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Grandville PRC
Consistory
4320 40th St SW
Grandville, MI 49418

Dear Consistory of Grandville PRC,

In my last letter I concluded by saying I would now keep silent about the condition of the preaching at Grandville PRC. However, I feel compelled to write regarding the sermon preached the morning of January 22, 2017.

In this sermon titled “God’s Righteous Judgment Maintained” Rev. Koole made the following statement, “So it is beloved with the gospel; you will notice I said the choice is yours. The gospel confronts us with the choice of the, of the woeful condition of man, of our own woeful condition in ourselves. And may I say the choice is yours in the end? I may say that. Choose you this day whom you will serve.” Although Rev. Koole goes on to say that the Calvinistic preacher says this with the knowledge that the Spirit of God will enable the elect believer to make the right choice, it is not at all proper to say “the choice is yours in the end.” The choice, in the end, is emphatically not our own, but solely due to the predestinating will of God; “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” Romans 9:16; Ephesians 1: 4, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...”; II Thessalonians 2:13, “...because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

The importance of what is said off of the pulpit was driven home to me that afternoon. My son asked me if I had heard Rev. Koole say that it is our own choice. I told him I did, and he said, “Dad, if Rev. Koole said that in 1953 they would have thought he was with the DeWolf group.”

I do not accuse Rev. Koole of being “with the DeWolf group”, and I made clear to my son that he is not. I say again, I do not believe that Rev. Koole is guilty of Arminianism or any false doctrine that would make our salvation contingent on our own choice. I do, however, believe Rev. Koole was guilty of being careless; of not choosing his words carefully, of not choosing those words carefully well ahead of time in the course of preparing the sermon. The Reformed minister, especially the Protestant Reformed minister, must never say it is our choice *in the end*.

And so I ask that Rev. Koole retract that statement and make clear to the congregation that in the end it is not our choice, but the choice of the sovereign, predestinating God. This is especially important for

the children to hear; children who are impressionable and who would be rightfully confused after hearing such a statement. That statement may not stand, regardless of what follows it.

Finally, I again ask that the Consistory either take up or continue the work of the oversight of the preaching. The type of oversight I refer to is the difficult oversight which may even include that of examining the sermon notes of the minister to make sure they are clear, thorough, logical and organized before it is presented to the congregation. It is possible for a minister to take an old sermon and simply jot down some thoughts and ideas in the margin. This then allows him to mount the pulpit and speak "off the cuff," and extemporize his way through the sermon. When this happens however, it not only results in disorganized and unclear sermons, it creates a situation which we experienced the morning of January 22.

I write this letter out of love for Grandville PRC, out of a love for my family and a concern for their spiritual condition, and a love for the truths of God's Word; which truths must be clearly maintained.

Sincerely in Christ,

Dewey A. Engelsma

P.S Below follows the quote from the sermon that I refer to above.

There would be unrighteousness with God, unrighteousness with his verdict that a sinner indeed is completely forgiven and pardoned. On what basis God, you have cancelled out, you have forfeited righteousness? How can you be the God that's the proper judge? The power of the gospel beloved is that it's a mercy in the way of righteousness, of righteousness being maintained and it is exactly because it is a righteousness that is being maintained that God in his mercy has worked up the adversary. The accuser in the end is rendered powerless and he understands that well. And understand thirdly beloved that to say Calvinism and the reformed faith is just likes to make people feel miserable is a distortion of the truth. We aren't interested in making men feel miserable; the truth beloved is interested in acquainting men with the knowledge of his misery and his woeful condition.

Just like a physician and doctor to whom you go with a, for a checkup, and he does a rather complete checkup, bloodwork and all the rest and he calls you back into his office in a few weeks and when he calls you back into his office in a few weeks he isn't interested in making you feel sick, and having a fever, and feel nauseating. He is interested in confronting you with the reality of what he has found, what he knows about you. But I am feeling quite well Doc. Maybe a little tightness in my chest and so on and a cough and so on, but I'm feeling quite well. And the doctor says, well that's wonderful, but here's the reality, do you see that spot there and that spot there and that spot there, those are cancerous tumors, we can tell from your blood work, and that one is in your lungs and it's a pretty good size and that is why you aren't

breathing so comfortably are you at the moment. Now are you going to deal with it or aren't you? Because if you're not we won't be having this conversation next year, you'll be dead. The choice is yours, you want to come to grips with it and seek the remedy, or you want to simply be in denial because you feel good at the moment? So it is beloved with the gospel. Now you will notice I said the choice is yours. The gospel confronts us with the truth of the woeful condition of man, of our own woeful condition in ourselves, and may I say the choice is yours in the end? I may say that. Choose you this day whom you will serve. The gospel preacher, the Calvinistic gospel preacher, says it from this point of view, in the knowledge that when it comes to his own people, God will give them his Spirit so they will make the right choice, they will believe, they will confess and acknowledge and seek the remedy.