original text.

31. (Referred to the Standing Judicial Committee) BELGIC CONFESSIO - (TFU, 2006 edition, page 39, article 9, par. 2): change the phrase “and the Holy Spirit appeared in the shape of a dove.” to “and the Holy Spirit appeared descending like a dove.” The word in question here is an adverb describing the way the Holy Spirit came down and not what the Holy Spirit looked like.

32. (Heidelberg Catechism questions 81, 87) change the word “impenitent” to “unrepentant”.

The word "impenitent" that appears a couple of times in the Catechism (81, 87) might be better worded "unrepentant" to avoid the idea that we believe in "penance" as a biblical concept. I don't think this is a must because "penitent" includes the idea of repentant, but the dictionary (Webster's Collegiate) also adds the idea that in Roman Catholicism "penitent" means one "doing penance." Using the word "repentant" here would avoid that association. Your committee makes two observations: first, the Greek word underlying this word is a derivative of “metanoia” commonly translated “repentant.” Second, there is already a precedent set for this change in our Directory of Worship that makes this change in the form used for the Lord's Supper.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Richard Stetler, Rev. Hank Bowen, Rev. David Dawn,

Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Wayne Johnson, Don Ribbens

All amendments or deletions passed by Synod are noted in the body of the report. In addition, a motion was passed to have Q/A 86, read: “*assured of our faith by the fruits thereof.*” Unless otherwise noted, the proposals of the committee were adopted.

C. On Synod Procedures

Fathers and Brethren:

Your Committee submits the following report and recommendations regarding Overtures 53-60 from the 263rd Synod and related matters:

A. Procedural Changes to the Practices of Synod

I. Overture 57. Elimination of the Overtures Committee.

Discussion: Your committee recommends the Synod end the practice of erecting a Standing Overtures Committee, concluding it is unnecessary and delays the proceedings. Presently, the Overtures Committee is appointed Tuesday morning and then meets to distribute overtures to the various committees. During that time the rest of Synod has no work. Once it distributes the overtures, the real work of Synod begins. No member of our committee can recall an occasion where the proposed distribution of overtures by the committee has been challenged. We propose that the President (who is in possession of all the overtures along with the Stated Clerk) simply make all assignments as the first order of

business on Tuesday morning subject to Synod's approval and that the Order of Business be amended to provide that on Tuesday morning, Synod shall be in recess for committee work from immediately after the overtures are distributed until immediately after the noon meal. Rule of Order # 12 already assumes the President does that where it says regarding the duties of the President, "He shall receive all minutes, reports, communications, etc., addressed to or intended for the judicatory, and with its consent refer them to the appropriate committees." Note: no distinction is made between Permanent and Standing Committees and it refers to a judicatory. The Synod as a judicatory only exists during its meetings and not during the year when the Permanent Committees operate. The only references to an Overtures Committee the committee could find were in Standing Rule 17 and Article 103 of the RCUS Constitution which refers to an Order of Business or what we call the Agenda. Changing them requires a two-thirds vote.

Recommendation I: That the practice of erecting an Overtures Committee be ended. That the second sentence of Standing Rule 17 and references to the Overtures Committee in the Agenda, Articles V & XV be stricken; and that Rule of Order 12 be understood to place the duty to distribute overtures upon the President (with the assistance of the Stated Clerk) on Tuesday morning of Synod immediately after the committees are established.

II. Overture 59. Reading of the Standing Rules.

Discussion: Standing Rule #4 requires the reading of the Standing Rules at each Synod unless suspended by a two-thirds vote. This requirement has been often debated and often suspended. A review of the Standing Rules reveals that only Rules 5, 6, 10, 12, 14, and 19 are relevant to the Synod meeting and all others are either for items preceding the meeting or are irrelevant to it. A change to the Standing Rules requires a two-thirds vote. The Committee felt the default of reading the Standing Rules should be reversed as follows:

Recommendation II: Standing Rule 4 be stricken and replaced with the following language: "Any member may move to have the Standing Rules read at the second session of Synod. Passage of the motion shall require a simple majority vote."

III. Overture 56. Addresses by Fraternal Delegates and Other Organizations to Synod.

Discussion: The overture from last year did not include a proposal to eliminate the opportunity for fraternal delegates to address the Synod. The overture proposed eliminating address by institutional representatives. The committee felt the proposal was beneficial and recommends it to the body. Our discussions also concluded there was benefit in strictly limiting the time allotted to fraternal delegates as is done by other denominations in their meetings. It was suggested that such addresses be on Tuesday, perhaps hearing from two or more immediately after lunch, another two after the afternoon break, and two more (if needed) immediately after dinner. Members of the committee suggested a limit of 5-7 minutes for each address and the elimination of the traditional response. Adoption of this change requires a change to the "Order of Business" listed in the RCUS Constitution, Article 103 and requires a two-thirds vote. It is not a change to the Constitution itself and does not require the approval of the Classes.

Recommendation III: That the Order of Business (Agenda, Article XII) listed in Article 103 of the RCUS Constitution be modified to have institutions invited to speak on a rotating schedule of two per year, and that the duration of the remaining addresses be limited to five minutes each at the call of the President after lunch, afternoon break and dinner on Tuesday.

IV. Overture 58. Erect a Standing Committee on Minutes of Synod.

Discussion: Concerns over the amount of time taken on the floor of Synod to audibly

read and correct the previous day's rough minutes on the floor of Synod gave rise to a proposal to create a committee to review the rough minutes and to provide a corrected copy for distribution to all delegates each day for their private review. Last year the process of correction on the floor took over 1 hour and 30 minutes or 90 man hours of Synod time. This recommendation would place the detailed review in the hands of a few delegates who would review the rough draft. Only the last day's minutes would need to be reviewed on the floor and even that might be eliminated or reduced if the committee was able to review that day's rough draft and distribute it shortly before adjournment. The Committee on Minutes of Synod would recommend to the delegates at the end of Synod that the corrected draft be adopted. This change to the Rules of Order requires that the recommended motion be seconded by a majority of the quorum (Rules of Order 46), and that the vote be postponed until the next day (Rules of Order 63) unless there is unanimous consent to taking an immediate vote (Rules of Order 62). It requires a two-thirds vote.

Recommendation IV: That the Synod erect a Standing Committee on Minutes of Synod which shall review the rough minutes of Synod and recommend to the delegates the approval of the Minutes of Synod. Rule of Order 8 shall be amended to read "Before the final adjournment the President shall recognize the chair of the Committee on Minutes of Synod and upon their recommendation shall say 'Shall the minutes now be approved?' If no objections are made, he shall declare them to stand approved." Rule of Order 20 shall be amended by striking the words "After the minutes have been read and approved," and by inserting the words "At the beginning of each day's session" It is also recommended that the word "in" after the word "announce" be stricken as a grammatical correction. That the Order of Business, (Agenda, Article XV) be amended to add the words "Committee on Minutes of Synod."

V. Overture 60. Eliminate the Practice of Considering Partial Reports, Considering Items Seriatim, and Adopting Partial Reports.

Discussion: The Synod had historically used a highly formal procedure when committees bring overtures to the floor where the chairman of the committee asks to be allowed to bring them up, asks to have them considered seriatim (one-by-one) and then, at the end of the partial report, asks the body to approve the partial report. Finally, when the committee's work at Synod is finished, the chairman asks the body to approve the report as a whole. This cumbersome procedure is not required by our Constitution, the Rules of Order or the Standing Rules. Neither is it required by Roberts Rules of Order (which we use by common consent to establish practices not covered by the above). Actually, our practice is adopted from the rules of the U.S. Congress where motions to consider such committee reports are often defeated so that the substantive items in question do not come to the floor for a vote and thus the members avoid the embarrassment of lodging a vote on an item. No one on our committee could recall an occasion where any committee was prevented from bringing a partial report, or from considering the items seriatim, or from adopting a partial report. In fact, no one could ever remember a single "no" vote from any delegate on such a motion. We propose the Synod eliminate this practice. The benefit to the Stated Clerk alone in recording who made and seconded each needless motion would justify this change.

We propose that in the future the President simply recognizes a committee chairman who informs the delegates the committee has a number of items ready for consideration. The items are read and considered one at a time and, upon conclusion, the chairman sits down. Only when the committee's overtures are all concluded does the chairman move the reception of the report as a whole. It requires a majority vote or common consent.

Recommendation V: That Synod end the practice of requiring committees to move to

receive their reports, to consider the items seriatim, and to adopt their partial reports.

VI. End the Practice of Holding a Worship Service on Wednesday Evening

Discussion: The committee received the suggestion from numerous sources that the practices of holding a worship service on Wednesday evening be ended. Some comments related to fatigue from all day meetings and business sessions diminishing their ability to focus properly on the proclamation of the Gospel. Others felt the body might be able make enough progress on the business of Synod so as to finish its business early on Thursday and thus reduce the imposition on the local congregation and facilitate travel arrangements by the delegates. The committee considered the balance between the need for efficiency and a regard to our desire to hear the Word and worship our God. No one wanted to lose sight of our obligation to glorify God in order to finish the work of Synod speedily.

On balance, the committee felt the elimination of the Wednesday night service was a good suggestion and recommends it to the Synod. It is a change to the Order of Business and requires a two-thirds vote. It is not a change to the Constitution and does not require the approval of the Classes.

Recommendation VI: (DEFEATED BY SYNOD) That the Order of Business (Agenda, Articles I & III) be amended to delete the worship service on Wednesday night and replace it with a business session from the end of supper until 9:00 p.m.

B. Substantive Changes to the Practices of Synod

VII. Overtures 53 and 55. That Officers Be Elected At the End of Synod.

Discussion: The present practice of electing officers at the beginning of Synod has the benefit of taking advantage of the work done prior to the meeting by the Executive Committee in planning and coordination. For instance, the President of the Executive Committee arrives with a proposed list of committee appointments, agenda, tellers, etc. The Stated Clerk comes prepared with a computer, printer, and pre-programmed entries in the minutes. Our polity requires that each Synod elect its own officers for the time the Synod is in session and it has no power to force the next Synod to accept the officers chosen at the previous meeting.

The downside of this practice has been that once an officer is elected, it becomes a near lifetime responsibility unless the officer affirmatively declines further election. The idea of electing officers at the end of Synod rather than the beginning solves some of this tendency but it runs afoul of our polity. Your committee discussed these matters and concluded that no change to the present practice be made despite these concerns.

One possible change was suggested that might reduce this conflict. Article 111 of the RCUS Constitution provides for the elections of officers and also defines the members and duties of the Executive Committee that operates between Synod meetings. If the Synod chooses, it could amend the Constitution to provide that an Executive Committee be erected at the end of Synod to carry out those functions until the next Synod made up of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and other members, any or all of whom might be different people than served as officers during the Synod itself. That would give the body the option of choosing members who demonstrate wisdom and willingness to serve in that interim role with the probability they will be elected as officers at the next Synod. In order to accomplish this, Article 111 of the Constitution and Rules of Order 1 and 2 would need to be amended as follows:

Strike the words “shall consist of the President, Vice President” from the second paragraph of Article 111 and insert the words “shall be elected at end of Synod and shall consist of a Chairman, Vice Chairman...”. The third paragraph shall be amended to strike

all references to the President of Synod and replace them with the word “Chairman.” Rules of Order 1 and 2 are amended to strike references to President and substitute the word “Chairman.” (MOVED AND DEFEATED BY SYNOD)

Your committee has not included this as a recommendation, but has provided the language for the convenience of Synod should it desire to move in this direction. Such a change would require the vote of two-thirds of Synod and approval by two-thirds of Classes and, if adopted, would take effect next year. Amending the Rules of Order requires the procedure outlined in Recommendation IV above.

The above matter was referred to the Executive Committee to report at the 265th Synod.

VIII. Overture 54. Change the Synodical Fiscal Year to July 1 to June 30.

Discussion: Presently, our fiscal year extends from February 1 to January 31. This was changed from a December 31 closing date to allow congregations to close their books at the end of the year and still make payments on dues and guidelines in time. The problem raised by this current practice is that the Synod doesn't meet until May and all financial decisions are effective retroactive to February 1 including funds for missions, ministerial aid, benevolence, etc. If the Synod were to shift its fiscal year to begin July 1, all decision of Synod would take effect on that date with no retroactive effect. Membership data is presently determined as of December 31 for purposes of guidelines, etc. That need not change.

In order for this change to be made, it would require us to authorize a 17 month budget extending from February 1, 2010 until June 30, 2011. A simple monthly pro rata extension of guidelines and budget authorizations would suffice. Thereafter we would have a normal 12 month budget commencing after the Synod set the budget and guidelines. The change is within the authority of Synod and requires a simple majority vote.

Recommendation VIII: That the fiscal year of the Reformed Church in the United States be changed to begin July 1 and end on June 30 of each year. That the budget authorized by the 264th Synod continue on a monthly pro rata basis from February 1, 2010 until June 30, 2011 in order to adjust to this change.

IX. Establishment of the Publications Committee as a Separate Entity

Discussion: Presently the Publications Committee operates as a Permanent Committee of Synod and it reports each year to Synod regarding its budget, publications and future proposals. Its funds come from a guideline approved by Synod. Last year's guideline was \$7.00 per communicant member or about \$21,000. It sold publications worth about \$48,000 in the 2008 budget year and spent about \$70,000. Of that the Herald brought in \$18,000 and its cost was almost \$31,000. (The Herald had a separate subscription cost of \$18.00 each. There were about 1000 subscriptions. This number has no relation to communicant members). In theory, the Publications fund had a beginning balance of \$94,000 on February 1, 2008 held over from previous year's approvals and ended the year on January 31, 2009 with almost \$78,000.

Your committee considered a proposal to separate the Publications Committee budget and fund balance from the rest of Synod and make it a separate, self-supporting entity responsible for its publication and financial decisions. This would eliminate the need for Synod to debate what publications would be made, how many copies are to be printed, the type of cover to be used, etc., as has been done in the past. Those decisions could then be made by an independent publications board based on sound business principles balancing

anticipated sales against costs of production. If the Synod wanted the publisher to print something the board did not believe was economically viable, then Synod could subsidize its production or underwrite it with a financial return to Synod if sales exceed expectations. In order to accomplish this, the Publications Committee could be established by separating its existing fund balance into a separate account under its direction as working capital. It would report annually to Synod, but all decisions would be made by the Board of Publications and not by Synod.

Ultimately, the committee felt this proposal was beyond its assigned duty and makes only the following recommendation:

Recommendation IX: That the Synod erect a Special Committee to study the concept of creating a Board of Publications as a separate, self-supporting entity reporting to and serving the interests of the RCUS.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Stuebbe, Chmn., M. Koerner, M. Wiersma, T. Gruggett, R. Gallimore, D. Fagrey

Amendments and defeats of recommendations are noted in the body of the report. Those recommendations without notations were adopted.

V. Standing Committee Reports

[The committee recommendations appear below in their final form, whether amended or not. Those defeated do not appear here.]

A. Benevolence Committee

1. That Synod grant benevolent aid for Grace RCUS, Lancaster, CA, in the amount of \$383.00 per month for the synodical year.
2. That Synod grant benevolent aid for Faith RCUS, Anderson, CA, in the amount of \$500 per month for the synodical year.
3. That Synod grant benevolent aid for Mrs. Amy Stevens in the amount of \$1200 per month for the synodical year.
4. That Synod grant benevolent aid in the amount of \$725 per month to Trinity RCUS, Colorado Springs, CO, for the next synodical year.
5. That Synod grant benevolent aid of \$450 per month for the Rev. Ron Potter for the synodical year to assist with life insurance, medical insurance, and medical costs.
6. A letter of thanks from Rev. Ron Potter was read.
7. That Synod grant benevolent aid to Rev. Tom and Carolyn Mayville in the amount of \$3000 for June 2010, in order to cover their medical and housing expenses.
8. That the Synodical permanent Diaconal Committee continue to oversee churches receiving benevolent aid and that the Diaconal Committee report to Synod whether the benevolent policy adopted at the 2008 (Synod) is being fulfilled. The policy is found on pages 75-76 of the 2008 Synod Abstract. Take Note.

B. Ministerial Aid

1. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe in the amount of \$1200 per month.

2. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe in the amount of \$1200 per month.
3. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett in the amount of \$1000 per month.
4. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Betty Sander in the amount of \$1000 per month.
5. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Rev. and Mrs. Gene Sawtelle in the amount of \$1600 per month.
6. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Rev. and Mrs. Neale Riffert in the amount of \$1800 per month.
7. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Rev. and Mrs. Vernon Pollema in the amount of \$850 per month.
8. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Rev. and Mrs. Paul Treick in the amount of \$500 per month.
9. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Kay Savage in the amount of \$1000 per month.
10. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Phyllis Grossmann in the amount of \$1200 per month.
11. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Virginia Hoeflinger in the amount of \$1200 per month.
12. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Rev. and Mrs. Howard Hart in the amount of \$1550 per month.
13. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Rev. and Mrs. Herman Van Stedum in the amount of \$1500 per month.
14. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1000 per month.
15. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Rev. and Mrs. Chester Ploeger in the amount of \$1400 per month.
16. That Synod grant Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Lena Jones in the amount of \$1200 per month.
17. (From the MAF report #1). That Synod accept the resignation of Mr. David McPherson.
18. That the Synod express thanks and appreciation to Mr. David McPherson for his involvement in guiding the MAF development for the past 15 years.
19. (From the MAF report #4) That Mr. Ralph Gothny be nominated and accepted as the replacement for Mr. McPherson on the MAF subcommittee.
20. (From the MAF report #4). That the RCUS treasurer serve as the sole trustee of MAF accounts on behalf of the RCUS and that direction for the fund replacement and withdrawal be supported via guidance of the MAF subcommittee. Seconded and carried.
21. That the MAF subcommittee develop an investment policy for the management of funds to be circularized by the Executive Committee for approval.

C. Ecumenical Committee

1. That Synod adopt the following guidelines for the Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee in how to pursue contacts with churches of a Reformed/Presbyterian background which are not necessarily candidates for fraternal relations: "That where there are RCUS

congregations in the vicinity of such churches we believe to be of interest in communicating and interacting with, the IRC ask our pastors and elders to make contacts, attend assemblies, etc., in order to get to know these groups and let them become more aware of us. In some cases, we might simply delegate a member of our committee or some interested pastor (including the use of retired pastors) to cultivate contacts where we might not be geographically represented.

2. That the proposed budget in the Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee report of \$7,300 total expenses be adopted. (Item 8 proposed budget was changed to \$00.00)
3. That Synod instruct its delegation to the Synod London 2010 of the United Reformed Churches of North America to affirm and defend the RCUS position on confessional church membership.

D. Education and Student Aid Committee

1. That Mid-America Reformed Seminary continue to be listed as a seminary worthy of support.
2. That Covenant College be placed on the list of recommended colleges to be published on the general information page of the Abstract.
3. To suspend Dordt College from the list of approved colleges, and that a letter of pastoral admonishment be sent by the Executive Committee of Synod to said institution and that a request for response be made by the Board of Trustees, to be addressed to the 265th Synod.
4. That the RCUS guideline for giving to Dordt College be suspended until the response from Dordt College is considered by Synod.
5. That the Synod sub-committee on Sunday School curriculum investigate the feasibility of developing a curriculum based on the 2010 pedagogical approach and set forth a detailed plan to accomplish any such proposals.

E. Judicial Committee

1. That Synod mandate its Permanent Publications Committee to print the Ecumenical Creeds, the Apostles Creed, and Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed at the beginning of RCUS publication of its creedal standards. [FOUNDATIONS: These three ecumenical creeds are declared at the end of Article 9 of the Belgic Confession to be official creeds of our Church.]
2. That Synod acknowledge the action of South Central Classis in allowing Rev. Warren Embree to retire from the active ministry by placing him on the roll of Synod as a retired minister.
3. That Synod advise the Northern Plains Classis that their requiring an eight-month internship of ministers entering their Classis from another denomination is entirely consistent with the Constitution of the RCUS and with the Standing Rules of Synod. FOUNDATIONS: 1) A lower judicatory may have rules that are narrower or more strict than the requirements of the broader judicatories, while such judicatories may not have rules that are broader than those of the higher judicatories which allow those rules to be violated. 2) The Synod Standing Rule requiring internships of "candidates for the ministry" may legitimately be understood to include candidates for the ministry of the RCUS who have already been ordained elsewhere, for they certainly are "candidates for the ministry" of the RCUS. 3) Requiring already ordained ministers who are candidates for the ministry of the RCUS to undergo an internship does not in any way violate the principle that such candidates shall

not be placed on the roll of Synod until they have been officially confirmed by Synod. This requirement in Article 84 safeguards the Synod's interest in maintaining the unity and orthodoxy of the ministry of the RCUS, which is not interfered with, but promoted by having in internship before their approval by a two-thirds vote of Classis.

4. That Synod accede to the overture for a specific study paper on homosexuality by erecting a special Committee to produce a paper for consideration by Synod, at its 265th Synod, that will be entitled, "Promoting a Biblical Sexual Morality." The contents of this paper are to include a didactic section that will, 1) Teach the biblical support and blessings of the teaching of godly sexual morality. 2) Will set biblical morality over against the abominations of homosexuality, adultery and man-centered views of sexuality, so that it can be used to teach biblical morality to our own people and to our culture. 3) Will provide biblical requirements for the use of human sexuality in the midst of and to the improvement of culture.
5. [TABLED] That Synod adopt the presently used order of business for Synod as an official form, and that Synod adopt the presently used order of business for Classis as an official form for those judicatories (this order to be compiled by the Synod's standing Committee on Minutes of Classis at this Synod meeting.) Should this latter task be too difficult, this matter will be referred to the Executive Committee of Synod for its accomplishment.
6. That the issue of the wording of the Belgic Confession Article 9, concerning the use of the phrase "descended in the shape of a dove" be referred to a Special Committee to study this matter and return with recommendations for its disposition. This Committee to be erected by recommendation from the Nominations Committee and should include members particularly capable of doing the study involved.

F. Missions Committee

1. That the budget be adopted as follows:

Congo:

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

Kenya:

- Church Support \$11,000 (same)
- Economic Development for pastor/elders \$2,000 (same)
- Student/ministry expenses & travel \$5,400 (same as last year)
- Reformed Faith and Life (French): \$17,000 (same)

Committee Expenses:

- Travel to Africa \$2,000 (same)
- Travel to Europe \$1,000 (same)
- Travel in USA \$ 3,000 (same)

TOTAL: \$69,400

2. That the RCUS continue to encourage the churches not to forget the Congo Economic development project but continue to support it by prayer and gifts when able. Take Note.
3. That the RCUS budget up to \$15,000 to assist Rev. Phil Proctor (OPC) with the purchase of a reliable vehicle in order to assist with quarterly meetings of those we support Kenya.

4. That the pastors of the RCUS prayerfully consider the open invitation from Rev. Phil Proctor for men of the RCUS to come and teach a three week class in Uganda. Take Note.
5. That the Foreign Ministries Committee, at its discretion, use monies from the Foreign Ministries budgeted travel funds to send interested pastors to teach at Knox Theological College, per Rev. Proctor's request.
6. That the RCUS budget \$1700 for UCRCP quarterly meetings for this year.
7. That the RCUS budget \$3000 for a future rip of RCUS men to the Philippines to meet with and hold conferences with the UCRCP.
8. That th RCUS budget \$2400 for travel expenses for the pastors of the UCRCP to engage in outreach.
9. That Synod provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas, with \$5760 in fiscal year 2011.
10. That Synod provide Covenant RCUS, Chico, CA with \$13,020 in fiscal year 2011.
11. That Synod provide Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA with \$12,500 in fiscal year 2011.
12. That the Day of Prayer offering be determined according to individual need of our works.
13. That the 2010 Day of Prayer offering be designated to help defray rental costs of Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, CA.
14. That the Classes, having done so, be commended for setting aside money for future mission works.
15. That \$7,000 be budgeted for committee expenses.
16. The 2011 Home Missions budget, if approved as recommended, would be \$38,280, a reduction from \$82,684 for 2010. Take Note.
17. That Synod grant diaconal assistance to help cover medical costs for the wife of Rev. Kabongo in the amount of \$200 contingent on the permanent Foreign Ministries Committee's contact with Rev. Eric Kayayan, to see whether or not this need has already been met.

G. Minutes of Classes Committee

1. That when reports or official communications are sent via electronic internet media to the clerks, that they be signed via electronic signature or a signed hard copy be faxed or mailed in addition. Take Note.
2. That the minutes of the Western Classis be approved with the following exceptions that ought to be corrected:
 - a. Pg 6/line 47 after scripture text, "a" should be "and"
 - b. Pg 12/line 10 sentence should start with "The"
 - c. Pg 14/line 19 needs signature of Elder Chris Fellersen
 - d. Pg 15 - correction to Rev. Lloyd Gross index reference not needed

Appendix:

 - a. Pg 13 need signature of Elder Wayne Johnson
 - b. Pg 14 need signature of Rev. Jim West and Elder Wayne Johnson
 - c. Pg 15 need signature of Rev. Jim West and Elder Wayne Johnson
 - d. Pg 16 need signature of Rev. Jim West and Elder Wayne Johnson

- e. Pg 17 need signature of Rev. Jim West and Elder Wayne Johnson
 - f. Pg 25 need signature of Deacon John Warren
 - g. Pg 26 need signature of Mr. Greg Born
 - h. Pg 88 written on back of Heidelberg Catechism worksheet
 - i. Pg 90 need signature of Deacon Jeremy Bridgman
 - j. Pg 107 need signature of all listed persons
 - k. Pg 111 need signature of Gil Garcia (both sides)
3. That the minutes of the South Central Classis be approved with the following exceptions which ought to be corrected:
 - a. Pg 2 commas are missing in the first sentence
 - b. Pg 4 "no new churches" ought to read "no new churches received."
 - c. Pg 5 The first name of Rev. Vusich is misspelled
 - d. Pg 4 "Lee Johnson moved to extend order of day to complete doctrine of Scripture" ought to mention "exam."
 - e. "By common consent Blair and Syms switched places" ought to specify "what" was switched.
 - f. Pg 14 lacking needed signatures
 - g. Document 11 lacks needed signatures
 - h. Document 12 lacks needed signatures
 - i. Document 13 lacks needed signatures
 - j. Document 14 lacks needed signatures
 - k. Document 15 lacks needed signatures
 - l. Document 16 lacks needed signatures
 - m. Document 34 lacks needed signatures
 - n. Overture 6 lacks needed signatures
 - o. Overture 7 lacks needed signatures
 4. That the minutes of the Northern Plains Classis be approved with the following exceptions which ought to be corrected:
 - a. No appendix heading for the listing of supporting documents.
 - b. Reports not numbered.
 - c. Pg 2 President's Report is "accepted" rather than "approved."
 - d. Pg 5 Minutes should be noted "approved as corrected."
 5. hat the minutes of Covenant East Classis be approved with the following exception which ought to be corrected:
 - a. Pages 4, 5, 6, 9 - time not recorded when Classis went into recess.

H. Publications Committee

1. That Rev. Paul Treick be nominated to serve as the Reformed Herald editor. Rev. Treick was then elected by ballot.
2. That \$500 be budgeted for expenses incurred by the editor of the Reformed Herald.
3. That Olive Tree Publications be compensated at a rate of \$35.00 per hour limited to layout work done to publish the Reformed Herald.

4. That the Publications and Promotions Committee utilize the services of Rev. Eric Bristley in making the changes to convert to the NKJV in all Bible references in the TFU which said services shall not as exceed \$350.
5. That the Website Committee offer the RCUS electronic Reference Library collection of the RCUS Website for free.
6. That Synod contract Rev. Eric Bristley in the amount of \$3600 to maintain the RCUS Website for the next synodical year.
7. That Synod approve a budget of \$500 for web hosting and software expenses for the website for the next synodical year.
8. Please remember to continue to update your church’s Reformed Herald subscriptions. Take Note.
9. That the report of the editor of the Reformed Herald be adopted.
10. That the Synod of the RCUS instruct the Webmaster to place the modern version of the Heidelberg Catechism with recent changes on the Website.
11. That all position papers and new yearly synodical and classical Abstracts of the RCUS, as they are available, be placed in an easily available “Downloads” page on the RCUS Website.

I. Finances Committee

1. That Synod pay travel expenses to the 2010 Synod in the amount of \$27,849.08.
2. That Synod pay \$27,004.27 to the OPC, which is the remaining amount due as a result of our agreement with regard to the work in Africa of Rev. Thomas Mayville.
3. Regarding the request from the Foreign Ministries Committee to be allowed to access up to \$10,000 of currently accrued funds in case of emergency, we recommend no action at this time. Take Note.
4. That Synod grant a loan of \$25,000 to Grace RCUS of Greeley, CO, for the improvement of their building. The loan is to be repaid over 5 years with 3% interest.
5. That the funds from the Arthur Mehlhaf Estate be distributed to the MAF for investment.
6. That the report of the Treasurer be adopted.
7. That the guideline for MARS be set at \$2.00 per communicant member.
8. That the guideline for Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary be set at \$1.00 per communicant member.
9. That the guideline for New Geneva Theological Seminary be set at \$2.00 per communicant member.
10. That the guideline for Heidelberg Theological Seminary be set at \$2.00 per communicant member.
11. That the guideline for MERF be set at \$2.00 per communicant member.
12. That the guideline for Hope Haven be set at \$2.00 per communicant member.
13. That the Synod Dues and Guidelines be approved as follows:

Synodical Dues	\$12.00
Home Missions	13.00
Foreign Ministries	42.00
Ministerial Relief	80.00
Diaconal Ministries	2.00

General Publishing	7.00
Student Aid	0.00
General Benevolences	18.00
Dordt College	0.00
Hope Haven	2.00
Mid America Seminary	2.00
Greenville Seminary	1.00
Heidelberg Seminary	2.00
New Geneva Seminary	2.00
Deficit Reduction	0.00
Ministerial Aid Fund	5.00
Building Fund	0.00
MERF	2.00
TOTAL	\$190.00
Reformed Herald (per subscription)	\$18.00

14. That Gary Mancilas be reimbursed for his motel room for \$222.60.

J. Excuses Committee

1. That the requests for excuses from all sessions of Synod be granted for the following members: Rev. George Syms, Elder Darrell Bentz; Elder Alan Fickbohm, Elder Justin Goehring; Elder Lynn Goehring; Elder Raymond Jung, Elder Ron Meidinger, Elder Earl Mehlhoff, Elder Leroy Neifer, Elder Vern Ochsner, Elder Tim Rott, Elder Jim Snyder, and Elder Steve Wilbur.
2. That the requests for excuses for part of the sessions of Synod be granted to the following members: Rev. Eric Bristley, Rev. Jon Blair, Rev. Dale Clark, Rev. David Fagrey, Rev. William Haddock, Rev. Randall Klynsma, Elder Mark Fisher, Elder Roger Gallimore, Elder Spencer Gross, Elder Mark Reyna, Elder Ewald Ochsner, Elder James Ochsner, Rev. Tracy Gruggett, and Rev. Dennis Roe.
3. Concerning the excuse from Mr. Dan Rogers. Take Note.
4. That the Stated Clerk send a letter to the Consistories of Grace RCUS in Mitchell, SD and Harvest RCUS in Minot, ND, encouraging them in their responsibility to have each member of the delegating consistory sign a delegate’s excuse.
5. That the Stated Clerk send a letter to the Consistories of Salem RCUS, Ashley, ND, Eureka RCUS, Eureka, SD, First RCUS in Herried, SD, and Harvest RCUS in Minot, ND, encouraging them to provide a more thorough explanation with their request to be excused.
6. That it should be noted that the following congregations are not represented at the 264th Synod of the RCUS: Hosmer RCUS n Hosmer, SD, and First RCUS in Herried, SD. Furthermore, it should be noted that the following congregations are not represented by an elder delegate: Harvest RCUS in Minot, ND, Eureka RCUS, Eureka, SD, Hope RCUS in Pierre, SD, Salem RCUS in Ashley, ND, and Covenant RCUS in Grass Valley, CA. Take Note.
7. That excuses for delegates no longer have to be signed by the delegating Consistory.
8. That the Synod take note of Guideline 2 of the Guidelines for Excuses which is found in the Abstract of the 261st Synod of the RCUS (p. 73) Take Note.

K. Nominations Committee

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

L. Overtures Committee

1. That Synod accept the invitation from Grace Reformed Church, Mitchell, SD, to host Synod.
2. From the Executive Committee Report, recommendation #1, regarding the request for the Synod Treasurer to be the authority to handle matters concerning the annuity from the estate of Arthur Mehlhaf. Take Note.
3. From the Executive Committee report, recommendation #6 regarding agenda to be used by Classes and Synod.
4. That Synod adopt the Executive Committee report for 2010.
5. That congregations be overtured to set aside the second Sunday of January (starting 2011 and continuing annually) as special day of prayer and fasting with the focus of entreating the Lord to raise up faithful men to pursue the gospel ministry in our day as well as pray for the approved seminaries of Synod, and that churches be encouraged to make such petition to the Lord on a regular basis.
6. That Synod adopt the 2010 Board of Trustees Report.
7. That Synod remind the Board of Trustees that it is required by law to meet at least once during the year regardless of whether or not it has business. Take Note.
8. That the following expression of gratitude be expressed to Ebenezer Reformed Church of Shafter, CA, and that it be printed in the Sunday's bulletin: "To the members and Consistory of Ebenezer Reformed Church: The 264th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States extends our deepest gratitude for your work of faith, labor of love, and the outpouring of hospitality both in fellowship and wonderful food. Our prayer is that God will richly bless and reward you for service to the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ."

XVI. Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

A. Expression of Appreciation

"To the members, deacons, and elders of the Ebenezer Reformed Church: The delegates to the 264th Synod of the RCUS extend their hearty and hardy gratitude for hosting this year's Synod meeting. We thank you for putting us up and putting up with us! We do appreciate your going the second mile in providing us with timely transportation, good food, lavish feasts, and Christian hospitality. We trust that our God will enable us to duplicate your labor of love which you have testified to us. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ go with you."

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

All these reports were adopted by the Synod.

XVII. Adjournment

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

The minutes were printed, distributed, read, corrected, and approved each morning and at the conclusion of the Synod.

B. Roll Call

The closing roll showed 44 ministers and 26 elders present, a total of 70.

C. Motion to Adjourn

The 264th meeting of the Synod was adjourned to the 265th Annual Session of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, to begin on May 16, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., at Grace RCUS, Mitchell, SD.

D. Closing Service

1. Devotions: Elder Bob Williams from Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter, CA, led in the closing devotion. Elder Williams read Psalm 33 and Psalm 133 and led in prayer.

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

The meeting of the Synod was concluded at 9:00 p.m., May 20, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,
 Rev. Paul H. Treick, Stated Clerk

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

Standing Rules

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

1. The fiscal year of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States shall run from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. The synodical dues shall be due on the first of June and are to be paid not later than the thirty-first of June of the current fiscal year. [1991, 2010]
2. The statistics of the Classes shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod two weeks before the session of Synod.
3. The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two weeks before the session of Synod.
4. Any member may move to have the Standing Rules read at the second session of Synod. Passage of the motion shall require a second and a simple majority vote.
5. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel in behalf of Synod at forty-five cents (\$.45) per running mile per vehicle. When distance and time require delegates to use public transportation to Synod, or in behalf of Synod, they shall be granted full fare. [2005, 2008]
6. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only those delegates to Synod whose congregations have paid the synodical dues in full to the Synod Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Synod or have been properly excused by Synod. Vehicle mileage for travel to Synod by pastors and delegate elders will be paid at the running mile rate per pastoral charge. [2008]
7. The President of Synod shall receive four hundred fifty dollars (\$450), the Stated Clerk shall receive one thousand dollars (\$ 1,000), and the Treasurer one thousand dollars (\$ 1,000) for the synodical year. An amount equal to 10 percent of the Stated Clerk's honorarium will be available for the Stated Clerk to use for secretarial help. The Editor of the Reformed Herald shall receive one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500), the Book Depository Manager shall receive three hundred dollars (\$300), and the Subscription Manager shall receive five hundred dollars (\$500) for the synodical year. [1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2007]
8. The monies sent to the Synod Treasurer shall be made out in check form to the REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES and shall be designated for which fund and how much. for each fund.
9. The Stated Clerk of Synod shall prepare an abstract of the synodical minutes, including a cumulative index of resolutions and positions taken by Synod, and shall publish the same. Each Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an abstract of classical minutes and shall send one

copy to each minister, elder delegate and congregation of Synod. [1987, 1989, 1990]

10. The Synod shall have Permanent Committees as follows:

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

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

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

12. Nominations for all officers of Synod and the editor of the *Reformed Herald* shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names with the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election. [1997]

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

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

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

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

17. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Synod four weeks in advance of Synod shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Synod at any time. [1998, 2004, 2010]

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

meeting of Synod. [1987]

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

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

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Membership and Financial Statistics - 2009		No. of Elders	No. of Deacons	Comm. Memb. Last Yr.	Rec'd by Confirmation	Rec'd by Letter	Rec'd by Prof.	Total Rec'd	Tot.O1 d/New Memb.	Lost by Dis-missal
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS										
<i>Bentonville, AR</i>	<i>Grace (w/ Peace (incl AR))</i>	1	0	20	0	0	0	0	20	0
Garner, IA	Peace (incl AR)	4	3	124	2	0	4	6	130	5
Golden Valley, MN	Redeemer	4	4	103	0	6	0	6	109	2
Hamburg, MN	St. Paul's	3	3	217	3	0	0	3	220	2
<i>Waymart, PA</i>	<i>(w/ Napoleon)</i>	0	0	10	0	3	5	8	18	0
Kansas City, MO	Northland	3	4	52	0	5	0	5	57	0
Manitowoc, WI	Salem Ebenezer	4	3	212	3	0	2	5	217	4
Napoleon, OH	Peace (incl.PA)	3	3	64	0	5	5	10	74	1
Subtotal		21	20	772	8	16	11	35	807	14
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS										
Aberdeen, SD	First	3	3	113	3	0	1	4	117	5
Anamoose, ND	Kassel	1	1	25	0	0	0	0	25	0
Ashley, ND	Salem	3	3	44	0	0	0	0	44	0
Eureka	Eureka	3	3	161	1	0	0	1	162	0
Herried, SD	First	2	2	49	0	0	1	1	50	2
Hosmer, SD	Hosmer	2	2	23	0	0	0	0	23	0
Minot, ND	Harvest	1	1	24	0	0	0	0	24	0
Pierre, SD	Hope	2	1	28	0	2	2	4	32	2
Watertown, SD	Covenant	2	0	17	0	0	2	2	19	0
Subtotal		19	16	484	4	2	6	12	496	9
South Central Classis										
Col Spr., CO	Trinity Cov.	3	2	53	0	0	0	0	53	11
Greeley, CO	Grace	3	2	44	1	3	7	11	55	0
Limon, CO	Providence	3	2	35	1	0	3	4	39	0
Lincoln, NE	St. John's	4	4	96	1	2	1	4	100	2
Menno, SD	Zion	4	4	166	3	0	0	3	169	2
Mitchell, SD	Grace	3	2	72	0	2	0	2	74	5
Rapid City, SD	Grace	2	2	66	2	0	0	2	68	4
Rock Spr., WY	Providence	2	2	36	2	4	2	8	44	2
Sioux Falls, SD	Trinity	5	5	127	0	12	6	18	145	0
Sutton, NE	Emmanuel	3	3	130	1	0	0	1	131	3
Sutton, NE	Hope	4	4	210	0	3	1	4	214	1
Vermillion, SD	Providence	2	1	25	0	0	0	0	25	0
Subtotal		38	33	1,060	11	26	20	57	1,117	30
WESTERN CLASSIS										
Anderson, CA	Faith	1	2	26	0	0	0	0	26	0
Bakersfield, CA	Grace	4	4	110	0	20	5	25	135	0
Chico, CA	Covenant	2	1	19	0	6	0	6	25	3
Grass Valley, CA	Covenant (Incl	1	0	41	0	0	5	5	46	3
<i>La Habra, CA</i>	<i>Rehoboth w/</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>0</i>
Lancaster, CA	Grace	1	2	32	0	0	1	1	33	0
Lodi, CA	Providence	2	3	50	1	0	4	5	55	2
Modesto, CA	Trinity	3	3	65	2	0	1	3	68	0
Sacramento, CA	Covenant (Incl	6	7	164	2	2	1	5	169	2
<i>S. Diego, CA</i>	<i>Covenant w/</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Stockton, CA</i>	<i>Calvary w/ Gr</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>0</i>
Shafter, CA	Ebenezer (Incl	5	6	122	4	4	0	8	130	18
Willows, CA	Grace	2	3	32	0	2	0	2	34	0
Yuba City, CA	First	3	2	50	0	0	3	3	53	0
Subtotal		30	33	711	9	34	20	63	774	28
TOTALS THIS YEAR		108	102	3027	32	78	57	167	3194	81
TOTALS LAST YEAR		107	105	3000	58	59	74	190	3190	77
PERCENT OF CHANGE		+1	-3	+1	-45	+24	-23	-12	0	+5

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

Lost by Erasure or Discipline	Lost by Death	Total Lost	Comm. Memb. this Yr.	Unconfir- ed Memb.	Total Baptized Members	No. of Families	No. of Children in S. S.	Adult Baptisms	Infant Baptisms	Total Baptisms	No. Rec'g Lord's Supper	Times Lds Supper Served
3	0	3	17	4	21	8	4	0	0	0	16	6
5	2	12	118	22	140	63	15	0	1	1	107	10
7	0	9	100	68	168	47	62	0	5	5	100	6
1	6	9	211	32	243	131	26	0	2	2	193	9
0	1	1	17	7	24	8	0	0	0	0	18	12
5	0	5	52	30	82	24	30	0	0	0	52	6
8	1	13	204	25	229	127	14	0	1	1	185	4
2	1	4	70	21	91	34	12	0	0	0	68	18
28	10	52	755	198	953	426	159	0	9	9	705	53
1	1	7	110	18	128	59	13	0	2	2	97	4
0	1	1	24	1	25	13	1	0	0	0	25	4
0	0	0	44	0	44	27	0	0	0	0	32	4
0	3	3	159	7	166	94	5	0	1	1	143	4
0	0	2	48	12	60	23	7	0	3	3	38	3
0	0	0	23	0	23	15	0	0	0	0	15	3
1	0	1	23	12	35	15	14	0	0	0	13	2
1	0	3	29	7	36	18	6	0	3	3	26	6
0	0	0	19	6	25	9	6	0	2	2	19	6
3	5	17	479	63	542	273	52	0	11	11	408	36
1	0	12	41	17	58	16	21	0	1	1	44	12
1	0	1	54	24	78	32	14	0	10	10	52	4
0	0	0	39	19	58	16	15	1	3	4	N/A	12
0	0	2	98	35	133	53	25	0	3	3	81	6
4	2	8	161	27	188	82	22	0	1	1	150	4
0	0	5	69	24	93	29	17	0	0	0	68	5
1	0	5	63	36	99	35	24	0	3	3	63	6
1	0	3	39	12	51	20	5	0	3	3	36	11
5	1	6	139	73	189	71	63	0	2	2	132	6
4	3	10	121	24	145	74	15	0	0	0	113	6
6	0	7	207	56	263	96	42	0	1	1	157	6
2	0	2	23	12	35	11	7	0	0	0	25	4
25	6	61	1,054	359	1,390	535	270	1	27	28	921	82
0	1	1	25	4	29	15	0	0	0	0	26	12
6	0	6	129	47	176	58	39	2	6	8	91	4
0	0	3	22	3	25	11	0	0	1	1	24	12
0	0	3	43	20	63	22	20	0	3	3	40	12
7	0	7	24	20	44	19	19	0	1	1	31	6
0	1	1	32	17	49	18	15	0	0	0	25	4
1	2	5	50	16	66	28	8	1	2	3	50	12
4	1	5	63	21	84	27	12	0	1	1	62	4
8	0	10	159	55	214	75	44	0	3	3	159	12
2	0	2	17	4	21	10	4	0	0	0	17	11
0	0	0	10	4	14	6	4	0	3	3	7	2
7	0	25	105	24	129	57	22	0	2	2	125	6
2	0	2	32	12	44	14	12	0	0	0	32	12
4	0	4	49	9	58	25	9	1	0	1	53	12
32	5	65	709	228	937	350	181	4	18	22	687	102
88	26	195	2,997	848	3,822	1,584	662	5	65	70	2,721	273
55	34	168	3,028	842	3,870	1,611	699	2	66	68	2,790	289
+37	-23	+13	-1	+1	-1	-2	-5	+130	-2	+3	-2	-6

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL		Receipts from Reg. Offerings	Receipts from Spec. Offerings	Receipts from other Sources	Total Receipts	Giving to Synod Guidelines	Giving to Classis Guidelines	Giving to Non-Guide-line Causes	Giving to Non-RCUS
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS									
Bentonville, AR	Grace (w/	39,951	952	17,589	58,492	4,220	1,420	0	0
Garner, IA	Peace (incl AR)	153,580	14,459	38,144	206,183	29,813	8,804	7,008	5,227
Golden Valley, MN	Redeemer	220,013	11,147	206	231,366	22,351	7,313	4,572	1,000
Hamburg, MN	St. Paul's	161,736	1,836	46,422	209,994	46,612	15,407	1,670	649
Honesdale, PA	(w/ Napoleon)	29,770	0	17,130	46,900	0	2,000	0	0
Kansas City, MO	Northland	162,995	7,806	121,996	292,797	11,195	3,692	2,282	7,306
Manitowoc, WI	Salem	162,622	534	9,548	172,704	47,307	15,052	425	735
Napoleon, OH	Peace (incl.	137,101	4,962	20,153	162,216	14,231	6,544	795	7,243
Subtotal		998,047	40,744	236,469	1,275,260	171,509	56,812	16,752	22,160
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS									
Aberdeen, SD	First	87,424	4,311	173,749	265,484	25,367	5,876	0	0
Anamoose, ND	Kassel	25,772	46	41	25,859	5,454	1,248	46	0
Ashley, ND	Salem	24,856	8,928	2,432	36,216	5,480	2,352	100	75
Eureka, SD	Eureka	102,709	626	0	103,335	23,354	8,372	200	426
Herried, SD	First	39,028	5,790	2,557	47,375	3,242	2,548	742	0
Hosmer, SD	Hosmer	4,785	0	10,188	14,973	357	138	0	0
Minot, ND	Harvest	28,205	1,890	1,585	31,680	1,748	1,196	0	0
Pierre, SD	Hope	42,288	6,977	0	49,265	6,027	1,456	0	308
Watertown, SD	Covenant	31,335	1,000	14,400	46,735	3,434	884	0	0
Subtotal		386,402	29,568	204,952	620,922	74,463	24,070	1,088	809
South Central Classis									
Col. Spr., CO	Trinity Cov.	64,925	1,524	8,700	75,149	11,408	2,161	623	0
Greeley, CO	Grace	103,061	1,572	43,174	147,807	9,742	1,753	1,495	0
Limon, CO	Providence	54,084	0	6,940	61,539	396	1,010	0	645
Lincoln, NE	St. John's	75,840	773	23,064	99,677	21,875	3,912	0	150
Menno, SD	Zion	117,838	19,016	6,227	143,081	35,732	10,855	20,780	4,170
Mitchell, SD	Grace	101,693	540	18,888	121,121	15,713	3,139	1,125	0
Rapid City, SD	Grace	153,850	0	0	153,850	14,801	2,691	6,711	0
Rock Spr., WY	Providence	76,890	19,035	0	95,925	7,194	1,305	530	0
Sioux Falls, SD	Trinity	200,425	11,501	3,442	215,368	27,260	5,307	2,193	5,100
Sutton, NE	Emmanuel	90,427	55,468	1,769	147,664	29,368	5,298	0	2,416
Sutton, NE	Hope	153,920	11,138	667	165,725	46,985	8,558	359	10,598
Vermillion, SD	Providence	68,079	2,046	11,786	81,911	5,561	1,020	2,000	172
Subtotal		1,261,032	122,613	124,657	1,508,817	226,035	47,009	35,816	23,251
WESTERN CLASSIS									
Anderson, CA	Faith	47,627	0	11,000	58,627	1,241	1,560	0	0
Bakersfield, CA	Grace	195,546	21,097	34,121	250,764	24,852	13,888	6,833	2,114
Chico, CA	Covenant	41,018	2,785	35,062	78,865	1,753	1,621	180	0
Grass Valley, CA	Cov. (Incl.	109,167	8,950	2,672	120,789	1,091	898	175	11,521
La Habra, CA	Rehoboth	90,489	0	43,918	134,407	7,749	4,464	180	0
Lancaster, CA	Grace	79,970	9,741	18,018	107,729	3,188	3,968	0	0
Lodi, CA	Providence	79,593	2,045	752	82,390	5,310	3,250	0	709
Modesto, CA	Trinity	103,087	899	30,025	134,011	14,441	8,060	906	0
* Sacramento, CA	Cov (Incl. S	291,867	151,086	133,011	575,964	36,634	20,336	5,303	17,761
San Diego, CA	Covenant w/	36,325	0	25,033	61,358	4,055	2,232	1,290	689
Stockton, CA	Calvary w/Gr.	20,536	0	366	20,902	564	490	175	265
Shafter, CA	Ebenezer (Incl	261,068	5,478	40,445	306,991	26,691	15,376	0	2,573
Willows, CA	Grace	70,515	1,801	507	72,823	6,852	3,968	72	316
Yuba City, CA	First	93,844	13,669	0	107,513	10,514	6,200	596	0
Subtotal		1,373,302	217,551	305,613	1,896,466	132,567	79,125	14,065	34,994
TOTALS THIS YEAR		4,018,783	410,476	871,691	5,301,465	604,574	207,016	67,721	81,214
TOTALS LAST YEAR		4,119,902	385,929	1,094,154	5,602,848	599,481	216,760	91,624	102,375
PERCENT OF CHANGE		-2	+6	-20	-5	+1	-4	-26	-21

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

Other Expenses	Total Expenses	Value of Church Building	Value of Church Parsonage	Improvements on church property	Present Property Debts	Debt Payments Past Year	Giving to Synod per Com. Mbr.	Giving to Classis per Com. Mbr.	Giving to RCUS per Com. Mbr.
61,047	66,687	0	0	0	0	0	211	71	282
146,860	197,712	750,000	125,000	2,102	0	0	240	71	368
186,486	221,722	850,000	215,000	14,635	369,643	31,321	217	71	332
135,656	199,994	750,000	250,000	14,652	0	0	215	71	293
38,460	40,460	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	200
242,801	267,276	1,500,000	0	0	297,609	32,183	215	71	330
109,404	172,923	800,000	200,000	12,395	0	0	223	71	296
137,501	166,314	200,000	0	0	0	0	222	102	337
958,708	1,225,941	4,850,000	790,000	43,784	667,252	63,504	Ave. 222	Ave. 76	Ave. 317
232,747	263,990	350,000	0	169,197	72,000	63,000	224	52	276
19,416	26,164	40,000	0	0	0	0	218	50	270
28,438	36,445	24,900	25,000	2,959	0	0	125	53	180
75,942	108,294	250,000	100,000	0	0	0	145	52	198
37,227	43,759	40,000	42,000	0	0	0	66	52	133
12,615	13,110	25,000	0	0	0	0	16	6	22
22,597	25,541	0	250,000	5,934	0	0	73	50	123
34,081	44,803	100,000	90,000	2,932	7,148	6,553	215	52	267
43,950	48,268	0	150,000	118	0	0	202	52	254
507,013	610,374	829,900	657,000	181,140	79,148	69,553	Ave. 143	Ave. 47	Ave. 206
52,083	66,275	0	0	0	0	0	215	41	256
132,425	145,415	192,000	158,000	23,346	10,877	19,158	221	40	295
54,963	57,023	40,000	0	1,114	1,154	3,600	11	29	40
69,301	95,238	110,000	99,100	7,794	0	0	228	41	269
97,791	169,328	500,000	75,000	19,986	0	0	222	67	418
92,517	112,494	275,000	155,225	6,561	38,979	935	215	43	274
140,557	164,850	515,000	185,000	20,538	39,267	26,101	226	41	368
74,017	83,046	170,000	incl.	0	13,876	26,584	200	36	251
106,392	146,252	590,946	0	123,473	0	0	215	42	274
52,722	89,804	522,000	157,000	5,332	0	0	226	41	267
98,097	164,597	800,000	70,000	5,671	0	0	224	41	266
65,038	73,619	300,000	125,000	100	0	0	222	41	343
1,035,903	1,367,941	4,014,946	1,024,325	213,915	104,153	76,378	Ave. 202	Ave. 42	Ave. 291
51,160	63,495	400,000	N/A	0	0	0	48	60	108
132,947	180,634	600,000	250,000	651	0	0	226	126	414
76,520	80,074	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	92	85	187
32,010	45,695	508,100	N/A	15,515	51,878	7,669	27	22	53
152,043	164,436	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	215	124	344
96,732	103,888	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	100	124	224
77,149	86,418	252,368	N/A	1,100	0	0	106	65	271
129,368	152,775	350,000	N/A	50,741	32,399	12,000	222	124	360
538,042	618,076	317,189	N/A	19,575	0	0	223	124	380
64,072	72,338	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	225	124	421
21,490	22,984	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	71	20	91
320,097	364,737	1,000,000	250,000	0	0	0	215	124	360
68,273	79,481	550,000	N/A	27,066	0	0	214	124	338
70,611	87,921	218,000	165,000	7,448	27,123	8,400	210	124	334
1,592,909	1,863,194	4,195,657	665,000	122,096	111,400	28,069	Ave. 153	Ave. 100	Ave. 318
4,094,533	5,067,450	13,890,503	3,136,325	560,935	961,953	237,504	Ave. 180	Ave. 66	Ave. 290
4,118,359	5,161,248	13,802,167	3,362,325	362,733	1,052,758	472,340	Ave. 187	Ave. 73	Ave. 276
-1	-2	+1	-7	+35	-9	-50	-4	-10	+5

GENERAL INFORMATION

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RCUS BOOKS c/o Elder Dave McPherson
Box 126, Sturgis, SD 57785

(605) 347-5666

Fax (605) 720-2788

E-Mail: mcperc@gwtc.net

The Reformed Herald (Monthly magazine)

Rev. Paul Treick (Editor) (209) 551-2407
4005 Masterpiece Dr., Modesto, CA 95357 E-Mail: TriWheeler@aol.com

Rev. Frank Walker (Subscriptions)..... (916) 320-0548
6121 Pine Vista Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758 E-Mail: DrFHW@comcast.net

Churches in Fraternal Relationship

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

Colleges Listed as Worthy of Support

Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, GA

Seminaries Listed as Worthy of Support

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

Benevolences Listed as Worthy of Support

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

Reformed Church in the U. S. Website

rcus.org
Reformed Herald Online - reformedherald.org