

Appendix 5
Philippine Mission Field Budget

	Adopted 2020	Actual 2020	Adopted 2021	Proposed 2022
3 Missionaries				
Base Salary.....	152,400	152,400	155,400	155,400
Child Allowance.....	13,500	15,000	13,500	13,500
Social Security	39,500	39,474	39,500	40,500
Tuition Allowance.....	31,000	16,814	30,000	35,000
Housing Allowance.....	43,000	43,000	40,350	40,750
Rev. Holstege.....	10,750	10,750	10,750	10,750
Rev. Kleyn	14,500	14,500	13,600	14,000
Rev. Smit	17,750	17,750	16,000	16,000
Medical Insurance.....	23,000	18,896	23,000	23,000
Missionary training	6,000	3,000	5,000	2,500
Office Supplies	3,750	273	3,750	3,000
Auto Mileage	10,000	2,336	10,000	10,000
Field Travel/Conferences	15,000	2,109	15,000	15,000
Literature, Translation.....	2,000	12	1,000	1,000
Visas/Passports.....	5,000	6,477	5,000	5,000
Miscellaneous	3,000	4,046	3,000	3,000
Furlough.....	17,500	9,315	29,600	15,000
Delegate Visit.....	10,000	3,282	10,000	10,000
Book/Computer Allowance....	4,500	3,690	4,500	6,000
	Adopted	Actual	Adopted	Proposed
3 Missionaries	2020	2020	2021	2022
Move Missionary to Field....	25,000	0	25,000	25,000
Move Missionary to N.A.	10,000	0	10,000	10,000
Missionary				
Re-established in N.A.....	10,000	0	10,000	10,000
Total.....	424,150	320,123	433,600	423,650

Protest of Mr. Brian Buiter

April 15, 2021

Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches
to convene June 8, 2021
in Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan

Dear brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Therein submit this protest of several decisions of Synod 2020, namely, Article 51, C, 2 (pp. 79-82) and Article 52, 2, a and b (pp. 87-88).

My main concern is that the sermons that were protested made the believer's works (repentance, obedience) to be an instrument to obtain

blessings of salvation, rather than the manner of life within salvation, contrary to Synod 2018. As I show below, despite saying the words “faith is the only instrument” and despite using the phrase “in the way of,” the sermons in fact misuse “in the way of” and “according to” such that “in the way of” means “the way of access unto” or “the way to obtain” blessing. As Synod 2018 established, our obedience (which includes repentance) “is never *the way of approach unto*,” but only “*the way of*, that is to say, *the way of grateful conduct in the experience of covenant fellowship*” (Synod 2018 Art, 62, B, 1, b, 1), c), (4), p. 72).

Bold text indicates the overall decision that I protest, the grounds are quoted in bold/italic.

Article 51, C, 2 – I ask that Synod 2021 overturn this decision and sustain Mr. C. Doezema’s appeal, that the sermon “Dealing Rightly with Our Sins” militated against Synod 2018, by making repentance an instrument to obtain blessings of salvation.

I have no comments on Ground “a,” but I do object to grounds “b,” “c,” and “d.”

Ground “b”: “*Rev. Overway did not militate against Synod 2018 when he preached ‘in the way of repentance we have the mercy of God.’*”

Sub-ground “1”: “*Contrary to Mr. Doezema’s contention, Synod 2018 did not judge that Rev. Overway used ‘in the way of’ improperly as an instrument. Although Synod 2018 judged that Rev. Overway was not teaching ‘the necessary way of the covenant’ in various statements, he did not use ‘in the way of’ in any of these statements. Therefore, Synod 2018 did not judge he used ‘in the way of’ as an instrument (Art. 62, B, 1, b, 2), a), (1), (2)).*”

1. While none of Rev. Overway’s statements that Synod 2018 directly dealt with contained the specific words “in the way of,” Synod 2018 clearly stated that he (and Hope’s Consistory in defending him) used similar terms improperly, even to the point of making obedience/good works an instrument (Art. 62, B, 1, b, 2), a), (2), p. 75).

a. Synod 2020 makes a false distinction between “in the way of” and “the necessary way of the covenant.” Both terms clearly refer to the regenerated believer’s way of walking or manner of living as he lives out of faith.

b. Explaining the correct understanding of “The Necessary Way of the Covenant,” Synod 2018 stated, “Therefore, obedience is never *the way of approach unto* the experience of covenant fellowship, which way is Christ alone on whom we come by faith alone. But, obedience is the way of, that is to say, *the way of grateful conduct in the experience of covenant fellowship...*” (Art. 62, B, 1, b, 1), c), (4), (a), p. 72). Here, Synod 2018 states

that the “necessary way of the covenant” includes the fact that we walk “in the way of” obedience.

2. Therefore, it is a moot point, whether or not Synod 2018 specifically condemned Rev. Overway’s use of the phrase “in the way of,” because Synod 2018 did explain the correct use of the phrase and condemn any use of the phrase that makes our obedience an instrument. Thus, any public teaching after Synod 2018 to the contrary would be militating against those decisions.

Sub-ground “2)”: “Rev. Overway’s teaching that ‘in the way of confession/repentance’ we experience the mercy of God is not contrary to, but in harmony with the decisions of Synod 2018. Synod 2018 stated explicitly with respect to the believer’s repentance: ‘Though we may lose the experience of covenant fellowship by continuing in disobedience, we never gain it again by our obedience, but it is restored by faith in Christ and in the way of repentance’ (Art. 62, B, 1, b, 1), c), (5), (b)).”

1. The problem with the sermon is that it did not merely teach that we experience mercy *in the way of* repentance; it made repentance to be an instrument to obtain mercy. See my comments on the next point.

Sub-ground “3)”: “Rev. Overway in the sermon explicitly distinguishes between what Christ has done as the basis for mercy, faith as the instrument for obtaining mercy, and repentance as the way in which mercy is received. The charge that Rev. Overway militated against synod because he used ‘in the way of repentance’ as an instrument through which we receive mercy is unfounded.”

1. The sermon is self-contradictory. Despite stating that faith is the only instrument for obtaining mercy (Synod 2020, p. 195), Rev. Overway does use “in the way of repentance” as an instrument elsewhere in this sermon. The pertinent quote is below (underlining mine-BB):

a. “It’s not true simply that he that confesses and he that has mercy are the same person, of course that’s true, of course that’s true. But that’s not the main or only point of the passage, to simply say the one who confesses and the one who has mercy is the same person. But the text means to instruct us that it is in the way of confession, in the way of repentance that we have the mercy of God. And, beloved, that’s true with regard to all of our sins. On the one hand, covering the smallest sin one will not prosper. But on the other hand, confessing the greatest sin, one has mercy. The free unmerited mercy of God in Jesus Christ. So long as we cover our sins, God will not cover our sins. That is, cover our sins with the forgiving blood of Jesus Christ in our

hearts and in our souls. So long as we with our pride cover our sins, we cannot, we cannot, with the hand of faith, cover our sins with the righteousness of Christ and the forgiving mercy that is found in Jesus Christ. But in the way of repentance and confessing our sins and laying them out before God and confessing them unfeignedly before the Holy God, our God, we as it were tear off the cover of our sins and take hold of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ” (Synod 2020, p. 196).

2. The sermon clearly states that, as long as we live in repentance and not in pride, we can, with the hand of faith, cover our own sins by taking to ourselves Christ’s righteousness and His mercy. This is wrong, because we do not impute righteousness to ourselves by means of repentance, but God imputes Christ’s righteousness to us by means of *faith* (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 23, Q&A 60 and 61). Furthermore, repentance is not a requirement to fulfill prior to faith—on the contrary, our repentance arises out of faith (Eph. 2:5, 8-9, 4:20-24), which confidently believes God’s gracious promise to forgive sins for Christ’s sake (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 7, Q&A 21).

a. As Synod 2016 stated (Art. 36, B, 3, motion; Art. 37, pp. 49-51) and Synod 2017 clarified (Art. 87, B, 2, a, p. 82; 87, B, 5, b, 1, b); and 2), c), pp. 84-86), when we speak of access to the Father and experience of His fellowship (which includes forgiveness of sins), the *only* way is Christ—not my willing, working, obedience, nor my repentance can be the way to obtain forgiveness. If it is, then it becomes the instrument (Synod 2018 Art. 62, B, 1, b, 1), c), (4), p. 72).

b. Repentance becomes the *way of approach unto* or *way of appropriating* (instrument) instead of the way of grateful conduct in the experience of covenant fellowship, when it is said that we take hold of God’s mercy in the way of repentance.

Ground “c”: *“Rev. Overway did not militate against Synod 2018 when he preached that there is an activity of the believer that is prior to the experience of a particular blessing from God. Mr. Doezema’s objection to this reveals a misunderstanding and a misrepresentation of the decision of Synod 2018.”*

I have no comments on Sub-ground “1),” which speaks of the temporal relationship between our activity and God’s blessing, but I do object to Sub-ground “2).” My concern is that, in this sermon, repentance was made to be the *way of approach* unto blessing (instrument).

Sub-ground “2):” *“The previous point does not contradict that the believer’s activity, which may occur prior to the experience of the bless-*

ing from God, is still the fruit of God's work. It would be error to say that one does not have mercy at all until after his activity of repentance. That, however, is not what Rev. Overway taught. Rev. Overway clearly taught that the ability to repent depends upon the cross of Christ and the reception of faith, and that it is out of that faith that one repents and in that way experiences the blessings of salvation."

1. The statement "the ability to repent depends upon...the reception of faith" is contrary to Synod 2018 (Art. 62, B, 1, b, 1), c), (4), p. 72), because it makes faith not just the instrument, but a condition of repentance.
2. It is my contention that Rev. Overway did not clearly teach that "it is out of faith that one repents and in that way experiences blessings." On the contrary, he taught "in the way of repentance,... we as it were tear off the cover of our sins and take hold of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ" (Synod 2020, p. 196), making repentance the way of approach unto instead of the way of conduct in the experience of blessings.

Ground "d": *"Rev. Overway's preaching that we repent and in the way of repentance experience the mercy of God is the teaching of Scripture and the confessions [there follows quotations from Isaiah 55:7 and Canons V-5]."*

1. The quoted passages teach that we experience God's mercy in the way of repentance. However, the sermon went beyond this (correct) idea, teaching that repentance is the way of approach unto (or, an instrument to obtain) God's mercy: "it is out of faith that one repents and in that way experiences blessings" (see my comments on Ground "b," point #2 above).

Article 52, 2—I ask that Synod 2021 overturn these decisions and sustain Mr. Doezema's protest, that the sermon "Reward of Grace" militated against Synod 2018, by making good works an instrument to obtain blessings of salvation.

Decision "a": *"That synod not sustain the appeal of Mr. Doezema in his contention that Rev. Overway militated against the decisions of Synod 2018 when he said, 'We do little. God rewards greatly. And yet there is a correlation so that we understand the less of a good work, or the less good that a good work is, the less or smaller the reward. The less number of works, the less of a reward one receives. So too with regard to the more. The more that one walks in good works, the more of a reward is received....'"*

Ground: *"Rev. Overway's statement does not constitute militating against the decisions of synod. There are fundamental differences between Rev. Overway's statement and the decision of Synod 2018."*

I have no comments on Sub-ground “1),” but I do object to Sub-ground “2).” Additionally, I believe that the sermon was not only contradictory to Synod 2018, but also to our confessions—specifically, Canons of Dordt, Head 2, Rejection of Error 4.

Sub-ground “2):” “Although Synod 2020 does not render a judgment on the correctness of Rev. Overway’s statement, the statement does not constitute militating against Synod 2018 because it does not speak of meeting requirements (a little, a lot) in order to enjoy degrees of fellowship with God, but of receiving degrees of reward according to the quality and number of good works.”

1. The sermon “The Reward of Grace” did contradict Synod 2018.

a. Synod 2020 makes a false distinction between Synod 2018 on meeting requirements to enjoy degrees of fellowship on the one hand, and Rev. Overway on degrees of reward according to quality and quantity of good works on the other hand. Rev. Overway clearly equates these two ideas in his sermon.

1) In the Introduction, Rev. Overway states that “some of the blessings of salvation are enjoyed by us as rewards,” and then states, “Or, to put it another way...blessings of salvation are experienced...on the basis of Christ’s perfect work through a justifying faith in Christ and in the way of a holy life of obedience” (Synod 2020, p. 109).

2) In the First Point, he adds, “when we speak of ‘in the way of,’ we are speaking of the reward of grace. When we’re speaking of ‘in the way of obedience’ some good thing occurs, or we enjoy the fellowship of God as synod has spoken, we’re speaking not of something that’s earned, not of something that’s appropriated through some instrument of good works, but we’re speaking of the reward of grace” (Synod 2020, p. 111).

3) Later in the First Point, Rev. Overway again equates the two ideas. “The reward is something that follows the good work. In the way of a good work or a life of obedience, one enjoys blessings of salvation” (Synod 2020, p. 113).

b. Even though Rev. Overway did not use the term “requirements” in this sermon, his explanation of the correlation between good works and the reward, coupled with his earlier explanation of the reward being in part the enjoyment of some blessings of salvation, is contrary to Synod 2018.

1) Synod 2018 judged the following statement to be in error:

a) “If we but meet these requirements a little bit, by

the grace of God of course, and by God's grace working them in us—if we meet these requirements but a little, then we will enjoy a little of God's fellowship. That's the truth. If we meet these requirements a lot, then we will enjoy much of God's fellowship" (Art. 62, B, 1, a, 2), p. 65).

- 2) Over against that statement, Synod 2018 stated:
 - a) "Nowhere does L.D. 45 teach or even suggest that we gain richer and richer measures of fellowship with God according to our meeting of requirements (which in this sermon included obedience and godliness)..." (Art. 62, B, 1, a, 2), c), p. 66).
- 3) Rev. Overway preached the following in "The Reward of Grace":
 - a) "And yet there is a correlation, so that we understand the less of a good work, or the less good that a good work is, the less or smaller the reward. The less number of works, the less of a reward one receives. So too with regard to the more. The more that one walks in good works, the more of a reward is received" (Synod 2020, p. 114).
 - 4) In this sermon, Rev. Overway equated the reward of grace with various blessings of salvation (which include fellowship); therefore, this statement then teaches the same correlation that Synod 2018 judged to be in error.

c. It is also important to note that Classis East of January 2020 upheld a different protest against the same statement in this sermon, on the ground that Rev. Overway misrepresents the main point of Q/A 63, and that we must not compare the punishment which the unbeliever earns by his sin to the reward of grace freely given to the believer (Article 25, C, 3, Synod 2020, p. 139).

Decision "b": "That synod not sustain the appeal of Mr. Doezema in his contention that Rev. Overway militated against the decisions of Synod 2018 by teaching, in Mr. Doezema's words, 'that enjoying the blessings of salvation follows the performance of good works in this life.'"

Ground: "Rev. Overway taught 'The reward is something that follows the good work.' This teaching is correct. Rev. Overway did not state 'The blessings of salvation follow good works.' Whether Rev. Overway means that the reward is equivalent to the 'blessings of salvation' may be implied, but it is not directly stated."

1. As noted above, the sermon clearly established that "blessings

of salvation” are included in the “reward of grace.”

2. As with the sermon “Dealing Rightly with Our Sins,” in this sermon Rev. Overway also implies that obedience/good works are an *instrument to obtain* blessing, rather than simply the *manner of living* while experiencing blessings.

a. Rev. Overway equates the receiving the reward of grace with enjoying fellowship in the way of obedience, making obedience an instrument to obtain the reward/blessing.

1) In the First Point, he says, “when we speak of ‘in the way of,’ we are speaking of the reward of grace. When we’re speaking of ‘in the way of obedience’ some good thing occurs, or we enjoy the fellowship of God as synod has spoken, we’re speaking not of something that’s earned, not of something that’s appropriated through some instrument of good works, but we’re speaking of the reward of grace” (Synod 2020, p. 111).

2) Shortly thereafter, he says, “Scripture speaks of the reward of grace in other terms as well. Not only do we find the word ‘reward’ when Scripture intends for us to understand it that way, we saw that already as we looked at the Beatitudes, verse 7, Matthew 5:7, for example, but other passages as well and we can explain those passages very able, very capably, using the phrases that we spoke of earlier, ‘according to’ or ‘in the way of’” (Synod 2020, p. 111).

3) In the same paragraph, he explains, “Psalm 62:12, ‘Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.’ The word ‘reward’ is not mentioned there but we do find the phrase ‘according to,’ again indicating the reward” (Synod 2020, p. 112).

4) Commenting on Galatians 6:7-9, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” He compares negative and positive rewards, then says, “In the way of, we could say, in the way of sowing to the Spirit one shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Synod 2020, p. 112)

b. Even though Rev. Overway specifically states that good works are not the instrument to appropriate the reward of grace, other portions of the sermon contradict this, by teaching that the reward of grace is received in the way of obedience/good works.

The reward is a reward of *grace*—our obedience cannot be *the way of approach unto* it (Eph. 2:8-9; see also Synod 2018, Art. 62, B, 1, b, 1), c), (4), p. 72).

Besides the material listed under Synod 2020's Article 52, I also believe that the sermon "The Reward of Grace" contradicts Canons Head 2, Rejection of Error 4, which rejects the error of those who teach "That the new covenant of grace, which God the Father through the mediation of the death of Christ, made with man, does not herein consist that we by faith, in as much as it accepts the merits of Christ, are justified before God and saved, but in the fact that God having revoked the demand of perfect obedience of the law, regards faith itself and the obedience of faith, although imperfect, as the perfect obedience of the law, and does esteem it worthy of the reward of eternal life through grace."

1. In the sermon "The Reward of Grace," Rev. Oerway makes the following statements:

a. "...first God gives us grace to perform the good work, and then the reward" (Synod 2020, p. 113).

b. "Additionally, we are rewarded according to imperfect obedience. Not perfect obedience. We are rewarded in the way of imperfect obedience. That's taught by the Catechism if we look at this Lord's Day as it includes both Question and Answer 62 and 63. 62 says, '...the righteousness which can be approved of before the tribunal of God must be absolutely perfect, and in all respects conformable to the divine law,' but then it says this, "and also, that our best works in this life are all imperfect," that is, we don't do one perfect work in this life, all of them are imperfect, "and defiled with sin." Then the very next Question goes on to establish that we are rewarded according to good works "in this and in a future life" (Synod 2020, p. 113).

c. "How can that be? The only explanation is we are rewarded in the way of imperfect obedience. God does not say to us, 'You must obey perfectly or you will never enjoy a reward.' Then there would be no reward because all of our obedience is not perfect but imperfect, stained with sin. Of course, of course God does require that we keep His commands perfectly.... This is His requirement, that we keep His commands perfectly, but we can't and we don't and yet still He rewards us according to our works in the way of obedience. That, beloved, brings out the graciousness, doesn't it? The graciousness of the reward of grace...obedience...deserves no reward whatsoever, and yet God is pleased to display His grace by rewarding imperfect good works" (Synod 2020, p. 113).

d. "Every child of God is rewarded according to good works and every good work is rewarded according to God's grace" (Synod 2020, p. 114).

e. "...we must speak of the reward of grace and without the fear of the justification template being laid over what we are speaking of. We speak not of justification, not of justification by faith alone, when we speak of the reward of grace, but of the reward of grace as taught in the Word of God and in the creeds" (Synod 2020, p. 115).

2. Although this sermon states, again and again, that we are justified by faith alone on the basis of Christ's work alone, in the end the reward of grace (which includes our experience of blessings of salvation) is separated from our justification by faith and instead tied to our works. The sermon may not have explicitly stated that we can merit with God by grace, but it effectively severs the connection between Christ's cross and our reward, and inserts our obedience—thereby establishing a "new and strange justification of man before God" (Canons Head II, Rejection of Error 4).

3. The explanation for why we are graciously rewarded, despite our imperfect obedience, is not that God graciously rewards us in the way of imperfect obedience, but that Christ merited the reward for us (Canons Head II, Article 8 and Rejection of Error 3). We always receive God's grace, including the reward of grace, through him who is the Way (John 14:6). Any attempt to insert our works into the process of how we receive anything from God displaces Christ (Gal. 2:21, Synod 2018 Art. 62, B, 1, a, 4), b), p. 70 and b, 1), c), (4), (a), p. 72).

May God bless your deliberations on these weighty matters.

In Christ,
Brian Buitter

Protest of Mr. Kent Deemter

Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches
to convene June 8, 2021
in Georgetown PRC, Hudsonville, MI

Dear brothers in Christ,

I am writing you out of a heartfelt desire for the restoration of peace and unity in our midst. I pray that God strengthen and humble us to seek peace knowing that "the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Ps. 37:11).

Rev. Lanning has faithfully served as a pastor in the Church of Christ