

Time Line of the 1953 Controversy in the Protestant Reformed Churches

- 1938:** Dr. K. Schilder, professor at Kampen, The Netherlands, made his first visit to the United States. He taught that the promise of God in baptism was general—for all those baptized. He was already being cautioned about his deviation from sound Reformed doctrine.
- Fall 1947:** Dr. Schilder again visited the United States and the Protestant Reformed Churches. By this time, he had been deposed for failing in his teaching to abide by the synodical decisions of the GKN. During these visits, Dr. Schilder disseminated his views among the Protestant Reformed ministers and people.
- 1950-'51:** The synod of the PRC adopted and ratified the Declaration of Principles, which those who later defected from the fellowship of the PRC strenuously opposed.
- April 15, 1951:** Rev. H. De Wolf preached the first sermon, which contained a statement that was protested to his consistory of First Protestant Reformed Church.
- Sept. 14, 1952:** Rev. De Wolf preached the second sermon, which contained a statement that was protested to his consistory. There is no public record of the two sermons. The consistory treated the sermons and statements based on the protests and whatever Rev. De Wolf would acknowledge that he had said in them.
- Feb. 1953:** The consistory of First PRC examined Rev. De Wolf about his beliefs and approved of his theology.
- April-May 1953:** Revs. G. Ophoff and H. Hoeksema appealed to Classis East the consistory's decision declaring Rev. De Wolf's theology and sermons to be Reformed.
- April-May 1953:** Classis East decided that Rev. De Wolf's statements were heretical *per se*, no matter how he meant them or interpreted them. They advised the consistory to suspend Rev. De Wolf, if he did not apologize for the statements, and to depose the elders who continued to support the heretical statements.
- June 1, 1953:** The consistory of First PRC heard the report and advice of the classical committee of Classis East and adopted this advice of the April-May classis.
- June 9, 1953:** Rev. Hoeksema delivered the seminary commencement address "The Freedom of Man and His Responsibility."
- June 15, 1953:** The consistory of First PRC met again to admonish Rev. De Wolf and did so in the presence of the classical committee.
- June 21, 1953:** Rev. De Wolf preached a sermon on Romans 1:16. This sermon included his "apology." At this service Rev. De Wolf installed his brother-in-law, A. Vermeer, into the office of elder, thus giving Rev. De Wolf the majority support in the consistory.
- June 22, 1953:** The consistory of First PRC, with all the office bearers voting, rejected a motion to require an apology from Rev. De Wolf for his sermon statements.
- June 23, 1953:** Revs. Hoeksema and C. Hanko and the faithful elders carried out the May classical decision and the consistory's June 1 decision by suspending Rev. De Wolf and deposing his supporting elders.
- June 28, 1953:** Rev. Hoeksema preached a sermon on John 6:67-69 in Grand Rapids Christian High School after the suspended Rev. De Wolf and the deposed elders changed the locks on First Church.
- July 1953:** Rev. Hoeksema gave the lecture "The Situation in First Church" in Hull, Iowa. A question and answer session followed the lecture.
- July 1953:** In response to a questioner at the Hull mass meeting held earlier, Rev. Hoeksema preached a sermon on Acts 16:30-31 in the Doon Protestant Reformed Church.
- August 1953:** Rev. De Wolf gave a lecture "The Situation in First Church" in Hull, Iowa. A question and answer session followed the lecture.
- April 1, 1954:** Rev. Hoeksema gave the lecture "Our Present Controversy in the Light of History" in Fourth Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids.
- Early Summer 1954:** Rev. Hoeksema gave the lecture "Our Present Controversy in the Light of the History of the Church" in Doon, Iowa.
- March 14, 1956:** Rev. De Wolf preached a sermon on Psalm 37:5 in the Baxter Christian School, after the state court granted the First Protestant Reformed Church property to Revs. Hoeksema and Hanko, their consistory, and congregation.