

February 9, 2021

Consistory of Crete Protestant Reformed Church
1777 East Richton Road
Crete, IL 60417

Dear Consistory,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom we have life. I write to you concerning the letter that was read to our congregation on Sunday morning, January 24, 2021.

I'm glad that our pastor and consistory are committed to the truths of the doctrines of God's sovereignty, his unconditional grace, his unconditional covenant and his sovereign maintenance of his covenant. Rev. Lanning was also committed to preaching these truths and he was deposed for schism that was never shown or proved from the sermons he preached. I urge you to study the minority report Classis East had before it regarding this deposition.

My wife and I were troubled by the consistory telling us that the separation of the office bearers and members of Byron Center PRC was sin because they did not avail themselves of their right for protest and appeal. A *right* is not a *requirement*. You cannot judge these people based on Classis East's decision to depose Rev. Lanning. The people were aggrieved and could not remain members in good conscience. You may not dictate consciences—that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Members of the PRCA who leave the denomination are not committing sin that must be repented of. We are called to unite ourselves to a church that has the purest manifestation of the truth. It is up to each member to decide this, without being charged with sin. Beside the error of a conditional covenant that is showing itself in our churches, the source of our good works is being denied as well as our total depravity. And calls to repentance are challenged as schismatic. When wrong ideas about these fundamental and historic truths of the reformed faith begin to show themselves in our churches, it would appear that the manifestation of the truth in the Protestant Reformed Churches is not as pure as it was in years past. This gives us cause for serious introspection.

What grieves us the most about this letter is that the work of the consistory is to rule, not to tell the flock what to think. That is the work of the Spirit through the preached word. And we are called to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4:4). I am so thankful for the faithful preaching we hear at Crete Protestant Reformed Church. We pray that our pastor continues to preach the truth boldly and without fear or favor of men, and that our consistory be given wisdom, discernment, and love for God's people. And we pray that, according to God's will, the breach in our denomination may be healed and that God does not take his truth from us.

Your brother in Christ,



Bob Vermeer