

From: Rev. McGeown

To: Undisclosed Recipients

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Some (many) of you may have heard about FRPC's decision to depose Chuck Doezema from the office of elder for the sins of public teaching of false doctrine (legalism) and public schism.

Chuck Doezema (with Wayne and Sarah Courtney) has been objecting to FRPC's practice of meeting in one building and piping in the sermons via live streaming into another building (the outbuilding) and administering the Lord's Supper in two buildings. (This is necessary because the building that the RPC uses is full of mold and many members cannot worship there for health reasons). The Courtneys and Chuck Doezema argue that the practice divides the table (even desecrates and profanes it) and is not true fellowship, etc.

The Courtneys protested to FRPC's consistory and their appeal to Classis was not upheld (May 13). FRPC charged the Courtneys with legalism (counter charging a protestant; where has that happened before and decried as hierarchy and tyranny?).

Meanwhile, Andy used his bully pulpit to argue against the Courtneys' position while their protest was still being treated (he did not name them, of course, but on Jan 9, 2022 he preached this: *"To go in the direction of teaching that the covenant fellowship of god's people with each other is a matter of physical proximity is inevitably to lead to a legalism; it has to go there because then the church has to make a whole set of rules for what's happening here where there is physical bodies together in the same room; what happens behind the glass where there's only an open doorway; what happens in the nursery and the other rooms in church; what happens in a building across the parking lot? Where God's people gather there has to be a whole set of rules for all of those circumstances the church has to figure out well how much communion is here there or anywhere the further the physical proximity increases. But, that's not the worst of it that that leads to legalism. The worst of it is this; that to teach the union of the people of God as members of the same body to be in some sense essentially their physical proximity is to displace Jesus Christ and to make the matter of the union of God's people whether they can see each other or be in the same room together and that's not the union"*). The FRPC answered the Courtneys on Feb 19, 2022, not sustaining their protest as I said. Now I happen to agree that Andy makes a good point, but his manner is wrong.

Chuck Doezema had a letter of concern, which FRPC answered on Feb 12; Chuck then refused to take the Lord's Supper or administer the elements in the outbuilding and he protested on Feb 18, and his protest was not sustained on March 30; then Chuck protested the aforementioned Jan 9 sermon on May 4, the answer to which is still pending.

On May 13 the Classis of RPC did not sustain the Courtney's appeal (NB: Doezema did not appeal to Classis, although he would have had time). The very next day (Saturday, May 14) a number of things happened:

1. Chuck Doezema emailed the entire FRPC congregation (I do not have that email, but FRPC's consistory quotes one paragraph: *"In light of classis' deliberation and decision regarding the Courtney's appeal yesterday, and in light of the fact that the consistory had previously made the dispute about*

congregational worship and administration of the Lord's Supper in the outbuilding public through the preaching in FRPC, I am compelled to distribute my contentions against the consistory in these vital matters. I too, as a watchman on the walls of Zion, must sound the alarm regarding the threats I perceive endangering the flock in FRPC" (my emphases).

2. RFPC consistory met and made a decision to depose Chuck Doezema

3. RFPC wrote a letter to the congregation to inform them of this decision

(The deposition will not take place until the sentence of Second RPC has been received)

Is Chuck Doezema's behavior for which he will be deposed not *the same as* Andy's behavior? He did not even protest to Classis in the RPC and when the Courtneys' protest (with which Chuck Doezema agreed and against which Andy preached) was not upheld, he IMMEDIATELY emailed his disagreements with the consistory and classis to *the whole congregation*, because, he has the right, he thinks, as a watchman, to sound the alarm; and the RPC, instead of "honoring the office of believer," charges Chuck Doezema with sin and deposes him. Only some people are allowed to blow the trumpet on the walls of Zion, it seems; others get shot off the wall with a big cannon. If I were Chuck Doezema, I would be very confused. Of course, Doezema is guilty of schism; he attempted to divide the congregation, but even the RPC's definition of schism is self-serving ("dividing the congregation from Christ and his gospel").

And observe, too, the swiftness of the RPC's action against Chuck Doezema.

Here, for comparison, is Dewey's blog about a deacon deposed in Hull PRC (Don't expect a similar blog post about Chuck anytime soon).

"[He was asked by his consistory] on [a certain] Monday to explain where he stood. Without guile and trusting the men who had been called by God to serve as fellow watchmen on the walls, he did. He gave them his letter on Tuesday. By Wednesday, he was summoned to meet with the consistory. After a 20-minute meeting [the deacon] was excused. There was probably much that was said, but what they failed to tell him was that the consistory of Calvary PRC was waiting nearby. Shortly after Deacon Andringa left the meeting, the elders of Calvary PRC joined and the decision was made to depose."

Chuck Doezema emailed the congregation. *The same day* the consistory met (with or without him, I do not know), voted to depose him, and informed the congregation of their decision. Second RPC are not waiting nearby, but their decision is surely inevitable.

If we did that in the PRC, the howls of "tyranny, hierarchy, murdering the watchmen, binding the conscience" and on and on would be heard on blog posts and in magazine articles. But it's OK when they do it. May the Lord open the eyes of the people under the leadership of Andy Lanning and Nate Langerak!

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