

The  
Reformed Church  
in the  
United States

Abstract of the Minutes  
257<sup>th</sup> Synod

May 19 - 22, 2003  
Eureka Reformed Church  
Eureka, South Dakota

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Directory of Congregations

ARKANSAS

**Bentonville, AR 72714** ..... (479) 876-1064  
 Grace RCUS Chapel  
 Office: 15 Kensington Drive, Bella Vista  
 Pastor: Rev. Wesley Brice (Wife: Ginger)  
 Worship: Call Pastor

CALIFORNIA

**Anderson, CA 96007** ..... (530) 365-6874  
 Faith RCUS, 3291 Rupert Rd.  
 Mail: P.O. Box 902  
 Worship 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM  
 Pastor: Vacant

**Bakersfield, CA 93305** ..... (661) 325-0165  
 Grace RCUS, 420 Columbus Street  
 Mail: 6407 Brooklawn Way, Bakersfield, CA 93309  
 Worship 10:30 AM and 6:30 PM; SS 9:45 AM  
 Pastor: George Horner (wife, Mary Jo)  
 E-Mail: ghorner@bak.rr.com

**Chico, CA 95926** ..... (530) 345-2732  
 Covenant Chapel, 1877 Hooker Oak Ave  
 Mail: 2 Woodminster Court, Chico, CA 95926  
 Worship 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM;  
 Pastor: Gary Mancilas (wife, Gloria)  
 E-Mail: gmancilas@sunset.net  
 Web Page: <http://www.crcchico.com>

**Grass Valley, CA 95945** ..... (530) 273-4673  
 Covenant RCUS, 407 W. Main St.  
 Mail: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA 95945  
 Worship 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM; SS 9:45 AM  
 Pastor: Dennis E. Roe (wife, Julie)  
 E-Mail: mathatas@prodigy.net  
 WebPage: <http://crcgv.nccn.net>

**Lancaster, CA 93534** ..... (661) 940-4669  
 Grace RCUS, 551 West Ave. I, Suite F  
 Mail: 2432 Greenhill Ave., Rosamond, CA 93560  
 Worship 10:45 AM; SS. 9:30 AM;

Pastor: Rev. Neale Riffert (wife, Mary Elizebeth)  
 E-Mail: [nealer@att.net](mailto:nealer@att.net)

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

**La Habra, CA 90631** ..... (562) 947-4837  
 Rehoboth Chapel, 643 South Beach Blvd.  
 Mail: 11502 La Serna, Dr., Whittier, CA 90604  
 Worship 10:30 AM; Bible Study 6:00 PM.  
 Pastor: Jay E. Fluck (wife, Loretta)  
 E-Mail: [jefluck@aol.com](mailto:jefluck@aol.com)

**Modesto, CA 95350** ..... (209) 523-3220  
 Trinity RCUS, 960 El Terino Ave.  
 Mail: 4005 Masterpiece Dr., Modesto, CA 95357  
 Worship 10:30 AM & 6:00 PM; SS 9:15 AM  
 Pastor: Paul Treick (wife, Karen)  
 E-mail: [triwheeler@aol.com](mailto:triwheeler@aol.com)  
 Web Page: <http://all.at/trichurch>

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

**San Diego, CA 91977** ..... (619) 460-1321  
 Covenant Chapel, 49 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Chula Vista  
 Mail: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977  
 Worship at 11:00 AM; SS 10:00 AM  
 Pulpit Supply: Lic. Guillermo (Gil) Baloy (wife, Manicar)  
 E-mail: [gilbaloy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gilbaloy@sbcglobal.net)  
 Web Page: [www.covenantreformedchurch.org/crcsd](http://www.covenantreformedchurch.org/crcsd)

**San Ramon, CA 94583** ..... (925) 918-1422  
 Grace Chapel, 110 Ryan Industrial Ct.  
 Mail: P.O. Box 2866, San Ramon, CA  
 Worship 10:30 AM  
 Pastor: Jonathan Merica (wife, Marsha)  
 E-mail: [jonmerica@aol.com](mailto:jonmerica@aol.com)  
 Web Page: [www.gracereformedchapel.com](http://www.gracereformedchapel.com)

- Shafter, CA 93263** ..... (661) 746-6907  
 Ebenezer RCUS, 235 James Street  
 Worship 10:30 AM & 7:00 PM; SS 9:30 AM  
 Pastor: Vernon Pollema (wife, Betty)  
 E-Mail: vpollema@juno.com
- Willows, CA 95988** ..... (530) 934-2732  
 Grace RCUS, 148 W. Sycamore St.  
 Mail: 839 Crestwood Way  
 Worship 10:00 AM; SS 9:00 AM  
 Pastor: Thomas Mayville (wife, Carolyn)  
 E-Mail: t.mayville@sunset.net
- Yuba City, CA 95991** ..... (530) 755-2272  
 First RCUS, 9882 Highway 99  
 Mail: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991  
 Worship 11:00 AM; SS 9:30 AM;  
 Pastor: Paul Henderson (wife, Tina)  
 E-Mail: thehendersons@juno.com

**COLORADO**

- Calhan, CO 81007** ..... (719) 647-1540  
 High Plains Chapel, 486 W. Bellflower Drive, Pueblo West, CO  
 Pastor: Maynard Koerner (wife, Marcia)
- Colorado Springs, CO 80918** ..... (719) 590-1477  
 Trinity Covenant RCUS, 3622 East Galley Road  
 Mail: 6050 Del Paz Dr.  
 Worship: 11AM  
 Pastor: C. W. “Bud” Powell, Jr. (wife, Penny)
- Greeley, CO 80631** ..... (970) 336-9927  
 Grace RCUS, 1505 10th Ave  
 Worship 11 AM; SS 10 AM  
 Pastor: Gene Sawtelle (wife, Sharon)
- Karval, CO 81063** ..... (719) 446-5215  
 Blue Cliff Community RCUS, Blue Cliff Com Bldg.  
 Mail: 2600 State Road 7 1, Ordway, CO 81063  
 Worship: 11 AM; SS 12:00 Noon  
 Pastor: Vacant

**IOWA**

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

**KENTUCKY**

**Danville, KY 40422** . . . . . (859) 936-1879  
Deaf RCUS, Contact Pastor for location of church meetings.  
Office: 917 Rosemont Ave., Danville, KY  
Pastor: Rev. Kevin Hamilton (Robin)  
Worship: 1:30 PM; Bible Study: 3:00 PM  
Fax: (859) 936-1879

**MARYLAND**

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

**MINNESOTA**

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

**Hamburg, MN 55339** . . . . . (952) 467-3878  
St. Paul’s Evangelical RCUS, 15470 Co Road 31  
Pastor: Rev. Hank Bowen (Wife: Patty)  
Worship: May - October 9:30AM; SS: 8:25 AM  
November -April 10:00AM; SS: 8:55AM

**MISSOURI**

**Kansas City, MO 64164** . . . . . (816) 420-9700  
Northland RCUS, 2901 NW Cookingham  
Pastor: Rev. George Syms (Wife: Debbie)  
Worship: 9:30 AM and 6:00 PM; SS 11:00 AM

**NEBRASKA**

**Lincoln, NE 68521** . . . . . (402) 477-7289  
St. John’s RCUS, 1101 South 26th St.  
Worship: 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM; Wednesday 7:00 PM  
Regular Supply: Warren Embree (wife, Anne), (402) 474-9134

**Sutton, NE 68979** ..... (402) 773-4227  
 Emmanuel RCUS, 110 South Way Ave.  
 Mail: PO Box 362  
 Worship: 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM  
 Pastor: Vacant

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

**NORTH DAKOTA**

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

**Denhoff, ND 58430** ..... 701/768-2892  
 Kassel RCUS, 14 miles N. and 31/2 miles W. of Denhoff  
 Mail: 540 20th St. NE, Kief, ND 58747-9339  
 Worship: 10:00 AM

**Minot, ND 58701** ..... (701) 838-0605  
 Harvest RCUS, 5200 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW  
 (Hwy 2, one mile west of Hwy 83 bypass)  
 Worship: 10:30 AM; SS: 9:15 AM  
 Pastor: Michael McGee (wife, Jennie)

**OHIO**

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

**PENNSYLVANIA**

**Carbondale, PA 18407** ..... (570) 282-6400  
 Covenant RCUS, 47 South Church St .  
 Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)  
 Worship: 10:00AM; Bible Classes 9:00AM

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

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

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

**Herreid, SD 57632** ..... 605/437-2414  
 First RCUS, Highway 83/ north end of town  
 Mail: 201 Dyke St., PO Box 316  
 Worship 9:00 or 11:00 AM (please call); SS: 10:00 AM  
 Pastor: Dan Schnabel (wife, Marie)

**Hosmer, SD 57448** ..... 605/283-2222  
 Hosmer RCUS, 2 blocks south of the water tower  
 Mail: PO Box 88  
 Worship: 9:00 AM or 11:00 AM (alternating monthly, please call)  
 Pastor: Steve Richert (wife, Nancy)

**Leola, SD 57456** ..... 605/439-3537  
 Oranien RCUS, Hwy. 10 and Burtis  
 Mail: 1214 S. McCoy St., Aberdeen, SD 57401  
 Worship: 11:00 AM  
 Pastor: David Dawn (wife, Colleen)

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

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

**Pierre, SD 57501** ..... 605/224-7846  
 Hope RCUS, 317 S. Garfield  
 Worship: 9:00 AM; SS: 10:25 AM  
 (for information, call 605/224-5170 then press 3985)  
 Pastor: William Haddock (wife, Ferne)

**Rapid City, SD 57701** ..... (605) 399-1711  
 Grace RCUS, 5626 North Haines Ave (2 miles north of I-90 on Haines)  
 Worship: 10:30 AM; SS 9:15 AM; Sunday Night 6:00 PM  
 Pastor: David Fagrey (wife, Bonnie)

**Sioux Falls, SD 57106** ..... (605) 339-3887  
 Trinity RCUS, 7301 S. Louise Ave  
 Mail: 3309 E. 31<sup>st</sup> St  
 Worship: 10:00 AM; SS 9:00 AM; Bible Study 6:00 PM  
 Pastor: Herman Van Stedum (wife, Phyllis)

**Vermillion, SD 57069** ..... (605) 624-4337  
 Providence RCUS, 830 E. Madison  
 Worship: 10:30 AM; SS 9:30 AM; Weds Bible 7:00 PM  
 Pastor: Robert Grossmann (wife, Polly)

**Watertown, SD 57201** ..... 605/882-9704  
 Covenant RCUS, 905 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE  
 Mail: 434 30th St. NW  
 Worship: 10:00 AM; SS: 11:20 AM  
 Pastor: Tracy Gruggett (wife, Michelle)

**WISCONSIN**

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

**WYOMING**

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



**Roll of Synod**

**ROLL OF MINISTERS**

**Baloy, Mr. Gil** ..... (619)697-0272  
 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977  
 gilbaloy@sbcglobal.net

**Blair, Rev. Jon** ..... (307)362-5107  
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**Clark, Rev. L. Dale** ..... (605)284-2396  
 PO Box 276, Eureka, SD 57437  
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 1214 S. McCoy, Aberdeen, SD 57401  
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**DeBoer, Rev. Jeff** ..... (641)923-3060  
 1905 200th St., Garner, IA 50438  
 jffdr@netconx.net

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 3410 Gregory Court, Lincoln, NE 68521  
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105 Lakeview Dr., Pierre, SD 57501  
rherald@earthlink.net
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thehendersons@juno.com
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6407 Brooklawn Way, Bakersfield, CA 93309  
ghorner@bak.rr.com
- Jones, Rev. Norman** ..... (605)945-1045  
PO Box 1212, Pierre, SD 57501  
nljones@dakota2k.net
- Kalkman, Rev. Hans** ..... (605)387-2816  
PO Box 387, Menno, SD 57045-0387  
hans@gwtc.net
- Kingswood, Rev. Darrell** ..... (402)773-4462  
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dlkingswood@alltel.net



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 555 Boulder St., Calhan, CO 80808  
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 9 Railroad St., Simpson, PA 18407  
 sgmall@echoes.net
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 gmancilas@sunset.net
- Mayville, Rev. Thomas** ..... (530)934-3736  
 839 Crestwood Way, Willows, CA 95988  
 tmayville@sunset.net
- McGee, Rev. Michael** ..... (701)838-8393  
 124 22nd St. SW, Minot, ND 58701  
 mcgeenme@srt.com
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 420 E. 14th Ave., Mitchell, SD 57301  
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 opp@wcnet.org
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 750 W. Lyon St., Garner, IA 50438-1960
- Pollema, Rev. Vernon** ..... (661)746-0211  
 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263  
 vpollema@juno.com
- Potter, Rev. Ron** ..... (570)785-4012  
 136 Grand Ave., Forest City, PA 18421  
 reformed@nep.net
- Powell, Jr., Rev. C.W.** ..... (719)590-1477  
 6050 Del Paz Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80918  
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- Richert, Rev. Steven** ..... (701)288-3682  
 209 First Ave. SW, Ashley, ND 58413  
 richerts@characterlink.net
- Riffert, Rev. Neale** ..... (661)256-1876  
 2432 Greenhill Ave., Rosamond, CA 93560  
 nealer@att.net
- Roe, Rev. Dennis** ..... (530)272-6693  
 17355 Alexandra Way, Grass Valley, CA 95949  
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 115 Langdon Farm Cir., Odenton, MD 21113  
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- Sander, Rev. Robert** ..... (408)532-9398  
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 RevRDS@aol.com
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 dsavage@plains.net
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 redemerrcus@core.com
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 PO Box 316, Herreid, SD 57632  
 dschnabel@valleytel.net
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 7411 Center Rd., Manitowoc, WI 54220  
 kydoso@juno.com
- Syms, Rev. George** ..... (402)773-4218  
 PO Box 362, Sutton, NE 68979  
 star5177@alltel.net
- Treick, Rev. Paul** ..... (209)551-2407  
 4005 Masterpiece Dr., Modesto, CA 95357  
 triwheeler@aol.com

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 3309 E. 31st St., Sioux Falls, SD 57103  
 hermanvs@sio.midco.net
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 501 Falls Ave., Lodi, CA 95240  
 prclodi@softcom.net
- Walker, Rev. Frank** ..... (916)683-9597  
 6121 Pine Vista Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758-4205  
 walker@cityseminary.org
- West, Rev. Jim** ..... (916)488-5569  
 5216 Locust Ave., Carmichael, CA 95608  
 jimwest3253@hotmail.com
- ROLL OF ELDERS PRIMARII***
- Beck, Mr. Chester (Eureka)** ..... (605)437-2462  
 31540 109th St., Artas, SD 57437
- Beilby, Mr. Chris (Rock Springs)** ..... (307)382-6239  
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 cbeilby@sweetwater.net
- Bender, Mr. Don (Shafter)** ..... (661)587-6449  
 13901 Austin Creek Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93312  
 rv6abender@juno.com
- Blank, Mr. Lee (Kansas City)** ..... (816)532-8843  
 419 Fletcher Dr., Smithville, MO 64089  
 blank@admworld.com
- Blare, Mr. Rusty (Mitchell)** ..... (605)946-57328  
 38844 272nd, Corsica, SD 57328
- Born, Mr. Greg (Modesto)** ..... (209)599-6786  
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- Brauning, Mr. David (Lincoln)** ..... (402)438-1820  
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- Greiman, Mr. Clayton (Treasurer)** ..... (515)923-2950  
 2115 Hwy 69, Garner, IA 50438-9506
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**SUMMARY INFORMATION**

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*Permanent Synodical Committees*

**Archives:** J. Fluck, J. Stuebbe, D. Mettler  
**Board of Trustees:** S. Richert, J. Stuebbe, T. Rott  
**Christian Education:** (3 yr) G. Horner, M. McGee, H. DeGroot,  
 (2 yr) H. Bowen, G. Stewart, K. Sorensen,  
 (1 yr) D. Kingswood, J. Liesveld  
**Diaconal Ministries:** (3 yr) C. Melhaf, R. Reitz\*,  
 (2 yr) T. Gruggett, R. DeJong,  
 (1 yr) C. Beilby, J. Bender  
**Editorial Advice:** (3 yr) L. Gross, (2 yr) C. W. Powell, (1 yr) S. Richert, L. Kauk  
**Executive Committee:** V. Pollema, R. Grossmann, P. Treick, G. Born, E. Merz  
**Foreign Ministries:** (3yr) H. Kalkman, H. Yoder, P. Henderson,  
 (2 yr) M. Voytek, D. Schlegel, K. Hamilton,  
 (1 yr) D. Schnabel, J. Blair, R. Grossmann  
 Diaconal Liaisons: T. Gruggett, J. Bender  
 Radio Administration Representatives: P. Treick, N. Riffert, D. Schnabel  
**Home Missions:** (3 yr) S. Richert, J. Bruckschen,  
 (2 yr) R. Morris, J. De Boer, W. Lingenfelter,  
 (1 yr) T. Ochsner, B. Richards, D. Roe  
**Interchurch Relations:** (3 yr) M. Koerner, J. Sawtelle,  
 (2 yr) R. Potter, T. Mayville,  
 (1 yr) G. Syms, J. Kroese

**Ministerial Relief:** (3 yr) C. Pennington, D. Dawn,  
 (2 yr) H. Opp, J. Saavalainen, S. Moore\*,  
 (1 yr) W. Haddock, D. McPherson, F. Krivohlavek  
**Publications:** (3 yr) D. McPherson, N. Riffert,  
 (2 yr) W. Brice, H. Hart, J. Johnson, C. Henson,  
 (1 yr) G. Mancilas, G. Mall, D. Fagrey  
**Web Site:** D. Roe, F. Walker, J. Mills, K. Hoxie, M. Peery

*Special Committees*

**Confer with Dordt College:** R. Grossmann, J. DeBoer, C. DeBoer, H. Van Stedum  
**Research eBooks:** G. Mancilas, D. Roe, J. Fluck, J. Jones, C. Esparza  
**Research Hymnals:** D. Clark, W. Brice, C. W. Powell, S. Powell, D. Mettler  
**To Study RCUS Seminary:** R. Potter, J. Merica, M. Koerner, S. Gross, J. Savage,  
 J. DeBoer, V. Pollema, M. Newman, R. Spitzer  
**Study of Justification:** T. Gruggett, N. Jones, D. Fagrey, C. W. Powell, D. McPherson  
**Synod Meeting Study:** Executive Committee  
**Pension Plan:** Ministerial Relief Committee  
 [\* = Deacon; underline = convener]

<b>SYNOD GUIDELINE</b>	
Synodical Guidelines	\$8.00
Deficit Reduction	5.00
Home Missions	45.00
Foreign Ministries	29.00
Ministerial Relief	49.00
Diaconal Ministries	6.00
Publishing	9.00
Benevolence	17.00
Student Aid	4.00
Building Fund	3.00
Ministerial Aid (investment fund)	15.00
Dordt College (non-budget item)	2.25
Hope Haven (non-budget item)	2.00
Mid America Reformed Seminary	2.00
New Geneva Theological	2.00
<b>Total per communicant member</b>	<b>198.25</b>

<i>SYNOD GUIDELINE</i>	
<i>REFORMED HERALD</i> (per subscription)	\$10.00

## The 257<sup>th</sup> Synod

of the

Reformed Church in the United States

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, with all longsuffering and teaching.”  
II Tim. 3:1, 2

### ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES

#### I. SERVICES

The Synod of the RCUS convened its 257<sup>th</sup> session at Eureka Reformed Church, Eureka, South Dakota on Monday, May 19, 2003 at 7:30 PM. Rev. David Fagrey (Rapid City, SD) conducted a service of worship in which Rev. Vernon Pollema (Shafter, CA) preached a sermon entitled, *God, His Ministers, and His Congregation* from I Corinthians 3.

The Evening Worship Service on Wednesday, May 21, 2003, was held at 7:30 PM. Rev. Harvey Opp, (Napoleon, OH), conducted the service. Rev. Jonathan Merica (San Ramon, CA) proclaimed the Word of God from II Corinthians 4:1-11 – *The Ministry of the Glorious Gospel*. Rev. Opp expressed the appreciation of the Synod to the congregation for their provisions in hosting this year’s Synod meeting.

Devotions were held daily at 10 AM. On Tuesday, Rev. Jim West (Sacramento, CA) led the devotion with a message from God’s Word on *The Revealed Will of God* from Deut. 29:29. On Wednesday, Rev. Kyle Sorensen (Manitowoc, WI) led the devotion with a message of God’s Word from II Kings 13:20-21, entitled, *The Living Bread*. On Thursday, Rev. Michael McGee (Minot, ND) led the devotion from I Corinthians 9:24-27 entitled *A Minister’s Life of Self-Denial*.

#### II. ORGANIZATION

The President, Rev. Vernon Pollema, called the 257<sup>th</sup> Session of Synod to order at

8:50 PM. The Stated Clerk, Rev. Frank Walker, called the roll, which showed 37 ministers and 29 elder delegates present, a quorum. The President declared the Synod in session. The roll was also called at the beginning of each business day.

The President defined the Bar of the House as the first fourteen rows on either side of the aisle.

Revs. Jeff DeBoer and Gil Baloy and Elders Greg Born and Eric Rynders were appointed by the President as tellers.

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

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

Both the former Stated Clerk and the Treasurer requested that they not be reelected to office. Rev. Frank Walker was commended for his labors as Stated Clerk for the past twelve years. Elder Clayton Greiman was commended for his faithful service for the past thirteen years.

Rev. Michael Voytek was appointed as the reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

The former Stated Clerk read the Standing Rules of Synod.

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

The Agenda, Order of the Day, and Special Orders were adopted.

### IV. WELCOME OF DELEGATES AND VISITORS

The President welcomed fraternal delegates, representatives of institutions, visiting elders and visitors as they arrived. Fraternal delegates and RCUS elders were seated in the Bar of the House and given the privilege of the floor. Elder delegates present for the first time were introduced and welcomed.

Fraternal Delegates included: Mr. Bill Gortemaker and Rev. Klaas Jonker (CanRC); Rev. W. Vernon Picknally Jr., (OPC); and Elder Klaas Wezeman (GKNLib).

Observer: Rev. Ralph Pontier (URCNA)

Representatives of institutions included: Dr. Scott Clark (WTSCA); Mr. Keith LeMahieu (MARS); Dr. Carl Zylstra (Dordt College); and Mr. Marlow Van Ginkel (Hope Haven)

Visitors: Rev. Chuck Snyder and Mr. Mike Brabo were seated in the Bar of the House as translators for the deaf. Seminary students James Grossmann (MARS) and Scott Henry (HTS) were present.

### V. RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS

The President welcomed the following new ministers in the RCUS: Rev. Kyle Sorensen (Salem-Ebenezer RCUS, Manitowoc, WI), Rev. Michael McGee (Harvest RCUS, Minot, ND), and Rev. Guillermo (Gil) Baloy (Assoc. Pastor of Covenant RCUS, laboring in the Covenant Chapel mission work of San Diego, CA.)

### VI. RECEPTION OF NEW CHURCHES

Providence RCUS, Vermillion, SD, was welcomed by the President as a newly organized congregation (organized on June 9, 2002). Rev. Lloyd Gross led in prayer for the new ministers and congregations of the RCUS.

### VII. ANNOUNCEMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

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

### VIII. PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reports and overtures were distributed to their respective committees according to the Agenda. Overtures were given to the Overtures Committee who distributed them to the appropriate Standing Committees for consideration.

#### A. Archives

The Archives Committee received no additional material in this past year, and thus has no further report.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Fluck (for the Committee)

#### B. Board of Trustees

Our Committee had no business and did not meet.

R. Dockter, L. Griess, J. Stuebbe, J. West, A. Dockter, C. Loucks

#### C. Christian Education

[Referred to Standing Education and Student Aid]

The 256<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States mandated a number of tasks to this committee. The following is the report of your committee's execution of its synodical mandate, including its pertaining recommendations.

#### Sunday School Curriculum

The 256<sup>th</sup> Synod voted to adopt this Committee's recommendation that Synod begin publishing the RCUS Sunday School Curriculum, based on S. De Graaf's "Promise and Deliverance", written by Howard Hart and Harvey De Groot, as soon as practically feasible. Therefore, your Committee determined, in consensus with the Permanent Publications Committee, to prepare for and hold a joint meeting of these two Committees for the sake of presenting a Curriculum publication recommendation(s) deemed feasible and adoptable by the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod. The members of both Committees were unified in their desire to see this Sunday School Curriculum, unique in its Reformed and Covenantal perspective, published yet in 2003 and, following the discussion of the various sub-committee's labors, were convinced that such was indeed feasible and that such a recommendation be brought by the Publications to Synod, with the support of the

Christian Education Committee.

The feasibility for publishing the Curriculum yet in 2003 is grounded in the following facts as the Christian Education Committee so reported to the Publications Committee:

1. The first four years of the 4-grade level curriculum (K-8) are completely written, with the fifth year lessons (a total of 240 lessons for each of the four grade levels, to be published in 12 lessons blocks) expected to be finished by January 2004. The compiling of the lessons and the editing is complete for the first year of the curriculum and such is expected to be true also for the second year of the curriculum by the time of the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod. Therefore, since the material for the first year is ready for publication, it is now feasible to recommend publication this year. Year 2, and most likely all the curriculum will be finished and ready for publication well prior to any 2004 publication deadline so that there would be continuing availability of the progressive curriculum.
2. The curriculum has been tested in actual Sunday School classes, and, even though the lessons were a pre-final-edition, the feed back from teachers and students was enthusiastically positive. Your Committee is convinced that this curriculum will better serve the goals of providing our covenant children a comprehensive, unified and covenantal-redemptive knowledge of the Bible than do other currently available programs. Since it is now feasible to begin its publication, Synod ought thereby make it available to our churches this year.
3. The Teacher's Key for the lesson's discussion section as well as the teacher training video/disc will be available for the first year of the curriculum prior to a 2003 publication date.
4. The Publications Committee assures this Committee that publication samples of the Curriculum will be available for review by the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod.
5. The four volume set of De Graaf's "Promise and Deliverance", the recommended resource for teachers of this curriculum, is available from publishers. (It is our hope that a special arrangement might be reached that provides a discount to the RCUS).

Therefore, on these grounds, the Christian Education Committee passed the following resolutions to the Publications Committee to assist its recommendations to Synod:

1. The Permanent Education Committee instructs the Permanent Publications Committee to prepare a plan to publish the first year the Sunday School Curriculum, 4 quarters, and those available to the churches by September 2003 if possible.
2. That the Permanent Publications Committee determine the most economical and practical way to provide the Teacher's Key for the Curriculum to the churches.

Recommendations:

1. That the writers, Howard Hart and Harvey De Groot, compiler Charles Henson, and proof reader Jess Johnson, of the curriculum material be commended for their diligent and laborious work.
2. That the honorarium for Hart and De Groot be continued in this next synodical year as needed, i.e., until their labors on this Curriculum are completed, at the rate of \$500. per month per man (same rate as before).
3. That an expense account of \$500 (maximum) be set aside to cover incidental expenses related to the completion of the curriculum.
4. That an honorarium of \$1500. per each year of curriculum program compiled be paid to Charles Henson. It is projected that two or more such payments will be due this synodical year.

5. That an honorarium of \$1000 per curriculum year be paid to Jess Johnson for his services as proofreader. More than one such payment might be due this synodical year.
6. That Synod begin to publish the Sunday School curriculum in 2003. (The Publications Committee will make recommendations specific to this issue).
7. That our churches be encouraged to use this Sunday School curriculum along with the teacher-training video/disc to be developed by the authors of this curriculum.

#### *City Seminary of Sacramento*

The Christian Education Committee has been pleased to hear of the developments at City Seminary of Sacramento this past year, especially as it relates to its acquisition of library resources, one of the revisit criteria mandated by the 256<sup>th</sup> Synod. But since the Seminary has not indicated that it has yet met the other revisit criteria, namely the development of an adequate ministerial apprenticeship program, no revisit by this Committee was scheduled this past year.

#### *Heidelberg Theological Seminary*

The 256<sup>th</sup> Synod also mandated: *the Permanent Education Committee to make an evaluation of Heidelberg Theological Seminary and bring its report to the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod.*

On November 5-6, 2002 a committee of the Christian Education Committee met in Vermillion, South Dakota to continue the process of evaluation of the Heidelberg Theological Seminary that was begun the year before. The committee members involved attending the meetings in Vermillion were Rev. George Horner, Rev. Darrel Kingswood, and Rev. Hank Bowen. Coinciding with this meeting the Special Committee to Study the Establishment of an RCUS Seminary was also present.

The Guideline approved by Synod last year to function as a framework for investigating seminaries approved by the RCUS was used. The first evening the committee met with the faculty and board members of HTS. It is not our intention here to duplicate those details that were reported by the committee last year, but to fill in and bring to completion our report and recommendations concerning whether HTS should be listed as an approved seminary of the RCUS in the training of men for ministry within our denomination.

The Committee reviewed the curriculum with the faculty, sat in on classroom teaching, and spoke with their one student as to the nature of his studies up to that point. The HTS catalog for 2003-2004 lays out a classically reformed curriculum to be completed over a four year period. Tuition currently runs \$4,800.00 per year for full-time students. All of the classes are presented from a historically reformed and orthodox viewpoint consistent with the Three Forms of Unity. There is an emphasis on Van Tillian apologetics, reformed hermeneutics, exegesis and homiletics. The Greek language is introduced in the first semester of the first year, and the Hebrew language is introduced in the first semester of the second year. Throughout the curriculum there is an underlying commitment to covenant theology.

As far as areas that the RCUS would view as aberrations to reformed theology, we could find no sympathy with any of them at HTS and a hearty commitment to presenting these positions through a critical approach. In terms of ministerial development, it is the intention of the faculty and board that students would be active within RCUS churches through out the Mid-west. Students will be required to serve three summer internships. Moreover, within the curriculum, for RCUS students, courses will be required that include study of the RCUS Directory of Worship, Constitution and History. The purpose

for HTS is to “equip the student to meet the educational requirements as prescribed by the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States, Articles 19 to 24” (Catalog, page 4).

At this time HTS is in the process of obtaining accreditation from TRACS. The curriculum is tailored for the purpose of students attaining a Master of Divinity upon successful completion. They are in the process of building an adequate library. Their current library is supplemented by Internet access and the library of a nearby University.

It was the conclusion of the committee members present that Professors Grossmann and Embree are more than capable and have the necessary elements in place to prepare men for examination for ministry in the RCUS. That is not say there were not concerns about the way the seminary is currently functioning. Both Professors are also currently full-time pastors in RCUS churches. Dr. Embree lives over two hours away and is only on campus a few days a week. Rev. Grossmann’s primary responsibility is to be a missions pastor for the Vermillion congregation. If something were to happen, God forbid, to either of these men, and especially to Dr. Grossmann, where would that place those students currently enrolled at HTS? We are also sensitive to the reality that HTS is just opening its doors. What God’s future is for HTS is still to be revealed. As a committee, however, we do not believe we can reject HTS on the basis that they are not big or well-established. From our investigation we are compelled to report that our conclusion is that they are a seminary that can prepare men for the gospel ministry in the RCUS.

Recommendation:

8. That Heidelberg Theological Seminary be added to the list of seminaries worthy of receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States.

#### *Re-visiting “Approved” Seminaries*

The 255<sup>th</sup> Synod adopted the recommendation of this Committee: *that each seminary approved by the RCUS be visited and evaluated at least once every three years by the Permanent Christian Education Committee.* In accordance with that mandate, your Committee this year visited Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS) and New Geneva Theological Seminary (NGTS).

#### *Mid-America Reformed Seminary*

In fulfillment of the requirement that Approved Seminaries are to be re-evaluated every three years, Rev. Bowen and Rev. Potter visited Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, Indiana on January 4-5, 2003.

Contact was made with seminary President, Dr. Cornel Venema prior to our coming and time was set for us to meet with the President and Faculty. The Guideline approved by the Synod last year was used as the framework for our questions. We were able to sit in on Classes on Tuesday, but a snow storm closed the seminary on Wednesday. We found the faculty and staff extremely accommodating and open in our visit. They expressed to us their deep gratitude for the RCUS and their involvement in the history of the seminary.

On Tuesday we met in the morning with President Venema and discussed at length the progress and current status of the seminary. We reviewed the curriculum and focused a number of questions on both the topic of the current debate concerning justification arising out of the teaching of Dr. Norman Shepherd, and the topic of the New Perspective. Dr. Venema was very frank about his concerns that these were departures from the historic reformed faith and that the commitment of the seminary was to teach and

emphasize orthodox reformed teaching. Dr. Venema also outlined how the seminary had been sensitive to requests from the RCUS to strengthen the subject of apologetics in the curriculum. He informed us that they now have expanded the hours dedicated to the subject of teaching Van Tillian apologetics. Furthermore, in the area of Church Government, the course is now being taught by Dr. Strange and Ecclesiology by Dr. Venema. Both men approach the subject from a historic presbyterial viewpoint.

We then met with all of the other professors, except for Dr. Strange, for lunch that day. Following a general discussion about what the professors perceived to be some of the greatest challenges they were facing in the training of men for the ministry, we again focused on the two areas of specific concern we had discussed with Dr. Venema. All of the professors likewise, expressed concern that there is an attack on the historic understanding of the doctrine of justification arising within the reformed community that concerns them deeply and that none of them supports. We left our meetings with a sense that there is a continuing commitment to training men for the reformed ministry that is consistent with and reinforces the positions of the RCUS.

It was our conclusion that the curriculum and teaching at MARS remains historically reformed. That they are wholly committed to the singular function of training men to the pulpit ministry in reformed churches, and that they have addressed concerns and continue to be open to discussion on ways in which they can better serve in the training of men for the gospel ministry.

Both Dr. Venema and the faculty were aware of the RCUS forming a committee to study the subject of a Denominational Seminary and had several questions about this. Dr. Venema asked that the RCUS consider a proposal from Mid-America Reformed Seminary to fund a professor to the faculty of MARS. This professor would then be accountable to the RCUS, would be provided an office, and would be responsible for teaching all areas specific to RCUS subjects. It was an interesting proposal and reveals the tremendous confidence and regard in which the seminary holds the RCUS.

Recommendations:

9. That Mid-America Reformed Seminary continue to be listed as a seminary worthy of receiving benevolent moneys from the Reformed Church in the United States.

10. That Synod consider the proposal from MARS to support a full-time RCUS professor to the faculty of MARS.

*New Geneva Theological Seminary* (visited by Revs. George Horner, Harvey Opp, with Rev. Maynard Koerner, NGTS Board member, assisting)

This seminary was originally established in 1993 as an extension of Knox Theological Seminary (Florida). It became independent as NGTS in June of 1998 and is governed by a 12-member Board of Trustees, 2 of which are RCUS officers, currently Rev. Maynard Koerner and Elder John Savage. The other Board members are Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) officers/members and affirm the Westminster Confession of Faith. NGTS, since 2001, has been directed by its President, Dr. Dominic Aquila (D.Min Westminster, Philadelphia), ordained in the PCA.

The faculty consists of four professors (Pastoral Ministry, Old Testament, Leadership/Missiology, Systematic Theology), eleven adjunct professors (Biblical Languages, Homiletics, New Testament, Pastoral Counseling (2), Spiritual Life and Theology, Systematic Theology (2), Missions, Religion and Society, Pastoral Theology) as well as visiting lecturers.

Of special note is that Dr. Bud Powell, pastor of Trinity RCUS in Colorado Springs,



is the Professor of Systematic Theology at NGTS as well as its academic Dean. Dr. Powell's position at NGTS allows him to promote the RCUS interests at the seminary and as well enhances the level of accountability of the seminary to the RCUS.

Throughout our meetings with the President, Board members and Faculty of NGTS the desire of the seminary to the serve the training of ministers for the RCUS was made evident.

Currently four RCUS students are enrolled: Lee Johnson, Matt Powell, Kurt Schimke, and Richard Stetler. It is expected that Ted Shieffelin will return as a student and that Rusty Blare will also enroll. The RCUS students are advantaged in their practical pastoral training by Dr. Powell's presence on the faculty especially as he, in conjunction with Board member Rev. Koerner, arranges for various apprenticeships (teaching catechism and Bible studies, assisting elders, exhorting) in the RCUS churches and mission works now located in the Front Range of Colorado.

Thus not only do the RCUS students fulfill NGTS's ministerial apprenticeship program (by way of "folios" and "portfolios") but they receive an extra layer by way of their involvement with the RCUS churches.

The M.Div. training provided by NGTS is orthodox. (The Seminary Evaluation Guideline approved and mandated by the 256<sup>th</sup> Synod proved very useful). All Professors and adjunct Faculty must affirm the Westminster Confession of Faith in the manner required by the PCA. NGTS, based on our interviews, including students, may be characterized as holding to a C. Van Till apologetic, a L. Berkhof/Turretin systematics, a grammatico-historical hermeneutic, a covenantal perspective a la S. De Graaf, a G.Vos historical-redemptive approach to homiletics, a regulative principle type of worship and Reformed/Presbyterian church polity.

NGTS stands firmly against the teachings relating to justification promoted by what is known as the "New Perspective" or the writings of Norman Shepherd. NGTS specifically disavows Open Theism, Hyperpreterism, Hyper Biblical Theology, Egalitarianism, Dispensationalism, and Paedocommunion as we in the RCUS would understand such.

It was also emphatically stated that NGTS teaches the Bible, not what others have said about it.

The orthodoxy is maintained by examination of faculty both prior to hiring and as well by the close interaction of the faculty and the oversight of the Academic Affairs Committee.

All the current professors hold to a literal six day view of creation, although the Seminary does not publish a position on creation and would, if pressed, assert the PCA position, which does allow not only the 6 Literal Day, but also the Day Age as well as the Framework Hypothesis positions among its ministers.

We had the opportunity to sit in on a few of the offered evening courses and found the teaching to be orthodox and stimulating, presented with zeal and with good interaction with the students. (The "power point" presentations were impressive)

The M.Div program consists of 99 hours and may be completed in four years, although most students do so in five years. The M.Div. courses are all offered in the evenings, thus more easily allowing students to also be gainfully employed. Several of the RCUS students we interviewed stated that they would not be able to undertake an M.Div program except by way of the evening course schedule provided by NGTS.

NGTS's library holds approximately 25,000 volumes and appears to be well serviceable to the M.Div. program and larger library resources are readily available in the

region.

The physical facility is more than adequate and its location in Colorado Springs is advantageous not only due to its being the only Reformed Seminary in that growing front-range megaplex, but also due to its proximity to RCUS and other Reformed congregations.

NGTS is accredited by ARTS (Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries) and is currently investigating other accreditation.

Since NGTS has been placed on the RCUS "approved" list, it has graduated one RCUS student-under-care, the Rev. Ron Morris currently serving our congregation in Mitchell, SD.

NGTS acknowledges that there are some areas of its M.Div program that it is seeking to improve in order to strengthen it and enhance the equipping of men for the Ministry of the Word, the seminary's professed primary objective. It ought to be noted that this seminary is now optimistic regarding its future following the difficulties and uncertainties faced upon its independence from Knox. The M.Div program has undergone changes through this transition and some of its acknowledged weaknesses are due to the transition.

Thus, as the fiscal situation is becoming more stable through the establishment of endowments and the receipt of foundation grants, so does it become more feasible to strengthen the M.Div program. The areas being addressed are apologetics, church history, as well as practical theology.

Due to the nature of the evening program, the Seminary does not at this time have a chapel program and is aware that student interaction is also limited. The faculty is studying ways to incorporate such.

Dr. Aquila communicated to us the desire of the seminary for the RCUS to become more actively involved in the further development of its M.Div program. They would prefer Dr.Powell devote more of his labors to the seminary and thus provide further emphasis to the training of RCUS ministers. RCUS financial support for the RCUS member of the faculty would serve to strengthen the RCUS interests at NGTS and enhance an RCUS orientation within the M.Div program.

Your Committee's conclusion following our visit to NGTS is that the seminary is a viable institution for the training of RCUS students for the ministry and ought to continue to remain on the "approved" list. Although there are some weaknesses, we are assured that these are being addressed. Most encouraging to this Committee is the presence on the faculty of one of our own RCUS pastors, as well as two RCUS men serving on the Board of Trustees, and the availability of RCUS churches in which RCUS students may gain RCUS specific pastoral training.

A further advantage of NGTS is that RCUS students receive a 33% discount on tuition, bringing the cost per credit hour down to \$140, or approximately \$4000 per year if the M.Div is completed in four years.

NGTS also offers the D.Min degree and encourages RCUS pastors to consider that program at NGTS.

The President, faculty, board and students hosted the visitors very hospitably indeed and we greatly enjoyed the fellowship in the unity of the truth.

Recommendations:

11. That New Geneva Theological Seminary continue to be listed as worthy of receiving benevolent moneys from the RCUS.

12. That Synod consider establishing a faculty chair at New Geneva Theological

Seminary.

*Reformed Colleges*

The 256<sup>th</sup> Synod adopted the motion that: the Permanent Christian Education making use of internet resources, provide an updated advisory list of Reformed colleges to the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod.

In this age of the internet, much useful information relating to colleges is accessible via the internet. It is a reasonable assumption that any college-bound RCUS member may avail him/herself of internet services. Therefore, this web-site directory of Reformed Colleges might serve as a useful tool to become familiar with as well as investigate colleges/universities which claim that their perspective is grounded in one or more of the Reformation Creeds.

No one search engine found this list of Reformed colleges. Furthermore, some colleges appeared on “Reformed College” listings but their respective web sites made no mention of the Reformed Creeds in their statements of faith, beliefs, mission or purpose. Some such colleges stated their affiliation with a Presbyterian or Reformed denomination, but did not specifically mention any form of subscription or adherence to the Reformed Creeds. Some colleges merely indicated the historic Christian faith or the Reformed faith as being their tradition.

Those colleges indicating distinctively that the Reformed faith (as understood by the above-mentioned creeds) undergirds the teaching provided, are included in this list. Inclusion on this list does not necessarily indicate that the claims of being Reformed would be held as valid following further discerning evaluation.

The following list of web sites may prove useful but the information so provided by the colleges ought not be used discerningly. This Committee would advise students and parents to seek input from currently attending students and recent graduates, their parents, pastors, as well initiate personal contacts with school administrators and faculty, and if possible, visit the school.

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

*Listing of Reformed College Web sites*

(alphabetical order; this list does not claim to be comprehensive)

Calvin College	<a href="http://www.calvin.edu">www.calvin.edu</a>
Covenant College	<a href="http://www.covenant.edu">www.covenant.edu</a>
Christ College	<a href="http://www.christcollege.org">www.christcollege.org</a>
Dordt College	<a href="http://www.dordt.edu">www.dordt.edu</a>
Geneva College	<a href="http://www.geneva.edu">www.geneva.edu</a>
New St. Andrews College	<a href="http://www.newstandrews.org">www.newstandrews.org</a>
Patrick Henry College	<a href="http://www.phc.edu">www.phc.edu</a>
Providence Christian College	<a href="http://www.providencechristiancollege.org">www.providencechristiancollege.org</a>
Reformed Bible College	<a href="http://www.reformed.edu">www.reformed.edu</a>
Trinity Christian College	<a href="http://www.trnty.edu">www.trnty.edu</a>
Whitefield College	<a href="http://www.whitefieldcollege.org">www.whitefieldcollege.org</a>

Recommendations:

13. That the Permanent Christian Education Committee, making use of internet resources, provide an updated advisory list of Reformed colleges to the 258<sup>th</sup> Synod.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Horner\* D. Kauk, H. Bowen, H. De Groot, D. Kingswood,  
J. Liesveld, D. Dawn, G. Stewart

**D. Diaconal Ministries**

[Referred to the Benevolence Committee]

Your committee received one request for financial aid from the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee on behalf of Kurt Schimke. A total of \$2000 was requested to assist Kurt and his family, so that he could be freed up to finish seminary courses and prepare for his licenture exam. Your committee authorized the request. The treasurer, Mr. Clayton Greiman, has sent the amount of \$500 per month from January through April, 2003.

T. Gruggett, R. DeJong, C. Beilby, J. Bender, D. Clark, C. Mehlhaff, J. Van Tol

**E. Editorial Advice Committee**

[No Report]

**F. Executive Committee**

[Referred to Overtures Committee]

Esteemed Brethren:

The report of the Executive Committee to the 257th Synod of the RCUS comprises two circulars issued during the past Synodical year.

Executive Circular 256:1 made two recommendations: (1) that work in Bentonville, AR, be adopted as a Synodical Home Missions work, and (2) that Synod provide mission support for this work in the amount of \$600.00 per month until the 257th Synod.

Executive Circular 256:2 also made two recommendations: (1) that Synod accept the invitation from the Eureka Reformed Church, Eureka, SD, to host the 257th Synod, and (2) that Rev. Dorman Savage be granted ministerial aid in the amount of \$1,200.00 per month until the 257th Synod. Rev. Savage found it necessary to retire for health reasons. The proposed ministerial aid was to be retroactive to the date of his retirement, viz., February 1, 2003.

The Executive Committee makes no further recommendations.

V. Pollema, F. Walker, P. Treick, E. Merz, R. Fay

**G. Foreign Ministries**

[Referred to the Standing Missions Committee]

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

ACTIVITIES OF YOUR COMMITTEE

Your Committee has been busy this past year in dealing with our foreign mission work both on the fields and here in the United States. The Committee met twice this year; once in Chicago in October, and in Salt Lake City on April 10th. In October, the

Committee divided into sub-committees to handle Kenya, the Congo and Radio work. Rev. Voytek is Chairman of the Kenya subcommittee, Rev. Blair of the Congo subcommittee and Rev. Schnabel of the Radio Committee. At both meetings, the matter of sending Mr. Kurt Schimke as a missionary to Africa was on the agenda (see recommendations below). We have worked out an arrangement whereby Mr. Schimke would go out with the OPC missionaries to teach at a Seminary in Uganda, leaving four months for time in Kenya, plus several other short trips. We would pay for one-half of the \$60,000 annual cost, and Mr. Schimke could be trained by experienced missionaries. Mr. Mukendi Musungayi has obtained refugee status and now has his wife and two children with him here in the U.S.

We would like to thank the Congregations of the RCUS for their extra gifts to foreign ministries beyond the budget. Over \$16000 of such special offerings have been received (including enough to fund Rev. Kabongo’s \$5000 moto-cross cycle [he is now holding out for a car].) These funds have enabled us to continue to send funds to Kenya for the medical clinic and schools, and to help found a school in a rural area near Mbuji-Mayi. We have also been able to help with some emergency medical needs in the Congo, and to provide aid to the families of two men from Kinshasa who are studying at the GKN (Liberated) seminary in Lubumbashi. A financial report on these funds will be available at Synod. We continue to support Rev. Kabongo (in Mbuji-Mayi), Rev. Kishimba Kasantika and Rev. Mbayo (in Lubumbashi) and now seven churches led by leading elders in Kinshasa, the capitol city of the Congo. The pastoral-elders and other elders are using some of our funds to support themselves as agreed at our last Synod. We attempted to bring Pastoral-Elder James Aunga to the US for this Synod meeting but the US state department is very leery of foreign nationals.

**OUR WORK IN THE CONGO**

This work focuses on help for various leaders through financial support and educational materials, and answering questions of theology and practice as they are brought to us from the brothers in the Congo. With our support, Rev. Kabongo has been able to serve his own congregation and to travel to Kananga and Kinshasa to train leaders in Reformed theology and practice. He has also traveled to Lubumbashi to teach in the GKN Seminary there. Rev. Kishimba has been busy with his work in his local congregation and as “Legal Representative” of the ERCC to the government. The Churches in Kinshasa continue to function fairly well. Much of our support for them goes to diaconal aid for members living in extreme poverty because of continued political unrest.

We have found a few RCUS members willing establish a volunteer organization for economic development in certain areas of the Congo. One of the Committee Members, Mr. Jerry De Jong plans to travel to the Mbuji-Mayi area later this Summer to gather information on what can and needs to be done. The other members are farmers, who find it difficult to travel during summers. We have also found some volunteers to help Rev. Kabongo’s daughter attend college in the U.S. This, however, has developed a snag since the daughter evidently is not committed to returning to the Congo.

**KENYA and the FRCK**

The work of teaching and evangelism continues with the untiring efforts of Pastoral Elders Meshack Nyarango and James Aunga. Mr. Aunga was attacked and almost killed by Masaai tribesmen on a cattle-stealing raid. This unrest has now been handled to some

extent and things seem safer in the Masaai border area. Mr. Aunga has recovered from his wounds but has some residual problems. The funds provided for ministers has been used at \$14 a month for elders and \$40 for the pastoral-elders. A large raise in these funds was requested by the FRCK but not approved by the FMC. The FMC continues to explore means of training ministers for the FRCK. Were Mr. Schimke sent out, men from the FRCK might be persuaded to study at the OPC school in Uganda, and Mr. Schimke would spend time teaching in Kenya. Heidelberg Theological Seminary is also video-taping classes for use in Africa. Manpower is needed to get this program up and running.

The FRCK medical clinic project is not finished for a number of reasons. There was a malaria epidemic in the Kisii last spring and summer, and funds were diverted for immediate medical needs. The FRCK now has eight preaching stations, and has begun a school for orphan children of AIDS and violence victims. They request help for this school and building four orphanages. They do not report whether their own children are being educated in this school. Elder Meschack’s wife, Josephine, is presently suffering from a severe illness that remains undiagnosed.

**FRENCH RADIO BROADCASTING IN AFRICA**

Rev. Eric Kayayan, the preacher and administrator for the work of the Reformed Radio Administration Committee (RRAC), has now moved to Pretoria, capitol of the Republic of South Africa. He reports that response to the now many programs produced continues to increase and that more and more radio stations are interested in using these programs, not only in Africa but also in France. The RCUS \$14,000 part of the annual budget of RRAC is a key to stability since no other church assembly has RRAC in its regular budget.

**Recommendations:**

1. That Mr. Kurt Schimke be appointed for service as an RCUS missionary to East Africa contingent upon his licensure and ordination as an RCUS minister.
2. That Synod invite the Blue Cliff Consistory to call Mr. Schimke as an associate pastor for the purpose of doing foreign mission work, and that Synod Commission Mr. Schimke as a missionary of the RCUS under the oversight of the Foreign Ministries Com.
3. That Mr. Schimke be sent out under the oversight of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for the purpose of administration and working with them at the Westminster Theological College, Mbale, Uganda, and his work with the Free Reformed Church of Kenya.
4. That Synod budget \$30,000 per year for Mr. Schimke’s support as our missionary.
5. That at least one of the RCUS representative to RRAC be a member of the Foreign Ministries Committee.
6. That Synod approve the following FMC Budget:

<b>Congo Work:</b>	
Elder/pastor support:	\$11,400 (up \$4,400)
Kinshasa Aid	\$7,000 (same)
Publishing	\$1,000 (same)
Building and diaconal aid	\$2,000 (same)
<b>Kenya Work:</b>	
Church support	\$9,000 (same)
Publishing	\$2,000 (same)
Mr. Schimke	\$30,000 (new)

International Radio	\$14,000 (same)
Committee expenses:	
Travel to Kenya	\$4,000 (same)
Travel to Europe (Holland/Germany)	\$1,000 (same)
Committee Expense in U.S.	\$3,000 (up \$1800)
TOTAL BUDGET FOR 2003	\$84,400 (up \$6200, plus \$30,000 for Mr. Schimke)

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

### **H. Home Missions Committee**

[Referred to the Standing Missions Committee]

Dear Brethren,

Home Missions Meeting: The Synod Home Missions Committee met at High Plains Reformed Chapel in Calhan, Colorado and at Providence Reformed Church in Limon, Colorado on March 31 - April 1, 2003. Committee members present were Rev. Ron Morris, Elder Tom Ochsner, Elder Bill Richards, Elder Bill Borgwardt, Rev. Dennis Roe, and Rev. Steven Richert. Missionary pastors present were Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Maynard Koerner, Rev. Jonathan Merica, Rev. Tracy Gruggett, Rev. Wesley Brice, Rev. Gary Mancilas, and Rev. Robert Grossmann.

Committee Work: The Classis Home Missions reports were read as well as parochial reports from the mission works. A synopsis of those reports are below. The committee was faced with two issues. The first issue was Rev. Jim Sawtelle's request for counsel concerning Redeemer RCUS and its proposed budget. Rev. Sawtelle voiced his concern over the relationship between Redeemer RCUS and the Covenant East Classis Permanent Home Missions Committee concerning this budget. The committee reviewed the proposed three year budget as submitted by Redeemer RCUS in line-by-line item review and found the budget to be in good order. Line items such as Pastor's Salary and IRA were not viewed to be excessive by the Synod Committee and it was noted that only 16% of Redeemer's income comes from Classis and Synod. The only thing your committee would recommend is that Redeemer take a 10% reduction in support for the year 2005. The second issue discussed by committee was the overall Philosophy of Missions of the RCUS. It was decided that a thorough study of missions from the Life of the Apostle Paul would be beneficial for the committee and that the RCUS consider a more concerted effort of church planting in the major metropolitan areas.

Annual Day of Prayer and Debt Reduction Offering: Last year's Debt Reduction Offering went to First Reformed Church, Yuba City, CA. Rev. Paul Henderson reports that the congregation received over \$15,000 from the churches. It should be noted that the Yuba City congregation officially came off of all missions support in February 2003. The SHMC will recommend that the 2003 offering this fall be designated for Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, CO.

### **Mission Reports:**

#### **Covenant Reformed, Watertown, SD**

Rev. Tracy Gruggett reports that God has continued to bless the congregation in Watertown. They received two families into membership by letter of transfer. Two more families have committed to joining. Two families associated with the Fargo work have been dismissed. They currently have 23 members. Average weekly attendance is 24. Another blessing is that the members have been generous givers. Offerings were up \$4,500 over the previous year. The congregation is experiencing great harmony and unity. Rev. Gruggett continues his radio ministry on KWAT. Outreach includes flyers placed on bulletin boards and invitations left at homes in the neighborhood. Evangelism classes are being conducted for the congregation. Plans are being made to develop a brochure that will be distributed through a local organization called the Watertown Greeter. Elder Tom Ochsner visited the Watertown work on February 16, 2003 as a representative of our committee. He was impressed with the number of young families in the congregation. He reports that Rev. Gruggett has good rapport with the members and visitors. His conversations with various people indicated that they were enthusiastic and optimistic about the work in Watertown.

#### **Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN**

Rev. Jim Sawtelle reports that Redeemer RCUS began 2002 with 81 members, 47 communicants and 34 non-communicants. They ended the year with 100 members, 55 communicants, 45 non-communicants. There are also a number of people who are in the process of joining the congregation. The congregation reflects the demographic spectrum of the Twin Cities, in most ways. Fifty percent of the members are under 16 years old, three quarters are under 45. The occupations of the members are diverse: blue collar, white collar, a few business owners, doctors, a lawyer, engineers, sales, computer programmers. The congregation as a whole is fairly well educated with 16 of the members having masters degrees and higher. They have a number of college students that visit regularly, some undergrads, and some in higher degree programs. Various immigrant groups are represented which reflects the twin Cities immigrant community: Canadians, Scots, and Dutch. The congregation was blessed this past year with the purchase of a nice facility which should serve them well for a long time. However, this new expense is hard to budget for at this time since they are not sure what the utilities and miscellaneous expenses might be.

#### **Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico, CA**

Covenant Reformed Chapel welcomed Rev. Gary Mancilas last February as pastor. The present communicant membership of Covenant Reformed Chapel stands at 20 and two young men are presently enrolled in membership classes. The congregation continues to meet at the Adventist building which they have been meeting in the past several years. Through diligent oversight by the Spiritual Council, and careful handling of the word of God, the Lord has graciously brought the congregation through some difficult issues that had been lingering, and in the providence of God this has resulted in their strengthening in the faith, and their peace and spiritual growth. Contributions to the work by members have not diminished.

#### **Rehoboth Chapel, L.A. Basin, CA**

Rev. Jay Fluck reports some progress in both the addition of six communicant and two baptized members and increased giving. There also appears to be an upward trend in visitors to the services. They are to ordain their first elder this year. The Shafter congregation has also increased support to allow Rev. Fluck more time for pastoral ministry and less time toward tent making. This past year the congregation met in a store front which seems to have proven beneficial as Rev. Fluck reports they are outgrowing the current place of meeting. Synodical support is requested to remain the same this year, but they are looking at a reduction for next year.

#### **Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, CO**

Rev. Gene Sawtelle reports that the congregation in Greeley is now averaging about 40 people during morning worship. The congregation conducts a morning worship each Lord's Day as well as a Sunday School, Women's and Men's Bible study, and catechism instruction for the youth with 9 enrolled. They have a monthly consistory and take communion quarterly. There is strong optimism among the attendees about the future of the congregation. They have received 9 new members in the past year and Greeley is a city of 76,000 with no other Reformed work. Pastor Sawtelle says that the people are responding well to the preaching of God's Word. Financially, the congregation seems strong. Their weekly giving is good and they have raised \$90,000 for a building fund. Regarding their building, some exciting developments have occurred. The building has been owned by the RPCNA. They decided to sell the building and originally were asking \$510,000 for the church and parsonage. This was seen as way over market value by the Greeley congregation. Eventually, the RPCNA reduced their price to a much more reasonable amount. The Greeley congregation is aggressively pursuing this option. In addition to their building fund, the congregation requested, and received permission from the Classical Home Missions Committee to solicit funds from other congregations in the RCUS.

#### **Providence Reformed Chapel, Vermillion, SD**

Rev. Robert Grossmann reports that there is a good spirit among members of the Vermillion congregation. Currently, they have about 30 in weekly attendance. That is up two or three from last year. The Vermillion congregation reports 23 communicant members, up by 3 from last year. They are also seeing some interest among the college students. There are about 6 which attend the worship service. Rev. Grossmann continues his weekly radio broadcast and has had a good response in the form of letters, phone calls and money given for the program. There is a weekly ad in the news paper for the radio program. During Sunday School, the topic is worship. Rev. Grossmann is preaching through the book of Romans during the worship service. On Wednesday evenings the congregation is watching the Ray Vander Laan videos. There is a weekly catechism class which currently has 6 students. The church's ladies get together weekly for a ladies Bible study. The congregation celebrates the Lord's Supper quarterly and the Elders do visitation twice each year per family. Church discipline is being exercised on one family. Financially, the congregation seems to be relatively strong. They have requested a 10 % decrease in funding, a decrease, it should be noted, which is ahead of schedule. The facilities are quite good. They have installed a new air conditioning system in the church building and could pay off their parsonage debt next year. In addition to the work of the church, the Rev. Grossmann and the facility in Vermillion are integral parts of the new Heidelberg Seminary. The seminary currently has two full-time students and one auditor.

#### **Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, CA**

Rev. Jonathan Merica reports that Grace Reformed Chapel's membership increases from 16 to 20 in the course of the past year, and the total baptized membership now stands at 22. They have had to do some fine tuning with respect to their meeting place during the course of the year, but they are happily again settled in at their previous location. The congregation remains enthusiastic in its focus on reaching out to the Tri-Valley area with the Gospel.

#### **High Plains Reformed, Calhan, CO –**

Rev. Koerner reports that there have been some very positive developments over the past year. Currently, the congregation in Calhan has anywhere from 25-50 in attendance on Sunday Morning. This is partly due to the background of many of the people in that area who do not, as yet, have a strong view of the Lord's Day as a day of worship. It is not uncommon for some of them to go together to the lake, or some other place of recreation, on Sunday. Also, they do not have a complete understanding of church membership. Rev. Koerner is patiently working with the people there to come to a fuller Reformed and biblical understanding of these things. The congregation has 9 families which are members. The congregation has a Sunday school, worship service, men's and women's bible studies as well as a confirmation class which will be starting soon. Rev. Koerner contacted a local newspaper in that area about running an ad, which they have done. But in the process, the editors asked if he would be willing to write a weekly devotional, which he readily agreed to do. The congregation has a newly remodeled building which was purchased from the Lutherans. Also, they purchased a parsonage a couple of blocks away from the church building. Financially, the congregation is quite sound. They are above budget for this year and could theoretically take a cut in missions funding ahead of schedule, but have requested to not take a decrease in order to apply that income to their parsonage payment.

Rev. Koerner reports that there continues to be rumors of a 300 house development coming soon to the area. Calhan is close enough to Colorado Springs to serve as somewhat of a bed-room community. This makes the future outlook positive for the town and church.

#### **Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, Ark.**

The 2002 Spring meeting of Covenant East Classis determined to seek a summer intern to supply the pulpit at Bentonville. Although several Reformed seminaries were contacted, no intern was available. However, supply was obtained by Reformed ministers nearly every Lord's Day after Synod 2002. On Sept. 20-22, Rev. Harvey Opp, Rev. Jeff DeBoer, and Elder Jim Bruckschen, members of the Classis Missions Committee, met with the group and conducted a second assessment of the work, as mandated by Classis. Prior to arrival, questionnaires were sent to each family, and a group questionnaire was sent regarding demographics of the area, and financial viability of the group, etc. The assessment overall was deemed to be positive and the Classis Missions Committee was quite encouraged as to the viability of this work. Classis concurred with this assessment at the Special Classis meeting of Oct. 3-4, 2002, with the following actions taken: Bentonville was established as a mission work of Classis. Oversight of the work was transferred from the Northland RCUS consistory to that of Peace RCUS at Garner, IA. A missionary was immediately to be sought. A re-evaluation of the work was mandated for the Fall of 2003. Classis increased its support to \$1,800 per month for pulpit supply and

Elder visitation, and toward the salary of a missionary when one could be obtained. Synod was also to be overtured for recognition of Bentonville as a Home Mission work of the RCUS, and that it provide \$600 per month in support until the 2003 Synod meeting. By December, the last two requests were approved by Synod. Just prior to the Fall Classis meeting, contact was made with Rev. Wes Brice as to a possible call to serve as a missionary in Northwest AR. Rev. Brice was then called by the Garner Consistory as an Associate Pastor to serve as a missionary in the Bentonville area. The call was accepted, and in mid-December he began said work, driving there on weekends. One half of the above support was received for December. Rev. Brice has now purchased a house approximately 15 minutes drive time from where the services are held. He moved there at the end of January. A conference room in the Holiday Inn Express in Bentonville continues to serve as an adequate meeting place. The people are encouraged, and have shown their commitment to the work in a variety of ways. The offerings have markedly increased. They have obtained and are seeking additional phone directory ads. Several new families have been visiting recently, including a former OPC elder and his wife, who have moved there. They have expressed their happiness with this work. Rev. Brice intends to come to Garner for several consistory meetings during the year, and officers at Garner will travel to Bentonville for some visitations also.

**Recommendations:** The SHMC brings the following recommendations to the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod of the RCUS:

1. That support for Covenant Reformed Church, Watertown, SD be set at \$8,145 for 2004.
2. That support for Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN be set at \$12,225 for 2004.
3. That support for Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico, CA be set at \$8,145 for 2004 and that an overture to standing benevolence be submitted for and additional \$3600 for Rev. Mancilas' health insurance for 2004.
4. That support for Rehoboth Chapel in the LA Basin be set at \$9,088 for 2004.
5. That support for Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, CO be set at \$18,580 for 2004.
6. That support for Providence Reformed Church, Vermillion, SD be set at \$11,511 for 2004.
7. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, CA be set at \$19,980 for 2004.
8. That support for High Plains Reformed, Calhan, CO be set at \$18,000 for 2004.
9. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, Ark. be set at \$8,400 for the remainder of 2003.
10. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, Ark be set at \$14,400 for 2004 on condition that a positive assessment is given from Covenant East Classis early next year.
11. That \$18,000 be budgeted for potential new works.
12. That \$3,500 be budgeted for committee expense.
13. That the annual Home Missions Offering on the Day of Prayer in 2003 be designated for Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, CO.
14. Take Note: The Home Missions budget for 2004, if approved as recommended, would be \$141,880.

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Morris, D. Roe, S. Richert, J. DeBoer, T. Ochsner, B. Richards, B. Borgwardt

### ***I. Interchurch Relations***

[Referred to the Standing Ecumenical Committee]

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

Your committee has been working during the past year to maintain contact with the churches in fraternal relationship and to promote advancement in our working together. Most of the committee work has been done via e-mail and telephone. There have not been any major developments, but contacts were made, and meetings conducted via subcommittees of the IRC. The *Handbook* for the IRC Committee (explaining procedures, etc.) has not been completed at this date. We trust that progress will be made during the next year.

#### ***Churches in Fraternal Relations***

##### **Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRef):**

A subcommittee met with the Canadian Reformed Churches on 11-11-02, just before the meeting of NAPARC, in Flat Rock, NC, at Bonclarken, which is the Conference Center of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. (ARP). Our arrangements dovetailed in such a way that our RCUS subcommittee consisting of George Syms, Ron Potter, Maynard Koerner (as well as Ron Morris) could spend ample time with the CanRef brothers, Rev. K. Jonker, Elders Bill Gortemaker and Art Poppe. The items of discussion were noted in last year's report per the CanRef mandate, "*To continue the contact with the RCUS by the CCCA with a mandate to continue the discussion on the issues noted in the Considerations 4.2; 4.4; 4.5.* (Acts of General Synod Neerlandia, p.64)." These considerations are as follows:

4.2 (Acts, p.63): Ongoing discussion about different practices relative to the observance of the Lord's Day will be mutually beneficial.

4.4 (Acts, p.63): Discussion on the administration of the Lord's Supper to shut-ins in light of Article 35 of the Belgic Confession.

4.5 (Acts, p.63): Discussion of bringing the language of the RCUS position paper on church unity more in line with the language of the Three Forms of Unity.

Discussion of Lord's Day Observance. There was a discussion concerning the preference for 2 services from the CanRef side. The principle is that this helps us observe the day as *the Lord's Day*. We agreed that there was a need to further study the application of Heidelberg Catechism Question 103. The discussion also included the principle that spiritual rest was not the only thing in view in Q/A 103. The day itself is addressed in the RCUS Constitution in that desecration of the day warrants discipline.

Lord's Supper to Shut-ins. The RCUS practice was explained. A concern was expressed to the CanRef brethren for shut-ins to have the privilege of communion at the Lord's Table. The RCUS men explained that to cut off the elderly/shut-ins from the Lord's Table is tantamount to excommunication. We also explained that the minister and at least one elder is always present in order that 'sacramentalism' is avoided. A brief exposition of the Word is given, and the form in the Directory of Worship followed. Fencing the Lord's Table was also discussed in light of the experience of a CanRef minister in one of our churches. It was noted that the RCUS will admit members of a Bible believing church in good standing and agree with our teaching concerning the meaning of the Sacrament. RCUS members are welcome at CanRef Churches for

Communion if they have some proof of membership, *i.e.*, an attestation that such persons are members in good standing in their local RCUS church.

We also discussed Confessional Language in the RCUS paper on church unity. The CanRef brethren were interested as to what we meant by “fine tuning” this paper (per last year’s report). The RCUS brothers agreed that there was a need to clarify statements in support of the principles of church unity. It was noted that CanRef and RCUS have the same view of the church if that view is based on the Three Forms of Unity. The discussion focused on the need for the doctrine of church unity, and therefore, the need for our principles for the same to reflect the teaching of the Three Forms of Unity.

The IRC subcommittee also asked about the influence of Norman Shepherd and the New Perspective on Paul in the CanRef Churches. We discussed the protocol for reception and seating of delegates to their assemblies. It was also discussed as to how we might promote a greater ecclesiastical fellowship. It was thought that this fellowship may be promoted by our continued exchange of delegates at Synods, Classes, also pulpit exchanges, and Youth Camps/Conferences.

Recommendation 1: That Synod erect a committee to study and report on the application of Heidelberg Catechism, Q/A 103, *i.e.*, the Lord’s Day and how it should be observed in our churches.

Recommendation 2: That Synod recommend to the churches the desirability of fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches, via pulpit exchange, visiting CanRef Churches, and invitations to youth camps/conferences held by the various Classes.

#### **Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico (IPCM):**

As reported last year, we do not believe that there is sufficient warrant to re-institute an active fraternal relationship between the RCUS and the IPCM. They have not responded to our inquiries regarding the way such a relationship would function. In light of this your Committee recommends the following:

Recommendation 3: That the Stated Clerk of Synod write to the IPCM and inform them that we are terminating our fraternal relationship with them in light of the impracticalities preventing fruitful interaction, and that we pray God’s blessings upon them in the church-gathering work of Christ.

#### **Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC):**

The Rev. Ron Potter attended the 69th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church which met on the campus of Gordon College in Wenham, MA June 12th to 18th, 2002. His report on their assembly is appended to this report. The 70th General Assembly of the OPC is scheduled to meet at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, June 25th to July 2nd, 2003, to which we have received an invitation.

We also received the report of the fraternal delegate of Western Classis to the Presbytery of Southern CA, OPC. The report states that the Presbytery sustained a charge preferred against a minister “with violating your ordination vows by teaching, contrary to the Scriptures and the Westminster Standards, that the Decalogue is no longer binding on believers as the standard of holy living.” It is also noted that this has been appealed to the General Assembly meeting at Dordt College later this year. We need to keep our OPC brothers in prayer and encourage them in their handling of these matters.

We have also received from the Administrator of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (Rev. Jack J. Peterson) a communication stating that in its efforts to deepen relations with churches with whom they have Ecclesiastical Fellowship, they

propose periodic substantive face-to-face meetings, with the meeting with the RCUS IRC scheduled for the Fall of 2006.

#### **Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) (GKN-Lib):**

Rev. G. Syms was unable to attend the *Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* last year due to the dates of our own Synod, but did write a letter on behalf of the RCUS. The letter stated “We trust that our sister-church relationship will continue to grow more deeply, especially as we speak to each other and demonstrate mutual care in addressing one another. It is not our desire to have our relationship become a matter of “*speaking at*” one another, nor of mere niceties, but rather that we may enter into communication with a view toward mutual edification.” It is our desire to encourage our brothers in the Lord especially in these difficult times. We have received word that a delegate from the GKN-Liberated will be attending Synod in Eureka.

#### **Reformed Confessing Church of the Congo (ERCC)**

Your Committee has had no contact with the ERCC this past synodical year. Contact with the ERCC is usually maintained through the Permanent Foreign Ministries Committee.

#### **Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA):**

The Rev. Wesley Brice was the delegate to the Synod of the RPCNA meeting in Parkville, MO, July 6-12, 2002, and will bring a report to Synod on the same.

### *Relations with Other Churches*

#### **United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA):**

A subcommittee of the IRC met with a URCNA subcommittee at the Redeemer Reformed Church, Minneapolis, MN, on September 10, 2002. Jim Sawtelle, Maynard Koerner, and George Syms met with Rev. Todd Joling and Rev. Ralph Pontier of the URCNA and discussed matters of importance including: a. the RCUS view and place of the Holy Scriptures, b. creeds and confessions, c. formula of subscription on confessions, d. significant factors in the two federations’ history, theology, and ecclesiology, e. church order and polity, f. liturgy and liturgical forms, g. preaching, sacraments, and discipline, h. theological education for ministers. According to the report of the URC brethren, they intend to “recommend that our full committee recommend to Synod 2004 that the United Reformed Churches in North America (URC) enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship (Phase 2 of the Guidelines for Ecumenicity and Church Unity) with the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS). Note: the RCUS calls this level of ecumenicity ‘Fraternal Relations.’”

#### **Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches (OCRC):**

Contact was made with the Rev. Maurice Luymes of Nobelton, ON, Canada, and an invitation to send observers to Synod 2003 in Eureka was extended. It is hoped that we can develop our relationship with the OCRC by an exchange of observers, as well as materials and information.

#### **Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC):**

An invitation was received from the KAPC to send an observer from the RCUS to its

27th General Assembly meeting in Toronto, ON, May 20-23, 2003. Your Committee will send a letter of greeting to the KAPC.

**Ecumenical Relations**

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

One of the actions of NAPARC was the termination of the membership of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. This was taken with sadness, but it should be noted that all of the member churches (except the CRC, of course) were in favor of this removal. The CRC had no delegates present at the meeting.

On a more positive note the meeting marked the reception of *L’Eglise Reformee du Quebec* (Reformed Church of Quebec or ERQ) into the membership of NAPARC. The reception of ERQ must be ratified by the member churches’ synods/assemblies.

We also were glad for the attendance at NAPARC of three observers (Rev. K. Jonker, Elders Bill Gortemaker and Art Poppe) from the Canadian Reformed Churches. The report of Rev. K. Jonker, introducing the Canadian Reformed Churches, was given to the Council.

In previous action by NAPARC it was moved, “that the Collation Committee be continued, that it be expanded to have representatives from each denomination; that it perfect the report and bring in a mutually agreeable definition of ‘organic union.’” This was authorized in 2001, continued in 2002, and the work was completed at a meeting of the committee at WTS, Philadelphia, in April 2003. It will be brought to the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of NAPARC in Pittsburgh, PA, for approval.

Recommendation 4: That Synod ratify the reception of the ERQ into the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council.

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

The next meeting of the ICRC is scheduled for South Africa, in 2005, with the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa as host. We should send two delegates to represent the RCUS, and therefore, we should begin to budget for this expense well in advance.

**Budget Information**

Your Committee herein submits the following as it’s anticipated budgetary needs for this next synodical year for the use of the Standing Committee on Finances. Dues for NAPARC and the ICRC are not included.

1. Delegation to NAPARC 2003 in Pittsburgh	\$2,000.00
2. Delegate(s) to the OPC GA (June 2002)	500.00
3. URCNA sub-committee meetings	500.00
4. Interchurch Relations Committee Meeting (if needed)	2,500.00
5. Interchurch Relations Committee expenses	500.00
6. Delegate to the RPCNA Synod (June 2003)	500.00
7. OCRC sub-committee meeting	500.00
8. CanRef sub-committee meetings	500.00
9. Budget for ICRC South Africa	1,500.00
TOTAL:	\$9, 000.00

Recommendation 5: That the budget proposed be adopted for IRC.

Respectfully Submitted:

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

**J. Ministerial Relief**

[Referred to the Standing Ministerial Aid Committee]

Esteemed Brethren:

Your Committee conducted its business through mail and by e-mail. We discussed the following items and we bring several recommendations.

**A. Consideration of a Retirement Plan.**

Pursuant to an informal poll taken at the Synod meeting last year, your committee considered the merits of leaving our current plan for the MAF and adopting a retirement plan through a paid provider. This item took up most of the discussion in our committee work. Because of our discussion, the majority of committee members did not favor adopting a retirement plan. We believe that we should stay with the current plan adopted by our Synod.

We do not need to pass a recommendation to keep our current system. Nevertheless, we include the arguments for and against the retirement plan, for your information.

*Arguments in favor of a Retirement Plan*

A majority of the ministers polled favored the idea of investigating a pension plan.

Slightly more than half of the congregations are providing IRA’S for their ministers.

Many of our ministers don’t pay into Social Security. This will be a heavy load for the MAF fund to bear.

Such a plan will encourage participation by offering matching funds. This can be adjusted each year as required.

The plan member can choose where he wants his money invested which removes the committee from this responsibility.

The plan will be portable.

The amount that we will pay out of the MAF fund will be small for each minister, so the tax saving would not be significant.

*Arguments Against a Retirement Plan*

Diaconal benevolence given to our ministers and widows is not subject to taxation. Retirement plan money is subject to taxation.

A retirement plan is subject to Federal rules and scrutiny.

Our current system is a benevolence ministry of the church. It is based upon a long history supporting our retired ministers and widows as specified by the RCUS Constitution. The majority of committee members did not see compelling reason to abandon this benevolence practice in favor of a paid provider plan. “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

**B. Audit of the Ministerial Aid Fund.**

The report of Nedved Accounting (the firm that audits the books of the Synod Treasurer) is attached with this committee report. You will note that the MAF increased



very slightly from the previous year. The value of our mutual fund assets dropped significantly this last year, a reflection of the stock market in general. This decrease in value in our mutual fund assets is shown as a “loss” in the accountant’s report, even though we still hold all of those shares.

#### C. Investment Policy.

The Synod has directed your committee to invest the contributions made to the MAF in a 50/50 balance between bond CDs and mutual funds. Your committee has done this. Your committee invested the 50 per cent designated for mutual funds very recently. The market was declining steadily until the start of the war in Iraq. It has shown recent stabilization and modest increase.

Your committee discussed the question of what to recommend to Synod for our investment policy this year. Most of the members favored keeping the current policy. Others wanted to put less money into mutual funds this coming year. It should be pointed out that no committee member argued for doing away with investing in mutual funds. The discussion was a matter of the right balance for the coming year. Since a majority of members expressed an opinion to maintain the 50/50 investment policy, your committee brings that as our recommendation.

#### D. Synodical Guideline.

There was widespread support among committee members for keeping the \$15.00 per communicant guideline for the MAF. This guideline has been the primary reason for the funds growth over the past few years. We will recommend to Synod that we keep the guideline.

In addition to the guideline, delegates are encouraged to remind their congregations that the MAF still accepts donations from churches and individuals.

#### Recommendations:

1. The Synod set the investment policy for the MAF for the next year as follows: 50% of contributions to go into bank CDs and 50% to mutual funds.
2. That the guideline for the MAF be set at \$15.00 per communicant member.

H. Opp, S. Moore, J. Saavalainen, W. Haddock,  
D. McPherson, F. Krivohlavek, L. Goehring, G. Williams

#### K. Publications

[Referred to Standing Publications Committee]

#### Esteemed Fathers and Brethren

Your Permanent Publications Committee (PPC) has had a heavy workload this past Synodical year. In order to work on the tasks assigned by the 256<sup>th</sup> Synod, the committee conducted business by telephone, e-mail, correspondence, and by committee meeting. To better facilitate the completion of the tasks, the committee was divided into subcommittees with team managers to move the members toward the goal of working on its appointed task.

This year your chairman found it expedient to call a committee meeting to work on the recommendations. To better facilitate the recommendations regarding the Sunday school material, both the PPC and the Permanent Christian Education Committee

scheduled a common meeting on Feb. 5 & 6, 2003, in Sioux Falls S. D.

For the consideration of the 257<sup>th</sup> session of Synod, the committee presents the following report with 12 recommendations:

A. Concerning the *Reformed Herald* production cost, the RCUS treasurer reported that the current cost of the *Reformed Herald* subscription is set at \$10.00 per year per family, and that this Synodical year there is a negative of about \$4,000, and the current inflow for the Reformed Herald has not covered its development, publication, and distribution costs: Inflow: \$17,817.70; Outflow: \$21,605.00.

Recommendation 1: That the *Reformed Herald* production cost be budgeted and included in the Publications Guideline, and that said guideline be raised \$10.00.

B. Concerning nominations for the editor of the *Reformed Herald*:

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

C. Concerning the expense account for the *Reformed Herald* editor:

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

D. Concerning Recommendation 5 (page 71 of the 2002 Abstract of Synod), which reads: “That Synod create a Special Hymnal Committee to research the publication or availability of a new hymn book that incorporates both singability and theological and confessional accuracy, and that the committee solicit recommended Psalm and hymn selections from congregations.” Refer to the Special Hymnal Committee’s report.

E. Concerning Recommendation 6 (page 71 of the 2002 Abstract of Synod), which reads: “[Take note] That this project [acquiring samples of certificates] be continued.”

Ordination Certificate for RCUS Ministers  
Certificate of Licensure  
Certificate of Marriage  
Certificate of Baptism of an Adult  
Certificate of Baptism of a Covenant Child  
Certificate of Confirmation

Your committee researched different methods of developing certificates and found developing certificates in electronic format, by using Adobe Acrobat document developer that creates files in PDF format, to be a practical and feasible solution. The PDF format will provide the means of developing eCertificates and will allow the end user (product user) to be within an environment that has the means and ability to view, display, input information on fields, and print the certificates on most all printers using any computer operating platform. At no cost, the end-users can acquire the Adobe Acrobat Reader to produce their certificates on a PC.

Once the eCertificates are developed in PDF format, the Book Depository can have available for purchase 100 8 ½ x 11 sheets of parchment paper and the CD loaded with the following items: The certificates files in PDF format and the free Adobe Acrobat Reader program. The Adobe Acrobat Reader program will allow the selection of the desired certificate, the input of relevant information in the predefined fields, and printing capabilities to print the certificates on the provided parchment paper.

Hard copy samples of the eCertificates will be available for exhibit at the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod, along with a computer demonstration.

Recommendation 4: That Synod approve the production of the certificates in electronic format.

Recommendation 5: That Synod approve the e*Certificate Package* containing the eCertificate CD and 100 sheets of parchment paper be made available at the Book Depository at the cost of producing the CD and the cost of the parchment paper.

F. Concerning Recommendation 7 (page 71 of the 2002 Abstract of Synod), which reads: “That the following book titles in the RCUS Book Depository inventory include a one-paragraph synopsis providing the size, binding, number of pages, contents, audience and application to be composed by the author or an appointed reviewer... and that Synod appoint the author or reviewer to provide a summary of each book title listed above.”

Following are the book titles and the appointed reviewers:

Heidelberg Catechism - Rev. Robert Grossmann  
 The Three forms of Unity - Rev. Hans Kalkman  
 RCUS Government Documents - Rev. Frank Walker  
 Directory of Worship - Rev. Paul Henderson  
 History of the Eureka Classis 1910-1085 - Rev. Howard Hart  
 Ye Shall be My People - Rev. Robert Grossmann  
 The Reformed Church in the United States - Rev. Howard Hart  
 Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism - Rev. Norman Jones  
 Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still - Rev. Paul Treick  
 Our God and His People in the Old Testament - Rev. Paul Treick  
 Confirmation Handbook - Rev. David Fagrey  
 Christian Living in the Home - Rev. Paul Treick  
 How to Handle Trouble - Rev. Paul Treick  
 Creation Pamphlet - Rev. Wesley Brice  
 Reformed Church Government CD - Rev. Frank Walker

The reviews are expected to be completed by the 257<sup>th</sup> Session of Synod.

G. Concerning Recommendation 8 (page 71 of the 2002 Abstract of Synod), which reads: “That each summary be presented to the RCUS Web Site Committee for posting to the RCUS web site.”

As each review is completed, it will be provided to the RCUS Web Site chairman for posting.

H. Concerning Recommendation 13 (page 72 of the 2002 Abstract of Synod), which reads: “That the editor of the *Reformed Herald* be allowed to accept advertisements based upon guidelines to be established by the Permanent Publications Committee.”

The following Advertisement policy for the *Reformed Herald* was adopted:

Advertisements for the *Reformed Herald* will be accepted at a flat rate of \$50.00 for a one-column, two-inch ad. Advertisements may be rejected at the discretion of the editor, and the editor reserves the right to waive charges for non-profit organizations. Appearance of an advertisement does not represent endorsement by the Reformed Herald.

I. Concerning Recommendation 16 (page 72 of the 2002 Abstract of Synod), which reads: “That the Permanent Publications Committee research the layout, graphic design and printing costs for the Sunday School Curriculum and report to the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod with a recommendation and timetable for publication.”

Your committee’s mission has been to develop the highest quality in printed material possible by using the resources available in the printing and publishing industry. Acquiring quality printing at a reasonable price has been challenging! Over the years, the RCUS has established relationships with printing and publishing companies that have efficiently published projects for the RCUS. Your committee is at work to establish yet another beneficial relationship with a company that potentially can help promote our

Sunday School Curriculum (SSC) project. Both your Permanent Publications Committee and Permanent Christian Education Committee chairmen have been in contact with Great Commission Publications (GCP) this past Synodical year. There has been mutual interest on the parts of both Synodical committees to form an alliance with GCP, in order to utilize its capabilities, staff skills, and resources to help with our cause. In a correspondence from Mr. Thomas Patete, Executive Director of GCP, he expressed the Great Commission Publications Board’s interest in the production of the RCUS Sunday School Curriculum, based on *Promise and Deliverance*, by S. G. De Graff. Mr. Patete writes, “The GCP Board has authorized me to explore an agreement with the RCUS Publications Committee pertaining to the *Promise and Deliverance* curriculum.”

Based upon GCP’s interest, your committees’ chairmen arranged a meeting with Mr. Patete and Mr. Mark Lowery, Director of Publications of GCP, in order to explore the plausibility of the RCUS forming an alliance with GCP for the printing, layout and graphic design for the RCUS SSC.

During the meeting, GCP informed your chairmen that it does not have in-house printing capabilities or a graphic design department, and that they contract out all of their printing and graphic design projects. Therefore, GCP contracts for the production of their Sunday school material. GCP’s function is more of a “front store” business operation handling marketing and sales promotions of their products.

GCP proposed that after the RCUS has published the first year of the SSC, it would be willing to conduct a feasibility study on the potential usage among its churches before committing to the RCUS for the inventorying, promoting, distributing, and sales of the Sunday School Curriculum. This proposal was confirmed by Mr. Patete who wrote, “We believe that we must be careful stewards of resources and opportunities, and therefore regard a thorough cost analysis (in terms of both staff and finances) to be crucial. Then, we must quantify potential usage among our churches. GCP’s involvement is at whatever level we might mutually agree to. It is dependent on this data.” Therefore, the only viable mutual venture in the future for the RCUS and GCP would be in marketing and promoting the sales of the SSC outside of the RCUS.

As a result of GCP’s not being ready to make a commitment at this time to promote and market the SSC, and of our limited marketing and storage capacity, it would seem prudent for the RCUS to print only a limited amount of the SSC to primarily supply our RCUS churches.

The chairman of the Permanent Christian Education Committee conducted a feasibility study on the potential usage of the SSC among RCUS churches. The following results of this study are provided for your consideration:

In trying to figure out the potential market for the [Sunday School Curriculum] material within the RCUS, I note that we have now about 1050 unconfirmed members, which would generally translate into K-8 grades, corresponding to the grade range of the curriculum. I think there will be congregations who will use the material also for high schoolers and some will adopt even for the adult Sunday School class (Shafer is just beginning a trial run, off the first disc, from K-adult).

Here are some possible permutations of estimates:

If the curriculum is made available in published hard-copy form and assuming that the distribution of members in each grade category is about equal, and every RCUS non-confirmed member was to receive a workbook, that would require about 250 workbooks per grade category [level] per year. I doubt, however, that all the assumption above would

hold up and most likely that number would be too high. But depending on where the price-break is for number of copies published, erring on the overestimating side might not incur all that much extra cost. If in fact churches also use the material in some perhaps adaptive way for high school and adult, then the oldest category workbook will be in higher demand and so 250 might be too low an estimate.

The first year of the Sunday School Curriculum (SSC), with minimal graphics, is completed and ready to be published in the following format: 64 page, single-color booklet, with two-color cover, on coated paper, saddle stitched, and trimmed to 8 ½ x 11. Samples of the workbooks will be provided for review at the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod.

### Structure of the Sunday School Curriculum:

Workbooks per grade level per quarter:	250
Grade levels:	4 (K-1, grades 2-3, grades 4-6, and grades 7-8)
Lessons per year per grade level:	48
Quarters per year:	4
Lessons per quarter:	12
Pages per workbook:	64, approximately

For the first full year, the total number of workbooks for 4 quarters, for all grade levels is 4,000 and the estimated cost for publishing is \$21,334.00. The Sunday School Curriculum Answer Key will be produced on a floppy disk and made available for \$1.00.

The second year of the SSC should be printed no later than the 258<sup>th</sup> Synod, in order to have the SSC available for the churches for the following Sunday school fiscal year. Therefore, for the second full year, the total number of workbooks for 4 quarters, for all grade levels is 4,000 and the estimated cost for publishing is \$21,334.00. The Sunday School Curriculum Answer Key will be produced on a floppy disk and made available for \$1.00.

In regard to the layout and graphic design of the SSC, the approximate cost can range between \$5,000 to \$8,000 per quarter, depending upon how elaborate the layout and graphics. This estimate provided is based upon GCP's correspondence with the RCUS. Currently, there are many unanswered questions for the PPC to adequately estimate the cost. There are many factors on the project yet to be decided, such as should it have the following: original art, graphics, and clip art; four-color art for the cover and workbook pages, etc. In order to acquire and propose an exact cost for the project, the committee must collaborate with professional artist designers and work out the details.

Recommendation 6: That Synod approve the printing of the first year of the Sunday School Curriculum, as in its existing completed text format, with minimal graphics.

Recommendation 7: That Synod approve the printing of 4,000 workbooks of the first year of the Sunday School Curriculum in text format, at the estimated cost of \$21,334.00, with printing to be completed by Sept. 2003, and the answer key be produced on floppy disk and be made available for \$1.00.

Recommendation 8: That Synod approve the reprinting of the first year of Sunday School Curriculum workbooks in text format as the RCUS Depository inventory is depleted, at the discretion of the Depository manager.

Recommendation 9: That Synod approve the printing of the second year of the Sunday School Curriculum in text format, with minimal graphics.

Recommendation 10: That Synod approve the printing of 4,000 workbooks of the second year of the Sunday School Curriculum in text format, at the estimated cost of \$21,334.00,

with printing to be completed no later than the 258<sup>th</sup> Synod, and the answer key be made available for \$1.00.

Recommendation 11: That Synod approve the reprinting of the second year of Sunday School Curriculum workbooks in text format as the RCUS Depository inventory is depleted, at the discretion of the Depository manager.

Recommendation 12: That Synod approve the Permanent Publications Committee continue its research of the layout, graphic design and cost for the Sunday School Curriculum and report to the next Synodical session with a recommendation.

J. Concerning Recommendation 18 (page 72 of the 2002 Abstract of Synod), which reads: "That the Permanent Publications Committee recommend enhancements to our ability to sell our materials out of the bookstore."

Your committee has been directed to enhance "our ability to sell our materials out of the bookstore." The consensus of the committee is that by improving the Book Depository's front store customer relations and utilizing the RCUS Website and professional companies to promote the sales of our resources can potentially build strong customer relationships with new customers and with the existing RCUS clientele base. Customer relations can be improved by responding to customer's inquiries, by assisting in preparing quotations and orders, and by implementing on-line payment methods.

By utilizing professional organizations and companies, the RCUS Book Depository can take advantage of innovative means to handle marketing and sales promotions of its resources, such as PayPal, which receives payments through Internet service. The company advertises, "PayPal lets any business or consumer with an email address to securely, conveniently, and cost-effectively send and receive payments online. Our network builds on the existing financial infrastructure of bank accounts and credit cards to create a global, real-time payment solution. We deliver a product ideally suited for small businesses, online merchants, individuals and others currently underserved by traditional payment mechanisms." Another professional organization that might be available to promote our resources is Great Commission Publications, which inventories, promotes sales, and distributes Christian resources.

Although, there are no recommendations for Synod, your committee needs to continue its research for opportunities to enhance our ability to promote and sell our RCUS resources.

K. Concerning Recommendation 19A, which reads: "That the Permanent Publications Committee print 500 modern version hardback catechisms (\$3,517.00)."

Five hundred copies of the modern version hardback catechisms were reprinted and are available at the Book Depository.

L. Concerning Recommendation 16 from year 2002, which reads, "That Synod commission Rev. G. Syms to produce the Three Forms of Unity in audio format (cassette, CD), and that an honorarium of \$500 be given to him in recognition of his labors."

Rev. George Syms is in the process of producing the Three Forms of Unity in audio format.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Mancilas, W. Brice, H. Hart, P. Henderson, H. Kalkman,  
G. Mall, D. Fagrey, C. Henson, J. Johnson, D. McPherson

**L. Web Site**

[Referred to the Standing Publications Committee]

Dear Brothers,

We are happy to report that our committee was again able to stay within our proposed budget of \$1800.00. This budget provided \$1200 for our web engineer, \$360 for web hosting (Earthlink) and domain registration and additional money for software upgrades, which we did not use.

Some of the things we were able to accomplish this year were:

1. Added pop-up descriptions for some of the inventory at our Book Depository.
2. Linked congregations with their own web sites directly from their respective classis and 'congregations' page.
3. Made periodic updates of church and congregational information.
4. Made periodic updates of members/elders/ministers' e-mail addresses, change of addresses, etc.
5. Continued posting online audio sermons and exhortations of our ministers and elders.
6. Posted a few articles and position papers.

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

We recommend the following actions to Synod:

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

Respectfully submitted,

D. Roe, F. Walker, T. Wilcox, D. Speranza

**IX. REPORTS OF OFFICERS****A. President's Report on the State of the Church**

Esteemed Brethren:

Through the reports of the Presidents of the Executive Committees of the Classes we are given a view of the state of the church as a denomination. The following excerpts are

taken from those reports, beginning with the "left" coast this year:

*Western Classis:* "Before reading any of your parochial reports, I decided to delineate the things that I use to evaluate your parochial reports before reading the reports themselves. Some of the categories of criteria include the following: 1) The presence of the three governmental marks of the church. 2) the esprit de corps or morale of the pastor & congregation. 3) Spiritual and numerical growth. 4) The peace and purity of the church. 5) The outreach of the church or missions. 6) Instruction of the catechumens. 7) Plurality of church officers. 8) Joyful and generous giving to the work of the kingdom. 9) Visitation of members. 10) Church discipline matters. 11) The temporal condition of the congregation. No doubt there are other things that could be added to this list, but it struck me that if a church "scores" well in the areas listed above, then it is, by the grace of God, doing very well indeed!"

"Let us remind ourselves also that no two churches are exactly alike. This is not only true of churches that have gone astray (like the six prosecuted churches in the *Apocalypse*), but also of churches that are true and faithful (like *Philadelphian* churches of this world and our Classis!)"

"Your President is very pleased to report that our Western Classis churches were enabled by God's grace to fulfill most of the categories stated above, especially the first which concerns the marks of the Church. But as I read your reports, I also zoomed in upon the morale of the pastor and congregation, although with regard to one or two of you, it was difficult to ascertain whether there might be a little hemorrhaging on the inside. Even though some of us are obviously tired, I am pleased to report that no pastor seems 'weary in well-doing,' and no congregation has 'hung its harp upon the willows' (not even in the town where you would expect this to occur, Willows). In other words, 'the joy of the Lord' continues to be 'our strength.' This was noticeable not only in the reports where there was exuberant joy, but in those where a quieter joy for the work of the kingdom was evident. I think it was the great Cotton Mather who once said that most pastors have very little joy in their lives (and ministries). But I did not discern this to be true in your reports."

". . . we continue to pray that the Lord would keep us true to the three marks of the Church: the faithful preaching of the Word of God, the proper administration of the sacraments, and church discipline. Without these, our 'Philadelphia' Classis would degenerate into a Laodicean Classis, or something even worse. God's will is that our churches remain 'hot' and avoid the two extremes of coldness and lukewarmness. For churches like ours that retain an orthodox creed that we believe and teach, it is especially important that we discern that the opposite of hot is not always cold, but lukewarmness. And, that lukewarmness is particularly odious to God. To a great extent, the 'buck stops' with us ministers, who are susceptible to the temptation to abandon 'the lively preaching of the word.' Richard Baxter once said, 'Nothing is more indecent, than a dead preacher speaking to dead sinners the living truth of the living God.' May God preserve us from pulpit apostasy."

"As I think about our congregations, I am reminded of Luke's assessment about the Apostolic Churches. His description of them has much application to us. He wrote: 'Then the churches throughout all Judea' Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied' (Acts 9:3 1). May our God both continue and increase these graces in us, so that we might multiply too."

*South Central Classis:* "It is humbling indeed to know that through preaching and

teaching, the Son of God ‘by His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life a chosen communion in the unity of true faith,’ and that He uses people like us not only in the gathering, but in the building up of His Church. The more we labor in the work he has called us to do, the more we see that the increase must be of Him, that none of us may boast. It is all too true that we are, at best, ‘unprofitable servants’ doing only what we should.”

“The preaching of the Word is the highest priority in the churches, and this speaks well of the people of God and those who minister in their midst. It is also encouraging to receive reports of the various ways of disseminating that Word. Cassette recording, video, compact disc, radio, and the printed page are utilized. The Word of the Gospel is being published abroad. It is well when all the churches begin to see themselves as mission churches. We are grateful to God that the sacraments continue to be faithfully administered in the churches, and that church discipline is being exercised with care.”

“The important work of regular yearly visits, for the encouragement and instruction of the families, appears to be on the increase. It is a good thing to promote the spiritual welfare of the flock by this longstanding practice of family or home visits. Rather than an opportunity to complain about the church or the pastor, the positive instruction of Holy Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity is given. May this become a characteristic of our church life in the RCUS.”

“The difficulties and problems of past years seem to have died down in the churches. The vigilance and diligence of the elders is to be commended. We also thank God for it. There appears to be no great upheavals at this time with which we have to deal.”

“We are also reminded in faithful servants of the Lord of the weaknesses of our flesh and the sufferings which accompany life in this world. Our esteemed brother, Dorman Savage, has been very busy in the work of the ministry while battling cancer. We are hopeful that he can enjoy some rest in a very necessary retirement. Pastor Gene Sawtelle also underwent back surgery recently and is presently recuperating. May God bless them with patience and strength.”

*Northern Plains Classis:* “Again it is time to give an evaluation of our faithfulness to our Savior and Head of the church, Jesus Christ. By what standard are we to make this evaluation? Clearly, we must start with the three marks of the church .... The parochial reports of the pastors give us some ideas of what is happening in this regard throughout the Classis.”

“The first mark is that of the preaching of the Gospel. Each report has indicated that the Word of God is being preached each Lord’s Day. Many of the reports also indicate additional opportunities to give the Gospel to those we normally don’t see. Whether it is over the radio, in newspapers, or public forums, the Gospel is being declared in our communities, not just our congregations. The various topics that are being delivered also indicate that not just favorite ideas are being preached, but the whole counsel of God.”

“Less has been stated concerning the Lord’s Supper and Holy Baptism. From what is stated, these precious sacraments are being faithfully administered in our churches. From what has been stated regarding the last mark, discipline, it would appear that where necessary the appropriate actions are being taken. The three marks would seem to be actively practiced within the churches of the Classis.”

“There is one last item which I wish to raise concerning the health of our Classis. In many of the reports, a reference was made to the declining membership of an aging and declining population. As a Classis, we need to be thinking of missions here at home more than we do. The Home Missions Report is presenting an idea to encourage us to get

beyond our usual thinking in preparation for a more concerted effort in missions. We need to do this, however, not out of concern for our survival, but for Jesus Christ (James 4:3). Our needs come second to the needs of others. Our comforts may need to be sacrificed for others to hear the Good News in its purity. We possess a treasure that will simply rot if we seek to keep it to ourselves. Our Classis is last in terms of the guidelines for missions. Is it time for us to give sacrificially to see the Gospel proclaimed throughout our boundaries? The Western and So Central Classes have been committed to missions and this is seen in their giving for missions. Our commitment is also seen in how much we give for this purpose. I say this to spur us on in righteousness. We must be about our Savior’s work in this area. May our faithful God and Lord work in and through us to build and strengthen His Church here at this time and in this place.”

*Covenant East Classis:* “Shaken. If there is one word that well describes our little classis this past year and even to the present, it is, shaken. After a good many years of relative peace and quiet harmony among the churches of this classis, this year the Lord has shaken us in many ways.”

“. . . As I read your parochial reports ... there were many ways in which we experienced the shaking as churches and office bearers. Some have health concerns, some have lost loved ones, even an infant’s death was noted. Many of you report a higher than usual number of discipline cases. Pastoral relationships have fallen apart, and members of the congregations involved have been rocked like never before. The work of the pastors and elders in these situations has increased beyond anything you could have imagined a year ago. The delegates of classis have also been called upon more than usual to help each other in these times. The classis met three times this past year, and sent out two Special Committees to troubled churches. Our first classis judicial trial in eighteen years was held, resulting in the disposition and suspension of a long time elder.”

“. . . He who rules, shakes according to His wisdom, holiness, and love. Hebrews 12:27 speaks of the purpose of shaking: Now this ‘yet once more,’ indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of *the things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.*”

“I thought of this passage from Hebrews when I read your parochial reports. Each of the pastors reported that they preached regularly the Word of God. At this meeting, each delegate elder will be asked, Are the doctrines of the Gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God? I expect the answer will be ‘yes’. Do we appreciate how important the calling of preaching is in the midst of a world that is being shaken, in the midst of the lives of God’s people who live with that shaking?

“Your reports reflect confidence in the Gospel. It is evident in the reports from the deaf brothers who are pursuing seminary education so that they may be even better equipped to ‘preach the Word.’ It is evident in the expressed desire of many of you to do the work of evangelism; in your faithful labor to catechize the covenant youth; in your reports of the exercise of discipline and the administration of the sacraments. It is demonstrated in the fact that Bible studies at church and in neighborhoods and among various groups are being held regularly.”

“When I read of the labors of the pastors and churches in the classis, I am amazed at the presence of godly fear displayed in your conscientious ministry of the Gospel .... May our God establish His kingdom among us in these days of shaking. May we see the shaking that is taking place result in the removal of every hindrance to the Word of His grace, so that His kingdom would increase as that Rock in Daniel that becomes a great

mountain filling the whole earth. May God's shaking remove the hindrances, but may He also make our feet sure and fast and beautiful on that mountain as we bring the good tidings, publish peace and salvation, declaring unto Zion: Your God reigns!"

As we can see from the above excerpts, there are various needs, trials, burdens and weaknesses within the denomination. Such are normal and to be expected. Nonetheless, we are exhorted *"to continue in the faith and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"* (cf. Acts 14:22). Let us take courage in that *"our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us afar more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"* (cf. 11 Cor. 4:17). Let us take comfort from the words, *"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"* (Luk. 12:32). Let us resolve to be *"stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord"* 1 Cor. 15:58). May our strength lie in our unity of faith that *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"* (Eph. 4:4-6).

In addition to the Classis Presidents' Reports, there are the Permanent and Special Committee Reports that bear on the state of the denomination. I have selected those that I believe are the most pertinent.

The training and education of its students for the ministry is of vital importance to a denomination that has great concern for the orthodoxy and purity of intention of its pastors. Seminaries have both a direct and indirect bearing on the state of a denomination.

The Permanent Christian Education Committee, as mandated by the 256<sup>th</sup> Synod, evaluated Heidelberg Theological Seminary and is recommending that it be added to the list of seminaries worthy of RCUS support. The CEC, as mandated by the 255<sup>th</sup> Synod, visited Mid-America Reformed Seminary and New Geneva Theological Seminary, and is recommending that the RCUS consider supporting a fulltime professor at each of these institutions. The 256<sup>th</sup> Synod erected a Special Committee to study the question of establishing a RCUS seminary, giving particular attention to Heidelberg Theological Seminary, Vermillion, SD, as, such a seminary. The prudent thing would be to have the Special Committee complete its task first before considering supporting professors at other seminaries. (The committee is requesting to have its mandate expanded and to report to the 258<sup>th</sup> Synod.)

The Permanent Foreign Ministries and Home Missions Reports indicate steady growth and progress, and continue to be a source of encouragement. We must not forget that *"missions is the life-blood of the church."* We praise God for enabling home missions churches to reduce building debt and purchase worship facilities this past year, for the building and/or completion of the medical clinic and schools in Kenya, and for the distribution of emergency and diaconal aid in the Congo. Although these things are not the church, they are necessary and serve the cause of Christ. The additional gifts from the congregations to the annual Debt Reduction Offering, to building funds, and to foreign ministries beyond the budget are necessary and appreciated. Their willingness and generosity reflects upon the state of the denomination.

Ministerial Relief is becoming an increasingly larger part of the denominational budget and, with increasing longevity of life, will only continue to do so. In addition, there is another generation of ministers nearing the age of retirement, either voluntary or involuntary, which will only exacerbate the situation. The question is, how long can our present system continue? This issue must be addressed, sooner rather than later!

The Permanent Publications Committee reports that the first year of the Sunday

School Curriculum, with minimal graphics, is completed and ready to be published. They are recommending approval of the printing of workbooks for both the first and second years. While this is welcome news, is it the wisest way to proceed at this juncture? Would not the issuance of this corrected and improved version in CD format (as with the draft version), be more practical and allow more time for further corrections and improvements? Also, before publishing, there should be knowledge of how many congregations are committed to using this curriculum.

The joint report of the Special Committee on the 2002 & 2005 Family Convention is disturbing. This is now the second time that considerable funds have been lost due to lack of preparation, interest, and commitment by ministers and members alike. It is time to reconsider the whole matter of a Family Camp before we lose any more money!

The Special Committee on Christian Education has basically re-submitted its work of last year. This year the majority and minority reports come to us as mutually supplemental to the synodical mandate to write *"a position paper setting forth the Reformed (biblical-covenantal-antithetical) perspective on education and the responsibilities that pertain thereunto."* Rather than recommending this as a position paper of the RCUS, it is submitted as pastoral advice and a teaching vehicle for the congregations. Given the present climate within the RCUS on this subject, it is, perhaps, the expedient way to proceed.

The Special Hymnal Committee presents a serious question with regard to their mandate, i.e., by choosing a hymnal, is the Synod subject to Article 104 of the Constitution of the RCUS? Since there appears to be some dissatisfaction with the hymnals presently in use, should this committee begin the long and arduous task of developing and/or finding a denominational hymnal, including all 150 Psalms? The RCUS has had denominational hymnals in the past. Is it time to consider doing so again?

The Special Committee to Study Nominations of Officers has interpreted Article 48 of the Constitution of the RCUS to say that the congregation *"is invested with a privilege ... to nominate,"* and has *"the responsibility and duty to nominate and elect its officers,"* and is recommending that the model Constitution For a Congregation, Article 21, which specifies recommendations for nominations by the congregation to the Consistory, be amended to bring it into conformity with the denominational constitution, thus ridding it of any ambiguity. This interpretation is based on the committee's understanding of Acts 1: 15-26 and 6:1-6. This interpretation is at variance with the practice of a number of RCUS congregations, and appears to be somewhat at variance with Article 48 as well. It also raises the question of Presbyterian/Reformed church government and is likely to generate considerable debate. This, too, will impact the future state of the denomination.

Finally, the state of the denomination is evidenced by its watchfulness and stand for faithfulness to the Word of God. The doctrine of justification by faith as set forth by the apostle Paul and historically held by the Reformers is being both questioned and attacked. Mr. Harold Camping continues to spew forth heresies with regard to the church. Overtures have been submitted to deal with these false teachings. The sad and chilling aspect of these attacks and false teachings is that they come from those who profess to be Reformed. We should not be surprised, but all the more watchful: *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers... Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch ...."* (Acts 20:28ff.)

*"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord"* (1

Cor. 15:5 8).

Respectfully submitted,  
V. Pollema

### **B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes**

[The Stated Clerk's report was adopted. Rev. Walker was commended for his twelve years of faithful service as Stated Clerk of Synod.]

Esteemed Brethren:

In accordance with the requirements of office, your servant has preserved the minutes of the 256th Synod and all supporting documentation. An abstract of the actions and reports contained therein was also prepared and published per Standing Rule 10. Copies of this Abstract were distributed to all ministers and congregations of Synod, as well as to all churches with which we maintain official correspondence and to all institutions approved by Synod.

In addition, your servant was also requested to dedicate the Abstract of the 256th Synod to the memory of Rev. Donald R. Vance (2002 Abstract, p. 74). A dedication to Rev. Vance appears as a frontispiece to the 2002 Abstract.

The Stated Clerk was also asked to send a letter to the independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico concerning its tenuous relationship with the RCUS. Details of the letter were set forth in recommendation I of last year's Standing Ecumenical Report (2002 Abstract, p. 60). The letter was sent as described therein. A second recommendation asked that the Clerk notify the interchurch Relations Committee of any response (*ibidem*). To date, the only response received was a brief email acknowledging receipt of the letter. This email was forwarded to our committee, per Synod's action.

The 2002 Abstract was printed much later than the Clerk anticipated. The lateness was due in part to my workload and partly to the fact that it took the printer several weeks to complete the project. The fact that I was so overwhelmed last fall made me question whether or not I could or should continue as Clerk. At first it was my desire to continue, if the timeliness of the Abstract was not an issue. However, after considering my schedule for the next several months, I have come to the firm but sad conviction that it would be best, all things considered, for Synod to elect someone who has more time to devote to the work.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the Synod for the confidence placed in me over the last twelve years. I do not consider myself the least bit worthy of this position, which only makes me realize what a great honor it was to have been elected.

Your servant in Christ,  
F. Walker

### **C. Treasurer's Report**

[The report was referred to the Finances Committee. Elder Clayton Greiman was commended for his excellent work as Synod Treasurer for the past thirteen years.]

Dear Brethren:

This is my thirteenth (13) annual report as your treasurer. Thank you for your support and patience these past thirteen years. I will miss seeing you at the synod meetings and being a participant in doing the work of synod

Our cash balance shows an increase of \$20,891.22; our notes receivables increased by \$6114.73. The contributions for Home Missions debt reduction to Yuba City were \$15,730. 00. There was a considerable improvement over past years in remitting these funds to your synod treasurer. The business of synod has grown three fold in the last 13 years. In my first report as your treasurer in 1991 synod had receipts of 228K, disbursements of 249K. In my report this year we had receipts of 620K and disbursements of 592K. It now requires a lot of time to handle the books, hence my plea to you to help your new treasurer to the best of your ability. Please use the forms he provides, and work with your treasurers in sending in funds regularly. With our increased monthly expenditures to meet synod obligations, a steady stream of funds sent by your church is needed.

All loan payments from our mission churches were paid on time and according to their individual loan payment schedules. Our two outstanding student loans continue on our books. Mr Caughey, due to financial circumstances has been unable to make payments since January. Mr Sawtelle's situation has changed. We are expecting to hear from him shortly on his repayment plans. The synod clerk & president have been informed of this. You can see their remaining balances in the audited financial report. We extended one new loan of \$ 20,000.00 to Calhan, Colorado this past year.

Again this year there were many contributions to our Kenya and Congo mission work. I believe Rev Grossmann has in his report these figures. My financial report also shows the income to each of these funds.

You will notice that this year the Reformed Herald is shown in the individual church report per the request of synod last year. This account operated once again in the negative. Also, you can see that not all church's contributed to this fund.

Since this is my last report as your treasurer, I feel that it is necessary to bring a few things to the delegate's attention. You will recall last year I appealed to the committee chairman to make sure their annual reports were sent to the synod treasurer before the annual meeting. I also made reference to this when I sent you the audited treasurer's report last month. This year the only committee that I heard from was the Publications Committee! Gentlemen, standing rule # 14 clearly states that these reports are also to be sent to your synod treasurer. These reports usually have recommendations to synod for expenditures and the amount requested of synod. Your treasurer needs to know what you are planning for the upcoming year so he can assist the finance committee at the synod meeting in arriving at the new budget. You know that the minutes of synod only show the action taken on recommendations by each committee. With out the report in hand you are lost. If the treasurer is not able to attend the full length of the synod meeting he will not be able to accurately handle his duties until receipt of the Abstract late in the synod year. .

It has been an exciting and humbling experience to serve as your treasurer these past thirteen years. To see the growth that our Lord has given this denomination in all ways makes me often think of Romans 8:31;" if God is for us, who can be against us".

Recommendations:

1. Synod disburse the \$10,703.77 in the Deficit Reduction Fund to zero the account.
2. Synod strongly encourage all the churches and committees to work closely with your new treasurer to facilitate his transition into his new position.

Respectfully submitted,  
C. Greiman, RCUS Treasurer

STATEMENTS OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES – CASH BASIS

	1-31-2003	1-31-2002
<i>ASSETS</i>		
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Checking #2	220,058.40	199,167.18
Total Current Assets	\$ 220,058.40	\$ 199,167.18
Other Assets		
Notes Receivable Unsec	\$ 120,062.65	\$ 113,947.92
Total Assets	\$ 340,121.05	\$ 313,115.10

*LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES*

Liabilities	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Fund Balances	340,121.05	313,115.10
Total Liabilities and Fund Bal	\$ 340,121.05	\$ 313,115.10

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

Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

**BASIS OF ACCOUNTING:** The Reformed Church of the United States prepares its financial statements on the cash basis method of accounting.

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

Note 2: Notes Receivable – Notes receivable are recorded as an asset at the-time funds are advanced.

*FUND BALANCES*

	Beginning Balance	Income	Expenses	Ending Balance
Building Fund	\$9,959.15	\$ 13,923.28	\$ (20,000.00)	\$3,882.43
Checking Transfers		1,199.22	(1,200.22)	(1.00)
Deficit Reduction	2,697.93	10,703.77	(2,697.93)	10,703.77
Diaconal	1,695.14	2,400.33	(500)	3,595.47
Dordt College		5,203.19	(5,203.19)	

Foreign Ministries	65,605.91	39,923.39	(65,640.47)	39,888.83
General Benevolence	(3,081.53)	55,366.10	(57,269.50)	(4,984.93)
Reformed Herald		17,817.70	(21,605.00)	(3,787.30)
General Publishing	37,980.72	54,216.19	(22,401.52)	69,795.39
Home Missions	49,421.26	157,468.93	(152,035.73)	54,854.46
Hope Haven		6,775.14	(6,775.14)	
Ministerial Aid		36,835.55	(36,835.55)	
Ministerial Relief	(2,630.70)	139,378.36	(129,000.00)	7,747.66
Seminaries		9,545.24	(9,545.24)	-
Student Aid	2,402.69	18,148.81	(11,983.70)	8,567.80
Synod Dues	35,116.61	30,808.83	(36,129.62)	29,795.82
Other Assets	<u>113,947.92</u>	<u>20,000.00</u>	<u>(13,885.27)</u>	<u>120,062.65</u>
TOTAL	313,115.10	619,714.03	(592,708.04)	340,121.05

*LOANS RECEIVABLE*

	Beginning Balance	New Note	Principal	Interest	Ending Balance
Student Loans					
Chris Caughey	\$12,927.00		\$2,154.50		\$10,772.50
John Sawtelle	19,990.00		3,810.00		16,180.00
Grass Valley 3.0%	29-,570.10		2,624.98	851.17	26,945.12
Minneapolis 3.0%	24,078.00		2,307.00	693.00	21,771.00
Rock Springs 3.0%	27,382.82		2,988.79	821.49	24,394.03
Calhan 3.0%		20,000.00		400.00	20,000.00
TOTAL	\$113,947.92	\$20,000.00	\$13,885.27	\$2,765.66	\$120,062.65

*STATEMENT OF EXPENSES*

Building Fund		
Transfer to Other Assets	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Checking Transfers	1,200.22	\$1,200.22
Debt Reduction	2,697.93	\$2,697.93
Diaconal		
Kurt Schimke	500.00	\$500.00
Dordt College	5,203.19	\$5,203.19
Foreign Ministries		
Congo Account	11,245.00	
Heidelberg Cat for Zaire	15.43	
International Radio	21,469.58	
Kenya Account	11,775.00	
Kinshasa Account	8,745.17	
Kishimba Kasantika	5,400.00	
Mbayo Masangu	1,800.00	
Rev Kabango	2,148.46	
SFMC Committee	3,041.83	

Total = \$65,640.47

General Benevolence	
Amy Stevens	12,000.00
Blue Cliff, Karval	4,000.00
David Dawn	3,000.00
Deaf Reformed Churches	5,000.00



Faith, Anderson CA	7,007.50	
Grace, Lancaster CA	5,428.00	
Maynard Koerner	12,000.00	
Trinity, Colorado Springs	8,834.00	
		Total = \$57,269.50
Reformed Herald	21,605.00	\$21,605.00
General Publishing		
D McPherson, honorarium	300.00	
E-Book Committee	4,609.53	
Herald Editor Honorarium	1,000.00	
Postage	1,500.00	
Publications Committee	1,973.89	
Royalties	518.10	
Subscription Manager	500.00	
Sunday School Curriculum	12,000.00	
		Total = \$22,401.52
Home Missions		
Bentonville, Arkansas	1,200.00	
Building Debt, Yuba City	15,405.11	
Covenant, Chico CA	8,032.08	
Covenant, Watertown SD	13,125.00	
Deaf Reformed Churches	2,000.00	
First, Yuba City	15,730.00	
Grace, Greeley CO	18,580.08	
Grace, San Ramon CA	22,200.00	
High Plains, Calhan CO\$	12,000.00	
LA Basin Mission	14,199.96	
Providence, Vermillion SD	16,272.00	
Redeemer Chapel, MN	12,225.00	
SHMC Committee	1,066.50	
		Total = \$152,035.73
Hope Haven	6,775.14	\$ 6,775.14
Ministerial Aid	36,835.55	\$36,835.55
Ministerial Relief		
Mrs Joan Vance	12,000.00	
Mrs Marie Stuebbe	12,000.00	
Mrs Marjorie Duckett	10,800.00	
Mrs Phyllis Grossmann	12,000.00	
Mrs Virginia Hoeflinger	12,000.00	
Mrs Vivian Stuebbe	12,000.00	
Rev Chester Ploeger	12,000.00	
Rev Howard E Hart	15,000.00	
Rev Norman Jones	15,600.00	
Rev Robert Sander	15,600.00	
		Total = \$129,000.00
Seminaries		
Mid America Seminary	4,862.62	
New Geneva Seminary	4,682.62	
		Total = \$9,545.24
Student Aid		
James Grossman	2,000.00	

Lee Johnson	1,600.00	
Matthew Powell	2,500.00	
Richard Stetler	2,283.70	
Scott Henry	3,600.00	
		Total = \$11,983.70
Synodical Dues		
Abstracts	5,434.74	
Annual Meeting	17,606.20	
Christian Education	2,093.96	
Computer & Accessories	121.44	
Dordt College Committee	185.90	
Financial Audit	502.70	
Home Missions Committee	1,728.97	
Interchurch Relations	3,105.64	
Miscellaneous	248.43	
Officer Remuneration	2,450.00	
Postage	328.64	
Supplies	405.53	
Telephone	14.87	
Web Site Committee	1,560.00	
Westminster Sem Comm	56.00	
Synodical Dues-Other	286.60	
		Total = \$36,129.62
Other Assets		
Transfers to Building Fund	13,885.27	\$13,885.27
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$592,708.08

C. Greiman, Treasurer

**X. REPORT OF MEMBERSHIP & 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 & OBSERVERS**

Rev. Ron Potter reported on his visit to the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Rev. Wesley Brice reported on his visit to the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

**XII. ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES, REPRESENTATIVES, & VISITORS**

Rev. W. Vernon Picknally Jr., representing the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church brought fraternal greetings to the Synod. Elder Klaas Wezeman, representing the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Liberated, brought fraternal greetings to the Synod. Rev. Klaas Jonker, representing the Canadian and American Reformed Churches of North America, brought fraternal greetings to the Synod. Rev. Ralph Pontier, observer from the United Reformed Churches in North America, addressed the Synod. Mr. Keith LeMahieu addressed the Synod on behalf of Mid America Reformed Seminary. Dr. R. Scott Clark addressed the Synod on behalf of Westminster Theological Seminary in California. Rev. Michael McGee read a letter of greeting from Dr. Joseph Pipa, President of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Dr. Carl

Zylstra addressed the Synod on behalf of Dordt College. Mr. Marlow Van Ginkel addressed the Synod on behalf of Hope Haven.

### XIII. REPORTS OF LIAISONS

Rev. Maynard Koerner reported as a member of the Board of Trustees of Dordt College. Rev. Jeff DeBoer reported as a member of the Board of Trustees of Hope Haven. Rev. Robert Grossmann reported as Liaison to the Deaf Reformed. Rev. Robert Grossmann reported for Heidelberg Theological Seminary. Rev. Paul Treick reported as liaison to the Radio Administration Committee of Reformed Faith and Life-French. Rev. Paul Treick reported as editor of the *Reformed Herald* (referred to the Standing Publications Committee). Rev. Frank Walker reported as a representative of City Seminary of Sacramento, CA. Rev. C. W. Powell reported as a representative of New Geneva Seminary.

### XIV. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

[Recommendations adopted unless otherwise noted.]

#### A. 2002 and 2005 Family Convention

The events and labors of the Committee since my last report in 2002.

The contract, as you recall, was held by a \$5000.00 deposit. The contract stated that we could update numbers up until 30 days in advance. 30 days in advance of the Conference at Maranatha Camp we had fifty people signed up including enough ministers to preach and teach. We determined, since we had made an agreement to hold the camp to continue to do so, as we had enough people committed to attend.

After the thirty days had expired, I had several cancellations, including several of the ministers that I had counted on, which made it impossible to continue. After consulting with the committee and with the Executive Committee of Synod, we determined that we had no choice but to cancel the convention. Maranatha Camp had been holding the space for us and this decision put them in a financial bind. As the \$5000 was not refundable, and we had breached the contract, the money was lost,

It appears to us as if there is some problem that needs addressed. It is extremely difficult to put a Camp together when there is no apparent interest, and it does not seem financially feasible to us to do so. A camp in theory is what is wanted by this body, but if there is no one actually who wants to go why do we continue? We made a contract based on the wishes of this body that was impossible to fulfill. We need to give it more thought. Please advise the 2005 Committee what the wishes of this body are.

Recommendations:

1. That the 2002 Family Convention Committee be dissolved
2. That Synod discontinue the Family Convention, and the 2005 Family Convention Committee be dissolved.

S. Powell, R. Morris, D. Dawn, H. Van Stedum, J. McClay, H. Yoder, (2002 Committee)  
M. Koerner, D. Dawn, S. Powell, J. McClay, C. Pennington, H. Yoder (2005 Committee)

#### B. Confer with Dordt College

Your committee continues to pursue its responsibilities in maintaining contact with the administration of Dordt College, as well as contact with RCUS students at the College. Committee member Rev. J. deBoer has been finding opportunities to visit our RCUS students to encourage them and to get input from them regarding their education at Dordt.

Your committee met with Dordt President Dr. Carl Zylstra, Director of Development Mr. Lyle Gritters, and Alumni Director Judy Hagey, on Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003, in the new Campus Center building. Committee members present were Rev. Jeff deBoer, Rev. Robert Grossmann, and chairman Rev. G. Syms. Elder members Chuck deBoer and Clayton Greiman were unable to attend. Rev. Maynard Koerner, presently a member of the Board of Directors at Dordt, was in attendance as well.

In our discussions with Dr. Zylstra we raised some concerns which focused on Dordt's relationship with the CRC. We said frankly that certain trends in the CRC were not good. We noted the expression of feminism in a recent issue of the *Voice* (an alumni paper), especially with regard to the ministry of the Word, and it was also noted that the political ideology being taught in one of the classes was not necessarily Reformed. The latter grew out of the discussion of Rev. deBoer with some students taking the class. The president affirmed the need to present both ideologies.

We expressed our gratitude for the financial aid packages available to RCUS students. However, we also discussed the rising tuition costs, and what was being done to keep them down.

Another issue raised was the apparent carelessness on the part of some students regarding their attendance upon worship on the Lord's Day. The spiritual condition of the students is important to the College, and the committee was assured that this is a matter which would be addressed.

Our hosts graciously provided us with a fine luncheon in a meeting room adjacent to the administration offices, for which we expressed our gratitude.

The committee believes that the interaction with Dordt College is helpful and necessary. Dordt is committed to providing an education from a Reformed world-and-life-view, and interestingly enough, recognizes in the RCUS a like-mindedness in this regard.

Recommendations:

1. That the committee be continued;
2. That the Guideline for Giving amount for Dordt College be \$2.25 for the coming year.

G. Syms, R. Grossmann, J. DeBoer, C. DeBoer, C. Greiman

#### C. Covenant Education

[In addition to the following resolutions adopted by the Synod, there is a 58 page exposition on the subject of covenant education which is available.]

**Resolutions:**

Resolution 1: Our Covenant God gives the responsibility for the education of our covenant children to their parents. Although the tasks related to education may be delegated, parents may not abdicate their responsibility by delegating it to either the state,

the church, or to any private educational institution. Grounds: Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Proverbs 22:6; Psalm 78:5-8; Ephesians 6:4.

Resolution 2: The education of our covenant children receive ought to have as its purpose their being equipped to fulfil the cultural mandate in the church militant; i.e. personal fellowship and communion with God, evangelistic and apologetic endeavors, and being salt and light in the world. In order to achieve these and other purposes to the glory of God, the knowledge to be gained must be in the context of God as the Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer and Judge, through Jesus Christ the Mediator, and the advancement of His Kingdom until the church is triumphant. Grounds: Psalm 111:10; Prov. 1:7; Prov. 15:33; John 17:1-3; II Peter 1:3-11; Eph. 3:14-19; I John 1:1-5; Romans 11:36

Resolution 3: Pastors, elders, and deacons are called to assist parents in the carrying out of their educational responsibilities by encouraging and supporting educational endeavors that are grounded upon the philosophy teaching, and presuppositions of the Reformed faith as expressed by the Reformed Confessions. As much as is feasible given the available means, including assistance from the church, covenant parents ought to seek to provide some form of such covenantal education. Grounds I Timothy 3:15; Prov. 1:20-33; Prov. 2:1-9; Eph. 4:11-14 and Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 103

Resolution 4: That this report, along with the supplementary material, be made available to the churches of the RCUS.

C. W. Powell, H. Opp, G. Horner, D. Kauk

#### **D. Research eBooks**

[The report with its recommendations was referred back to the Special Committee who will report next year. The matter of continued funding for eBooks was referred to the Finances Committee.]

Your special committee was commissioned by the 256<sup>h</sup> Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States to carry out three recommendations, which were accomplished by telephone, e-mail, correspondence, and one committee meeting.

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

In keeping with the recommendation, "That the committee continue its work on the RCUS Electronic Library References, Volume II, to determine what should be included, and that the committee report to Synod next year for possible production of the same," your committee is providing to the delegates of the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod a list of book titles for the production of Volume II, which includes 6,091 pages, at \$1.45 per page, at the production cost of \$8,831.95 (see attachment: The RCUS Electronic Reference Library, Volume II: Reformed Confessions Book Title List).

The selection of book titles for Volume II evolved from the committee's conviction that there is a need for a broader exposure of the teachings of the "Three Forms of Unity," and that a concentrated resource of commentaries, sermons, and expositional works of the confessions would be beneficial to pastors, elders, seminarians, and RCUS members, as well as to those who are considering the Reformed Faith.

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

Recommendations:

1. That Synod approve \$8,831.95 to develop 6,091 pages of *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library*, Volume II for sale and distribution on CD format.
2. That *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library*, Volume H titles be added to the current Volume I CD.
3. That the eBook titles on *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library* are not to be published on any website without the written permission of the RCUS Permanent Publications Committee.
4. That a notification be placed on *The RCUS Electronic Reference Library* CD and its cover that the material contained therein not be copied in any way without the written permission of the RCUS Permanent Publications Committee.
5. That the *Special Committee to Research eBooks* continue.

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

#### **E. Research Hymnals**

[The report with its proposed recommendations was referred back to the Special Committee.]

Your Committee received the following mandate from the 256<sup>th</sup> Synod:

That Synod create a Special Hymnal Committee to research the publication or availability of a new hymn book that incorporates both singability and theological and confessional accuracy. And that the committee solicit from congregations recommended Psalm and hymn selections.

Your committee did not meet, but utilized e-mail to do their business. We also neglected to solicit recommendations for possible hymn selections. As our recommendations indicate, we believe that this would be a larger project than one year would permit.

Back in 1994, the 248<sup>th</sup> Synod (Abstract 1994, page 46) also looked into this subject by erecting a committee. One recommendation, regarding hymns available through Christian Copyright Licensing Inc., was recommitted. The other recommendations were "take note." In 1995 the committee (Abstract 1995, page 81) came back with a recommendation to purchase 1500 copies of the Old Trinity Hymnal with the Heidelberg Catechism replacing the Westminster Standards and embossed with "Reformed Church in the United States" (page 133). We are now out of these hymnals, hence the need for this committee.

There are a number of other hymnals that could be looked into. The URC is working

on a Psalter/Hymnal, as are the Canadian Reformed. The RPCNA are working on a Psalter. We could seek to cooperate with the URC or simply wait until they finish and purchase these. We were unable to establish communications with the chairman of the URC committee, and so where they are in this project is unknown to your committee.

This would not solve the immediate problem of the need for RCUS hymnals in the Book Depository. In considering this issue, the Committee had no real strong inclinations toward either the Old or New Trinity Hymnals. The Old Trinity (OT) is well known and widely used within the RCUS. The New Trinity (NT) is less so. In 1994 the NT was recommended. One advantage to the NT is the better singability of the tunes by lowering the pitch. It is also on whiter paper and larger print for easier reading. This makes it a bit larger, therefore heavier. The NT has dropped a number of hymns, mostly the lesser known hymns, and has added some more contemporary hymns and songs.

In conversation with Tom Patete, Great Commission Publications can print either hymnal for us, The cheapest way is to piggyback on their run. The OT will have to be reprinted this year, the date is not known. The NT will be reprinted for delivery in March 2004. The minimum request is for 2000 copies. Hopefully the cost will be known by the time of Synod.

The one disadvantage of both Trinity Hymnals is that neither have the all 150 Psalms in either a metered form or a looser paraphrase. One solution to this is to purchase the Trinity Psalter, which is a selection of one each of all 150 Psalms from the RPCNA Psalter. There is a "pianist" edition with the music and a "word only" edition available through either Great Commission Publication or from Crown and Covenant Publishers of the RPCNA. The purchase of this along with one of the Trinity Hymnals would certainly solve our current problem, and is a possible solution for our future needs.

Some have asked about more contemporary songs. In talking to Mr. Patete, Great Commissions started to do this and selected 150 songs, but then the Board dropped the project. Accomplishing such a project would require more expertise than is currently available on this committee. It would also require more than one year. We have spent much time and effort on the Sunday School Curriculum. This project would need as much time or more, to complete.

In the past, use of the Christian Copyright License Inc. was recommended. Denominations cannot utilize this, but individual congregations can. For individual congregations, this might solve their need for youth group and camp situations. Much of the music available is from Pentecostal sources or other non-Reformed groups, so caution is advised.

A question to be addressed is whether, by adopting one of these hymnals, we are making them an ordinance as per Article 104 of the Constitution. If so, this may mean that we need to actively pursue producing a hymnal of our own.

In summary, there are two issues: the one to fill the immediate needs for a hymnal; and the other, a future need. With this in mind, your Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. That we print the New Trinity Hymnal at the same time as Great Commissions does their annual run.
2. That we print 2,000 copies of the New Trinity Hymnal with the Heidelberg Catechism replacing the Westminster Standards.
3. That the congregations be encouraged to purchase the Trinity Psalter in addition to their current Trinity Hymnal.
4. That a committee be established to collect and prepare for publication a supplement of

spiritual odes and contemporary hymns.

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

#### *F. Study Nominations of Officers*

The 256th Synod of the RCUS appointed your committee to study the issue of a proposed amendment to Article 48 of the RCUS Constitution. We understand our mandate is to study the question: "To whom is given the duty to nominate men to be voted on for the offices of elder and deacon?" Various members of the committee were assigned to research the following areas: the Biblical basis of this issue of nominating by the congregation; the history of the practice of nominating the candidates to be voted on among Presbyterian and Reformed churches; the standards of the RCUS, including the Confessions and the Constitution. In what follows we will present summary conclusions of the areas studied, our summary observations, and some recommendations.

#### *Summary Conclusions of Biblical Texts Examined*

Acts 1:15-26 - After the ascension of Christ, Peter stands up and informs the church that someone needs to replace Judas as one of the apostles (officers) in the church. The process was:

1. Define the office by the current officers (verse 20)
2. Define the requirements by the current officers (verse 21,22)
3. Present nominations by the whole assembly (verse 23, the antecedent to the pronoun "they" is the "multitude of persons .... about a hundred and twenty" Peter is recorded as addressing in verse 15)
4. Vote on the nominations by the whole assembly (verse 26)
5. The elected official is included in the existing body of officers ("number with the eleven", verse 26)

This is the New Testament paradigm.

Acts 6:1-6 - This is the election of the officers to aid the apostles, and it follows the same paradigm as that in Acts 1. Again, the whole assembly was involved in the process, because the apostles "called the multitude of disciples" and told them to "look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you." It is clear that the process to nominate and to elect was vested with that multitude assembled by the apostles (the existing officers at the time) for that purpose:

1. The duties are to replace work the apostles were expected to do (verse 2)
2. The apostles outline the requirements of the office (verse 3)
3. The whole assembly nominates those to be elected (verse 3 - "look ye out . . . from among you")
4. The whole assembly elects (verse 5 - "they chose")
5. After the election, the 7 are ordained by the existing officer corps (verse 6)

There is no apparent tension between the concern that officers are to oversee the congregation in spiritual matters, including the matter of choosing and electing its officers, and the congregation having the duty to nominate and elect its officers.

*Summary Conclusion of the Standards of the RCUS Relevant to this Issue  
Confessional Basis: Belgian Confession Article 31*

“The elders, and the deacons ought to be chosen by lawful election by the Church in that order which the Word of God teaches.” Here we express our belief that there is an order taught in the Word of God for such things as nominations and elections, and that God’s church can discern that order. We refer the reader to Acts 1 and 6. It should be noticed also that the Belgic Confession does place a restriction on the way in which this process is to be understood, namely, “everyone must take heed not to intrude himself by improper means, but is bound to wait till God is pleased to call him; that he may have testimony of his calling, and be certain and assured that it is of the Lord.” However, this restriction is reasonably derived from the process outlined by the book of Acts. Because the office is a “calling” a man may not nominate himself to the office.

#### *RCUS Constitution*

Article 47 refers to Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3 as the standards set forth in Scripture for nominations and election of men for the offices. Here we find a restriction in our freedom of nomination and suffrage, namely, the congregation may not nominate or elect as office bearers in Christ’s church those who do not manifest the character prescribed by 1 Timothy 3 and Acts 6. In this the Constitution rightly says that the requirements for the offices are defined by God, God is the One who equips a man for an office, and the congregation is not at liberty to define those requirements; we are to be in submission to the Word of God both as to the office and as to the qualifications for the office.

Article 48 contains the most extended discussion of the issue of nominations in the Constitution. In this article, there are three indisputable points.

1. First, the consistory nominates.
2. Second, the congregation nominates.
3. Third, the word “may” in the clause “may be nominated by the congregation” is not merely an option the consistory might allow, but is an acknowledgment that the congregation is invested with a privilege, namely, to nominate.

With regard to the second point, the Constitution adds another restriction in the process. The article stipulates that only “one additional person for each officer to be elected may be nominated by the congregation.” Significantly, the Constitution does not attempt to resolve any apparent tension between the duty of the consistory to nominate and oversee the purity of the offices, and the congregation’s duty and privilege to nominate and elect its officers. It simply sets forth and calls both to their respective duty. This, of itself, is not inconsistent with the paradigm in Acts 1 and 6 so long as the “multitude” is not denied the responsibility both to “look out from among” and “to chose” the officers.

The Scriptures teach that it is the duty of the congregation to nominate and elect its officers, the Belgic Confession confirms the responsibility to choose, and the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States is in conformity with both the Scriptures and the Belgic in vesting the responsibility of nominating and electing to the “whole assembly.”

#### *Summary Conclusions of Historical Practices Examined*

In the historical development of Church Government on the issue of choosing officers for the church, the primary question to be asked is: Who is best suited to choose those men who will be officers in the church? The options were, and are still today,

1. The Special Offices
2. The General Office, or the office of believer – the congregation

#### 3. Both the Special and General Office.

Clearly, the fundamental conflict has been between whether the existing officers chose their replacement or helpers or whether the congregation. Despite the obvious tradition and practice of the Apostles as outlined in Acts 1 and 6, the Church quickly moved in the direction of having the existing officers choose and appoint. In the Episcopacy that developed, the final result was officers only appointing new officers and imposing officers on the local congregation without any consent on the part of the members. This view accords best with option #1 above, but not with the Apostolic example.

This matter was one of the concerns during and after the Reformation, as Protestant Churches sought to return the Church to the rule of Scripture and apply that search in the area of Church Government. The Reformers also turned their attention to this question of “who shall choose the officers of the Church?”

There were differing conclusions between the Presbyterian thinkers and the Reformed. Practices common to both groups can be summarized as follows. Both saw it as the duty of elders (and in some cases also the deacons) to nominate. Both eventually saw the congregation as having a right to vote, though some of the early Reformed thinkers did not allow this right. However, there has been a difference regarding nominations by the congregation. Historically, the Reformed never saw the congregation as having the right to nominate. On the other hand, the Presbyterians have gone back and forth on the issue. Most often they have come down on the side of understanding the Scriptures to teach that the congregation at least had the right to add to the nominations brought by the elders. Such additional nominations are not always but sometimes allowed at the meeting in which the vote is cast.

It is also instructive to note some of the historical examples of objections to allowing members of the congregation to nominate and/or elect officers. For example, the objection was raised that people are sheep and cannot judge rightly concerning qualifications and abilities of elders and deacons. This objection was rightly answered that we must believe what Christ says, John 10:4,5, that His sheep know His voice. It was also argued that it is dangerous to allow the congregation to engage in the nomination and election of officers because the congregation may be inclining to heresy or schism. This was answered with the counter argument that to force elders and deacons upon an unwilling congregation has its own evils; and, it is more often the case that false teachers lead the congregation astray and not the other way around. Another objection raised was that the people might fail to nominate and elect the best men. The answer was simply what we often hear on the floor of Synod, that a failure to do the right thing is not to be corrected by removing the responsibility to do that right thing. A final objection is that only the officers are best qualified to know who is suited to the offices. However, officers often err in judgment. Witness the times a Classis misjudges on the fitness of candidates for the ministry of the Word.

In all cases, the objections are answered by the simple point that we are to follow the Scripture in our processes because it was the responsibility of the Apostles to establish the Church and lay down the processes and procedures by which that Church is to be governed and maintained. Any objection against that practice takes issue with the men appointed by Christ to do that job.

#### *Summary Observations*

The Holy Spirit teaches in the Bible that the congregation has the responsibility to

nominate and elect its officers. Less explicitly directive is the responsibility of the elders and deacons in this process of nomination. There is no Biblical injunction against the officers being involved in the nomination process, nor does the committee see a need to force an unnecessary “either/or” choice in the matter.

Our Constitution is more restrictive about the nomination of officers by the congregation than the Bible - as set forth in Acts 1 and 6 - but it is not necessarily in conflict with that process so outlined. The current consistory is to bring nominations to the congregation, and only one nomination from the congregation is permitted. Nevertheless, so long as the congregation both nominates and elects its officers, this restriction is still within the paradigm of Acts 1. There is no evidence in that instance that the 11 remaining Apostles were excluded from either the nominating or the election. Furthermore, if a consistory would require of its members to have the nominations presented to them “before” the meeting for election rather than “at the meeting,” there is no inconsistency with Acts 1 or 6, so long as the responsibility to make that nomination is not removed from the “whole multitude.” There is, after all, no particular process in the Constitution outlining how the congregation arrives at that “one additional” nomination.

It must be noted that the “model Constitution for congregations” - in Section III, article 21, appears to be in conflict with the denominational Constitution. This section states: “Recommendations [the offending word] for nominations for the offices shall be made by any member.” This implies that the congregation makes only suggestions and not actual nomination. It would be best if the model constitution would be changed to conform to the denominational Constitution.

It seems to us the intent of the denominational Constitution as it seeks to reflect Biblical polity is upheld as long as a local constitution allows for either of the options for nomination by the congregation stipulated in Article 48; namely, “on” or “before” the meeting for election one additional person may be nominated.”

It therefore seems to us that synod ought to resolve that any congregation’s constitution providing the option of nomination by the members, at whichever point of the process leading to the actual vote of the assembly, is in conformity with the RCUS Constitution. And further, synod ought to resolve that it is the responsibility of the congregations of the RCUS to work out an acceptable process for the nomination by the congregation of its one additional officer to be elected. That process ought to include ways of implementing restrictions such as, “that a man ought not nominate himself, and that light-minded, contentious, or otherwise improper persons shall not be chosen to the offices.”

Recommendations:

1) That the model Constitution for congregations, Article 21, be amended by deleting the words “Recommendations for” and the word “Nominations” be capitalized. The first “shall in Article 21 be changed to “may”.

Grounds: This would bring the model Constitution into conformity with the denominational constitution and rid it of any ambiguity.

2) That the Synod take the position that as long as the Constitution of a congregation provides for the congregation’s ability to nominate a man for office, the matter of when the nominations from the congregation are to be finalized is properly decided by the congregation.

Grounds: the Scriptures do not prescribe whether the finalizing of nominations is “on” or “before” the meeting. Although the Constitution allows for both options “on or before,” it does not follow that both options are required of a congregation, or that both are a

necessary privilege. The committee sees no need to amend the Constitution Article 48. Local practices might vary their nomination process while still holding to the basic principle, that a congregation has the duty to nominate and elect its officers.

J. Sawtelle, T. Gruggett, W. Embree, R. De Young, G. Williams

### G. Study RCUS Seminary

The 256th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States erected a Special Synodical Seminary Committee with a mandate to examine the feasibility, procedures, and criteria necessary to establish a RCUS seminary, giving particular attention to Heidelberg Theological Seminary in Vermillion, SD as the denomination’s seminary. The motion adopted by Synod reads as follows:

*“To form a special committee, which shall report to the 257th Synod of the RCUS, to examine the feasibility, procedures, and criteria necessary to the establishment of an [sic] RCUS seminary, giving particular attention to Heidelberg Theological Seminary which petitioned the Synod to serve as the denomination’s seminary”* (page 70 of Abstract of Synod 2002).

Based upon the adopted motion of the 256th RCUS Synod your Special Seminary Committee understands the scope of Synod’s mandate is to *examine* issues that pertain to the feasibility, procedures, and criteria for the establishment of a RCUS seminary, and then make recommendations pertaining to Heidelberg Theological Seminary’s petition to serve as a seminary of the RCUS. The petition from Heidelberg Theological Seminary dated, May 15, 2002, to the 256th RCUS Synod reads as follows:

*“The undersigned members of the Board of Trustees of Heidelberg Theological Seminary hereby petition the honorable Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States to take spiritual oversight over the theological teaching and pastoral preparation of this Seminary, thereby establishing this Seminary as a Seminary of the Reformed Church in the U. S. (RCUS Constitution, Articles 36, 38, 41)”*(Minutes of Synod 2002)

At the very outset of this report it should be noted that Heidelberg Theological Seminary petitioned the RCUS Synod to be established “*as a Seminary of the Reformed Church in the U. S.*” not “*to serve as the denomination’s seminary*” as stated above in the motion to erect the Special Seminary Committee. The definite article “the” could have the connotation that Heidelberg Theological Seminary will serve as the only RCUS Seminary, which obviously was not the intended meaning of Heidelberg Theological Seminary’s petition. The Special Seminary Committee interprets the meaning of the petition to be that Heidelberg Theological Seminary desires to serve as a denominational seminary of the RCUS.

In order to fulfill the mandate of the RCUS Synod, the Special Seminary Committee was divided into three subcommittees (consisting of two men on each subcommittee) for the purpose of examining the three areas of feasibility, procedures, and criteria for the establishment of a RCUS Seminary. Each of the three subcommittee reports were reviewed by members of the committee via the internet. On March 17 and 18, 2003, members of our committee met at Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA, to prepare our report for the 257th annual synod of the RCUS.

In carrying out the mandate of synod your Special Seminary Committee worked concurrently with the Permanent Christian Education Committee, which was given a

mandate by the RCUS Synod to evaluate Heidelberg Theological Seminary as a seminary worthy of support. Because of the obvious overlap of duties of the Special Seminary Committee with that of the Permanent Christian Education Committee, three representatives from each of the two aforesaid committees visited Heidelberg Theological Seminary in Vermillion, SD on November 4-6, 2002. Prior to visiting Heidelberg Theological Seminary, members of the Special Seminary Committee were given a seminary catalog to read and examine. During the visit at the seminary site, representatives of the two committees met with members of the Board of Trustees of Heidelberg Theological Seminary, interviewed the two professors, interviewed the one student, sat through sessions of classroom instruction, and met as individual committees to do the work assigned by the RCUS Synod. A representative of Heidelberg Theological Seminary provided the Special Seminary Committee chairman with a list of books from the Heidelberg Theological Seminary library as well as providing an up-to-date financial report of the seminary's income and expenditures. The financial report indicated that Heidelberg Theological Seminary was meeting its financial obligations.

As the RCUS Synod considers establishing a RCUS Seminary, it should be noted that the work of examining the establishment of a RCUS Seminary is not a recent development. In the "1985 Abstract of the Minutes," of the RCUS on pages 68-70, a report to determine "Options for the training of young men for the ministry" was presented to the Eureka Classis. The first recommendation to be adopted by the Eureka Classis was, "That the committee develop detailed plans for the establishment of a Seminary according to options 7 and 8 and report next year." (*"1985 Abstract of the Minutes"*, p. 70). At the 1986 RCUS Synod the special committee to investigate a RCUS Seminary presented its report. The actions of the 1986 RCUS Synod on establishing a RCUS Seminary were as follows:

"1. (Postponed indefinitely) That the RCUS establish a Seminary within the parameters suggested in the body of this report."

"2. (Take Note) That a timetable be set for the establishment of this Seminary."

The content of the Special Committee to Investigate an RCUS Seminary presented to the RCUS Synod of 1986 is located in the "1986 Abstract of the Minutes" on pages 61-66. After nearly sixteen years Synod is revisiting the question of establishing a RCUS Seminary. In addressing the question of establishing a RCUS Seminary, committee members have employed a variety of resources such as the RCUS Constitution, visitations of seminary campuses, interviews with other seminary representatives, researching reformed theological seminary web sites, downloading accreditation manuals for theological schools from the internet, reading other seminary catalogs, and researching the RCUS "Abstracts of the Minutes" from former years.

As your committee pursued its work and produced papers relative to feasibility, procedures, and criteria, it became apparent that our mandate did not address some important, prior, questions. Your committee is convinced the mandate, as it was given, is incomplete. The questions of warrant and necessity are not addressed. The question of feasibility, in particular, must be driven by Scriptures' warrant and the application of that warrant in history. Without that warrant our feasibility report is incomplete at best, and perhaps unnecessary. Without necessity, we believe there will be no long term, Christian, commitment to a seminary endeavor in the RCUS.

Additionally our study of the historical development of seminaries, which included the resolution to establish a seminary adopted by the Hagerstown Synod of the RCUS of 1820, the Plan for the Establishment of Princeton Theological Seminary of 1811, and the

Purpose and Plan of Westminster Theological Seminary of 1929, demonstrate a purpose to establish seminaries driven by historical necessity.

Your committee envisions an investigation of the biblical, confessional, and constitutional warrants and providential necessities for the establishment of a denominational seminary by an expanded mandate. Our expanded, suggested, mandate is found in recommendation #1.

In regard to Heidelberg Seminary's petition to be placed under the oversight of the RCUS Synod, thereby, establishing it as a seminary of the RCUS, the committee makes the following observations:

- a) Prior to making a response to Heidelberg Theological Seminary's petition, the proposed study on the warrant and necessity, feasibility, procedures, and criteria, of a denominational seminary needs to be completed.
- b) That the committee will continue to monitor the progress of Heidelberg Theological Seminary.

Recommendations:

1. That the mandate given to the Special Seminary Committee be expanded to read as follows: "To form a special committee, which shall report to the 258th Synod of the RCUS, to study the warrant and need of a denominational seminary, and to examine the feasibility, procedures, and criteria necessary to the establishment of a RCUS seminary, giving particular attention to Heidelberg Theological Seminary which petitioned the Synod to serve as a seminary of the Reformed Church in the U.S."

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

J. Merica, J. De Boer, M. Koerner, R. Spitzer, R. Potter, M. Newman

#### **H. Visit Westminster Theological Seminary in California**

[A minority report by Rev. J. Fluck was presented, but not adopted. The matter of placing Westminster Theological Seminary in California on the list of approved seminaries was referred to the Permanent Christian Education Committee to report at the next Synod.]

Your committee appointed by the Synod fulfilled the mandate of Synod to meet with individuals of Westminster Theological Seminary of California. We agree on a date convenient to meet after contacting Dr. Robert Godfrey. The date was set to coincide with the Building Reformed Churches conference to be held in Chino, CA, on the following day.

Present for the formal meeting were the following: representing the Synod of the RCUS, Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Neale Riffert, and Rev. Jay Fluck, (absent with notice was Elder Richard Fay); representing Westminster, Dr. Robert Godfrey (President of WTSCA and Prof. of Church History), Dr. Iain Duguid (Associate Prof. of Old Testament), Dr. Bryan Estelle (Associate Prof. of Old Testament), Dr. Dennis Johnson (Prof. of Practical Theology), and Dr. David Van Drunen (Prof. of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics).

The meeting was very cordial and the discussions were very frank and forthright. It did not appear at all that they were telling us only 'what we wanted to hear.' We met for

about two hours with the focus of discussion prompted by our questions.

Initially, it was made clear to us that there have been some changes at WTSCA from the inquiries made two years ago. Some of the faculty members that have been replaced are Professors Kline, Frame, Futato, and Dennison.

The men present expressed their dismay and disappointment at the dropping of WTSCA while maintaining WTSPA as an approved seminary for the RCUS. Both schools hold the same position on the length of creation days, for example.

There were four major areas of discussion: Framework Hypothesis, The New Perspective on Paul, the Historical Redemptive Hermeneutic, and Seminary Academics.

With two Old Testament Professors present, there was ample discussion on the framework vs. ‘normal day’ creation length (the view of the RCUS). We were again assured that the seminary does hold firmly to the ex nihilo creation by the spoken word of God. There is no room for evolution or theistic evolution in their position. The difference is found in the exegetical interpretation of the length of the days. One professor stated that he would not discount a 24 hour day length, but that the length of the day was to be determined by the meaning of “morning and evening” rather than focusing on the word “day.” That, in his interpretation, could allow for a day that was longer or shorter than a 24 hour day. The other professor stated that he presents various views on the length of days. It would appear that, for him, the framework position is not rejected. It was agreed that there is less emphasis, with the departure of Prof. Kline, on the framework issue.

It was reaffirmed that WTSCA has not changed its position on this subject from that held by the founders of WTSPA or WTSCA. This has been the historical position of both – that the exact length of the creation days could not be determined, but that all things were created by the word and power of God alone.

There was a focused rejection of the “New Perspective on Paul” by all the faculty. They are taking this error seriously, and have made their position against this teaching clear. At the Growing Reformed Churches Conference in Chino, CA, in the days following our meeting, there were excellent sermons and lectures that spelled out this teaching and stressed the need for the Reformed understanding of the active and passive obedience of Christ.

When asked about the presence Historical Redemptive Hermeneutics, it was the opinion of those present that this approach does not have a major presence, as it may have had in the past.

Some time was spent on discussing the need for a seminary to be an academic institution as well as an institution for preparing men for the ministry. A sizeable majority of those fulfilling the M. Div. Program at WTSCA seek to enter the pastorate. But, they felt that a seminary ought also to fulfill the need to prepare men for higher academics and future leadership and teaching positions. The Reformed Church must produce scholars who are respected and leaders in various fields of theology. The men present agreed that WTSCA seeks to fulfill this dual role, and felt that they were well capable of performing this.

If in researching seminaries for those that might be recognized as worthy of RCUS support, we reject all seminaries that we find some difference with, what might we be left with. The issues concern the seriousness of the differences and the extent to which these might be emphasized. At this writing, there are no seminaries which we endorse in which the Boards of Trustees are under the direct control of Synod. While we may have input, the Synod does not examine or commission those who teach (see RCUS Constitution, Articles 36-42). While it may be desirable to have a seminary that conforms to our

Constitution and which receives its support from Synod, we need to have room to present a list of seminaries that stand closely with us in the Reformed faith. This does not mean that each of these will receive financial support, but that students who may wish to attend these, or members who wish to support these, given the differences in some areas, would have the overall approval of the Synod.

As in the past, seminaries “worthy of support” are those where students could attend and seek limited financial aid from Synod funds. It does not mean that they are automatically supported by Synodical Guideline dollar amounts.

Recommendation: We recommend that Westminster Theological Seminary in California be listed by the RCUS as a seminary worthy of support.

P Treick, N. Riffert, and R. Fay.

## XV. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

### A. Benevolence

Recommendations adopted:

1. That Grace Reformed Church of Lancaster, CA, be granted \$450 per month of benevolent aid.
2. That Mrs. Amy Stevens be given \$1,000 per month of benevolent aid.
3. That Trinity Reformed Church in Colorado Springs, CO, be granted \$750 per month of benevolent aid.
4. That Blue Cliff Community Reformed Church of Karval, CO, be granted \$500 per month of benevolent aid contingent upon their calling of a pastor and his subsequent acceptance or an intern who fills that role in an acceptable manner.
5. That Rev. Kevin Hamilton of Deaf Reformed Church of Kentucky be granted \$500 per month of benevolent aid for a period of eight months, from May 2003 to January 2004.
6. That Faith Reformed Church in Anderson, CA, be granted \$1,200 per month of benevolent aid beginning in July 2003. With this request was submitted a three year budget as per the requirement of the 256 Synod.
7. That Rev. Ron Potter be granted \$425 per month of benevolent aid starting June 1<sup>st</sup> and continuing until he receives another call or full time employment.
8. That Kurt Schimke be granted \$2,000 to assist his family in order to be freed up to finish his seminary courses and prepare for his licensure exam. (Take Note)
9. That Rev. Gary Mancilas at Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico, CA, be granted \$3600 of benevolence for his health insurance cost for 2004.

D. Schnabel, W. Brice, D. Kingswood, C. Beck, F. Krivohlavek, M. Altman

### B. Ecumenical

Recommendations adopted:

1. That Synod recommend to the churches the desirability of fellowship with Canadian Reformed Churches, via pulpit exchange, visiting Can/Ref Churches, and invitations to youth camps/conferences held by the various Classes.
2. That the Stated Clerk of Synod write to the IPCM (Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico) and inform them that we find it necessary at this time to end our fraternal



relationship with them in light of the impracticalness preventing fruitful interaction, and that we pray God's blessings upon them in the church-gathering work of Christ.

3. That Synod ratify the reception of the Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ) into the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council.
4. That the budget proposed, be adopted for the Interchurch Relation Committee (IRC).
5. That the IRC make revisions in the RCUS paper on church unity to bring the language of the paper more in line with the language of the Three Forms of Unity.
6. That the letter to the RCUS from the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in the Netherlands regarding the relationship between our churches be read on the floor of Synod.

J. Blair, G. Syms, C. W. Powell, R. Davis, C. Zeeb, K. Hoxie

### **C. Education and Student Aid**

Recommendations adopted:

1. That the writers (Hart and DeGroot), the compiler (Henson), and the proofreader (Johnson) of the curriculum material be commended for their diligence and labor.
2. That the honorarium for Hart and DeGroot be continued at the rate of \$500 per month each until their labors are completed, to a maximum of \$10,000.
3. That an expense account of \$250 (maximum) be set aside to cover expenses incidental to the completion of the curriculum.
4. That Charles Henson be given an honorarium of \$1500 for each year of curriculum compiled (this includes all four levels). Two or more such payments may be needed this year.
5. That Jess Johnson be given an honorarium of \$1000 for each year of curriculum that he proof reads (this includes all four levels). One or more payments may be needed this year.
6. That our churches be encouraged to use this Sunday School curriculum along with the teacher-training video/disc yet to be developed by its authors. Take Note.
7. That Heidelberg Theological Seminary be added to the list of seminaries worthy of receiving benevolent monies from the RCUS.
8. That MARS continue to be listed as a seminary worthy of receiving benevolent monies from the RCUS.
9. That Synod consider the proposal from MARS to support a full-time RCUS professor to the faculty of MARS. Take Note.
10. That New Geneva Theological Seminary continue to be listed as a seminary worthy of receiving benevolent monies.
11. That Synod consider establishing a faculty chair at New Geneva Theological Seminary. Take Note.
12. That the Permanent Christian Education Committee, making use of the internet resources, provide an updated advisory list of Reformed Colleges to the 258<sup>th</sup> Synod. Take Note.
13. That Scott Henry be granted student aid as follows: \$4500 for tuition and \$250 for books for the coming academic year.
14. That James Grossmann be granted \$4600 for books and tuition for the coming academic year.
15. That Richard Stetler be granted \$2852 in student aid for the coming year.
16. That Matthew Powell be granted \$3100 in student aid for the coming year.

17. That Ted Schieffelin be granted \$2940 in student aid for the coming year.  
F. Walker, G. Sawtelle, H. Hart, C. Beilby, W. Johnson, S. Gross

### **D. Excuses**

Recommendations adopted:

1. That excuses be granted to the following delegates who were absent from all or part of the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod, according to their requests: R. Davis, W. Johnson, J. Snyder, A. Docktor, R. Spitzer, D. Bender, J. Clark, A. Haller, M. Wiersma, J. Liesveld, D. Schnabel, K. Hoxie, K. Hamilton, C. Pennington, D. Mettler, J. Saavalainen, J. Fluck, J. Mills, S. Gross, W. Haddock, A. Fickbohm, G. Baloy, M. Kappes, J. West, J. Hieb, D. McPherson, D. Fagrey, G. Stewart, T. Mayville
2. That the request for an excuse from Rev. Lloyd Gross is appreciated, yet it is unnecessary for a retired minister to request an excuse as per RCUS Constitution, Article 88. Take Note.
3. That the request for an excuse for Matthew Powell is unnecessary according to the credentials received from the clerk of South Central Classis, as Jean McClay was designated secundus after their Classis meeting. Take Note.  
H. Opp, N. Jones, N. Jones, D. Clark, G. Mall, J. Johnson, M. Peery, R. Dockter

### **F. Finances**

Recommendations adopted:

1. That \$5,351.88 be distributed from the deficit reduction fund to the building fund and that \$5,351.89 be distributed from the deficit reduction fund to the general benevolence fund.
2. That Synod strongly encourage all churches and committees to work closely with our new treasurer to facilitate his transition into his new position.
3. That Synod grant honorariums to Rev. Chuck Snyder (\$1,000.00) and Mr. Mike Brabo (\$600.00) and that Synod reimburse Rev. Chuck Snyder \$507.00 and Mr. Mike Brabo \$383.50 for travel expenses.
4. That the Executive Committee of Synod contact Mr. Andrew McIntyre for the purpose of making arrangements for the repayment of his student loan as per the agreement and forward communication on to the Synod Treasurer.
5. That the Executive Committee of Synod meet with representatives of City Seminary of Sacramento, CA, to discuss RCUS participation in planned giving programs being established by City Seminary.
6. That the Executive Committee of Synod contact Rev. John Sawtelle for the purpose of making arrangements for the repayment of his student loan and forward communication on to the Synod Treasurer.
7. That the Blue Cliff RCUS be granted a secured loan from Synod in the amount of \$10,000.00 @ 3% APR if a parsonage is purchased.
8. That the Treasurer's and Auditor's reports be approved.
9. That the President and Clerk of Synod be authorized to sign the appropriate documents to allow the Synod Treasurer to open accounts at City State Bank at Sutton, Nebraska.
10. That the travel expenses of delegates to the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod of the RCUS be paid. The total is \$21,630.71.
11. That the Stated Clerk of Synod, prior to each Synod meeting, remind each committee

chairman to physically mail his report to the Synod Treasurer as per Standing Rule 14.

12. That the Guideline for Synod Dues be set at \$8.00.
13. That the Guideline for Deficit Reduction be set at \$5.00.
14. That the Guideline for Home Missions be set at \$45.00.
15. That the Guideline for Foreign Ministries be set at \$29.00.
16. That the Guideline for Ministerial Relief be set at \$49.00.
17. That the Guideline for Diaconal Ministries be set at \$6.00.
18. That the Guideline for Publishing be set at \$9.00.
19. That the Guideline for Benevolences be set at \$17.00.
20. That the Guideline for Student Aid be set at \$4.00.
21. That the Guideline for the Building Fund be set at \$3.00.
22. That the Guideline for Ministerial Aid be set at \$15.00.
23. That the Guideline for Dordt College be set at \$2.25.
24. That the Guideline for Hope Haven be set at \$2.00.
25. That the Guideline for Mid America Reformed Seminary be set at \$2.00.
26. That the Guideline for New Geneva Theological Seminary be set at \$2.00.
27. That T. Mayville be reimbursed \$485 for travel expenses.

<b>SYNOD GUIDELINE SUMMARY</b>	
Synodical Guidelines	\$8.00
Deficit Reduction	5.00
Home Missions	45.00
Foreign Ministries	29.00
Ministerial Relief	49.00
Diaconal Ministries	6.00
Publishing	9.00
Benevolence	17.00
Student Aid	4.00
Building Fund	3.00
Ministerial Aid (investment fund)	15.00
Dordt College (non-budget item)	2.25
Hope Haven (non-budget item)	2.00
Mid America Reformed Seminary (non-budget item)	2.00
New Geneva Theological Seminary (non-budget item)	2.00
<b>Total per communicant member</b>	<b>198.25</b>
REFORMED HERALD (per subscription)	\$10.00

J. Merica, R. Potter, S. Richert, C. Greiman, T. Schieffelin,  
E. Rynders, R. Stuedeman, T. Griess

**F. Judicial**

Recommendations adopted:

1. That Synod deny the request from Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale to seat George S. Mall as Elder Primarius and Rev. George W. Mall as elder secundus at the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod.
2. That Synod seriously take heed to Standing Rule #14 of the Standing Rules of Synod. Take Note.
3. Synod confirms and recommends for use in the church the “Special Committee Report to Study Mr. Harold Camping’s View of the Church” from Western Classis, and that the clerk write a letter of admonition to Mr. Camping on this issue.
4. That Synod form a special committee to study the doctrine of justification by faith in light of the current controversy surrounding the relationship of good works to justification.
5. That Synod add the following clauses to Article 22 of the model constitution: “by appointing an inactive elder or deacon or by calling a special congregational meeting.”
6. That Synod form a special committee to study the constitutionality and feasibility of holding biennial Synod meetings or other options.

H. Van Stedum, T. Gruggett, L. Gross, D. McPherson, A. Rau

**G. Ministerial Aid**

Recommendations adopted:

1. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Vivian Stuebbe in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
2. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
3. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
4. That ministerial aid for Rev and Mrs. Robert Sander in the amount of \$1,300 per month be approved.
5. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Virginia Hoeflinger in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
6. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Phyllis Grossmann in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
7. That ministerial aid for Rev. Howard Hart in the amount of \$1,250 per month be approved.
8. That ministerial aid for Rev. Dorman Savage in the amount of \$1,300 per month be approved, and that Rev. Savage receive an additional 100 monthly in benevolent aid.
9. That ministerial aid for Rev. And Mrs. Norman Jones in the amount of \$1,300 per month be approved.
10. That ministerial aid for Rev. Chester Ploeger in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
11. That ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1,000 per month be approved.
12. That the current investment policy of holding 50 percent of the MAF assets in mutual funds and 50 percent in bank CD’s be continued.
13. That Synod continue to fund the MAF (investment) with a guideline of \$15.00 per communicant member.
14. That a committee be appointed to establish a ‘Defined Contribution Pension Plan,’ in

addition to the Ministerial Aid Fund, to aid our ministers for their retirement, and that, this plan be circularized at least 30 days prior to the meeting of the 258<sup>th</sup> Session of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States in order that it may be considered for implementation at the 258<sup>th</sup> Session.

P. Henderson, H. Bowen, D. Dawn, G. Born, V. Ochsner, M. Kappes

**H. Minutes of Classis**

Recommendations adopted:

1. That the minutes of the Western Classis be approved with the following exceptions:
  - a) On page ii, the possessive of “Classis” is misspelled.
  - b) On page 14, line 37, “contracts” should be “contradicts”.
  - c) On page 92, report is not signed.
2. That the minutes of South Central Classis be approved with the following exceptions:
  - a) The wrong year is used in the footer of each page.
  - b) On page 3, Rev. Syms is introduced by last name only.
  - c) On page 4, line 4, “Grossman” is spelled incorrectly.
  - d) On pages 9 and 14, titles of exams are not capitalized properly.
  - e) On page 11, the body asked Schimke to leave, but not mention is made of his return.
  - f) The names and addresses of the officers are not listed at the end of the minutes.
  - g) Not all of the reports are on white, 8 ½ X 11 paper.
3. That the minutes of the Northern Plains Classis be approved with the following exceptions:
  - a) The title page date does not agree with the divider date.
  - b) On page 4, under item V, “move” should be “moved.”
  - c) On page 14, the copy is not complete, the right 3<sup>rd</sup> is not visible.
  - d) There is no stated time for adjournment of special meeting.
  - e) The page numbers are illegible.
  - f) In the Annual Meeting minutes, on pages 22, 31, 35, and 37, signatures are insufficient.
  - g) And this commendation: We appreciate the special notation for double-sided copies.
4. That the minutes of Covenant East Classis be approved with the following exceptions:
  - a) On page 5, “Order Day” should read “Order of the Day.”
  - b) On page 8, a spelling error, “by dissolved” should read “be dissolved.”
  - c) In the regular stated meeting, the motion to adjourn has no date, time, or place.
  - d) In the same minutes, the name and address of the treasurer is missing.
  - e) The minutes of the special meeting are not in proper bindings.
  - f) In the same minutes, the name and address of the treasurer is missing.

W. Haddock, J. Fluck, J. DeBoer, J. Mills, T. Schieffelin, J. Hieb

**I. Missions**

Recommendations adopted:

1. That Mr. Kurt Schimke be appointed for service as an RCUS missionary to East Africa contingent upon his licensure and ordination as an RCUS minister.
2. That Synod invite the Blue Cliff Consistory to call Mr. Schimke as an associate pastor

for the purpose of doing foreign mission work, and that Synod Commission Mr. Schimke as a missionary of the RCUS under the oversight of the Foreign Ministries Committee.

3. That Mr. Schimke be sent out under the oversight of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for the purpose of administration and working with them at the Westminster Theological College, Mbale, Uganda, and his work with the Free Reformed Church of Kenya.

4. That Synod budget \$30,000 per year for Mr. Schimke's support as our missionary.

5. That at least one of the RCUS representative to RRAC be a member of the Foreign Ministries Committee.

6. That Synod approve the following FMC Budget:

Congo Work:	
Elder/pastor support:	\$11,400 (up \$4,400)
Kinshasa Aid	\$7,000 (same)
Publishing	\$1,000 (same)
Building and diaconal aid	\$2,000 (same)
Kenya Work:	
Church support	\$9,000 (same)
Publishing	\$2,000 (same)
Mr. Schimke	\$30,000 (new)
International Radio	\$14,000 (same)
Committee expenses:	
Travel to Kenya	\$4,000 (same)
Travel to Europe (Holland/Germany)	\$1,000 (same)
Committee Expense in U.S.	<u>\$3,000 (up \$1800)</u>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET FOR 2003:</b>	<b>\$84,400</b> (up \$6200, plus \$30,000 for Mr. Schimke)

7. That support for Covenant Reformed Church, Watertown, SD be set at \$8,145 for 2004.

8. That support for Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN, be set at \$12,225 for 2004.

9. That support for Covenant Reformed Chapel, Chico, CA, be set at \$8,145 for 2004 and that an overture to standing benevolence be submitted for and additional \$3600 for Rev. Mancilas' health insurance for 2004.

10. That support for Rehoboth Chapel in the LA Basin be set at \$9,088 for 2004.

11. That support for Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, CO be set at \$18,580 for 2004.

12. That support for Providence Reformed Church, Vermillion, SD be set at \$11,511 for 2004.

13. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, San Ramon, CA be set at \$19,980 for 2004.

14. That support for High Plains Reformed, Calhan, CO be set at \$18,000 for 2004.

15. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, AR, be set at \$8,400 for the remainder of 2003.

16. That support for Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, Ark be set at \$14,400 for 2004 on condition that a positive assessment is given from Covenant East Classis early next year.

17. That \$9,000 be budgeted for potential new works.

18. That \$3,500 be budgeted for committee expense.

19. That the annual Home Missions Offering on the Day of Prayer in 2003 be designated for Grace Reformed Church, Greeley, CO.

20. The Home Missions budget for 2004, if approved as recommended, would be \$141,880. Take Note.  
 21. That Deaf Reformed Ministries be supported in the amount of \$2000 for 2003.  
 22. That \$10038.68 be transferred from the special Congo fund to the Foreign Ministries Fund.  
 23. That \$6905.54 be transferred from the special Kenya fund to the Foreign Ministries Fund.  
 24. That the 2003 budget for new works be reduced from \$18,000 to \$9,000.  
 D. Roe, R. Grossmann, K. Hamilton, R. DeJong, J. McClay, W. Lingenfelter

**J. Nominations**

**PERMANENT COMMITTEES**

- Archives:** J. Fluck, J. Stuebbe, D. Mettler  
**Board of Trustees:** S. Richert, J. Stuebbe, T. Rott  
**Christian Education:** (3 yr) G. Horner, M. McGee, H. DeGroot  
 (2 yr) H. Bowen, G. Stewart, K. Sorensen  
 (1 yr) D. Kingswood, J. Liesveld  
**Diaconal Ministries:** (3 yr) C. Melhaf, R. Reitz\*  
 (2 yr) T. Gruggett, R. DeJong  
 (1 yr) C. Beilby, J. Bender  
**Editorial Advice:** (3 yr) L. Gross  
 (2 yr) C. W. Powell  
 (1 yr) S. Richert, L. Kauk  
**Executive Committee:** V. Pollema, R. Grossmann, P. Treick, G. Born, E. Merz  
**Foreign Ministries:** (3yr) H. Kalkman, H. Yoder, P. Henderson  
 (2 yr) M. Voytek, D. Schlegel, K. Hamilton  
 (1 yr) D. Schnabel, J. Blair, R. Grossmann  
 Diaconal Liaisons: T. Gruggett, J. Bender  
 Radio Administration Representatives: P. Treick, N. Riffert, D. Schnabel  
**Home Missions:** (3 yr) S. Richert, J. Bruckschen  
 (2 yr) R. Morris, J. De Boer, W. Lingenfelter  
 (1 yr) T. Ochsner, B. Richards, D. Roe  
**Interchurch Relations:** (3 yr) M. Koerner, J. Sawtelle  
 (2 yr) R. Potter, T. Mayville  
 (1 yr) G. Syms, J. Kroese  
**Ministerial Relief:** (3 yr) C. Pennington, D. Dawn  
 (2 yr) H. Opp, J. Saavalainen, S. Moore\*  
 (1 yr) W. Haddock, D. McPherson, F. Krivohlavek  
**Publications:** (3 yr) D. McPherson, N. Riffert  
 (2 yr) W. Brice, H. Hart, J. Johnson, C. Henson  
 (1 yr) G. Mancilas, G. Mall, D. Fagrey  
**Web Site:** D. Roe, F. Walker, J. Mills, K. Hoxie, M. Peery

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

- Confer with Dordt College:** R. Grossmann, J. DeBoer, C. DeBoer, H. Van Stedum

- Research eBooks:** G. Mancilas, D. Roe, J. Fluck, J. Jones, C. Esparza  
**Research Hymnals:** D. Clark, W. Brice, C. W. Powell, S. Powell, D. Mettler  
**To Study RCUS Seminary:** R. Potter, J. Merica, M. Koerner, S. Gross, J. Savage, J. DeBoer, V. Pollema, M. Newman, R. Spitzer  
**Study of Justification:** T. Gruggett, N. Jones, D. Fagrey, C. W. Powell, D. McPherson  
**Synod Meeting Study:** Executive Committee  
**Pension Plan:** Ministerial Relief Committee  
 [\* = Deacon; underline = convener]  
 J. Sawtelle, N. Riffert, M. Voytek, D. Helseth, C. Mehlhaf, A. Fickbohm

**K. Overtures**

Excuses from delegates were referred to the Excuses Committee. Requests for Student Aid were referred to the Education and Student Aid Committee. Requests for ministerial aid were referred to Ministerial Aid Committee. Financial matters were referred to the Finances Committee. Requests for Benevolent aid were referred to the Benevolence Committee. Proposed amendments to the constitution or model constitution were referred to the Judicial Committee. Request regarding publications were referred to the standing Publications Committee. Requests regarding Home Missions and Foreign Ministries were referred to the Missions Committee. Matters regarding Synod's relationship with other Reformed churches were referred to the Ecumenical Committee.

Recommendations adopted:

1. That Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church host the 258<sup>th</sup> Synod.
2. That Synod limit all addresses by delegates from other Reformed Churches, representatives of institutions and visitors to no more than ten minutes.
3. Defeated: That the following reports normally not be read on the floor of Synod: RCUS fraternal delegates, Liaisons, including Board members and representatives, and that all such reports be sent to delegates three weeks before synod.
4. Referred to the Executive Committee: Amend Standing Rule #18 by replacing the words "X Membership and Financial Statistics" with "morning devotions."  
 D. Fagrey, J. West, K. Sorensen, M. McGee, D. VanPeurse, L. Griess

**L. Publications**

Recommendations adopted:

1. That the cost of the Reformed Herald subscription continue at \$10. 00 per year per family.
2. That the Rev. Paul Treick be nominated to serve as editor of the Reformed Herald. An election by ballot resulted in the election of Rev. Treick as editor of the Reformed Herald.
3. That the editor of the Reformed Herald be given an expense account of \$500.00.
4. That Synod approve the production of the certificates in electronic format.
5. That Synod approve the eCertificate Package containing the Adobe Acrobat Reader, the eCertificate CD, 100 sheets of parchment paper, and envelopes be made available at the Book Depository at the cost of producing the CD, the cost of the parchment paper and envelopes.
6. That the editor of the Reformed Herald be allowed to accept advertisements based upon

- the guidelines adopted by the Permanent Publications Committee as followings: Advertisements for the Reformed Herald will be accepted at a flat rate of \$50. 00 for a one-column, two-inch ad. Advertisements may be rejected at the discretion of the editor, and the editor reserves the right to waive charges for non-profit organizations. Appearance of an advertisement does not represent endorsement by the Reformed Herald.
7. That Synod approve the production in PDF format of the first year of the Sunday School Curriculum, as in its existing completed text format with the following provision: That prior to production of year-one of the curriculum the Discuss/Decide section of the 4th quarter, grade level 1-3, be revised to be more age appropriate.
  8. That Synod approve the \$1,500.00 for the production in PDF format CD-Rom of the first year of the Sunday School Curriculum in text format, to be completed by Sept. 2003, or shortly thereafter and that the free Adobe Acrobat Reader be included so that the end user (product user) be within an environment to have the means and ability to view, display, and print the Sunday School Curriculum on most all printers using any computer operating platform.
  9. That the CD-Rom disc of the first year of the Sunday School Curriculum be made available to our churches at the cost of \$49.00.
  10. That production of the Sunday School Curriculum in other formats be delayed pending review on feedback from the implementation of year one.
  11. That a notification be placed on the Sunday School Curriculum CD and its cover that the material contained therein not be copied in any way without the written permission of the RCUS Synod.
  12. That the Sunday School Curriculum is not to be published on any website without the written permission of the RCUS Synod.
  13. That Synod approve the Permanent Publications Committee continue its research of the layout, graphic design and cost for the Sunday School Curriculum and report to the next Synodical session with a recommendation.
  14. That the extra copies of the Reformed Herald be provided to the RCUS home mission works to be used only for the purpose as evangelistic material at no cost to those churches/chapels and/or for distributions to other Reformed bodies.
  15. That the Permanent Publications Committee continue its research for opportunities to enhance our ability to promote and sell our RCUS resources. Take Note.
  16. That the Permanent Publications Committee has printed 500 modern version hardback catechisms which are available at the Book Depository.
  17. That Synod encourage Rev. Syms, to continue the development of Three Forms of Unity in audio format and when completed made available on the RCUS Website.
  18. That the Permanent Publications Committee provide a stick-on label to make the change to the model Constitution for Congregations ( Article 2 1) passed by Synod.
  19. That a budget of \$1,800.00 to maintain the denomination's web site be approved for the next Synodical year.
  20. That the Stated Clerk of each Classis regularly provide to the Web Site Chairman, in electronic form, an undated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring meeting of Classis.
  21. That the clerk of each Consistory notify the Web Site Chairman of any changes in the information listed on the Web Site for their particular charge.
  22. That Synod encourage ministers to submit audiotapes of their sermons and articles in electronic form for the web site.
  23. That Synod encourage the members of the RCUS to submit to the Web Site Chairman

"position papers" or other important historical documents they may have in electronic form and not yet published on the web site.

24. That the members of the RCUS be encouraged to use and promote the RCUS E-mail discussion group for e-mail discussions.
25. That each Consistory provide for the Reformed Herald Subscription Editor an updated Reformed Subscription list, as needed, with all the names and addresses of those who are to receiving the Reformed Herald and that a current list be provided on or before each Synodical meetings.
26. That the Web Site Committee research and implement guidelines for discussion list users.

G. Horner, H. Kalkman, G. Mancilas, J. Bender, J. Bruckschen, S. Hodge

### *M. Special Judicial Committee*

[The Synod voted to approve all five of the Special Judicial Committee's Findings.]

The Special Judicial Committee received two complaints and two appeals. Each complaint and each appeal will be taken as separate actions by the Committee. It was the determination of the Committee that neither appeal was properly done, but it was decided to hear them as complaints. This was acceptable to all parties. In addition, most of the papers, which accompanied one of the complaints, were defamatory to individuals not party to the complaint.

It is our primary finding that there is an evident confusion over the fact that the relationship between the Classis and a Consistory is pastoral as well as judicial. For this reason, after hearing all the complaints and voting on our findings, we met with all the parties in order to seek a Biblical way to deal with these issues. The value of the Constitution in solving controversies is effectual only when all parties act in good faith in accordance with the unity we have as the body of Christ and in submission to His headship as defined by the Scriptures.

Before each complaint, the committee determined which papers were regular and irregular, determined what were the questions and qualities at issue, and then by a majority vote came to a decision in the case. It was determined that most of the papers submitted and the forms in which these complaints and appeals came were not regular, but we adjusted the language in order to consider the questions at issue and vote on specifications that complied with the form of complaint found in the back of the Constitution.

The Committee did considerable investigation into the proper way in which complaints and appeals should come to Synod, the language used in the presentation, and extraneous content that often comes with these complaints. Most of the terminology used in the documents we received was neither regular nor proper. A charge is an accusation of moral misconduct or heretical teaching. The term "charge" does not belong in either an appeal or complaint unless it refers to actual charges. The term "specification" as used in the Constitution has two different senses, With respect to charges, the term "specification" refers to matters of fact, or what we would call evidence. With respect to appeals or complaints, the term "specification" refers to the limits placed upon the question at issue that serves to hinder "the disputers from wandering away from the precise point of inquiry" (as Isaac Watts says). In the documents we received, we refined the contents so as to ascertain the actual question at issue and those specifications provided by the

complainants that actually limited the "precise point of inquiry."

With the exception of the complaint of John Arendt, Sr.-Who was not present nor had he sent a counsel-the Committee followed the process outlined in Article 169. Those papers of the complaints that were regular were read. On the first complaint, the complainant was given 10 minutes to present, the judicatory complained against was given 15 minutes to present, and the complainant was given 5 minutes to close. On the last two, the complainant was given 5 minutes to present, the judicatory complained against was given 10 minutes to present, and the complainant was given 5 minutes to close. Afterward, the Special Judicial Committee debated the matters at length then, after the debate had ceased, voted by roll call vote on each specification.

According Article 169, the Committee presents the following findings for Synod's approval.

1) The first complaint considered was from the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Carbondale, PA against Covenant East Classis. The main question at issue is, before Classis dissolves the pastoral relation, does the Classis have the authority to request additional information from a Consistory when both the Consistory and congregation have requested the resignation of the pastor and the pastor has tendered a resignation. The Consistory took the negative and the Covenant East Classis took the affirmative of the question. There were three regular specifications:

- a. Classis failed to address the grounds of an objection that was sent by the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church with regard to the Executive Circular.
- b. Classis refused to dissolve the charge when there was no controversy.
- c. Classis failed to receive a letter from the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church.

A roll call vote as taken and each judicator respond "No" to each specification. The action of the Covenant East Classis stands.

2) The second complaint considered was from John Arendt, Sr. against Covenant East Classis. The main question at issue is whether the judicatory hearing a complaint has the authority to debate the issue after the complainant has given his closing statement. There was a secondary specification, which has as its question at issue whether Classis had regarded the instructions of the 256th Synod with respect to a complaint brought to it. The specifications were used to consider the affirmative in both questions at issue.

- a. Classis disregarded the Special Judicial Committee of the 256<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States.
- b. Classis improperly allowed a member of the judicatory to speak in favor of the Spiritual Council after the complainant's closing statement.
- c. A member of the judicatory speaking in favor of one of the parties disqualifies that member from voting.

A roll call vote was taken and each judicator responded "No" to each specification. The action of the Covenant East Classis stands on both issues.

3) The third complaint considered was from the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Carbondale, PA. The main question at issue is whether a Classis has the authority to admonish a lower judicatory without a formal trial. The consistory took

the negative and the Classis the affirmative. The three regular specifications considered were:

- a. Classis admonished without hearing important information.
- b. Classis improperly admonished us when we had not been informed by Pastor Potter of any problems.
- c. Classis admonished the consistory when the constitution does not require seeking Elder Sharp's advice before this action.

A roll call vote was taken and each judicator responded "No" to each specification. The action of the Covenant East Classis stands.

4) The fourth complaint considered was from the Reverend Mr. George Mall as the Spiritual Council of Covenant Reformed Church, Carbondale, PA. The main question at issue is Classis properly admonished the Reverend Mr. George Mall. The two regular specifications considered were:

- a. Classis admonished Pastor Mall when he was never given opportunity to present his position.
- b. Classis admonished Pastor Mall without giving him sufficient time to do what he was instructed to do.

A roll call vote was taken and each judicator responded "No" to specification (a) and each judicator responded "Yes" to specification (b). The Synod instructs the Classis to replace the word "admonishes" with the word "encourages" in its instructions to Pastor Mall and give him a definite time-line in which it expects Pastor Mall to perform his duties.

5) That, because many of the papers were irregular and defamatory, this report be the only document included in the minutes of Synod.

M. Koerner, D. Mettler, R. Morris, G. Stewart, W. Embree

## **XVI. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS**

The following expression of appreciation to host congregation was adopted: "That the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States express its heartfelt thanks to Eureka Reformed Church for its very warm and loving hospitality. We are grateful to God for your generosity in providing us with wonderfully satisfying meals and opening your homes to the delegates. We greatly appreciate your expenditure of time and effort on our behalf to the glory of God. May He richly bless you for providing such beneficent fellowship and such excellent kitchen!"

Synod adopted the following motion: That the Stated Clerk draft a letter on behalf of the Synod to our esteemed President, George W. Bush, letting him know of our prayerful support of his and our country's continuous and courageous efforts in the war in Iraq. I would also propose that a copy of the editorial published in the April 2003 issue of the Reformed Herald be sent along with this letter and include a copy of our Synod's letter to President George Washington in 1789 and his response to it.

## **XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

Final roll call showed 38 ministers and 32 elders present.

On motion it was determined that the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States adjourn to the 258<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States to be held at Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Newton, WI, to begin May 10, 2004 at 7:30 PM.

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

Elder Chester Beck led the closing devotions with the reading of Psalm 122 and the recitation in unison of the Apostles' Creed.

The President led the assembly in the Lord's Prayer, pronounced the benediction, and led in the singing of the doxology.

The business of the 257<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States concluded at 10:35 PM on Thursday, May 22, 2003.

*Respectfully submitted,  
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 February 1<sup>st</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. The synodical dues shall be due on the first of January and are to be paid not later than the thirty-first of January of the current fiscal year. [1991]
2. The statistics of the Classes shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod two weeks before the session of Synod.
3. The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two weeks before the session of Synod.
4. The Standing Rules shall be read during the second session of the annual Synod meeting. This rule may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of Synod.
5. A pastor and his elder delegate to Synod shall be paid twenty-two cents (\$.22) per running mile; when there is but one elder delegate, if he drives his own car, he shall be paid twenty cents (\$.20), and if he rides with another person he shall be paid two cents (\$.02) per mile. When distance and time require delegates to use public transportation to Synod they shall be granted full fare. [1996]
6. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel in behalf of Synod at twenty cents (\$.20) per running mile, also if several ride together in one car, or if by public transportation, the actual fare. [1996]
7. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only those delegates to Synod whose congregations have paid the synodical dues in full to the Synod Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Synod or have been properly excused by Synod.
8. The President of Synod shall receive four hundred fifty dollars (\$450), the Stated Clerk shall receive one thousand dollars (\$1,000), and the Treasurer one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the synodical year. An amount equal to 10 percent of the Stated Clerk's honorarium will be available for the Stated Clerk to use for secretarial help. The Editor of the Reformed Herald shall receive one thousand dollars (\$1,000), the Book Depository Manager shall receive three hundred dollars (\$300), and the Subscription Manager shall receive five hundred dollars (\$500) for the synodical year. [1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998]
9. The monies sent to the Synod Treasurer shall be made out in check form to the REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES and shall be designated for which fund and how much. for each fund.
10. The Stated Clerk of Synod shall prepare an abstract of the synodical minutes,

including a cumulative index of resolutions and positions taken by Synod, and shall publish the same. Each Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an abstract of classical minutes and shall send one copy to each minister, elder delegate and congregation of Synod. [1987, 1989, 1990]

11. The Synod shall have Permanent Committees as follows:

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Archives            | B. Board of Trustees     |
| C. Christian Education | H. Home Missions         |
| D. Diaconal Ministries | 1. Interchurch Relations |
| E. Editorial Advice    | J. Ministerial Relief    |
| F. Executive           | K. Publications          |
| G. Foreign Ministries  | L. Web Site              |

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

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

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

14. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Synod shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the churches and the Treasurer of Synod at least three weeks before the meeting in which these recommendations are to be presented to Synod session. Excuses for this requirement are to be made only on written request to the Executive Committee of Synod by the chairman of the committee involved, at least two weeks before the meeting of Synod. All reports, overtures and correspondence must be submitted on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, and all reports must be signed by a majority of the committee members. [1992, 2000]

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

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

17. It shall be the practice of the Reformed Church in the United States to require each



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

18. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Synod four weeks in advance of Synod shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Synod at any time. The members of the Overtures Committee of Synod shall meet during a recess on Tuesday morning immediately after “X Membership and Financial Statistics” until the call of the chair, and shall make the, initial distribution of papers upon the resumption of business. [1998]

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

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

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

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

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