

Rev. Andy Lanning  
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Byron Center, MI 49315

March 14, 2020

To: Unity Protestant Reformed Church Consistory  
c/o Elder Larry Looyenga, Clerk

Dear brothers,

I received your letter dated March 3, 2020. In the letter, you forbid me from preaching certain sermons on Unity's pulpit. You wrote: "We do not want you to preach the sermon 'The Tears of Bochim' based on Judges 2:1-5 in our church, nor any other sermon dealing with the recent controversies in our churches. The reason we do not want any sermons dealing with the recent controversies is because we do not agree with your application, and not because we disagree with your doctrine."

Brethren, this is an improper decision. By your own admission, the doctrine of my sermon is sound. To forbid sound doctrine on your pulpit is to forbid the Word of God. Beware, brethren, lest you become those about whom the apostle warns the preacher: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3, 4).

Furthermore, to forbid any sermon dealing with the controversy in our churches is to forbid the reproofs, rebukes, and exhortations that Christ requires the minister of the gospel to bring. Beware, brethren, lest you become those "rebellious people" who "will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us" (Isaiah 30:9-11).

Your problem with my sermon is not my doctrine, but my application. However, my application is simply the application of the Bible's doctrine to the Protestant Reformed Churches. It is a call to the PRC to repent for our failure to throw down the altars of the Canaanites, which is exactly the doctrine of the text to the Israelites. It is my calling as a minister of the gospel to make this application to the PRC from the doctrine of the text. Beware, brethren, lest you contradict the Lord's apostle, who required of the preacher: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:1, 2).

You judge my application of the doctrine to be "misapplication of the word of God," inserting "the opinion of man into the preaching of the word of God," "extra-scriptural," "unwise, divisive, and wrong." You judge that the result of my sermon "would be further division, further sinful suspicion of office bearers, and distrust of our godly leaders." There is an orderly way for you to deal with these charges. The orderly way is for you to report my public sins in the preaching to my consistory (Church Order, Article 74). The orderly way is not for you to pick and choose which texts and sermons you will allow or forbid. You think to protect your own pulpit, but what of the other pulpits in the denomination where I

will preach this sermon? I reject your charges, but if you are convinced of them, then beware, brethren, lest you allow my leaven to leaven the whole lump (I Corinthians 5:6).

In light of this, I ask Unity's Consistory to reconsider your decision and to rescind it. I ask that you grant me the same freedom of my office that you grant to the other Protestant Reformed ministers who assist you with pulpit supply.

I also inform you that, since you have forbidden me to preach Judges 2:1-5, that I now must preach that text and no other. I intend to do this at the earliest opportunity, which is my classical appointment on March 29 during the evening service. I do this with a final solemn warning to myself. Beware, Rev. Lanning, lest Jehovah confound you for acquiescing to the muzzling of his Word. "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee" (Jeremiah 1:17-19).

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Andy Lanning". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rev. Andy Lanning