

CLASSIS EAST
OF THE
PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES
September 12, 2018

Grace Protestant Reformed Church - Standale, MI

1. Rev. J. Smidstra leads in opening devotions by singing Psalter 281, reads I Peter 4:1-11.
2. The credentials are read. The churches are represented by the following delegates:

Byron Center	Rev. A. Lanning	Ed Hekstra
Cornerstone	Rev. J. Mahtani	Bill Lenting
Faith	Rev. C. Spronk	Jim Van Overloop
First	Rev. C. Griess	Daniel Monsma
Georgetown	Harvin VerBeek	Todd Miedema
Grace	Rev. R. VanOverloop	Mart Daling
Grandville	Tom Bodbyl	Herm DeVries
Holland	Rev. J. Smidstra	Wes Koops
Hope	Rev. D. Overway	John Van Baren
Hudsonville	Rev. G. Eriks	Jim Westing
Kalamazoo	Rev. M. DeVries	Dave Pryor
Pittsburgh	Rev. W. Bruinsma	Keith Bauman
Providence	Rev. H. Bleyenbergh	Joe Brummel
Southeast	Rev. W. Langerak	Don Kuiper
Southwest	Rev. D. Noorman	John Ophoff
Trinity	Rev. N. Decker	Rick Gritters
Wingham	Rev. M. VanderWal	Will Reinink
Zion	Rev. J Holstege	Gary Kaptein

Motion to accept the credentials as read.

Carried.

Rev. Smidstra, as chair, declares that the classis is constituted properly.

3. Rev. C. Spronk, by rotation, now presides. Rev. C. Spronk welcomes the delegates and requests their cooperation in the conducting of the business of this session.
4. Those delegates present at classis for the first time sign the Formula of Subscription. Elders: Todd Miedema (Georgetown), Will Reinink (Wingham), and David Pryor (Kalamazoo) sign this document.
5. The minutes of May 9, 2018 meeting and of the continuation meeting held July 18, 2018 were previously distributed. Motion to approve their transcription. **Carried**
6. The Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order are asked of each church and are satisfactorily answered.
7. Southeast PRC Consistory requests the advice of Classis in order to proceed to the second announcement of the second step of discipline (according to Articles 76 and 77 of the Church Order) with an individual.

The chairman declares closed session.

A motion is made to allow the Mr. Jacob Maatman and Matthew Cordes, seminarians that are presently in their internship for the ministry, to remain in attendance during closed session.

Carried

A motion is made to allow the elders of Southeast advisory vote.

Carried

A motion is made to concur with the consistory of Southeast PRC to proceed in the second step of Christian discipline.

Carried

The chairman declares open session.

8. Report of the Stated Clerk is read (Supplement 2).
Motion to approve his labors.

Carried.

9. Chairman appoints the following committees:

A. Committee of pre-advice re. Finances

1. Ministers: Smidstra, Noorman
2. Elders: Tom Bodbyl, Don Kuiper

B. Committee of pre-advice re. Protests of C. Doezema, S. Doezema, W. Koops

1. Ministers: Lanning, Griess, and Decker
2. Elders: Todd Miedema, Jim Westing, and John Ophoff

C. Committee to thank the caterers

1. Rev. Van Overloop

10. The Classical Committee report is read (Supplement 3). They report that they have nothing to report other than the mandate given them at the July 18 meeting.
They were appointed “to study the necessity and extent to apologize to Mrs. Connie Meyer and make a recommendation” (Art. 41 of July 18, 2018).

The Classical Committee presents the following.

A. Information

1. As to the necessity:

a. In general, apology to an appellant by any broader assembly is rare, if not without precedent. We could find no examples in our own history, or commentary on it by any of the usual church polity authorities (Rutgers, Bouwman, Jansen, M & VD, Hanko).

b. We can only conjecture as to the explanation for lack of precedent or commentary. Certainly, it is not because broader assemblies rarely err. The likely explanation is that the process of protest and appeal itself is the normal ecclesiastical manner to rectify offense of any “aggrieved” by ecclesiastical decisions (Arts. 30-31). If so, we conclude that apology by a broader assembly for decisions that are subsequently overturned is generally unnecessary, and ought to remain rare, if not unprecedented.

c. Also, based upon established procedure and rules, we conclude that after the process of protest and appeal is exhausted, if anyone is still convinced an apology is necessary, the ecclesiastical manner to make such a petition is overture (cf. Rules of Classis, V, 2; and Rules of Synod, VI, B, 3, a-b; Acts of Synod, Arts. 38 and 44).

2. As to the extent: The central question is whether any aspect of this matter, or decision of Classis East constitutes an exception to the above normal ecclesiastical manner by which to rectify offense in ecclesiastical judgment. We conclude it does in two points:

a. In three specific sub-points of Art. 62, B.1.c (2), 3), and 6), Synod ruled Classis misrepresented the position of Mrs. Meyer. It is one thing to offend an appellant by a judgment that is subsequently overturned (which the process of protest and appeal normally rectifies). It is

another matter to offend by also misrepresenting an appellant's position in the process of making that judgment.

- b. By referring this matter for study and recommendation, Classis, in effect, fulfilled any practical purpose of an overture. Based upon this report, Classis has the necessary information to determine for itself the need and extent to apologize.

Addendum: Synod 2018, Art. 62. B.1.c.2), 3), and 6)

Art. 62.B.1. That synod sustain Mrs. Meyer in her appeal of Classis East Art. 41/43 (decision to reject her appeal). Ground: Classis failed to deal with doctrinal error contained in sermons Mrs. Meyer protested to Hope's Consistory. The doctrinal error is that the believer's good works are given a place and function that is out of harmony with the Reformed confessions.

c.2) Classis East states (Art. 41, I, B), "By arbitrarily imposing her own heretical meaning on these statements, Mrs. Meyer necessarily condemns as heretical all P.R. ministers and spiritual fathers who have used the exact same language in the same context." This assertion is false. [Following this statement are three proofs we omit due to length].

c.3) Classis East states (Art. 41, I, C), "Mrs. Meyer errs in her conclusion that 'in the way of obedience' means 'obedience is the way (instrument) by which' we experience blessings, and therefore is a 'condition' and 'another instrument than faith alone.'" This assertion is false. Mrs. Meyer is not concluding that "in the way of obedience" means "obedience is the way [instrument] by which we experience blessings...." Rather she concludes that Hope's use of that phrase teaches that obedience is an instrument."

c.6) Classis East states (Art. 41, I, F), "Mrs. Meyer errs in her inference that since we are justified by faith alone without works, the activity and fruits of faith, and sanctification are excluded from the experience and enjoyment of fellowship with God."

a) This assertion is false. Mrs. Meyer does *not* content that "the activity and fruits of faith, and sanctification are excluded from the experience and enjoyment of fellowship with God." She expressly states, "I agree that I enjoy the fellowship of God as I live a life of sanctified good works. These will and must go together. There is no enjoyment in a life of debauchery" (Nov. 28, 2017 Letter to Consistory).

b) Classis goes on to misquote Mrs. Meyer. Classis states (Art. 41, I,F,1, agenda p. 261), "*This inference is evident from the following: Her objection to the statement 'it is by the exercise of faith this covenant life of friendship and fellowship is experienced.' ...*" Classis does not give the context of her objection. She does not object to the exercise of faith in the sense of believing or embracing. In the context of her objection, Mrs. Meyer writes, "And what is this exercise of faith? It is a sanctifying faith which exercises itself in obedience" (p. 234, Nov. 28, 2017 letter). Mrs. Meyer objects to the teaching that a sanctifying or obedient faith is necessary in order to experience fellowship with the Father.

B. Recommendations:

1. That Classis East apologize to Mrs. Connie Meyer for misrepresenting her position in its February 2018 decision.

Ground: The decision of Synod 2018, Article 62 B.1.c.2), 3), and 6, which declared that Classis misrepresented Mrs. Meyer in her protest.

Motion is made and supported to approve Recommendation #1.

Failed

2. That Class East adopt and send to Mrs. Meyer the proposed letter communicating our decision and apology.

Recommendation #2 falls away because Recommendation #1 failed.

Classis recesses for the committees of pre-advice to do their work

11. Committee of pre-advice re. the protests reports.

A. Information

- A. See the information of Synod 2018, Art. 62 A.1-8.
- B. Classis East January 10, 2018 (reconvening February 28, 2018): Classis made three decisions in Art. 41-44, and 46 regarding the appeal of Mrs. Connie Meyer.
- C. Classis East May 9, 2018 (reconvening July 18, 2018):
 1. Mr. Doezema, Ms. Doezema, Mr. Koops, and Mr. Overway protested the decisions of Art. 41-44, and 46.
 2. Classis declared all four protests to be legally before it (Art. 17 A.1-4 {17 C.1-4}).
 3. Classis then adopted the recommendation of Art. 17 B {17 D}: "Recommendation: The committee of pre-advice recommends that Classis reconvene July 18 to treat the advice of committee 6 concerning the four protests. Grounds: 1. The way of wisdom dictates that we wait until after Synod because the issues included in the four protests are essentially the same issues included in the Connie Meyer appeal being brought to Synod 2018. 2. This will give the committee time to formulate advice. Carried."
 4. Upon reconvening on July 18, classis declared all four protests to be illegal (Art. 36 B, 37 B {37 D}, 38 B, and 39 B): "That classis declare that the protest of [Mr. Chuck Doezema, Ms. Sara Doezema, Mr. Wes Koops, Mr. Matthew Overway], although previously declared legal, is no longer legally before classis." Classis made this ruling on three grounds:
 - 1) "Classis is forbidden and prohibited from deliberating upon and rendering a decision on a matter that has been previously and specifically ruled upon by synod, since a ruling by a broader assembly is considered 'settled and binding' (Church Order, Art. 31)."
 - 2) "In this instance, Synod 2018 specifically overruled Articles [41/43, 42, and 44], the very articles which [Mr. Doezema, Ms. Doezema, Mr. Koops, Mr. Overway] protests. Thus [Mr. Doezema's, Ms. Doezema's, Mr. Koops', Mr. Overway's] protest has been rendered moot by Synod 2018."
 - 3) "It is axiomatic that any matter 'that is settled and binding should not continue to be the subject of discussion at ecclesiastical gatherings,' which 'would raise discord and require much time needed for other matters.' Moreover, 'all the churches are obligated to live up to the decisions [of Synod] (VanDellen & Monsma, p. 145)."
 5. A motion made from the floor failed (Art. 40): "A motion is made that Classis East advise Hope PRC to reject the 'Doctrinal Statement' because it contains ambiguous statements and the doctrinal error of giving to our good works a place and function out of harmony with the Reformed Confessions. Failed."

D. Classis East September 12, 2018:

1. Mr. C. Doezema's protest:
 - 1) Mr. Doezema now protests the decisions of Classis East, July 18, 2018, Art. 36.B (decision that the previously legal protest is now illegal).
 - 2) Mr. Doezema also protests the failed decision of Classis East, July 18, 2018, Art. 40 (motion to advise Hope to reject the Doctrinal Statement).
 - 3) Mr. Doezema supports his protests with several grounds:
 - a) Declaring the protests illegal contradicts the previous decision of classis that the protests were legal without proving that articles 30 and 31 were no longer satisfied.
 - b) By its decisions, classis failed to "live up to the decisions [of synod]."
 - c) The Formula of Subscription requires Classis East to "express public conformity with synod" on confessional matters "when faced by protests and a motion to do so."
 - d) The grounds classis used to declare the protests illegal are faulty.
2. Ms. S. Doezema's protest:
 - 1) Ms. S. Doezema now protests the decisions of Classis East, July 18, 2018, Article 37.B {37 D} (decision that the previously legal protest is now illegal). Over against this, Ms. Doezema asks "that Classis East overturn this decision that my protest is no longer legally before it and instead treat my protest...."
 - 2) Ms. Doezema supports her protest with several grounds:
 - a) "While Mrs. Meyer's appeal to Synod and my protest to Classis concern some of the same decisions of the Feb. 28 meeting of Classis, they present different arguments and grounds, so there is still more to be considered, discussed, and decided

regarding those Feb. 28 decisions of Classis. Therefore, Synod's decision does not render my protest moot."

- b) "It is helpful, important, and necessary, for the well-being and unity of the church, for Classis to repudiate and clarify their understanding of HC Q&A 116 & 86, the Canons head 5 articles 5, 9, 10, &13, the Baptism Form, the Lord's Supper Form, and select passages of scripture."
 - c) "By signing the Formula Subscription, each delegate of Classis has assumed the duty of whole-heartedly rejecting the lie and whole-heartedly defending the truth, which duty is negated by Classis' decision to merely acquiesce to Synod's decision rather than clearly setting forth the truth in distinction from the lie in this case. Such a whole-hearted repudiation of the error and defense of the truth is the main burden of my protest."
 - d) "Synod did not clearly set forth what a condition is and how the statements to which Mrs. Meyer objects do or do not fit within the definition of a condition. In other words, Synod did not 'specifically rule upon' the point of my protest that Classis did not satisfactorily explain and prove that the statements in question do not fit within the definition of a conditional covenant."
3. Although Mr. Doezema and Ms. Doezema are only protesting decisions in Articles 36, 37, and 40, their protests apply to decisions in Articles 38 and 39 as well, which articles declared the protests of Mr. Koops and Overway also illegal.

B. Recommends:

1. That classis declare the protest of Mr. C. Doezema re. Art. 36b and re. Art. 40 of the meeting of Classis East July 18, 2018 to be legally before it. Ground: The protest satisfies the requirements of Articles 30 and 31 of the Church Order.

Chair rules that the question be divided.

That classis declare the protest of Mr. C. Doezema re. Art. 36b of the meeting of Classis East July 18, 2018 to be legal **Carried**

That classis declare the protest of Mr. C. Doezema re. Art. 40 of the meeting of Classis East July 18, 2018 to be legal.

Motion to recommit to the committee of pre-advice **Carried**

- b. That classis declare the protest of Ms. S. Doezema re. Art. 37 of the meeting of Classis East July 18, 2018 to be legally before it. Ground: The protest satisfies the requirements of Articles 30 and 31 of the Church Order. **Carried**

Classis recesses until the committee of pre-advice can return with a recommendation re. Mr. Doezema's protest against Art. 40 of the meeting of Classis East July 18, 2018.

Motion to recess until 6 pm this evening for the committee to finish their work. **Carried**

Rev. Bruinsma closes the morning session of meeting with prayer.

Elder John Van Baren opens the evening session by reading Psalm 128. Classis sings Psalter 360. Elder Van Baren leads the classis in prayer.

12. Committee of pre-advice re. the protests presents recommendation:

B. Recommendations:

3. That classis declare the protest of Mr. C. Doezema re. art. 40 of the meeting of Classis East July 18, 2018 **not** to be legally before it. Ground: It is not possible to protest a failed motion because there is no decision/content to protest. **Carried**
4. That classis sustain the protests of Mr. Chuck Doezema and Ms. Sara Doezema and declare that Classis East erred in its decisions of July 18, 2018, Articles 36.B, 37.B, 38.B, and 39.B

(decision that the previously legal protests are now illegal). Note: Adopting this recommendation would mean that the four protests are legally before this classis. Grounds:

- a. Article 31 of the Church Order gives members “the right to appeal” decisions of ecclesiastical assemblies. The right to appeal implies the right to receive an answer from the assembly to which one appeals.
- b. Because synod’s decisions are settled and binding, classis’ answer to a legal protest, the content of which was dealt with at synod, ought to answer the protestant in light of synod’s decision to the protest. Classis’ answer should not be the declaration that the protest is not legal. Van Dellen and Monsma write in their *The Church Order Commentary* on article 31 under heading 8 (“*All Decisions Settled and Binding*”): “*Doubtlessly this double expression is used purposefully. Anything that is settled should not continue to be the subject of discussion at ecclesiastical gatherings. That would raise discord and require much time needed for other matters. The second word, ‘binding,’ indicated that all the Churches are obligated to live up to the decisions of the assemblies concerned*” (p. 145). **Failed**

13. Protest of Mr. W. Koops. Committee of pre-advice presents their information and recommendations.

A. INFORMATION

1. See the information of Synod 2018, Art. 62 A.1-7.
2. Classis East January 10, 2018 (reconvening February 28, 2018): Classis East adopted the recommendation of Art. 41/43.
3. Classis East May 9, 2018 (reconvening July 18, 2018):
 - a. Mr. Wes Koops protested the decision of Classis East, February 28, Art. 41/43.
 - b. Classis declared Mr. Koops’ protest to be legally before it (Art. 17.A.3. {originally printed in the minutes as Art. 17 C.3.}).
 - c. Classis then adopted the decision of Art. 17.B: “Recommendation: The committee of pre-advice recommends that Classis reconvene July 18 to treat the advice of committee 6 concerning the four protests. Grounds: 1. The way of wisdom dictates that we wait until after Synod because the issues included in the four protests are essentially the same issues included in the Connie Meyer appeal being brought to Synod 2018. 2. This will give the committee time to formulate advice. Carried.”
 - d. Upon reconvening on July 18, 2018 classis declared the protest of Mr. Koops to be illegal (Art. 38 B).
4. Classis East September 12, 2018:
 - a. Mr. Koops now protests the first ground of the decision of Classis East, May 9, Art. 17 B.1. {17 D.1.}: “The way of wisdom dictates that we wait until after Synod because the issues included in the four protests are essentially the same issues included in the Connie Meyer appeal being brought to Synod 2018.” Over against this, Mr. Koops protests that “Classis East violated our church order by its decision of Article 17.B.1.”
 - b. Mr. Koops supports his protest with one ground: “Synodical decisions are ‘settled and binding’ C.O. Article 31. Therefore for Classis East to decide to ‘wait till after Synod’ to treat my protest was a violation of our church order since it would not have been allowed to do so. According to VanDellen & Monsma’s commentary on Article 31 of our church order, ‘that is settled and binding should not continue to be the subject of discussion at ecclesiastical gatherings’. Page 145.”

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That classis declare the protest of Mr. Wes Koops to be legally before it. Ground: The protest satisfies the requirements of Articles 30 and 31 of the Church Order. **Carried**
2. That Classis reject the protest of Mr. Wes Koops that Classis East violated the church order by its decision of Article 17.B.1. Ground: The fact that Classis East decided to wait till after synod to treat the protests does not mean that Classis “would not have been allowed to” treat the protest. **Carried**

Classis recesses for Committee of pre-advice to formulate further advice

14. Recommitted advice re. Protest of Mr. C Doezema and Ms. Sara Doezema (Supplement 4)

Recommendation: That classis not sustain the protests of Mr. Doezeema against Art. 36.B and Ms. Doezeema against Art. 37.B of the July 18, 2018 meeting of Classis East.

Ground: Synod has spoken to the content of the protests, answering the content of the protests in settled and binding decisions.

Explanation:

1. Ms. S. Doezeema protests the decision of Classis East of February 28, 2018, Articles 41/43: *“That Classis East reject the appeal of Mrs. Connie Meyer concerning ‘a doctrinal position [she] contends represents a denial of the truth of the unconditional covenant of grace and therefore a denial of justification by faith alone...taught and upheld by the pastor and elders of Hope PRC, Walker, MI,’ namely, ‘the concept that our obedience is a condition that we must perform in order to experience the fellowship of God.”* Synod 2018 overturned this in Art. 62.B.1.: *“That synod sustain Mrs. Meyer in her appeal of Classis East Art. 41/43 (decision to reject her appeal). Ground: Classis failed to deal with the doctrinal error contained in sermons Mrs. Meyer protested to Hope’s Consistory. The doctrinal error is that the believer’s good works are given a place and function that is out of harmony with the Reformed confessions.”*
2. Mr. C. Doezeema protests the decision of Classis East of February 28, 2018, Article 42, *“That Classis East advise Hope Consistory to rescind its Nov. 21, 2017 decision to adopt ‘The Doctrinal Statement: Re Experiencing Fellowship with the Father.’”* Synod 2018 overturned this in Art. 62 B.2.: *“That synod sustain Mrs. Meyer in her appeal of Classis East Art. 42 (decision to advise Hope Consistory to rescind adoption of the doctrinal statement). Ground: Classis erred in advising ‘Hope Consistory to rescind its November 21, 2017 decision to adopt ‘The Doctrinal Statement: RE Experiencing Fellowship with the Father.’”* Classis should have advised Hope to reject the Doctrinal Statement because it contains ambiguous statements and the similar doctrinal error of giving to our good works a place and function out of harmony with the Reformed confessions.”
3. Mr. C. Doezeema and Ms. Sarah Doezeema protest the decision of Classis East of February 28, 2018, Article 44 II.A.: *“That Classis East advise Hope’s Consistory to require that Mrs. Meyer retract her accusation against her consistory ‘that the teaching of Hope Consistory is the teaching of a conditional covenant and justification by faith and works’ and do so in writing both to her consistory, pastor, and congregation with three grounds.”* Synod 2018 overturned this in Art. 67.1: *“That synod sustain Mrs. Meyer’s appeal of Art. 44 (decision to advise Hope’s Consistory to require her to retract her accusation). Ground: Classis East’s decision of Art. 44 is based on its decision of Art. 41/43 to reject Mrs. Meyer’s protest. However, synod sustained her appeal of Art. 41/43 because Mrs. Meyer correctly demonstrated that there was doctrinal error being defended by the Consistory.”*

Motion to change the ground: to the following:

Ground: The decisions of classis concerning the Mrs. C Meyer case that Mr. C. Doezeema and Ms. S Doezeema protested was overturned by Synod 2018 Article 62.B.1.

Motion to adopt the recommendation as amended.

**Carried
Failed**

Classis recessed so the committee of pre-advice could bring new advice.

Classis’ meeting is resumed as the committee of pre-advice brings new advice.

Recommitted Advice (Supplement 5)

Recommendation: That Classis sustain the protests of Mr. Chuck Doezeema and Ms. Sara Doezeema and declare that Classis East erred in its decision of July 18, 2018, Articles 36.B, 37.B{37.D}, 38B, and 39.B (decision that the previously legal protests are not illegal) Note Adopting this recommendation would mean that the four protests are legally before classis.

Ground: Because synod’s decisions are settled and binding, classis’ response to a legal protest, the content of which was dealt with a synod, ought to answer the protestant in light of synod’s decision. Classis’ answer should not be the declaration that the protest is not legal.

Motion to amend the ground by replacing “the content of” with “of a decision”, so it now reads:

Because synod’s decisions are settled and binding, classis’ response to a legal protest, of a decision which was dealt with a synod, ought to answer the protestant in light of synod’s decision. Classis’

answer should not be the declaration that the protest is not legal.

Carried

The motion as amended.

Carried

15. Classis treats the advice concerning the May 2018 protest of Ms. S. Doezema and Mr. W. Koops concerning Articles 41/43 of the February 2018 meeting of Classis East.

A. Information.

A. See the information of Synod 2018, Art. 62.A.1-8.

B. Classis East January 10, 2018 (reconvening February 28, 2018): Classis East adopted the recommendation of Art. 41/43, "That Classis East reject the appeal of Mrs. Connie Meyer concerning 'a doctrinal position [she] contends represents a denial of the truth of the unconditional covenant of grace and therefore a denial of justification by faith alone...taught and upheld by the pastor and elders of Hope PRC, Walker, MI,' namely, 'the concept that our obedience is a condition that we must perform in order to experience the fellowship of God.'"

C. Classis East May 9, 2018 (reconvening July 18, 2018).

1. Ms. S. Doezema protested the decision of Classis East, Feb. 28, Art. 41/43. Ms. Doezema supports her protest with several grounds: The following are her grounds from the May 9, 2018 Agenda, pp 100-101.

- 1) "Classis misrepresents what Mrs. Meyer and Hope's consistory are saying."
- 2) "Position of Mrs. Meyer and Hope's consistory based on what they say."
- 3) "The Classical Committee concludes that Mrs. Meyer and Hope's Consistory do not misunderstand each other, but rather hold two opposing positions regarding the relationship between obedience and the experience of fellowship in the covenant. The problem, therefore, is not one of confusion and misunderstanding but rather a lack of unity in their faith. The orthodoxy of their respective positions is what Classis East is asked to adjudicate."
- 4) "Hope's consistory insists that their teaching that 'in the way of obedience God...causes His people to experience the blessings of salvation' is in accordance with the scripture and the confessions and does not constitute conditional theology notwithstanding Mrs. Meyer's attempt to demonstrate otherwise in her letters and protests. I do not agree that the scriptures and confessions which are quoted by Hope's consistory in defense of their position do indeed prove what they are contending those passages and confessions prove. Nor do they provide any explanation of how these scripture passages and confessions prove their position."
- 5) "I believe that Classis East also errs when they conclude, in I.B.2.d. of their Recommendation (Art. 40, Supplement 18), that when 'Mrs. Meyer condemns as 'the doctrine of Rome' and 'Federal Vision' the statement, 'by the exercise of faith...this covenant life of friendship and fellowship is experienced and enjoyed' (I.B.2.)...she 'also contradicts our Confessions:' (I.B.2.d)."
- 6) "Mrs. Meyer contends that her consistory has not yet provided any satisfactory explanation of how her charge that such a teaching constitutes teaching conditional theology is false. Therefore, she brings the matter to Classis asking that they clearly set forth the truth of God's unconditional covenant of grace, explain how what Hope's consistory believes is or is not in accordance with the truth of God's Word and the confessions, explain how what she believes is or is not in accordance with the truth of God's Word and the confessions, and thus judge whether her conclusion, namely, that what Hope's consistory and pastor are teaching is a false gospel and conditional theology, is correct or not."
- 7) "Classis East's explanation does not clearly set forth the truth or clearly expose the error. While Classis criticizes Mrs. Meyer for merely making assumptions without proving her charge of conditional theology, Classis does not prove how her interpretations are wrong, does not provide the other, natural, alternative, orthodox interpretation of 'in order to' that is unconditional, and yet they advise Hope's Consistory to require that Mrs. Meyer retract her charge that to say 'obedience is required in order to experience fellowship of God' is to make obedience a condition for fellowship because, while 'in order to' is typically avoided because it strongly suggests conditions, it can be defended and therefore is not conditional."
- 8) "For the sake of maintaining the truth of God's unconditional covenant of grace, to the glory of God and the comfort of His people in the PRCA, I ask that Classis East evaluate the two dichotomous positions of Mrs. Meyer and Hope's consistory on the basis of God's Word and

the confessions and clearly explain how each of their respective beliefs are or are not in harmony with the scriptures and the confessions.”

2. Mr. W. Koops protested the decision of Classis East, Feb. 28, Art. 41/43. Mr. Koops supports his protest with three grounds. The following are his grounds from the May 9, 2018, Agenda, p. 128-129.
 - 1) “Her protest consistently and positively sets forth the historical, biblical, and confessional truth of the Protestant Reformed Churches.”
 - 2) “Her protest is consistent with and reinforces the decision of Synod 2017 in article 87 of Acts of Synod 2017.”
 - 3) “Classis East confirmed Mrs. Meyer’s contention that error was present in the sermons she brought forward in her appeal. In the minutes of the meeting on February 28, 2018, Classis quoted several statements of Rev. Overway’s sermons that Mrs. Meyer quotes in her protest. By quoting the statements and using them to address the errors of both Rev. Overway in his preaching and Hope’s Consistory and failure to oversee the preaching, Classis gave sound legitimacy to Mrs. Meyer appeals and therefore should have upheld her appeal.”
 3. Classis East declared the protests of Ms. S. Doezema and Mr. W. Koops to be legally before it (Art. 17.A.2 and 3 {17 C.2 and 3}).
 4. Classis East declared the protest of Ms. S. Doezema and Mr. W. Koops to be illegal (Art. 37.B {37.D} and 38.B).
- D. Classis East September 12, 2018: By virtue of the decision of this advice in I.B.4, the protests of Ms. S. Doezema and Mr. W. Koops are now before this classis.

B. Recommendation.

That classis sustain the protests of Ms. S. Doezema and Mr. W. Koops and declare that Classis East erred in its decision of February 28, 2018, Articles 41/43: *“That Classis East reject the appeal of Mrs. Connie Meyer concerning ‘a doctrinal position [she] contends represents a denial of the truth of the unconditional covenant of grace and therefore a denial of justification by faith alone...taught and upheld by the pastor and elders of Hope PRC, Walker, MI,’ namely, ‘the concept that our obedience is a condition that we must perform in order to experience the fellowship of God.’”*

Ground: The decision of Synod 2018, Art. 62.B.1.: *“That synod sustain Mrs. Meyer in her appeal of Classis East Art. 41/43 (decision to reject her appeal). Ground: Classis failed to deal with the doctrinal error contained in sermons Mrs. Meyer protested to Hope’s Consistory. The doctrinal error is that the believer’s good works are given a place and function that is out of harmony with the Reformed confessions.”*

Carried

- 16.** Classis now considers the advice concerning the May 2018 protests of Mr. C. Doezema and Mr. M. Overway concerning Articles 42 and 46 of the February 2018 meeting of Classis East.

A. Information.

- A. See the information of Synod 2018, Art. 62.A.1-8.
- B. Classis East January 10, 2018 (reconvening February 28, 2018): Classis East adopted the recommendation of Art. 42: “That Classis East advise Hope Consistory to rescind its Nov. 21, 2017 decision to adopt ‘The Doctrinal Statement: Re Experiencing Fellowship with the Father’.”
- C. Classis East May 9, 2018 (reconvening July 18, 2018).
 1. Mr. C. Doezema protested the decision of Classis East, Feb. 28, 2018 Art. 42 and 46.III.B.4.2. Mr. Doezema supported his protest with one ground: In order for the congregation of Hope to know what Rev. Overway and the consistory believe regarding the matters presented in their doctrinal statement, the consistory should be advised either to defend it with more clarity or renounce and reject it (May 9 Agenda p. 18).
 2. Mr. M. Overway protested the decision of Classis East, Feb. 28, Art. 42. Mr. Overway supports his protest with one ground: “I do not agree that ‘The Doctrinal Statement: Re Experiencing Fellowship with the Father’ should be rescinded. I believe the Doctrinal Statement should be re-evaluated and repudiated as teaching false doctrine, namely, that of making our holy life of obedience to be a part of the instrument of faith as faith functions to receive the fellowship of the Father” (May 9 Agenda p. 131).
 3. Classis East declared the protests of Mr. Doezema and Mr. Overway to be legally before it (Art. 17.A.2 and 3 {17 C.2 and 3}).

4. Classis East declared the protest of Mr. Doezema and Mr. Overway to be illegal (Art. 36.B and 39.B).
- D. Classis East September 12, 2018: By virtue of the decision of this advice in I.B.4. the protests of Mr. C. Doezema and Mr. M. Overway are now before this classis.

B. Recommendation.

That Classis sustain the protests of Mr. C. Doezema and Mr. M. Overway and declare that Classis East erred in its decision of February 28, 2018, Article 42: *“That Classis East advise Hope Consistory to rescind its Nov. 21, 2017 decision to adopt ‘The Doctrinal Statement: Re Experiencing Fellowship with the Father.’”*

Ground: The decision of Synod 2018, Art. 62 B.2.: *“That synod sustain Mrs. Meyer in her appeal of Classis East Art. 42 (decision to advise Hope Consistory to rescind adoption of the doctrinal statement). Ground: Classis erred in advising ‘Hope Consistory to rescind its November 21, 2017 decision to adopt ‘The Doctrinal Statement: RE Experiencing Fellowship with the Father.’” Classis should have advised Hope to reject the Doctrinal Statement because it contains ambiguous statements and the similar doctrinal error of giving to our good works a place and function out of harmony with the Reformed confessions.”*

Carried

17. Classis now considers the advice concerning the May 2018 protests of Mr. C. Doezema and Ms. S. Doezema concerning Article 44 of the February 2018 meeting of Classis East.

A. Information.

- A. See the information of Synod 2018, Art. 62 A.1-8.
- B. Classis East January 10, 2018 (reconvening February 28, 2018): Classis East adopted the recommendation of Art. 44: *“That Classis East advise Hope’s Consistory to require that Mrs. Meyer retract her accusation against her consistory ‘that the teaching of Hope Consistory is the teaching of a conditional covenant and justification by faith and works’ and do so in writing both to her consistory, pastor, and congregation with three grounds.”*
- C. Classis East May 9, 2018 (reconvening July 18, 2018):
 1. Mr. C. Doezema protested the decision of Classis East, Feb. 28, Art. 44. Mr. Doezema supported his protest with several grounds:
 - 1) The decisions of Synod 1992: 55.C.2.b.3 and 55.C.2.c.
 - 2) Article 32 of the Belgic Confession.
 - 3) A proposal that classis require Hope’s Consistory to wait until the case is fully adjudicated before requiring her to retract her accusation, in case of an appeal to synod.
 - 4) *“How we deal with Mrs. Meyer has implications for how we will deal with subsequent protestants.”*
 - 5) Classis itself judged that Mrs. Meyer *“exposed ‘improper and ambiguous’ language that should be rooted out....”*
 2. Ms. S. Doezema protested the decision of Classis East, Feb. 28, 2018, Art. 44. Ms. Doezema supported her protest with two grounds. The following are her grounds quoted from the May 9 Agenda, p, 100:
 - 1) *“While Classis East provides many examples of how others teach conditions to show that Hope’s Consistory does not teach conditions in the same way others teach conditions, Classis East does not provide proof that the actual teaching of Hope’s Consistory itself does not teach conditions in the covenant. Since Classis has not proved how Hope’s Consistory statements are not conditional, how they can defended, or how her position is contrary to scripture and the confessions, they cannot require that she retract her position.”*
 - 2) *“Classis themselves, in Article 46.III.B.1 admit that ‘in order to’ ‘strongly suggests conditions since its natural meaning is ‘with the intention or purpose of.’ Furthermore, in section III.B.3. Classis states that ‘Rev. Overway used ambiguous language without clearly defining or explaining what is meant or what is not meant, which left his intentions and meaning in doubt and open to interpretation, particularly that a new ‘necessity’ or purpose for good works was being introduced in Hope Church.’ Therefore, is it certainly not sin for Mrs. Meyer to continue to understand it to mean conditions if she has not yet been convinced otherwise.”*

3. Classis East declared the protests of Mr. Doezema and Ms. Doezema to be legally before it (Art. 17.A.2 and 3 {17 C.2 and 3}).
 4. Classis East declared the protest of Mr. Doezema and Ms. Doezema to be illegal (Art. 36.B and 37.B {37.D}).
- D. Classis East September 12, 2018: By virtue of the decision of this advice in II.B.4, the protests of Ms. S. Doezema and Mr. W. Koops are now before this classis.

B. Recommendation

That classis sustain the protest of Mr. Chuck Doezema and Ms. Sara Doezema and declare that Classis East erred in its February 28, 2018 decision of Article 44 II.A.: *“That Classis East advise Hope’s Consistory to require that Mrs. Meyer retract her accusation against her consistory ‘that the teaching of Hope Consistory is the teaching of a conditional covenant and justification by faith and works’ and do so in writing both to her consistory, pastor, and congregation with three grounds.”*
 Ground: The decision of Synod 2018, Art. 67.1.: *“That synod sustain Mrs. Meyer’s appeal of Art. 44 (decision to advise Hope’s Consistory to require her to retract her accusation). Ground: Classis East’s decision of Art. 44 is based on its decision of Art. 41/43 to reject Mrs. Meyer’s protest. However, synod sustained her appeal of Art. 41/43 because Mrs. Meyer correctly demonstrated that there was doctrinal error being defended by the Consistory.”* **Carried**

18. The committee appointed to help Hope PRC reports. (Supplement 6)
 They report on three meetings and inform the classis that Hope desires that the committee continue to be available to assist them for another four months.
 Motion to approve the labors of the committee. **Carried**
19. The Finance Committee reads their report. (Supplement 7)
 Motion to approve the expenses of \$904.28 for this session of Classis. **Carried**
20. Motion to hold the next regular meeting classis at Hope PRC on January 9, 2019. **Carried**
21. Rev. Van Overloop reports that he has thanked the caterers.
22. The concept minutes are read. Motion to adopt. **Carried**
23. Rev. Clay Spronk gives some closing remarks as the chairman, thanksgiving God for the brotherly spirit of our meeting today.
24. Motion to adjourn. **Carried**

Rev. Spronk closes our meeting with prayer.

, President

, Stated Clerk