

## Act of Separation and Reformation

We the undersigned office-bearers and members of Crete Protestant Reformed Church as well as other like-minded Reformed believers declare by these our signatures our separation from the apostatizing church and the reformation of the church institute from the bondage and corruption into which she has fallen. By this act we express our grievance against the Protestant Reformed denomination for her continuing departure from the fundamental truths of the Reformed faith as once held by this denomination. We express our commitment to reform the church anew according to the Holy Scriptures, the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dordrecht and to join ourselves to other likeminded Reformed congregations to express the unity of the Holy Spirit in the truth once delivered unto the saints (Ephesians 4:1-6; Jude 1:3).

Further, we express our detestation for her departures in Reformed church polity which are manifested in her increasingly hierarchical actions, in her discipline of faithful office-bearers who have shown her errors, and for her denigration of the office of all-believer. By this she holds down in unrighteousness the free course and expression of the truth of the Gospel in all aspects of her life. She values man, his name, and his reputation above the Word of God. In short, she ascribes more authority to herself than to the Word of God and persecutes the faithful in her midst, thereby denying the marks which characterize a true church (2 Timothy 3:1-13).

We have desired only the pure preaching of the Reformed faith as contained in the Holy Word of God and summarized in the Three Forms of Unity. For many years in our church the Lord provided that faithful preaching by our minister, Rev. Nathan J. Langerak, who shunned not to declare to us the whole counsel of God. We were built up in the most holy faith and comforted by Christ's gospel. Crete Protestant Reformed Church has taken to herself the marks of a departing church by the unjust use of the keys of the kingdom entrusted to her. This is clear from the suspension of her faithful minister who has without ceasing labored day and night for the spiritual upbuilding and health of the members and lambs of the congregation to which the Lord called him. Never has anyone shown from Scripture or the Confessions any errors in his doctrine or walk which are worthy of suspension throughout the time he served Christ's church.

The consistory's act of suspension is nothing less than a rejection of Christ himself as he is revealed in the faithful office-bearer of Christ and as he speaks to and teaches his church in the gospel (Ephesians 4:20-21; 2 Timothy 4:3; Matthew 10:40). This rejection of Christ is intolerable and will serve for spiritual destruction in the generations of those who remain in her fellowship. The office-bearers have thereby persecuted the truth by silencing the pure preaching of the gospel, corrupted the pure administration of the sacraments for Christ's sheep who cannot partake with her in her sins, and corrupted the mark of discipline by exercising it against the godly.

Doctrinal departure by the Protestant Reformed denomination is manifestly evident in her toleration of false doctrines that the way unto experiencing covenant fellowship with the Triune God is by our obedience unto the law. Similarly, the benefits of salvation are presented as our

motivation for obedience, which has the same effect as declaring that our experience of covenant fellowship is by obedience to the law. By these teachings, Christ is separated from His people and Christ's perfect and complete work of salvation is displaced. These teachings withhold Christ and his completed salvation from his elect people. These teachings are the true and terrible schism in the body of Christ.

For years in the Protestant Reformed denomination, we have observed the erosion of commitment to the sole authority of the Word of God and the pure Reformed doctrine. We have seen false teachers defended and the godly who rebuked the churches for their errors persecuted and defamed. We have witnessed the reputations of men honored above adherence to the truth and rejection of false doctrine. We have seen the true preaching attacked and slandered as antinomian. We have witnessed that consciences are bound by human ordinances in things that the Lord has left free. We have observed that men faithful to their callings to defend the truth and to militate against the lie have been declared sinful and schismatic. We have witnessed lies and hypocrisy in the dealings of the assemblies. We have seen the office-bearers of the church behave as lords in God's heritage by ecclesiastical brutality, intimidation, and willful disregard for good order and decency. We have suffered as faithful pastors and office-bearers have been suspended and deposed for carrying out their calling to expose lies and false doctrines by warning and rebuke. We have witnessed lies that are contrary to the pure Reformed creeds tolerated in the public preaching and writing of ministers.

Therefore, we call all those spiritually-minded persons to separate from the apostatizing church and to contend for the doctrine that was once committed unto them (Jude 1:3; Acts 2:36-42; 2 Corinthians 6:17; Revelation 18:4; Belgic Confession Articles 27, 28 and 29). We declare that in all things we hold to God's Holy Word, to the Three Forms of Unity, the accepted liturgical forms, and the Church Order of Dordrecht. Moreover, we declare that we reject the unjust suspension of our pastor and continue to acknowledge him as our minister.

Andrew T. Birkett, elder

Lee A. Wiltjer Jr., deacon