

Out of deep love and concern for you the local manifestation of the body of Christ, the consistory felt it necessary to announce to you our judgement of the sad events that occurred this past week in our denomination.

Earlier this week, two elders and three deacons of Byron Center PRC called for separation from the Protestant Reformed churches. They believe that the deposition of Andrew Lanning reveals that the Protestant Reformed churches have corrupted the marks of the true church and manifested the marks of the false church. They did this by a signed letter, and a signed document entitled, *Act of Separation*. It is the judgement of our consistory that this willful, hasty, and sinful act of separation was a violation of Art. 31 of the CO, because the aggrieved men did not avail themselves of their right for protest and appeal, rather they separated. This is schism and breaking of the union of the body of Christ.

The consistory calls these office bearers, and those that have also agreed to separate, to repentance.

On the contrary, our consistory and her minister are committed to remaining in the Protestant Reformed churches. We love our denomination and the blessed truths of the doctrines of God's sovereignty, His unconditional grace, His unconditional covenant and His sovereign maintenance of His covenant that are maintained and defended by her consistories, Classis, and Synods. We believe her to be a true church of Jesus Christ.

We warn and admonish the congregation against the sin of slander and schism in our own hearts. The spirit of the age is one of violence and strife, evil speaking and slander. This same spirit can also creep into the lives of God's people. Christ calls us to a spirit of unity, in the midst of strife; speech of love and encouragement, instead of evil; building up the character and reputation of the brother, instead of biting and devouring him. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" Galatians. 5:15

Finally, we ask the congregation for patience as the consistory labors during these times. Pray for us, that Christ give us wisdom and discernment of his will as well as a deep love for His truths. Our prayer for you beloved, is that the Lord uphold you and give you much comfort in the knowledge that He sovereignly reigns over all and even these events are from His Fatherly hand, so seek the Lord always in constant prayer.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Eph. 4:1-3