

Dear Brethren in the Lord, esteemed for Christ's sake,

Having brought our grievances verbally before the consistory, we now formally protest the decision of the consistory taken on January 23 in Article 3 with its two grounds and Article 4 with its approved announcement.

Article 3 Decision:

Motion made and supported to denounce as willful, hasty, sinful, and schismatic the actions of 2 elders and 3 deacons of Byron Center PRC wherein they 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. Motion carries. Grounds: a. This is 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. b. This is a breaking of the union of the body of Christ. Eph. 4:1-3

We are aggrieved with this decision and find it to be in error with the following grounds.

Ground # 1: It contradicts Church Order Article 31

"If anyone complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly" (Church Order Article 31)

The church order speaks of the right of the believer to protest. As a right, one can choose to avail himself of it or not to avail. To refrain from exercising one's right is not a violation of this article. Rather than stay and militate against the decision, rather than avail themselves of their right to protest, those separated removed themselves outside of all rights and privileges of the PRCA included in her church order. There is no longer jurisdiction over them of the church order, and therefore no sin or schism has been committed.

Ground # 2: It contradicts the teaching of scripture and the creeds regarding the union of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"We believe and profess, one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation, of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by his blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost. This Church has been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal King, which, without subjects, cannot be. And this holy Church is preserved or supported by God, against the rage of the whole world; though she sometimes (for a while) appears very small, and in the eyes of men, to be reduced to nothing; during the perilous reign of Ahab, the Lord reserved unto him seven thousand men, who had not bowed their knees to Baal. Furthermore, this holy Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same spirit. " (Belgic Confession Article 27)

According to this article, those separated have not broken the union of the body of Christ - for it can never be broken. That union of the body "has been from the beginning of the world and will be to the end thereof" in Christ, her eternal King.

Heidelberg Catechism LD 21 Q & A 54

What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Catholic Church?

“That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to Himself by His Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am, and for ever shall remain, a living member thereof.”

This teaches us that Christ Himself, by His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends, and preserves His church chosen unto everlasting life. The body of Christ has been chosen in eternity and there is nothing man can do to go against the power of the Son of God that could break that union of His body to Himself and with each other.

“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” John 17:2

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John 17:21-23

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” Ephesians 1:4-5

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18

These passages teach plainly that all that the Father has given to Christ (those chosen and predestinated) are given eternal life and the union one to each other in the body is in our Lord Jesus Christ. That body cannot be separated from Christ, and in Him, the Father.

We request the consistory to rescind the decision as in error and issue another announcement stating the following. It was the right of those separated to leave, and that it was neither sinful nor schismatic to separate from the denomination. Also, in their separation, those separated did not and could never have broken the union of the body of Christ. In the separation, Christ, the Head of His body and King of His church continues to gather, defend, and preserve unto Himself His Church that His name may be praised and none may fear that His perfect work is not accomplished.

In Christ,

Matthew & Stephanie Medema