

# *Providence Reformed Church*

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*Abraham said, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.”*



South Grand Rapids Classis  
4500 – 60th Street SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49512

November 18, 2014

Dear Members of the Executive Team,

Please receive this letter in brotherly love. As a church which is a member of the RCA, we pray that the Lord will guide and teach us according to his Word.

The last Classis meeting of October 21, 2014 was difficult for us. We were called to agree with accepting women for offices in the church which the Scripture gives to men only (I Timothy 3: 2, 5, 12, etc.). It is difficult for us and it is not our desire to openly oppose this at nearly every meeting. You know our position: we desire to follow the authority of Scripture, not forsaking Scripture to follow cultural dictates. While this may not make sense to our natural intellect, we are called to obey the inspired Word of God.

The Word of God describes different gifts and tasks with respect to men and women. Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has taught in 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12 that a woman should not fill an office that rules or teaches in the church. God gave this role to men. God did not give women or wives this same role. God did not degrade women by giving them a subordinate role under men in the church, but rather in His wisdom gave women roles such as described in Titus 2: 3-5 (teaching the young women, teachers of “good things” etc. (Titus 2: 3-5). Additional critical roles that women often fill are that of helper to their husband (Genesis 2: 18) and mother to their children, a role so very important, that it can never be sufficiently filled by a man. Seeing this beautiful role that women hold caused William Ross Wallace to pen, “The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.” Being in a supportive role does not diminish a woman’s worth. The believer says, “The Lord is my helper...(Hebrews 13:6), but this surely does not make the Lord inferior to the believer.

Ordaining women in the church acts against the authority of Scripture. When we start to put our culture or our own thoughts above the authority of Scripture, we cannot expect the favor of the Lord. In fact, Paul uses arguments in I Timothy 2 which do not change even if culture does change. Paul’s reasons why women should “not usurp authority over the man” have no cultural basis: First, Adam was formed first, then Eve and secondly, Eve was deceived first. These Biblical facts do not change with culture. The Lord will bless obedience to his Word and we pray that we as RCA will be brought back to this obedience.

Also in this meeting, the question was asked about what the classis can do for the congregations. We believe the most important things that classis and the denomination can do for individual churches is to keep the denominational focus on Scriptural authority and the rich, deep contents of the Reformed Biblical truths.

May the Lord give you wisdom in your work.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jan Arie VandenBerg, Senior Pastor  
James Bazen Jr., Elder  
Mark Hoffmann, Elder

Ron Hoogmoed, Deacon  
David Meeuwse, Deacon