

# **ACTS**

## **General Synod 1986**

OF THE

**Canadian Reformed Churches**

Burlington, ON

1986

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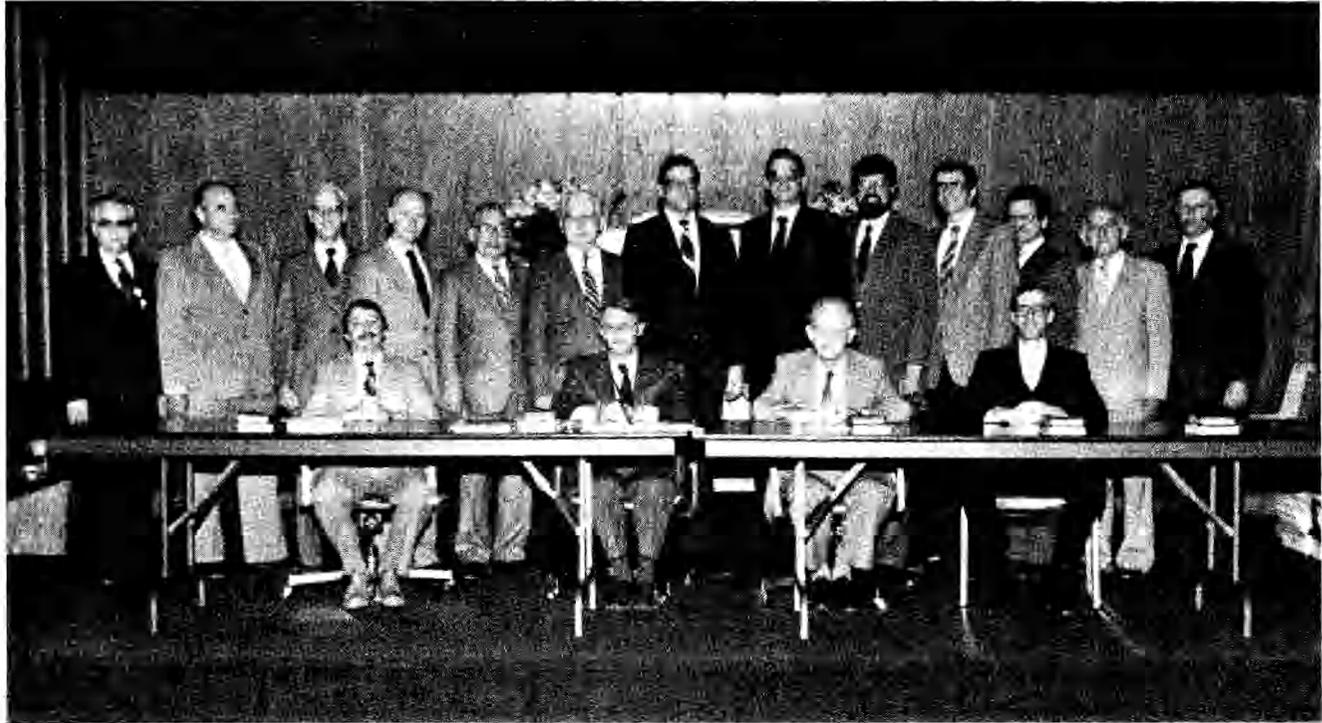
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Sitting (l to r): Rev. C.I. Stam, Rev. M. van Beveren, Rev. W. Pouwelse, Rev. W. Huizinga. Standing (l to r): Rev. P. Kingma, elder N. Torenvliet, Rev. J. Geertsema, elder E.J. VanWoudenberg, elder J. DeHaas (Senior), Rev. J. Mulder, elder G.J. Nordeman, elder H.A. Berends, Rev. G.D. Jerrell (OPC), elder H. Veenendaal, Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer, elder J. Gelderman, elder J. VandenBos (elder T.M.P. VanderVen, who replaced elder J. VandenBos half-way through Synod, is missing).

# Acts

**GENERAL SYNOD of the CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES  
held at BURLINGTON-WEST, ON from April 15, — May 7, 1986**

**MORNING SESSION — TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1986**

## **ARTICLE 1**

### **Opening**

On behalf of the convening Church at Burlington-West, ON, the Rev. J. Mulder calls the meeting to order. He requests that Psalm 72:1 be sung, reads II Timothy 2: 1-13, and leads in prayer.

He welcomes the delegates with the following words:

"Esteemed brothers,

On behalf of the convening church, its consistory, and congregation, the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington, I am delighted to extend to you all a hearty welcome!

We thank the Lord that He has protected you on your travels to Burlington so that you safely arrived.

We consider it an honour as convening and hosting church to have you in our midst. We express the hope that you will enjoy our hospitality!

You have come here to fulfill an important task in and for the churches. Your aim is to serve the preservation and increase of God's church in order that His kingdom may come.

This demands the guidance of the Holy Spirit and submission to the Word of God. This also requires of you a free and honest discussion of the matters put before you by the churches and their members. What is said in these coming sessions and in the meetings of the advisory committees must be characterized by love for the Lord Jesus Christ and His church. That also implies that everything must be done 'decently and in order.' For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. That word of Scripture from I Corinthians 14 is, as you know, the scriptural basis of our Church Order. Let it also be your guideline when you, by way of discussion and expression of opinions, endeavour to reach meaningful decisions.

All this does not require agreement concerning all things! But it does demand that 'wisdom from above' of which James says that it is 'first pure, then peaceable, gentle and open to reason,' (3:17).

Let us have good, sometimes even heated discussions, but let it be done not in terms of conflict or anger, but in terms of mutual trust and gentleness. Brothers, you have been entrusted by the churches with a significant task! You must direct the appointment of a professor in the New Testament department of our Theological College, since Professor L. Selles hopes to retire at the end of this academic year. We now already wish to thank him for his work done at the college and for the churches in faithfulness, dedication, and humility. The new professor will be different (Prof. Selles would be the first one to say, 'He better be!'), but we hope that he may have much of the dedication and faithfulness of his predecessor.

You have to deal with other matters of the college, which could move to its new functional premises in the spring of last year.

You have to decide on matters in which the churches are genuinely interested, as is clear from the many appeals and revision requests on the agenda of synod. Decisions made here may have an impact upon the life of the churches for many years. If you are sometimes discouraged and ask yourself whether what you are doing here really will benefit the churches and solve any problems, then stop worrying about that question. The point is whether you who are here in the synod 'compete according to the rules,' to say it with the words of the apostle Paul in II Timothy 2, the Scripture passage we read. Let your aim be 'to satisfy the one who enlisted you.' Then you have the promise that the Lord will grant you 'understanding in everything.' Not too long ago we celebrated Easter. We must not make that celebration a one-day event. You serve also here a Lord who is very much alive and gloriously active in the throne of God.

'Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David . . . .'

Brothers, be also here good soldiers of this risen Lord! Don't get side-tracked by pursuits which are not your concern. Follow the orders of 'the seven-star General' of Revelation 1: 20.

And when you feel discouraged, take a look again at II Timothy 2, that last will and testament of the apostle Paul. Keep your memory sharp and call to mind that you are recruited by a Lord and Master who is not merely alive, but also in power and in glory!

In closing, I wish to especially welcome the representative of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Glenn Jerrell of Roswell, New Mexico. We appreciate it greatly that you came from far to attend part of this synod, and we express the hope that your presence among us may strengthen the ecclesiastical contact between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the churches you represent!

Brothers, may the Lord bless you and guide you when you now start the work which later on will be referred to as the Acts of the 11th General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

May I now ask you to rise when we together profess the catholic faith by singing the Apostles' Creed, Hymn 1A.'

## ARTICLE 2

### Examination of Credentials

A committee is appointed to examine the credentials. The Rev. J. Geertsema reports that according to the record of attendance and the credentials, the following delegates are present with proper credentials:

From the Regional Synod East:

Ministers: W. Huizinga, J. Mulder, Cl. Stam, and P. Kingma.

Elders: J. Gelderman (alternate for T.M.P. VanderVen), G.J. Nordeman, N. Torenvliet (alternate for M. Van Grootheest), and J. VandenBos.

For the Regional Synod West:

Ministers: P.K.A. DeBoer, J. Geertsema, W. Pouwelse, and M. van Beveren.

Elders: H.A. Berends, J. DeHaas (alternate for P. DeRuiter), H. Veenendaal, and E.J. VanWoudenberg.

Since both Regional Synods are duly represented, General Synod is constituted.



## ARTICLE 7

### Adoption of the Agenda

The following agenda is adopted:

#### The Final Agenda

- I Opening on behalf of the convening Church of Burlington-West.
- II Examination of credentials.
- III Election of the officers.
- IV Constitution of the 1986 General Synod.
- V Information from the convening church.
- VI Adoption of the agenda.
- VII A. Arrangement of time schedule and procedures.
  - B. Letter from the Foundation for Superannuation re date for Tri-Annual Meeting, Saturday, April 19, 1986.
  - C. Letter from the Board of Governors of the Theological College re Synod Agenda and meeting of the board.
- VIII Mail received:
  - A. THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
    1. Nominations for the Board of Governors
      - a. Regional Synod East
      - b. Regional Synod West
    2. Board of Governors
      - a. Report to General Synod 1986.
      - b. Letter from the Executive Committee of Board of Governors re salaries of the faculty.
      - c. Supplementary Report of Board of Governors to General Synod 1986.
      - d. Letter from the Board of Governors re Appointment of Professor in New Testament.
    3. Letter from the Church at Houston re Third Annual Report.
    4. Letter from br. L. VanZandwyk.
    5. Supplementary letter from br. L. VanZandwyk.
  - B. BOOK OF PRAISE
    1. a. Report of Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*.
    - b. Report re audit of finances of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*.
    2. Letter from Dr. J. Faber re Committee for the Preparation of Definite Text of Creeds and Confessions.
    3. Letter from br. B. Moes c.s. re Forms for Public Profession of Faith and Baptism.
    4. Letter from the Church at Coaldale re Melody for Hymn 1.
    5. Letter from sr. D. Jansen re Melody for Hymn 1.
  - C. APOSTLES' CREED
    1. Letter from the Church at Burlington (Ebenezer) re insertion of the word "Christian" in section III of the Apostles' Creed.
    2. Letter from Dr. J. Faber re same.
    3. Letter from the Church at Houston re same.

4. Letter from the Church at Toronto re same.
  5. Letter from the Church at Orangeville re same.
  6. Letter from the Church at Edmonton (Immanuel) re same.
  7. Letter from br. L. VanZandwyk re same.
  8. Letter from the Church at Burlington (Rehoboth) re same.
  9. Letter from Rev. B.J. Berends re same.
- D. BELGIC CONFESSION
1. Letter from Dr. J. Faber re revision of the text of Art. 8, Belgic Confession.
- E. CANONS OF DORT
1. Letter from Dr. J. Faber re revision of the text of Canons of Dort II/3, 4.
- F. CHURCH ORDER
1. Letter from br. E. Witten re Art. 35 (C.O.).
  2. Letter from br. R. Wildeboer re C.O. revisions.
  3. Letter from Classis Alberta-Manitoba Oct. 23, 24, 1984, re Art. 44, 46 (C.O.).
  4. Letter from br. C. Groenewegen re C.O. revision.
  5. Overture from the Church at Carman re Art. 44 (C.O.).
  6. Overture from the Church at Burlington (Rehoboth) re Art.'s 13, 72 (C.O.).
  7. Letter from br. A. Bergsma re Art. 63 (C.O.).
- G. CORRESPONDENCE WITH CHURCHES ABROAD
1. Letter from the Church at Burlington (Ebenezer) re Art. 105 of the *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale* — Korean Presbyterian Church.
  2. Letter from the Church at Burlington (Ebenezer) re Constitution of the ICRC.
  3. a. Report Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad.  
b. Appendices to Report Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad.
  4. Overture from some concerned members of the Church at Carman re Art. 121 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale*, re Constitution of the ICRC.
  5. Letter from the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa.
- H. PROTESTS AND APPEALS
1. Letter from Rev. D. DeJong, Burlington, re Art. 148 of *Acts of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983*.
  2. Letter from the Church at Edmonton (Immanuel) re Art. 148, 165 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale*.
  3. Letter from the Church at Edmonton (Providence) re Art. 166 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale*.
  4. Letter from br. B. VanHuisstede re Election of Office-bearers by the congregation.
  5. Letter from br. J. Werkman re Art. 166 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale*.
  6. Letter from the Church at Smithers re Art. 166 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale*.
  7. Letter from br. H. Noot re Art. 166 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale*.
  8. Letter from br. J. DeVos re Art. 160 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale*.

9. Letter from br. H. DeJong re Art. 166 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale*.
10. Letter from br. and sr. T. VanderZyl re Art. 166 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale*.
11. Additional information from br. and sr. T. VanderZyl.
12. Letter from Rev. J. Mulder, Burlington, re Art. 9 of *Acts of Regional Synod East, March 1985*.
13. Letter from the Church at Burlington (Ebenezer) re Art. 11 of *Acts of Regional Synod East, March 1985*.
14. Letter from the Church at Smithers re Letter from br. J. DeVos, Art. 160 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale (Agenda VIII, H, 8)*.

#### I. OVERTURES

1. The Church at Surrey re Address to the Federal Government.
2. The Church at Burlington (Rehoboth) re Art. 45 of *Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale, Guidelines for Synod*.
3. The Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church's, (Lower Sackville, NS), request for a sister-church relationship.
4. Letter from the Church at Ottawa re overture from the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church, Lower Sackville, NS.

#### J. CONTACT — ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1. a. Report from the Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- b. Letter re contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
2. Overture from Classis Ontario-South, March 5, 1986, re Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
3. Report to Classis Ontario-South, March 5, 1986, re affiliation of Tri-County Reformed Church, Laurel, MD, U.S.A.
4. Letter from br. J. Tillema re Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
5. Letter from br. H. Boersma re "Reformation Church at Blue Bell."
6. Letter from the Church at Smithville re Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
7. Letter from the Church at Attercliffe re Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

#### K. REPORTS

1. The Church at Burlington (Rehoboth) re General Archives.
2. Committee on Bible Translations.
3. The Church at Carman re the General Fund.
4. Finance Committee — Synod Cloverdale.

IX Appointments.

X Censure according to Art. 44 (C.O.).

XI Publication of the *Acts of General Synod*.

XII Financial Matters of General Synod.

XIII Preparation for the next General Synod.

XIV Adoption of the *Acts of General Synod*.

XV Approval of the Press Release of Synod.

XVI Closing of General Synod 1986.

## ARTICLE 8

### Advisory Committees

The following advisory committees are appointed:

Committee 1 — Rev. C.I. Stam, convener; Rev. M. van Beveren; Elder J. DeHaas; Elder N. Torenvliet.

Material: Agenda C, D, E, I, K.

Committee 2 — Rev. J. Geertsema, convener; Rev. W. Huizinga; Elder G.J. Nordeman; Elder E.J. VanWoudenberg.

Material: Agenda H, 1 — 3, 5 — 7, 9 — 13.

Committee 3 — Rev. P. Kingma; Rev. J. Mulder, convener; Elder H.A. Berends; Elder J. VandenBos.

Material: Agenda A, G, F.

Committee 4 — Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer, Rev. W. Pouwelse, convener; Elder J. Gelderman; Elder H. Veenendaal.

Material: Agenda B, H, 4, 8, 14, J.

Committee 2 is authorised to ask the advice of the professor in Dogmatics if they deem it beneficial for the work of the committee.

## ARTICLE 9

### Adjournment

Elder E.J. VanWoudenberg asks to be excused from Wednesday afternoon until Thursday evening. His request is granted.

After the various committees have been assigned their respective meeting rooms, the chairman adjourns the meeting to give the committees the opportunity to begin their work.

## AFTERNOON SESSION — TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1986

## ARTICLE 10

### Theological College Appointment

Synod enters into closed-restricted session.

Committee III presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, A, 2, d: Proposal re Appointment of a new professor of New Testament.
- B. **OBSERVATIONS**
  1. The Board of Governors presents the following:
    - a. The information that Professor L. Selles has reached the mandatory retirement age in 1986, and is to retire as professor of New Testament at the end of the academic year 1985/1986.
    - b. The recommendation to express appreciation for the faithful and fruitful service of Prof. L. Selles as professor of New Testament since the college was established.
  2. The Board of Governors requests the following:
    - a. In accordance with the advice of the Senate of the College and pursuant to the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981, Section 5(11)(d), to direct the Board to appoint as professor of New Testament as per May 15, 1986, the Reverend J. Geertsema of Surrey, British Columbia.

- b. To make the appointment on the financial conditions that:
  - i The annual honorarium and allowance be equivalent to that of a professor with tenure.
  - ii The Theological College pays for all reasonable relocation expenses.

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. On the advice of the Senate the Board of Governors has addressed the 1986 General Synod with a recommendation to direct the Board of Governors to appoint the Rev. J. Geertsema of Surrey, BC. as professor of New Testament as per May 1, 1986.
2. From the information given by the Board of Governors, it appears that the Rev. J. Geertsema is qualified to occupy the chair of professor of New Testament in faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures.
3. In view of Rev. Geertsema's experience and length of service in the reformed churches, the Board of Governors is justified in proposing that Rev. Geertsema be paid a honorarium and allowance equivalent to those of a professor with tenure at the Theological College.

**D. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decides:

1. To express great appreciation for the faithful and fruitful service of Professor L. Selles as professor of New Testament since the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches was established.
2. To direct the Board of Governors to appoint the Reverend J. Geertsema of Surrey, BC, as professor of New Testament as per May 15, 1986, granting him an annual honorarium and allowance which are equivalent to those of a professor with tenure at the Theological College.

The recommendation of the committee is ADOPTED.

Closed-restricted session is terminated.

**ARTICLE 11**

**Publication of Appointment**

The Rev. J. Geertsema, who had been requested to leave before his appointment was discussed, is called back to the meeting. The chairman informs the Rev. J. Geertsema about the decision of synod and asks him to inform synod about his decision as soon as possible, but at least within 10 days, after the appointment by the Board of Governors has taken place.

The Rev. J. Geertsema responds with a few well-chosen words.

**ARTICLE 12**

**Adjournment**

Synod is adjourned until the evening.

The advisory committees meet.

**EVENING SESSION — TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1986**

**ARTICLE 13**

**Adjournment**

The chairman informs synod that plenary sessions will be held Wednesday evening.

He requests that Psalm 73:8, 9 be sung, and then leads in thanksgiving.

Synod is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 1986**

**ARTICLE 14**

**Reopening**

The chairman requests that Psalm 66:1, 2 be sung, reads Ephesians 1:1-14, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

The chairman welcomes all and speaks some words of encouragement.

**ARTICLE 15**

**Acts**

The Acts, Articles 1 — 13 are read and adopted.

**ARTICLE 16**

**Adjournment**

The chairman informs synod that in the evening session the Rev. G.D. Jerrell of Roswell, New Mexico, representative of the OPC, hopes to address synod and that the Rev. W. Huizinga will respond on behalf of synod. Session is closed and the advisory committees meet.

**AFTERNOON SESSION — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 1986**

**ARTICLE 17**

**Roll Call**

Roll call is held. All members are present. The committees meet.

**EVENING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 1986**

**ARTICLE 18**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 84:1, 6 be sung.

**ARTICLE 19**

**Roll Call**

Roll call reveals that Elder E.J. VanWoudenberg is absent with notification.

**ARTICLE 20**

**Welcome**

The chairman welcomes all present, including some guests as audience.

## ARTICLE 21

### Introduction Rev. G.D. Jerrell

The Rev. G.D. Jerrell of Roswell, New Mexico, representative of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, is introduced by the Rev. W. Huizinga, with the following words:

“Brothers and sisters, delegates of General Synod,

It is my pleasure to be asked to introduce the fraternal delegate from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church — the Reverend Glenn D. Jerrell. I say that because it was my privilege to study with him. Before our Theological College was instituted, Prof. Van Dam, Rev. Boersema, and I studied at Westminster Theological Seminary. There we met the now Rev. Glenn D. Jerrell who was also in the same first year class. I even enjoyed working with him in some home mission projects at the State Penitentiary and the Rehabilitation Center.

But much time elapsed before we saw each other again. At the 1982 General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, as the delegate of the Canadian Reformed Churches, I saw him again. In fact, we roomed together during my stay at the General Assembly, so that we could renew old acquaintances. At that time the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was busy discussing the invitation of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Let me tell you something about Rev. Glenn D. Jerrell. After an internship of one year he became the minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at Winner, South Dakota. He served there for four years. Then he moved to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at Roswell, New Mexico, where he has stayed for the last eight years. Another important fact about him is that he is a member of the Committee for Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations for the last three years. This is the committee with which our contact committee deals. He is joined in that committee with another minister from the presbytery — Rev. J.J. Petersen. In the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations he has worked with Rev. Petersen on the ‘Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church.’ These principles constitute an important part of the report of the committee to their General Assembly concerning the invitation to join the PCA. He has also worked on a General Assembly Committee for revision of the *Book of Discipline & the Directory of Worship*. Thus we can welcome a delegate who has considerable experience in the life of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

It is my privilege to introduce the Rev. Glenn D. Jerrell.”

## ARTICLE 22

### Address Rev. G.D. Jerrell

On behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Rev. G.D. Jerrell of Roswell, New Mexico, addresses Synod with the following words:

“Mr. Chairman and brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Four years ago, I had the joy of attending worship at the American Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. Following that worship service three Orthodox Presbyterian ministers, including myself, were graciously hosted in Rev. Kingma’s home.

I attended Westminster Seminary. It was there that I had my introduction to the Canadian Reformed Churches. Your Rev. W. Huizinga, Professor C. VanDam, and Rev. Ralph Boersema were my classmates there. It is a joy to know them.

It has been a privilege to have your delegates attend our General Assemblies. In keeping up this contact in this way you have demonstrated a churchly concern for us. You have been represented well by your delegates.

On a presbytery/classis level, the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC was benefited by the presence of Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer a year ago at their meeting in Amarillo, Texas.

This year is the fiftieth anniversary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Perhaps you have heard of J. Gresham Machen. He was a central figure in the formation of the OPC. J. Gresham Machen was our Schilder. Machen did not stand alone, but the crowd in which he stood was not a big crowd by anybody's standards.

In 1929 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. reorganized the board of Princeton Seminary. This sealed the doom for orthodoxy there. So Machen and others formed Westminster Seminary. They organized it independent of the General Assembly and the church. The faculty at Westminster Seminary was the OPC in embryo form. There in the early years were Cornelius VanTil, Ned B. Stonehouse, John Murray, R.B. Kuiper, Edward J. Young, and J. Gresham Machen. The controversy with modernism went far beyond the Seminary. The struggle raged in the church. They must have been tiring years. Yet the men at Westminster pursued orthodoxy in faithfulness to the Lord. In 1936 the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was formed. It came at the end of a long struggle, a struggle about which gospel would be preached on the mission fields around the world. The Board of Foreign Missions of the General Assembly was sending out missionaries who questioned the historical nature of the Bible. They were missionaries who styled themselves as modernists. One of them, Pearl S. Buck, complimented Machen on his statesmanlike conduct and on his adherence to the church's standards — even though she did not agree with him.

The struggle in the 'old' church climaxed when Machen was removed from the ministry of the church. He was defrocked. Others also were found guilty of not being loyal to the boards of the church. The heavy-handed use of church power unknowingly gave birth to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The new church was formed on June 11, 1936.

A notable feature of that struggle in the church was this: Machen and others did not simply quit or leave the church. They pursued one avenue of redress after another, though it must be said that they did not file charges against the modernists when they might have. It is perhaps easier for us to look back and see what could have been done. At least we can learn from that and increase our diligence. Yet, Machen and others did stay in the church and pursue change and reformation. They took their covenantal responsibilities seriously. They did not determine to leave. They were put out of the ministry of the church. That is our heritage. That is our humble beginning as a church. Perhaps we should talk about it as a 'Liberation.'

In the OPC we must ask ourselves, 'Who are we?' Our fiftieth anniversary gives us a special occasion for this question. Certain books and a special anniversary volume are being published for the occasion. One of the volumes gives special attention to the question 'Who are we?', since it traces our history.

The covenant is vital to us. We have been growing in appreciation of the covenantal way. Such volumes as Schilder's trilogy on Christ's passion and S.G. DeGraaf's *Promise and Deliverance* have wide usage in the OPC. *Sola Scriptura* by S. Greidanus, *My God is Yahweh* by Van'tVeer are some others.

The Three Forms of Unity have found use in some of our churches. We recognize that the Reformed faith has been an international movement from its inception. It is imperative from where we stand that the OPC not be a church bound by nation and culture, but that we be a Church of Jesus Christ bound together in covenant unity with faithful Reformed and Presbyterian Churches. It takes time to grow in the breadth of Reformed thought and life. We have many churches that have begun from scratch and have gone on to be growing, Reformed congregations. We have congregations that have begun with one, two, or three families. The additions to the congregation come from all different church and non-church backgrounds. We do not have your established identity. We have not always appreciated our own heritage as much as we ought. We have not always appreciated our Reformed and Presbyterian heritage as fully as we should. So we still ask, 'Who are we?'

In a few weeks, in the middle of June, our General Assembly will meet and vote on the J & R with the PCA. J & R is the method of 'joining and being received' which the PCA has used in extending an invitation to the OPC to join her. The OPC is handling the invitation to J & R as a question of constitutional revision. That means three votes are required for the process to go full circuit. The first vote would be taken by this General Assembly. The second vote by the presbyteries. The third vote by the following General Assembly. The full process would take one year. A 'no' vote at any point would stop the process.

A key to considering this J & R with the PCA is in answering the questions 'Who are we?' and 'Who are they?' It has been said that the question is 'Shall we continue or shall we cease?' Some say in effect that it would be sin to vote 'no.' There are those who are undecided.

How will the voting go? What will be the outcome? Our General Assembly's Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations was evenly divided on its vote — 3 to 3. The report to the General Assembly contains principles on church union adopted unanimously by the committee, and yet the committee gives two different responses to the principles. Does the committee's divided vote reflect the church? That remains a big question mark. We shall see. Our future is not far away.

The OPC has contact with other churches. We are members of NAPARC — the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council. The member churches are: the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, the Korean American Presbyterian Church, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Christian Reformed Church, and the PCA. The council has recently formulated a statement on fugitives from discipline. It asks each member church to 'take seriously' the discipline of the other churches.

As you are aware, we are members of the RES — the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. The RES continues to be in crisis. The GKN — the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland — is still a member of the Synod and so are we. At this point in history we are pursuing the course of using every avenue legitimately open to us to deal decisively with the GKN. Five days ago I received the current RES 'News Exchange.' It reports that the GKN has determined to stay in the RES, that they did not withdraw their advice to the churches on 'homophilia,' and that they want to work for the revision of the RES constitution. The course we have followed is to oppose the GKN's defection from the Reformed faith with the warnings of Scripture. We have sought to be faithful to the Lord in bearing testimony to the Reformed faith. We are using the means available and we continue to insist that the GKN be dealt with decisively if the integrity of a Reformed and Presbyterian testimony is to be maintained.

The OPC is working on revisions to the Directory for the Public Worship of God. Another draft of the first chapter, 'Principles of Worship,' is being submitted to our upcoming General Assembly. A key principle is that worship is the most important activity in the church. Our committee on revisions has found G. VanDooren's book, *The Beauty of Reformed Liturgy* quite useful in their work. The covenantal perspective has helped to focus the revisions at the crux of the Reformed faith.

I have taken up much of your time. You have been gracious to me.

Pray for us as we face issues which challenge the unity which we have. We will pray for you that the unity you have in Christ will not only be maintained but grow."

#### ARTICLE 23

#### **Response by Rev. W. Huizinga to Representative Orthodox Presbyterian Church**

On behalf of Synod, the Rev. W. Huizinga responds to the words spoken by the Rev. G.D. Jerrell as follows:

"On behalf of the 1986 General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches I would like to respond to the words of the Rev. G.D. Jerrell.

First of all, we thank him heartily for his kind and Christian greetings on behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We would like to reciprocate those greetings. Secondly, you have mentioned the fiftieth anniversary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which will be celebrated this year, especially at the General Assembly to be held in June of this year. We hope to send a delegate who can participate in the joy of this event. As churches we have noted how the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has championed the cause of God's Word over against the flood of liberalism, by which the evil One wanted to sweep away 'the woman,' the church who keeps the commandments of God and bears testimony to Jesus. Remembrance of how God worked reformation and faithfulness through faithful servants will undoubtedly occasion much rejoicing and thankfulness. May the faith of those forefathers and leaders of reformation be fondly remembered, as the letter to the Hebrews instructs us to do.

Thirdly, you mentioned the invitation of the Presbyterian Church in America to have the Orthodox Presbyterian Church join and be received into it. It is with keen interest that we follow these developments. We will pray that the Lord of the Church may cause the truth of the Word to triumph. For our only High Priest prayed that His believers would be united as the Father and the Son are one. But this union must be based on the Word of truth through the Spirit of truth. We can sympathize with you as you struggle to ascertain whether that basis of covenantal truth is present. For on the one hand, to join a body with doctrinal error or ungodly conduct would break that unity in the truth. On the other hand, to abstain from union when there are no sound Biblical, confessional or church-governmental grounds would be schismatic. We have experienced both these pitfalls in the recent history of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands during the Liberations of 1944 and the Union of 1892 respectively.

Fourthly, you referred in your address to the developments within the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. We are thankful to hear that your voice has been loud and clear in favour of the Reformed faith and confessions. In fact the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Synodical) have described you as 'the small church with the big mouth.' You have stood strong against any erosion of the Biblical and Reformed confessions. We applaud this.

Also, your assistance to, understanding of, and Biblical approach to the Reformed churches in South Africa is laudable. On the other hand, we must interject a word of criticism. To be a member of an organization which has thus far tolerated diversion from the Reformed confessions and from the Biblical truth and conduct should not continue. It is our hope that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, be it to its regret, will give a loud and clear testimony by offering a detailed declaration that they cannot continue as a member of the RES.

Fifthly, you have noticed that we want to obey the apostolic call to unity in that we entered a temporary ecclesiastical contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We want to maintain that obedience.

However, we at the same time adamantly strive to maintain the truth of God's Word. Unity must not be at the price of truth. Therefore, as you have noticed we have asked serious questions about our relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Since this General Synod has not dealt with these matters, now is not the time to comment on these problem areas. But please be assured that we do not do this out of animosity towards those to whom we have stretched out the hand of fellowship, but simply out of loyalty to what our chief Prophet and Teacher has taught us.

Rev. Jerrell, may our mutual contacts further Christ's triumphal march of truth in this world. To Him be the glory and the honour."

## ARTICLE 24

### Finances General Synod Cloverdale 1983

Committee 1 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, K, 4 a. Report of the Financial Committee of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale.
- b. Audit report of the books of the Financial Committee of the 1983 General Synod.

### B. OBSERVATIONS

1. The 1983 General Synod appointed the church at Langley to audit the books of the finances of General Synod of 1983 and to send a report to General Synod of 1986.
2. It appears that the brethren H. Moes and J. deWit have submitted a report to synod on behalf of the church at Langley. These brethren have found all receipts and expenses to be in good order and in agreement with the bank statement.
3. From this report regarding the finances of General Synod of 1983 it appears that:

The total income was	\$ 32,441.98
The total expense was	\$ <u>32,413.63</u>
Balance	\$ 28.35

The balance of General Synod of Smithville of 1980 (\$202.79) was transferred to the Financial Committee of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983.

A cheque for the balance of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 was forwarded to General Synod of 1986.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

1. To express gratitude for the work done by the Financial Committee of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983.
2. To discharge the committee on the basis of the report of the church at Langley.
3. To appoint a Financial Committee General Synod of 1986. This committee will pay the expenses of General Synod of 1986, using funds submitted by the Regional Synods as well as the balance of the funds of the General Synod of 1983. This committee will forward the balance of funds upon completion of General Synod of 1986 to the convening church of the next General Synod.
4. To appoint, upon the recommendation of the convening church of Burlington-West, the brethren J.J. Poort, L. Sipkema, and A. Driegen as Financial Committee of the General Synod of 1986.
5. To appoint the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church (Burlington-East) to audit the books of the finances of the General Synod of 1986, and to send a report to the General Synod of 1989.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

## ARTICLE 25

### Appeals re Financial Arrangements for Rev. C. Olij

Committee 2 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, H, 12, 13.  
The report is discussed. (See Art. 44)

## ARTICLE 26

### **Adjournment**

The chairman commemorates the fact that today it is 36 years ago that the first Canadian Reformed Church was instituted in Coaldale, Alberta.

One of the consistory members involved in that institution is at the present time a member of this synod. He is elder J. DeHaas.

The Rev. Cl. Stam requests that Psalm 115:6 be sung, and leads in closing prayer. Synod is adjourned.

## MORNING SESSION — THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1986

## ARTICLE 27

### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 130:3, 4 be sung, reads Ephesians 1:15-23, and leads in prayer.

## ARTICLE 28

### **Roll Call**

Roll call reveals that Rev. W. Huizinga is replaced by his alternate, Rev. M. Werkman, and that elder E.J. VanWoudenberg is absent with notification.

## ARTICLE 29

### **Acts**

The Acts, Articles 14-26 are read and adopted.

## ARTICLE 30

### **Adjournment**

Synod decides that no further plenary sessions will be held this morning and afternoon. In the evening session the Professor-designate, Rev. J. Geertsema, will make a statement about his appointment. The members of the faculty and the Board of Governors will be invited for that session.

In the evening session the discussion about Agenda VIII, H, 12, 13 will be continued. Synod is adjourned.

## AFTERNOON SESSION — THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1986

## ARTICLE 31

### **Roll Call**

Roll call is held.

Absent with notification is elder E.J. VanWoudenberg. Absent without notification are the Rev.'s J. Geertsema, J. Mulder, and M. Werkman, and the elders J. Gelderman, and N. Torenvliet.

## ARTICLE 32

### **Adjournment**

The chairman informs the members of synod that a report on Agenda VIII, D and E has been handed out and is ready to be dealt with in the evening session.

Synod is adjourned until 7:00 p.m.

## EVENING SESSION — THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1986

## ARTICLE 33

### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, and requests that Psalm 98:1, 4 be sung.

The roll call indicates that elder E.J. VanWoudenberg is absent with notification and that Rev. W. Huizinga is present again.

The chairman welcomes all present, especially the faculty and some governors of the Theological College.

## ARTICLE 34

### **Accepting Appointment Professor Designate J. Geertsema**

The Rev. J. Geertsema receives the floor and speaks as follows:

“Mr. Chairman,

On April 15 I received a letter from the Board of Governors of our Theological College, directed by this General Synod, informing me concerning my appointment.

I have come to the conclusion that this appointment and calling that comes to me through the advice of the Senate and the decision of this General Synod, comes from the Lord and His churches. On the basis of this conviction I herewith accept this appointment.

Further, I promise you as Board, and in you the churches, that I will fulfill the duties of this calling to the utmost of my ability, serving, in the first place, our Lord, who bought for Himself His church for the price of His blood, and, in the second place, the churches for which Christ Jesus showed such an incomprehensible, saving love.

It is my prayer and hope that our Lord may grant me the strength and ability to fulfill this task of teaching the New Testament to future ministers of His Word, who will be servants of the churches, in such a manner that they, and I, may increasingly learn to love intensely, to read correctly, and to understand rightly, in humble submission, the second part of the Holy Scriptures to the glory of our Lord, and to the edification of the churches.

Thus, I hope and pray that I may be an instrument in the hand of the Lord, the Head of the Church, that serves the proclamation of, and the instruction in, His Word in true faithfulness, with spiritual conviction and with christian enthusiasm, and that, in that way, I may serve the preservation and further gathering of the church and the coming of His kingdom.”

The Rev. J. Geertsema presents to the chairman his letter of acceptance, to be handed over to the Board of Governors.

The chairman responds to the Rev. J. Geertsema's speech with some well-chosen words and wishes him strength and the fulfillment of his task.

The chairman addresses also the Rev. J. Mulder in his capacity as Chairman of the Board of Governors. Next he addresses Prof. Dr. J. Faber, the Principal of the Theological College. Also, to Prof. L. Selles, the retiring professor, some appropriate words of appreciation are spoken.

## ARTICLE 35

### **Responses to decision of Rev. J. Geertsema**

The Rev. J. Mulder, Chairman of the Board of Governors, addresses Rev. J. Geertsema, as well as the retiring Prof. L. Selles.

The Principal of the Theological College, Prof. Dr. J. Faber, speaks on behalf of the faculty.

## ARTICLE 36

### **Incoming Mail**

A package of incoming mail is declared inadmissible, because the deadline for incoming mail has expired.

## ARTICLE 37

### **Continuation Discussion re Financial Arrangement for Rev. C. Olij (See Art. 25)**

The discussion about Agenda VIII, H, 12, 13 continues.

## ARTICLE 38

### **Elder E.J. VanWoudenberg Present**

Elder E.J. VanWoudenberg, after having been absent for a day, is recognized again as voting member of synod.

## ARTICLE 39

### **Continuing Discussion (See Art. 25 and 34)**

A motion, duly seconded, reading:

“Synod decides not to accept the advice of Committee 2 re Rev. C. Olij, since most materials pertaining to this case are not available to synod” is DEFEATED.

## ARTICLE 40

### **Adjournment**

Rev. W. Pouwelse requests that Psalm 122:1 be sung, and leads in thanksgiving. Synod is adjourned.

## MORNING SESSION — FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1986

## ARTICLE 41

### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 124:1, 2, 3 be sung, reads Ephesians 2:1-20, and leads in prayer.

## ARTICLE 42

### **Roll Call**

Roll call is held. All members are present.

## ARTICLE 43

### Acts

Acts, Articles 27 — 40, are read and adopted.

## ARTICLE 44

### Continuation Discussion re Rev. C. Olij (See Art. 25, 37, 39)

Committee 2 presents:

#### A. MATERIAL — Agenda VIII, H, 12, 13

1. The appeal of Rev. J. Mulder, Burlington-West, against Art. 9 of the Acts of the Regional Synod East, March 27, 29, 1985.
2. The appeal of Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington-East against Art. 11, consideration 4, of the Acts of Regional Synod East of March 27, 29, 1985.

#### B. OBSERVATIONS

1. Rev. J. Mulder appeals the decision of Regional Synod of March 27, 29, 1985, Acts, Art. 9, re the financial arrangements for Rev. C. Olij and family.
2. Regional Synod decided to deny an appeal of Rev. J. Mulder against a decision of Classis Ontario North of January 24, 1985. That classis had judged "that the arrangements made by Classis June 26, 1980, with the approbation of the Deputies of Regional Synod, implies the termination of all financial support for the Rev. C. Olij and family at the end of 1984, except for the obligations which are made in the event that the Rev. C. Olij reaches the age of 65, or in the event of his death" (Art. 8).
3. Rev. Mulder complains that the "decision of Classis Ontario North of January 24, 1985, was insufficient and unjustified, being not in harmony with the arrangements made." Regional Synod used the following consideration to deny this complaint:
  - a. that Classis Ontario North did not have to adduce grounds for something which is self-evident, namely, that the arrangement for financial support, using a "gliding scale," terminates on the date mentioned (December, 1984) and is not self-perpetuating;
  - b. that special pension arrangements do not imply that regular support must be given before such pension situations arise;
  - c. that you have not shown which possible financial obligations still rest on the church at Orangeville for the support of Rev. C. Olij and his family after the termination of the financial arrangement for the period 1980 — 1984.
4. Rev. Mulder "requests that General Synod judges that Regional Synod East 1985 should not have denied my appeal and I further request General Synod to decide that according to the arrangement made by the church at Orangeville, if necessary with the help of sister-churches, should financially support Rev. Olij and family, if his and his family's needs are not adequately met." As considerations he gives:
  - a. He is a minister of the Word in the midst of the churches.
  - b. He has been released of his ministerial service in Orangeville according to Art. 11 of the Church Order without one-sided blame on him.
  - c. He retained the title of minister of the Word according to the decision of the churches.
  - d. He did not receive a call from one of the churches.
  - e. He is unable adequately to meet his needs and those of his family.

- f. He owes his ministerial status to the call once received from the church at Orangeville.
  - g. The church at Orangeville is the church who has to initiate financial support if Rev. Olij is in need.
5. The Regional Synod East of March 27, 29, 1985, in its denial of the complaint of br. and sr. H.J. Endeman gave as its fourth consideration that "Rev. C. Olij is indeed allowed to turn to the deaconry for help, since only the support from Orangeville as per arrangement was terminated."
  6. The consistory of Burlington-East objects to this consideration in the first place, "since it is the honour and duty of the churches to provide for the proper support of their ministers."
  7. The second objection of Burlington-East is that the statement, "the support from Orangeville as per arrangement was terminated," is in conflict with the facts, since "the gliding scale was terminated, but not the arrangement itself."

#### **C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. The release of Rev. C. Olij as the active minister of the church at Orangeville was done under the previous version of the Church Order, in which there were no stipulations about a period of support in the event a minister is released from his service in the congregation.
2. The appellants correctly argue that Rev. C. Olij is still a minister in our churches, retaining the title and honour of a minister of the Word, according to the decision of the churches.  
He owes his ministerial status to the call which he received from the church at Orangeville.
3. Classis Ontario North of June 26, 1980, made financial arrangements for Rev. C. Olij, for the period from April 1, 1980, through 1984, (using a sliding scale) so that he and his family could be supported while he awaited (an)other call(s) or while he sought other employment.
4. Regional Synod of March 27, 29, 1985, correctly stated that these financial arrangements (using the sliding scale), with the exception of the arrangements in case Rev. C. Olij either retired or passed away, terminated on Dec., 1984. However, the financial arrangements made in 1980 do not preclude financial support after 1984.
5. The church-orderly principle at stake is that a man who receives and retains the office of a minister should receive the honour and support worthy of the office (compare the present Church Order, Art. 11, in which support ceases only when and if a minister is released from his ministerial status).
6. Though Regional Synod of March 27, 29, 1985, was correct in stating that the financial arrangements, with the exception of the arrangements for a pension and in case of death, terminated Dec., 1984, it must be remembered that these financial arrangements were taken in the expectation that Rev. C. Olij would either receive a call or find another vocation.  
Unfortunately, this expectation has not materialized. In this present situation new measures therefore should be made, since the Church Order makes clear that a minister should receive the honour and support worthy of his office.
7. The consistory at Burlington-East correctly states that "it is the honour and duty of the churches to provide for the proper support of their ministers" and that a minister should therefore not be directed to the deaconry for support.

#### **D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

General Synod judges:

On the basis of these considerations that it is proper that financial support from

the church at Orangeville with the help of sister-churches in the classical resort of Ontario North be given for Rev. C. Olij and his family in case his needs are not adequately met.

General Synod decides:

To send this decision to the Rev. J. Mulder, the consistory of the Burlington-East, the Church at Orangeville, Rev. C. Olij, and the convening church of the next Classis Ontario North, and the convening church of the next Regional Synod East.

The chair rules that, according to Art. 32, Church Order, the Rev. J. Mulder, being one of the appellants, cannot take part in the vote.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

## AFTERNOON SESSION — FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1986

### ARTICLE 45

#### **Roll Call**

All members of synod are present.

### ARTICLE 46

#### **Report on Contact OPC**

Committee 4 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, J, 1, 2.

The report is discussed.

### ARTICLE 47

#### **Farewell Rev. G.D. Jerrell**

Because the Rev. G.D. Jerrell, representative of the OPC, is leaving synod, the chairman speaks words of appreciation for his presence. He wishes him the Lord's blessing, and expresses the hope that the mutual contacts may be to the benefit of the OPC as well as the Canadian Reformed Churches, and above all, to the honour of God's Name. He wishes the Rev. G.D. Jerrell a safe trip home.

### ARTICLE 48

#### **Contact with Committees**

On request of one of its members, synod gives the advisory committees permission to take up contact with members of standing committees, if it is deemed profitable for the preparation of an advisory report.

### ARTICLE 49

#### **Adjournment**

Rev. Huizinga requests that Psalm 138:3, 4 be sung, and leads in prayer and thanksgiving. Synod is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — MONDAY, APRIL 21, 1986**

**ARTICLE 50**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 146:1, 4 be sung, reads Ephesians 2:11-22, and leads in prayer.

**ARTICLE 51**

**Roll Call**

Roll call is held. All members are present.

**ARTICLE 52**

**Acts**

Acts, Articles 41 — 49, are read and adopted.

**ARTICLE 53**

**Report on Contact OPC (See Art. 46)**

The discussion is continued.

**ARTICLE 54**

**Adjournment**

Synod is adjourned for lunch.

**AFTERNOON SESSION — MONDAY, APRIL 21, 1986**

**ARTICLE 55**

**Roll Call**

The chairman reopens the meeting.

Roll call is held. Elder J. Gelderman arrives later because of other business on behalf of synod.

**ARTICLE 56**

**Continuation Report OPC (See Art. 46, 53)**

The discussion is continued.

A motion, duly seconded:

“That Committee 4 reconsiders part A and B of its advisory report, taking into account the remarks made,”  
is CARRIED.

The meeting is adjourned and the advisory committees meet.

**EVENING SESSION — MONDAY, APRIL 21, 1986**

**ARTICLE 57**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 85:1, 4, be sung.

**ARTICLE 58**

**Roll Call**

Roll call is held. All members are present.

**ARTICLE 59**

**General Archives**

Committee 1 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, K, 1: Inspection General Archives.

B. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 appointed the Church at Burlington-West to examine the archives of General Synod of 1983 (Acts, Art. 113).
2. The archives were examined and all the correspondence received by the General Synod of 1983 has been filed in an orderly manner.  
Also the credentials were filed, as were other documents received by synod.
3. As yet there are no copies in the archives of the correspondence sent by the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983. There is also no copy of the original Acts.

C. **CONSIDERATION**

The Church at Burlington-West has been informed by the second clerk of the General Synod of 1983 that copies of the correspondence sent by the General Synod of 1983 will be forwarded to the Church at Burlington-East.

D. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decide:

1. To thank the Church at Burlington West for examining the archives and reporting to Synod.
2. To request the Church at Burlington East to place a copy of the Acts of General Synod of 1983 in the Archives of General Synod.  
The recommendations are ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 60**

**Bible Translation**

Committee 1 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, K, 2: Letter from the Committee on Bible Translations.

B. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. The Committee on Bible Translations sends a letter instead of a report.
2. It appears that the General Synod of 1983 failed to notify the convener of this committee, the Rev. J. van Rietschoten, of his appointment to the committee and his task as convener.
3. General Synod of 1983 failed to give the committee a “continued or otherwise new mandate” according to the committee.
4. Diverse circumstances prevented the committee from fulfilling its task. The members were unable to finalize their work; the time simply was not available.

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. General Synod of 1983 gave the Committee on Bible Translations a clear mandate, as noted in the *Acts*, Art. 115, C. 1.
2. Since it is important that the churches are vigilant with respect to the developments concerning the Bible translation which is in use in the churches, the inability of the committee to fulfill its mandate is to be deplored.

**D. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod continues the Committee on Bible Translations with the same express mandate as decided by the General Synod of Smithville of 1980, *Acts*, Art. 111, C, 4, urging this committee diligently to pursue this matter and to report to the next General Synod.

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 61**

**Address to Federal Government**

Committee 1 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, I, 1: Overture from the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey, BC, re address Federal Government.

**B. OBSERVATION**

The Church at Surrey requests synod to address the Federal Government requesting "new legislation which will address the following areas of great concern to all those who fear God and tremble for His coming wrath over our nation:

1. the sanctity of life;
2. the observance of the Lord's Day;
3. the honour of God's Name;
4. the moral conduct of Canadian citizens."

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. General Synod acknowledges and shares the concern of the Surrey Maranatha Church on the issues mentioned above.
2. The Church at Surrey does give grounds for addressing the Federal Government on the issues mentioned, but no grounds are given that it is the task of synod to make such an address.
3. Article 30 of the Church Order stipulates that ecclesiastical assemblies shall deal only with ecclesiastical matters; the Church at Surrey has not shown that this is indeed an ecclesiastical matter.

**D. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decide:

not to accede to the request of Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey.

A motion, duly seconded, reads:

"Delete consideration 1,

Replace Recommendation with: Synod decides to declare the request of Surrey inadmissible."

The motion is DEFEATED.

The recommendation of the Advisory Committee is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 62**

**Greeting from the Netherlands**

A letter with greetings and best wishes is received from the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

The chairman reads the letter and expresses the appreciation of synod for it.

**ARTICLE 63**

**Adjournment**

Rev. J. Mulder requests that Psalm 101:1, 3, 6 be sung, and leads in prayer.

Synod is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 1986**

**ARTICLE 64**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Hymn 3:1, 2, 3 be sung, reads Ephesians 3:1-20, and leads in prayer.

**ARTICLE 65**

**Roll Call**

Roll call is held. All members are present.

**ARTICLE 66**

**Acts**

Acts, Articles 50 — 63 are read and adopted.

**ARTICLE 67**

**Report on Contact OPC (See Art. 46, 53, 56)**

The discussion is continued.

At noon the chairman adjourns the meeting for lunch.

**AFTERNOON SESSION — TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 1986**

**ARTICLE 68**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 68:8, 12 be sung.

**ARTICLE 69**

**Roll Call**

Roll call is held. All members are present.

## ARTICLE 70

### Report on Contact OPC (See Art. 46, 53, 56, 67)

The discussion is continued.

After two rounds on each point of the report, the discussion is terminated to give the committee the opportunity to consider all the remarks.

## ARTICLE 71

### Letter br. L. VanZandwyk

Synod enters into a closed-restricted session.

Committee 3 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, A, 4, 5: Letter and Supplementary Letter of br. L. VanZandwyk (dated 28/03/86 and 8/04/86 resp.).
- B. **OBSERVATIONS**
  - 1. Br. L. VanZandwyk lays charges against Prof. Dr. J. Faber on the basis of a certain statement in Dr. Faber's articles in *Clarion* regarding the word "Christian" in the Apostles' Creed.
  - 2. Br. L. VanZandwyk attached to his letter to General Synod a copy of a letter sent by him to the Board of Governors of the Theological College with the same charge.
- C. **CONSIDERATIONS**
  - 1. The churches have entrusted the supervision over the doctrine and life of the faculty of the Theological College to the Board of Governors and its Academic Committee (Theological College Act, Section 5, sub. 11, e; By-Law No. 1, Section 3.16 and Section 8.02).
  - 2. Br. L. VanZandwyk made known to General Synod that he has laid his charge against Dr. J. Faber before the Board of Governors of the Theological College.
  - 3. Synod trusts that the Board of Governors will deal with this charge in a proper way.
- D. **RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decide:  
not to deal further with these letters.  
The recommendation is ADOPTED.  
Closed-restricted session is terminated.

## ARTICLE 72

### Adjournment

Synod is adjourned. Committees meet.

## EVENING SESSION — TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 1986

## ARTICLE 73

### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 33:1, 2 be sung.

## ARTICLE 74

### Roll Call

Roll call is held. Elder H. Berends arrives later because of other synodical business.

## ARTICLE 75

### General Fund

Committee 1 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, K, 3.

The report is discussed and taken back by the committee for further consideration.

## ARTICLE 76

### Guidelines for Synod (See Art. 162)

Committee 1 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, I, 2: Overture concerning Acts, Art. 45, General Synod of 1983 re Guidelines for Synod.

B. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. Guideline I, C, presently reads,  
“All material submitted to the convening church shall be sent to all delegates as well as to the alternate delegates.”
2. The convening church proposes that all material should be sent to all delegates and the first alternates.

C. **CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Guideline I, D, rules that all appeals should be at the convening church at least one month before Synod, in thirty copies, which is two copies short, because 16 delegates and 16 alternates makes 32.
2. The present rule is expensive and unnecessary. The delegates and first alternates should hand over the material to their alternates when necessary.

D. **RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decide:

To accede to the overture of the Church at Burlington-West, and to amend Guideline I, C, as follows:

“All material submitted to the convening church shall be sent to all delegates and the first alternates.”

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

## ARTICLE 77

### Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church

Committee 1 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, I, 3, 4.

The report is discussed.

## ARTICLE 78

### Adjournment

Rev. P. Kingma requests that Psalm 33:4, 6 be sung, and leads in prayer, and thanksgiving.

Synod is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986**

## ARTICLE 79

### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 30:1, 7 be sung, reads Ephesians 4: 1-16 and leads in prayer.

Roll call reveals that all members are present.

## ARTICLE 80

### Acts

Acts, Articles 69 — 78 are read and adopted.

## ARTICLE 81

### Adjournment

Synod is adjourned and the committees meet.

## AFTERNOON SESSION — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

## ARTICLE 82

### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting.

Roll call shows that Rev. W. Huizinga and elder E.J. VanWoudenberg are absent for valid reasons.

Synod is adjourned. The committees meet.

## EVENING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

## ARTICLE 83

### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 1:1, 2 be sung.

Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

## ARTICLE 84

### General Fund (See Art. 75)

Committee 1 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, K, 3 Report of the Church for the Administration of the General Fund, the Church at Carman.

B. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. The Church at Carman asked of the churches \$1.00 per communicant member in the period 1983 — 1985.

Balance	\$ 2161.17
Income	<u>6883.79</u>
Total Income	9044.96
Total Expenses	\$ 7533.04
Bank Balance per Jan. 31/86	\$ 1511.92

2. There is one outstanding account, the Immanuel Church at Edmonton, which owes \$165.00.

The Church at Smithville has overpaid \$279.50.

3. The consistory of the Church at Carman has audited the books of the treasurer of this Fund, and found the books in good order.

### C. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decide:

1. To express gratitude to br. H. Veldman, treasurer of the General Fund, for the work done during the past three years.
  2. To thank the Church at Carman, as church for the administration of the Fund, for auditing the books of the treasurer, and to discharge the Church at Carman from the responsibility over the period 1983 — Jan. 1, 1986.
  3. To request the Church at Carman to urge the Immanuel Church (Edmonton) as yet to pay the amount in arrears.
  4. To request the Church at Carman to obtain information from the Church at Smithville as to whether this church should be credited the amount of \$279.50.
- The recommendations are ADOPTED.

### **ARTICLE 85**

#### **Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church, Sackville (See Art. 77)**

Committee 1 presents:

##### A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, I, 3, 4.

A motion, duly seconded, to read III, B, considerations, 1, as follows:

“The procedure for admitting other churches to the confederation has always been a matter of local churches with the judgment of Classis and the concurring advice of Deputies of Regional Synod.”

The motion is ADOPTED.

The amended report of Committee 1 reads now:

##### I. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, I, 3, 4.

— Request of the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church, Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, for sister-church relationship.

— Letter from the Church at Ottawa regarding the request of the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church of Lower Sackville.

##### II. Request to be admitted as (corresponding) sister church.

##### A. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. The CORC requests Synod “that a sister-church relationship be established between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church.”
2. This request is made directly to General Synod “as well as through the consistory of the Ottawa Church.”
3. The Church at Ottawa recommends to Synod “that the request of the CORC of Lower Sackville be considered.”
4. As grounds for their requests, the following can be noted:
  - a. The CORC of Lower Sackville cannot as yet be admitted to the federation because such an admission at this time may damage the unity of the congregation. The Church at Ottawa writes, “They are not yet sufficiently comfortable with us to make the transition to full unity.”
  - b. Although the CORC is a church in Canada, it is felt that the distance between the CORC and, e.g., the Church at Ottawa “is so great that for all intents and purposes it is as if they are in a different country.”
  - c. A sister-church relationship (in terms of correspondence) would give the CORC the needed benefits of such a relationship (e.g. receiving ministers to administer the sacraments) while at the same time it would allow the CORC to continue to work towards full unity “in a careful, considered, and gradual fashion.”

## **B. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. The Canadian Reformed Churches do not know of a sister-church (or correspondence) relationship with churches inside Canada. Although the distances between the churches in this country are indeed formidable, these have not prevented the Canadian Reformed Churches from maintaining a purposeful and active life as federation. The argument of distance does not really provide a solid ground for not coming together in "full unity," especially since in the CORC perception, it does not appear to be a problem in the development perceived later.
2. The main reason for the CORC not to enter the federation at this time is that there are still differences to be overcome (especially concerning the office of elders). Since the unity of the federation of churches and the "sister-church relationship" are based on the same unity of faith, it would not be correct to use the one to avoid the obstacles perceived in the other.
3. The session of CORC writes that "the Church of Ottawa specifically, and the Classis North in general, be given the task of continuing the contacts with the CORC (pg. 5)."
4. The CORC can be amply assisted by the churches in Classis Ontario North in a way considered responsible by these churches.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To express gratitude for the contacts which the Classis Ontario North, and especially the Church at Ottawa has with the CORC of Lower Sackville, and to express the hope that these contacts may continue fruitfully towards full unity of faith.
2. Not to accede to the request of the CORC to establish with them a sister-church relationship but to urge the CORC and the Church at Ottawa along with Classis Ontario North to work at removing any obstacles preventing admission of the CORC into the Federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

- III. Request from the Church at Ottawa to conduct a review as to procedures and policies re admission of other churches seeking to join the federation.

### **A. OBSERVATIONS**

1. The Church at Ottawa requests synod "that a review be conducted as to the procedures that should be followed and the policies which should be taken with respect to churches of a different historical background and development seeking to join the federation."
2. The Church at Ottawa expresses the concern not one but different policies could be followed in the churches with respect to the admission of others.

### **B. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. The procedure for admitting other churches to the federation has always been a matter of local churches with the judgment of classis and the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod.
2. Other churches can only be admitted to the Federation of Canadian Reformed Churches if they fully accept the basis of these churches and bind themselves to the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dort.
3. Since this procedure is rather straightforward, it is not necessary that Synod formulate strict rules or set up a committee to study the recommend such rules.

**C. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decide:

Not to accede to the request of the Church at Ottawa to review the rules for admission to the federation.

**IV. Guidelines re differences in eldership.**

**A. OBSERVATIONS**

1. The Church at Ottawa requests that if the request of the CORC is denied, synod shall give some guidelines as to how the Church at Ottawa and Classis Ontario North should deal with differences in eldership.
2. The CORC requests synod to appoint a study committee to study "the following issues of concern in regard to the office and task of ruling elders, i.e., 1) life ordination, and 2) preparation of original exhortations and the administration of the sacraments in the absence of a minister or unavailability of pulpit supply."

**B. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. The policy and practice with respect to the terms and duties of the office-bearers in the Canadian Reformed Churches have been clearly defined in the confessions, forms, and order of the churches. It is clear that all the churches in the federation have obligated and do obligate themselves to abide by these adopted rules.
2. This does not mean that compelling local circumstances cannot lead the churches to accept various existing situations, which are not against Scripture, when a church of a different background and development is admitted to the federation. A church admitted to the federation is, from then on, in future decisions and policies, obligated to abide by the adopted church order.

**C. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decide:

Not to adopt further guidelines or to appoint a study committee to study the expressed issues of concern with respect to the office and task of elder.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 86**

**Adjournment**

Rev. J. Geertsema requests that Psalm 122:3 be sung, and leads in prayer.

Synod is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1986**

**ARTICLE 87**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 108:1, 2 be sung, reads Ephesians 4: 17-32, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

**ARTICLE 88**

**Acts**

Acts, Articles 79-86 are read and adopted.

Synod is adjourned. The committees meet.

**AFTERNOON SESSION — THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1986**  
**ARTICLE 89**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting.  
Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.  
The plenary session is adjourned. The committees meet.

**EVENING SESSION — THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1986**  
**ARTICLE 90**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 36:2, 3 be sung.  
Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

**ARTICLE 91**

**Revision Belgic Confession, Art. 8, and Canons of Dort II, 3/4**

Committee 1 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, D, E Letter of Dr. J. Faber re the revision of Belgic Confession, Article 8, and Canons of Dort, Ch. II, 3/4.

B. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. Belgic Confession, Article 8.

Dr. J. Faber requests Synod to return to the old reading "for they are all three co-eternal and co-essential" instead of the present revised reading, "For these three, in one and the same essence, are equal in eternity."

His reason is that the phrase "equal in eternity" is ambiguous and "obscures the grand truth of the qualitative co-eternity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

2. Canons of Dort, Ch. II, Art. 3 and 4.

Dr. J. Faber requests Synod to change the heading of Article 4 from "His death had infinite value" to "Why His death had infinite value."

The reason is that the two headings are now almost identical and that the present heading does not show the progress in the reasoning of the Canons.

C. **CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Although the expressions "co-eternal" and "co-essential" are somewhat archaic, they do excellently express the eternal unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. The heading of Canons of Dort, Ch. II, Article 4 should be changed to show progression of thought.

D. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decide:

To grant the requests of Dr. J. Faber and instruct the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* to include these changes in the next printing of the *Book of Praise*.

A motion, duly seconded, reads:

C.1. Since the expressions "co-eternal" and "co-essential" are somewhat archaic, and since "co-essential" can easily be misunderstood, it would be better to improve the language of Art. 8, B.C., to read, "For these three together, in one and the same essence, are equally eternal."

D.1. . . . to include the following change . . . to read in Art. 8, B.C., (2nd last sentence), "For these three are together, of one and the same essence, and are co-eternal."

The motion is **DEFEATED**.

The recommendation is **ADOPTED**.

## ARTICLE 92

### Re Article 63, Church Order

Committee 3 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, F, 7 Letter from br. A. Bergsma, Carman, MB.

### B. OBSERVATIONS

1. Br. A. Bergsma requests that the last paragraph of Article 63 of the Church Order be revised as follows:  
“The solemnization of a marriage shall take place in a worship service.”  
He recommends hereby the elimination of the option to solemnize a marriage in a private ceremony.
2. He adduces the following grounds:
  - a. No previous general synod has properly dealt with this matter.
  - b. Although the Scriptures do not command the solemnization of a marriage in a worship service, we would however act in accordance with the Holy Scripture when we do so, since God placed marriage in the framework of the covenant with His people.
  - c. There is no reason to exclude the congregation when two members marry.
  - d. The Form for the Solemnization of Marriage involves the consistory and congregation.
  - e. It is difficult to use the form in a private ceremony since changes are easily made.
  - f. The solemnization of marriages in a worship service makes it easier to avoid Roman-like superstition and it assures proper supervision of the churches.

### C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Synod Homewood dealt with this matter, deciding that the maintaining of Article 70 of the Church Order (old version) “shall be to the discretion of the churches” (Acts, Art. 74).
2. Grounds for this decision were:
  - a. It cannot be proven from the Word of God that it is proper. . . that the matrimonial state be confirmed in the presence of Christ’s Church.
  - b. Ministers have the possibility of solemnizing marriages of members of the congregation, calling upon the Name of the Lord.
3. No church has appealed this decision to a general synod or requested to have it revised. Consequently, there was no reason for previous general synods to deal with this matter.
4. In harmony with the decision of Homewood 1954, Synod Cloverdale 1983 adopting a revised Church Order, has incorporated the option that the solemnization of a marriage may take place either in a private ceremony or a public worship service.
5. Although it is correct that marriage and the “covenant of God with His people” are related and that the consistory and the congregation are involved when two members marry (Art. 63, C.O., and Form), this does not prove that the solemnization of a marriage must take place in a public worship service.
6. Also, when a marriage is solemnized in a private ceremony after proper announcements, the congregation is not excluded but encouraged to attend such a solemnization.
7. When consistories diligently maintain all the stipulations of Article 63 of the Church Order, “superstition” will be avoided and the adopted form will be used as it is.

**D. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decide:

To deny the request.

A motion to vote is ADOPTED.

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 93**

**Re Linguistic Changes to the Church Order**

Committee 3 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, F, 2 Letter from br. R. Wildeboer.

**B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. Br. R. Wildeboer proposes in his letter, dated September 10, 1985, "to apply legal drafting techniques to our Church Order that will add clarity, consistency, and correctness."
2. Br. Wildeboer has prepared a list of "proposed amendments" to that effect.
3. He is of the opinion that the Church Order can be improved. He still sees many errors in grammar, diction, and structure in both language and presentation.

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. The list of proposed changes which br. Wildeboer presents to this Synod appears to be mainly linguistic in character.
2. These proposed changes warrant a careful examination.
3. Synod 1983 appointed a Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*, and charged it to scrutinize and correct the text of the entire *Book of Praise* in order to achieve uniformity with respect to language and punctuation (*Acts* 1983, Art. 123, D. Recommendation, 12 and 13).

**D. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decide:

To pass on the linguistic changes proposed by br. Wildeboer to the Standing Committee for consideration of incorporation in the next printing of the *Book of Praise*.

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 94**

**Re Article 44, Church Order**

Committee 3 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, F, 5 Overture of the Church at Carman concerning Article 44 of the Church Order.

**B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. The Church at Carman, in examining the Church Order adopted by General Synod Cloverdale of 1983, noticed a difference between the "old" Article 41 in the previous Church Order and the revised one, which is called Article 44 in the Church Order adopted by General Synod 1983.
2. Some questions to be asked by the president of a classis according to the "old" Article 41 are not found in the revised Article 44.
3. The Church at Carman requests this synod to take into consideration that, "neither the committee report nor the *Acts* of General Synod Cloverdale of 1983 give reasons for deleting the original questions and we can therefore not refer to why this revision was made."

4. This church calls this Synod's attention to the sister-churches in the Netherlands. These churches have amended Article 44, "Kerkorde" in the following way: "De praeses zal vragen of de ambtelijke diensten voortgang hebben, de besluiten van de meerdere vergaderingen nageleefd worden en of er iets is, waarbij de kerkeraden het oordeel of de hulp van de Classis nodig hebben voor de goede voortgang van plaatselijk kerkelijk leven."

Carman translates:

"The president shall ask whether the work of the office-bearers continues, the decisions of the major assemblies are executed and where there is any matter in which the consistories need the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of their church."

5. It is the opinion of the Church at Carman that matters could be settled "in a more orderly and efficient way to the benefit of Christ's churches and their members," if the above quotation be inserted in the present Article 44 of our Church Order.
6. The Church at Carman, considering the suggestion that these questions will be raised during the yearly church visitation, reasons that church-visitors do not necessarily have to ask these questions.

#### C. **CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Synod 1983 did not provide ground for the deletion of the several questions in Article 44.
2. The proposal of the Church at Carman does give the president of a classis the opportunity to raise two very important matters relating to:
  - a. The ministry of the office-bearers;
  - b. The honouring of decisions of major assemblies.
3. The proposal of the Church at Carman may prevent delay in settling matters relating to these questions.

#### D. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decide:

1. To amend Article 44, Church Order, in the following way:
  - a. The president shall ask whether the ministry of the office-bearers is continued, the decisions of the major assemblies are honoured, and whether there is any matter in which the consistories need the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of their church.
  - b. To instruct the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* to include this amendment in the next printing of the *Book of Praise*.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

### ARTICLE 95

#### Re Articles 13 and 72, Church Order

Committee 3 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, F, 6 Overture of the Church at Burlington-West concerning Article 13 of the Church Order.

#### B. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. The Church at Burlington West requests Synod to revise Article 13 of the Church Order adopted by General Synod 1983 as follows:

"If a minister of the Word because of age, illness, physical or mental disability is rendered incapable of performing the duties of his office, he shall retain the honour and title of minister of the Word. He shall also retain his official bond with the church which he served last, and this church shall provide honourably

for his support. The same obligation exists toward's a minister's widow and/or dependants. Retirement of a minister shall take place with the approval of the consistory with the deacons and with the concurring advice of Classis and of deputies of Regional Synod."

2. This church presents the following considerations for this overture:
  - a. The present formulation of this article can be read as if it is only the minister who is involved in the matter of retirement, and not also the consistory.
  - b. The retirement age of a minister is not determined. It could be set arbitrarily.
  - c. The present article totally excluded the approval of the consistory with the deacons, and the approval or advice of classis and of deputies of regional synod in case a minister decides to retire "upon reaching retirement age."
  - d. According to reformed church polity, a minister of the Word cannot be admitted to the ministry, leave the church to which he is bound, be dismissed from his service within the congregation, enter upon another vocation, be deposed of office without the approval or judgment of classis, and, in most cases, also without the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod.
  - e. The same rule should be applied when a minister retires of active service.

#### C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. The present Article 13 of the Church Order, in speaking of "reaching retirement age," tends to undermine the character of the ministry as a life-long office and calling.
2. Reformed church-polity dictates that the approval of classis, and, in most cases, the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod, are needed when a minister of the Word is admitted to the ministry, leaves the church to which he is bound, is dismissed from his service within the congregation, enters upon another vocation, is deposed of office with the approval or judgment of classis, and, in most cases, also with the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod.
3. In order to promote good order and to prevent irregularities, the same rule should apply when a minister retires of active service.

#### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

1. To amend Article 13 of the Church Orders as follows:

"If a minister of the Word is rendered incapable of performing the duties of his office because of age, illness, physical or mental disability, he shall retain the honour and title of minister of the Word. He shall also retain his official bond with the church which he served last, and this church shall provide honourably for his support. The same obligation exists towards a minister's widow and/or dependants.

Retirement of a minister shall take place with the approval of the consistory with the deacons and with the concurring advice of classis and of deputies of regional synod."

2. To instruct the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* to include this amendment in the next printing of the *Book of Praise*.

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, F, 6 Overture of the Church at Burlington West concerning Article 72 of the Church Order.

#### B. OBSERVATIONS

1. The Church at Burlington West requests synod to amend Article 72.
2. This article speaks about serious and gross sins. One of the sins mentioned is "habitual drunkenness."
3. The Church at Burlington West states that drunkenness as such is sufficient reason for suspension.

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Drunkenness does not become a serious and gross sin only when it is habitual.
2. Drunkenness as such is sufficient reason for suspension.  
It renders the office-bearer unfaithful, unworthy, and incapable in the service of the Lord. I Cor. 4: 1, 2; I Tim. 3: 3; Titus 1: 7.

**D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decide:

1. To delete the adjective "habitual" in Article 72 of the Church Order.
2. To instruct the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* to change Article 72 accordingly in the next printing of the *Book of Praise*.  
The recommendation re Article 13 of the Church Order is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 96**

**Adjournment**

Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer requests that Psalm 103:1, 7 be sung, and leads in prayer.  
Synod is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1986**

**ARTICLE 97**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 72:8, 9 be sung, reads Ephesians 5:1-20, and leads in prayer.  
Roll call is held. All members are present.

**ARTICLE 98**

**Acts**

Acts, Article 87-96 are read and adopted.  
Plenary session is adjourned. The committees meet.

**AFTERNOON SESSION — FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1986**

**ARTICLE 99**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting.  
Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

**ARTICLE 100**

**Re Articles 13 and 72, Church Order (See Art. 95)**

Discussion continues.  
The recommendations re Art. 72 are ADOPTED.

## ARTICLE 101

### Text Apostles' Creed

A motion, reading:

"Synod decide to declare the document which br. L. VanZandwyk added to his letter about the word 'Christian' and to which he gave the title 'I believe . . . a "Christian" Church' is inadmissible on the basis of its harsh, unbrotherly, and therefore unchristian, language."

The motion is ADOPTED.

Committee 1 presents a majority report and a minority report.

#### A. MATERIAL — Agenda VIII, C, 1 — 9

Letter from the Church at Burlington East re insertion of the word "Christian" in section III of the Apostles' Creed.

Letter of Dr. J. Faber re the same.

Letter from the Church at Houston re the same.

Letter from the Church at Toronto re the same.

Letter from the Church at Orangeville re the same.

Letter from the Church at Edmonton (Immanuel) re the same.

Letter from the Church at Burlington West re the same.

Letter from br. L. VanZandwyk re the same.

Letter from the Rev. B.J. Berends re the same.

An amendment reading: "change Recommendation 2a of the majority report as follows, to instruct the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* to insert the word 'Christian' in the Hymn version of the Apostles' Creed, if this is possible" is ADOPTED.

The majority report reads as follows.

#### B. OBSERVATIONS

1. The arguments to remove the word "Christian" from the adopted version of the Apostles' Creed are based mainly on two points:
  - a. The original and authentic Latin "received text" of the Apostles' Creed speaks of "the holy, catholic church" (without Christian). This is the argument of "catholicity."
  - b. The text in English has always followed the "authentic Latin text (without Christian)." This is the argument of "ecumenicity" and "apostolicity."
2. The appellants argue that the Canadian Reformed Churches have from the beginning (Synod 1958) used the English text (without "Christian") and that the mandate of the Committee on Translation and Revision of the Confessional and Liturgical Forms (appointed in 1974) allowed the use of the "received text" (without "Christian") — "comparison of the Dutch version with the original languages."

It follows from this that Synod 1974 did not "remove" the word "Christian" (according to the appellants) but rather objected to the "reinstating" of this word.
3. It is nowhere stated by the appellants that the "reinstating" of the word "Christian" is contrary to the Word of God and the Reformed confessions. On the other hand, some who wish to retain the word "Christian" see its removal as a loss of an important tenet of faith, if not an attack on the confession.
4. It is considered "a discrepancy" or oversight of Synod 1983 that it did not insert the word "Christian" in the Hymn 1A version of the Apostles' Creed, in Lord's Day 21 (Q. 54) of the Heidelberg Catechism, and in the Canons of Dort, Chapter II (Rejection of Errors, Paragraph 1).

### C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Although it is true that the commonly "received text" speaks of "holy, catholic church," which text is followed especially in English-speaking countries, this does not mean that other texts in use in other areas do not have good historical validity or present value. The addition of the word "Christian" in the age of the reformation does not deny "catholicity" in terms of the contents of the confession concerning the church.

There is no reason to assume that the addition of the word "Christian" in the English text would mean "an obstacle to possible unity" among English-speaking Christians or that this addition has any negative effect with respect to "ecumenicity" and "apostolicity."

2. Prior to 1974, no general synod dealt with the exact version and translation of the Apostles' Creed. It is therefore to be understood that only after 1974 conflict arose on this point.

When the churches in 1958 adopted the Dutch text of the Heidelberg Catechism as the authentic one, it was thereby implied that the Dutch version of the Apostles' Creed (including "Christian") was also the official version. It has not been proven that when that synod recommended the (Christian Reformed) English text of the Heidelberg Catechism for use in the churches, it thereby decided that the version of the Apostles' Creed contained therein was the official one. The opposite is indicated in the fact that the churches subsequently undertook to come to an official and accepted translation.

It is therefore an overstatement to say that the Canadian Reformed Churches have, since 1958, officially and exclusively adopted that version of the Apostles' Creed which is in agreement with the so-called "authentic Latin text" or "received text."

3. a. The deletion of the word "Christian" from section III of the Apostles' Creed was considered by Synod 1983 to be "an impoverishment of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith."  
b. The expression "Christian church" has its roots in the teaching of the Holy Scriptures (Matthew 16: 18; 18: 20; Galatians 1: 22), was known in the early church, and purposely used in the time of the great Reformation. It therefore is a part of the catholic and apostolic faith which may also be confessed in our time.  
c. The suggestion to remove the word "Christian" from a creed on the basis of historical and textual grounds should not be construed as an attack upon the Scriptural truth that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church.
4. It is correct that "discrepancies" with respect to the text of the Apostles' Creed in the *Book of Praise* be removed. However, it is not clear whether synod may independently change copyrighted material (tune of Hymn 1A).

### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

1. Not to accede to the requests of Dr. J. Faber and the Churches at Burlington, Houston, Toronto, Orangeville, and Edmonton (Immanuel).
2. a. To instruct the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* to insert the word "Christian" in the hymn version of the Apostles' Creed, if this is possible.  
b. To have the word "Christian" inserted in the text of the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 21, Q. 54, "What do you believe concerning the holy, catholic, Christian church?," and the Canons of Dort, II (Rejection of Errors, Par. 1).  
The minority report reads as follows.

## B. OBSERVATIONS

1. The arguments to remove the word "Christian" from the 1983 General Synod's adopted version of the Apostles' Creed are mainly based on two points:
  - a. The original and authentic Latin "received text" of the Apostles' Creed speaks of "the holy, catholic church" (without "Christian").
  - b. The text in English has always followed the "authentic Latin text (without 'Christian')."
2. The appellants argue that the Canadian Reformed Churches have from the beginning (Synod 1958) used the English text (without "Christian") and that the mandate of the Committee on Translation and Revision of the Confessional and Liturgical Forms (appointed in 1974) allowed the use of the "received text" (without "Christian").

It follows from this that Synod 1974 did not "remove" the word "Christian" but objected to the "reinstating" of this word.
3. Some of the appellants who wish to retain the word "Christian" see its removal as a loss of an important tenet of faith, if not an attack on the confession.

## C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. The English text of the Apostles' Creed has always followed the original and authentic Latin "received text" (without "Christian").
2. From 1958 until the 1972 edition of the *Book of Praise* the churches used the English text of the Apostles' Creed (without "Christian"), without anyone voicing objections against that text or requesting insertion of the word "Christian."
3. Synod 1974 rightly stated that the Committee on the Church Book should not have made the unauthorized insertion of the word "Christian" in the Apostles' Creed.
4. Synod 1983 wrongly spoke of a change of policy when Synod 1974 referred the Committee for Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms to the original languages.
5. It was in accordance with their mandate given by Synod 1974 when the Committee on Translation and Revision of the Confessional and the Liturgical Forms reported in 1979 and 1980 that they had taken as basis for their translation of the Apostles' Creed the Latin "received text" (without "Christian").
6. Synod 1974 did not have to consult with the sister-churches abroad because synod restored the English text to its original form as used by the churches since 1958.
7. Synod 1983 stated, but did not prove that "the deletion of this word ("Christian") is an impoverishment of the expression of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith."

## D. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide:

To delete the word "Christian" in section III of the Apostles' Creed as printed in the *Book of Praise* on pages 436 and 482.

The amended recommendations of the majority report are ADOPTED.

Consequently, the minority report is not voted on.

## ARTICLE 102

### Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for supper.

EVENING SESSION — FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1986

ARTICLE 103

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 135:1, 3, and 10 be sung. Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

ARTICLE 104

**Re Article 35, Church Order**

Committee 3 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, F, 1 Letter of br. E. Witten of Burlington, ON.

**B. OSERVATIONS**

1. Br. Witten appeals the decision of 1983 Synod Cloverdale (*Acts*, Art. 91) to change the last sentence of Art. 35, Church Order, "Furthermore his office (of president) shall cease when the assembly has ended," and to adopt a new version, which reads, "In major assemblies the office of the president shall cease when the assembly has ended."
2. Br. Witten is convinced that not only in major assemblies the office of president should cease when the assembly has ended, but also in the consistory.
3. Br. Witten adduces the following grounds:
  - a. Our sister-churches in the Netherlands and Australia found no reason to change the last sentence of Article 35, C.O., when revising their Church Order.
  - b. This sentence is called the most important parts of Art. 35 and it is based on an old tradition going back to the first General Synods of the reformed churches in the Netherlands, 1571, 1581.
  - c. This stipulation is made to prevent hierarchy, but the present version may lead to hierarchy.
  - d. The fact that the consistory is a permanent body does not imply that also the function of president is a permanent one.
4. The Committee of Revision of the Church Order recommended to the 1983 Synod to delete the sentence that the office of president ceases when the assembly has been ended.
5. From the *Acts* of the 1983 Synod (Art. 91) it appears that br. E. Witten (and others) requested synod "to retain the sentence, 'Furthermore his office shall cease when the assembly has ended.' "
6. The 1983 Synod considers that fear is expressed "that exclusion of this part of the article will lead to some form of hierarchy or to the creation of permanent 'higher' bodies or offices."

The sentence could be maintained as follows, "In major assemblies the office of the president shall cease when the assembly ends."

The Committee for Revision does not consider this addition "objectionable."  
The 1983 Synod adopted this addition.

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Although our sister-churches in the Netherlands and Australia indeed have found no reason to change the last sentence of Art. 35 in their Church Order, from the report of our Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad (Sec-

tion IV and V) it appears that the present stipulation in our Art. 35 C.O. does not meet with any objection from these churches.

2. The clause in Article 35 that the office of the president ceases when the assembly has ended is based on an old tradition and has been called "most important," however, this was mostly said with a view to the office of the president in a major assembly.

3. The 1983 Cloverdale Synod did maintain that in major assemblies the office of president ceases when the assembly ends, but this synod saw apparently no dangers of "hierarchy" and "permanent 'higher' offices" when this is not stipulated for the office of president of the consistory.
4. Br. Witten did not prove that when a consistory in accordance with Article 38, C.O., appoints the minister (or, in the absence of a minister, another member of the consistory) as the one who will preside the meetings of the consistory and also grants him a certain function for the time in between meetings of the consistory (as signing of documents, representation, etc.), this leads to "hierarchy" or "permanent 'higher' offices" in the church.
5. The consistory of a church is a "permanent body" composed of the ministers of the Word and the elders, who as a rule shall meet once a month (Art. 38, C.O.). It is not in conflict with the reformed character of the Church Order when the consistory also allows the president to represent the consistory and authorizes him to fulfill other duties on behalf of the consistory in the time between the meetings of the consistory.

#### D. **RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decide:

Not to grant the request.

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

### **ARTICLE 105**

#### **Re Articles 44 and 46, Church Order**

Committee 3 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, F, 3 Request of Classis Alberta/Manitoba held October 23/24, 1985, to amend Art.'s 44 and 46, Church Order.

#### **B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. Classis Alberta/Manitoba of October 23/24, 1985, proposes to insert in Articles 44 and 46 of the Church Order the clause,  
"unless great distances render this inadvisable."
2. Classis Alberta/Manitoba writes,  
"Ever since the churches in Classis Alberta/Manitoba have been instituted there have never been held more than two classes in one year."  
The main reason for this was "the great distances to be travelled by the delegates" and the cost associated with it.
3. Classis Alberta/Manitoba states that "the Provision made in Article 44, 'Such meetings shall be held at least once in three months, unless the convening church, in consultation with the neighbouring church, concludes that no matters have been sent in by the churches which would warrant the convening of a Classis,' does not apply to our situation since this provision deals with lack of material for the agenda rather than with geographical considerations."
4. Classis Alberta/Manitoba does not adduce any grounds for their proposal to amend Article 46, C.O.
5. The 1983 Cloverdale Synod, in considering the clause "unless great distances renders this inadvisable," is of the opinion that "the danger is there that this

clause might be used as an excuse not to conduct church visitation," (*Acts*, Art. 91, C, p. 63).

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Article 44, C.O., specifies that a classis shall be held every three months. It allows, however, a convening church, in consultation with the neighbouring church, to cancel every other classis, provided they have concluded "that no matters have been sent by the churches which would warrant the convening of a Classis."
2. Decisions on important matters should not be delayed merely because of great distances and travelling expenses involved.
3. Article 44, if applied properly by the churches of the classical district Alberta/Manitoba, does not compel the churches to convene a classis more often than is their present practice.
4. Classis Alberta/Manitoba does not refute the arguments of the 1983 Cloverdale Synod and does not prove the need of amending Article 46, C.O.

**D. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decide:

Not to accede to the request of Classis Alberta/Manitoba held on October 23/24, 1985. The recommendation is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 106**

**Standing Committee for Publication *Book of Praise***

Committee 1 presents:

**A. MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, B, 1, a, b, 2.

The report is discussed and taken back by the Advisory Committee for further consideration.

**ARTICLE 107**

**Theological College**

Committee 3 presents:

**A. MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, A, 1 Nominations for the Board of Governors of the Theological College

a. Regional Synod East

b. Regional Synod West

A, 2 Board of Governors, Report to General Synod 1986.

**B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. a. The Board of Governors recommends that synod "appoint, select, reappoint, or reelect six active ministers as governors (in accordance with Section 3 04 [a] of By-law Number 1 [as amended]) to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each regional Synod area."
- b. Regional Synod East of March 27/29, 1985, nominated as governors (Academic Committee) the Revs. P. Kingma, J. Mulder, and Cl. Stam, and, as substitutes, the Revs. J. VanRietschoten, M. Werkman, and J. DeJong, in that order.
- c. Regional Synod West of February 5-7, 1985, nominated as governors

(Academic Committee) the Revs. J. Geertsema, M. van Beveren, and J. Visscher, and, as substitutes, the Revs. M. VanderWel, B.J. Berends, and C. VanSpronsen, in that order.

- d. The Rev. J. Geertsema has been appointed by Synod as professor of New Testament (*Acts*, Article 10).
2. The Board of Governors presents the following proposals regarding the governors (Finance and Property Committee):
  - a. To accept the resignations of Mr. Arie Hordyk and Mr. Maas VanGrootheest as governors, and pursuant to Section 5 (2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of By-law Number 1 (as amended);
  - b. to appoint Hendrik Buist, Esq. (Burlington), and Casper G. Heerings, Esq. (Dundas), as governors for a term from the date of their appointment until the third general synod held after the date of their appointment;
  - c. to reappoint A.L. VanderHout, Esq. (Hamilton), as governor for a term from the date of his reappointment until the second general synod held after the date of his reappointment;
  - d. to reappoint Henk Kampen, Esq. (Richmond Hill), and C.M. Loopstra, LL.B. (Toronto), as governors for a term from the date of their reappointment until the next general synod held after the date of their reappointment.
3. The Board of Governors presents the following information regarding the Faculty of the Theological College:
  - a. After five years as Lecturer of Ecclesiology, the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene requested to be released from his obligations towards the College due to his retirement from the active ministry and his intended move to British Columbia. The Board of Governors is thankful for his faithful labour until the end of the academic year 1984/1985.
  - b. The Rev. G. VanDooren, although retired as lecturer in Diaconiology in 1982, made himself available to continue as temporary instructor until the end of February, 1984.
  - c. On September 7, 1984, Dr. K. Deddens could be installed as professor of Diaconiology. His mandate was extended when he, after the retirement of Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, was also appointed professor of Ecclesiology.
  - d. Prof. L. Selles, due to his age, is to retire as professor of New Testament at the end of the academic year 1985/1986.

#### C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. In accordance with By-law 1 (Section 3.04) of the Theological College, the General Synod shall appoint or reappoint six active ministers to the Board of Governors.
2. In accordance with By-law 1 (Section 3.04) of the Theological College, the General Synod shall appoint or reappoint five brothers, who are not ministers.
3. The Rev. J. Geertsema, although nominated by Regional Synod West, February 5 — 7, 1985, to the Board of Governors, cannot be appointed to the Board of Governors due to his appointment as Professor of New Testament at the College.
4. Regional Synod West nominated as first substitute the Rev. M. VanderWel of Abbotsford, BC.

#### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

1. To appoint as Governors of the Theological College the following active ministers and their substitutes:

From Eastern Canada: Rev. P. Kingma, Rev. J. Mulder, Rev. Cl. Stam.

Substitutes: Rev. J. VanRietschoten, Rev. M. Werkman, Rev. J. De-Jong, in that order;

From Western Canada: Rev. M. van Beveren, Rev. M. VanderWel, Rev. J. Visscher.

Substitutes: Rev. B.J. Berends, Rev. C. VanSpronsen, Rev. J.D. Wielenga, in that order;

2. to appoint as governors of the Theological College the following brothers who are not ministers, according to the retirement schedule adopted by the Board of Governors:

H. Buist (9 years); C.G. Heeringa (9 years); A.L. VanderHout (6 years); H. Kampen (3 years); C.M. Loopstra (3 years);

3. to express our sincere gratitude to the brothers A. Hordyk and M. VanGrootheest for their many years of faithful service as trustees/governors of the Theological College;
4. to thank the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, M.Th., for the faithful and fruitful work done as Lecturer of Ecclesiology at the Theological College;
5. to thank the Rev. G. VanDooren, M.Th., for the work faithfully done as temporary instructor in diaconology until the end of February, 1984.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

#### **ARTICLE 108**

##### **Adjournment**

Elder N. Torenvliet requests that Psalm 32:1 be sung, and leads in prayer.

Synod is adjourned.

#### **MORNING SESSION — SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 1986**

#### **ARTICLE 109**

##### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Hymn 40:1, 2, and 5 be sung, reads Ephesians 5:21-6:9, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. All members are present.

#### **ARTICLE 110**

##### **Acts**

Acts, Articles 97 — 108 read and adopted.

Synod is adjourned. The committees meet.

#### **ARTICLE 111**

##### **Adjournment**

Elder J. Gelderman requests that Psalm 52:1 and 5 be sung, and leads in prayer and thanksgiving.

Synod is adjourned.

#### **MORNING SESSION — MONDAY, APRIL 28, 1986**

#### **ARTICLE 112**

##### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 115:1, 5, and 6 be sung, reads Ephesians 6: 10-24, and leads in prayer.

Roll call reveals that all members are present.

## ARTICLE 113

### Greetings from Australia

A letter with fraternal greetings and best wishes is received from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. The chairman reads the letter and expresses the appreciation of synod for this sign of unity with our sister-churches abroad.

## ARTICLE 114

### Personal Matters

The chairman extends congratulations to br. N. Torenvliet, who celebrated his 71st birthday. He also addresses the Rev. W. Huizinga, who accepted the call extended to him by the Free Reformed Church of Armadale, Western Australia. He wishes Rev. W. Huizinga strength and the guidance and blessing of the Lord in following this call.

## ARTICLE 115

### Adjournment

Synod is adjourned. The committees meet.

## AFTERNOON SESSION — MONDAY, APRIL 28, 1986

## ARTICLE 116

### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting.

Roll call is held. Elder H. Veenendaal is absent with notification.

The chairman welcomes Prof. Dr. J. Faber, Principal of the Theological College, and br. A.J. Hordyk, Esq., Treasurer of the Board of Governors of the Theological College. The former will meet with Committee 2 and the latter with Committee 3, both in an advisory capacity.

The plenary session is adjourned. The committees meet.

## EVENING SESSION — MONDAY, APRIL 28, 1986

## ARTICLE 117

### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 18:1 and 16 be sung.

Roll call is held. All members are present.

## ARTICLE 118

### Book of Praise (See Art. 106)

Committee 1 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL**— Agenda VIII, B, I, a, b, 2 Report of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*;  
Report re Audit Finances Standing Committee;  
Report from Dr. J. Faber re Committee for the preparation of definite texts of creeds and confessions.

## B. OBSERVATIONS

1. The Standing Committee for the Publications of the *Book of Praise* reports to Synod regarding its activities (see Appendix of Acts).
2. The Church at Brampton reports that no audit of the books of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* was possible since it was "informed by the convener of the committee that there are no financial books for the committee." The Church at Brampton recommends that "this appointment be discontinued unless the financial books for this committee exist elsewhere."
3. Dr. J. Faber proposes that synod "set a target date for the definite adoption of the creeds and confessions and appoint a committee for the preparation of this final edition. The committee could even be mandated to take also into consideration the important work that in the meantime has been done in the Christian Reformed Church with respect to the modernization of the English text of especially the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort."
4. In the Preface to the *Book of Praise*, the Standing Committee writes that "except for the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed, our creeds and confessions are now presented in the more modern version provisionally adopted by the 1983 General Synod."

## C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Although the Committee does not specify whether it indeed fulfilled its mandate given by the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale regarding the linguistic correction and scrutiny of the entire *Book of Praise* (Acts, Art. 123, Rec. 13), it can be assumed that the Committee did fulfill its mandate in this respect.
2. It is indeed not possible for the Church at Brampton to audit the books of the Standing Committee if no such books are available.  
The treasurer of the General Fund reports that an amount of \$556.07 was paid for the "Committee for the *Book of Praise*." The Standing Committee reports that it is "not involved in financial transactions."
3. It is important for the "final edition" of the *Book of Praise* that also the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds be linguistically revised. Since the Standing Committee for the publication of the *Book of Praise* has already been appointed for linguistic scrutiny and correction, there is no need to appoint a special committee for this work. It is good that a "target date" be set for a final edition.

## D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

1. To thank the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* for its report and for the work done.
2. To reappoint the committee with the following mandate:
  - a. to see to it that the *Book of Praise* remains available to the churches at a reasonable price;
  - b. to make the necessary arrangements with printers and others for the production and distribution of the *Book of Praise*;
  - c. to maintain its corporate status in order to be able to protect the interest of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*;
  - d. to implement all synod decisions relating to the contents of the *Book of Praise*;
  - e. to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* also among others;
  - f. to serve as address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed;

- g. to see to the linguistic revision of the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed and to present a draft of this revision to the churches no later than 1 year before the next general synod and to include this revision in the report to the next general synod for the final edition of the *Book of Praise*.
- 3. To thank the Church at Brampton for its report re the auditing of the books of the Standing Committee.
- 4. Not to reappoint the Church at Brampton for this task.
- 5. To set the General Synod of 1989 as target date for the final edition of the *Book of Praise*.

A motion, duly seconded, reads:

"Replace Consideration 3 with: 'It is important that in the "final edition" of the *Book of Praise* also the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds be presented in a more modern English version.'

Delete Recommendation 2, g.

Insert Recommendation 3: 'Since the modern English version of the other creeds was presented by a separate committee, it stands to reason also to appoint a small, separate committee for the modernization of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.'

Renumber existing Recommendations 3, 4, 5, as 4, 5, 6."

The motion is **DEFEATED**.

The recommendations of the committee report are **ADOPTED**.

## ARTICLE 119

### Letter from Br. VanHuisstede re Election of Office-bearers

Committee 4 presents:

**A. MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, H, 4 Letter from br. B. VanHuisstede re Election of Office-bearers by the Congregation.

#### **B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. Br. VanHuisstede states that the submission is "a letter of appeal concerning objections which I have against the application of what you and I confess in Art. 31 of the Belgic Confession and what the churches have stipulated in Art. 3 of the Church Order, namely: 'That the ministers of God's Word, elders, and deacons ought to be chosen to their offices by lawful election of the church.'"
2. Br. Van Huisstede also states "that this letter of appeal has nothing, I emphasize, nothing to do with the so-called Women's Voting Rights."
3. Br. VanHuisstede emphasizes in his submission that "the congregation is called by the Lord to choose her office-bearers," while "only a small part of all the communicant members is involved."
4. Br. VanHuisstede expresses the hope and the prayer that the 1986 General Synod "may come to the same insight about this matter and will take the decision to find ways to have that wrong-doing changed in the midst of the churches of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

#### **C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Although br. VanHuisstede states that this submission "has nothing to do with the women's voting rights," the purpose of his letter is to permit women to take part in the election of office-bearers.
2. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 considered that there is an obvious lack of consensus on this matter (Acts, Art. 160, C, 1).
3. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 also considered that "various church-

es have expressed their conviction that the matter of women's voting rights does not live in the midst of the churches and that granting women's voting rights would definitely cause great concern and even division."

4. Br. VanHuisstede asks this general synod to make a decision on a matter, dealt with and decided upon by a previous synod, without substantiating his request with new grounds (Art. 33, C.O.), or proving that the previous decision was in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order (Art. 31, C.O.).

**D. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decides not to accede to br. VanHuisstede's request.  
The recommendation is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 120**

**Re The 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale, Acts, Art. 160**

Committee 4 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda III, H, 8, 14
- B. Letter from br. J. DeVos re Art. 160 of the *Acts* of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983.
14. Letter from the Church at Smithers re letter from br. J. DeVos, Art. 160 of the *Acts* of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983.

**B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. Br. J. DeVos submits his "objections to the manner in which the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has disposed of the matter" of women's voting rights.
2. He is "very disappointed in the conduct of this synod" and considers it to be a "lack of continuity" and "a lack of respect . . . for the arguments brought forth . . ."
3. He states "that it does not belong to the competence of the general synod to grant or not to grant women's voting rights."
4. He further states that "the general synod had the duty to rule whether or not the traditional restriction of voting to 'male confessing members' must be maintained."
5. He is of the opinion that "if the status quo does not change, there remains no moral hindrance for any consistory to introduce women's voting rights by its local regulations."
6. He urges this synod to rescind the decision of the Synod of 1983.
7. He "was shocked to read the following sentence: 'even if the Report of the Committee would be conclusive and clear with respect to its considerations, which it is not, it would still for the above-mentioned reasons be unwise to grant such voting rights' " (Considerations, 4).
8. He urges synod "to pronounce that the statement, 'even if the report . . . , etc.,' is not a statement worthy of an assembly of Christian churches and it is not, and cannot be, ground for any decision whatsoever."
9. The Canadian Reformed Church at Smithers disagrees with the statement of br. DeVos that "there remains no moral hindrance . . . etc." (Observation 5).
10. The Canadian Reformed Church at Smithers asks synod not to reopen the discussion on this matter.

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Br. DeVos is correct in his statement that synod had the duty to rule in this matter (Observation 4).

2. It is therefore incorrect to state that it does not belong to the competence of synod to grant or not to grant women's voting rights (Observation 3).
3. It is therefore also incorrect to state that there is no moral hindrance for any consistory to introduce women's voting rights by its own regulations (Observation 5).
4. Br. DeVos does not prove that the decision of the 1983 General Synod was in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order (Art. 31, C.O.), neither does he substantiate his request with new grounds (Art. 33, C.O.).
5. The last part of Consideration 4 of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale certainly gives rise to misunderstanding and is not a correct consideration, which can be upheld. The basic conclusion of the General Synod of Cloverdale is thereby, however, not removed as binding for the churches.

**D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decides,

1. not to accede to the request of br. J. DeVos;
2. to send this decision as a response to br. J. DeVos as well as to the Church at Smithers.

A motion "that Committee 4 take back its report for reconsideration to consider the arguments from the floor," is DEFEATED.

The recommendations of the committee are ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 121**

**Adjournment**

Elder J. DeHaas requests that Psalm 119:1 and 40 be sung, and leads in closing prayer. Synod is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 1986**

**ARTICLE 122**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 150:1 and 3 be sung, reads I Timothy 1:1-17, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. Elder J. Vandenbos is replaced by elder T.M.P. VanderVen, who hopes to attend synod for the rest of the time of synod.

**ARTICLE 123**

**Acts**

Acts, Articles 112-121 are read and adopted.

**ARTICLE 124**

**Report on Contact with OPC (See Art. 46, 53, 56, 67, 70)**

Committee 4 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, J, 1.

The report is discussed.

Synod is adjourned for lunch.

**AFTERNOON SESSION — TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 1986**

**ARTICLE 125**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, and requests that Psalm 131:1, 2, and 3 be sung. Roll call is held. All members are present.

**ARTICLE 126**

**Report on Contact OPC (See Art. 46, 53, 56, 67, 70, 125)**

The discussion continues.

Committee 4 presents:

**MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, J, I, point A.

A. Synod 1983 gave the mandate to the Committee for Contact OPC as follows:

“To continue contact with the OPC, while taking into account the rules for ‘Ecclesiastical Contact.’ ”

These rules for “Ecclesiastical Contact” (Synod 1977, *Acts*, Art. 91, p. 42) are as follows:

- a. “To invite delegates to each other’s General Assemblies (G.A.) and to accord such delegates privileges of the floor in the Assembly or Synod, but no vote;
- b. to exchange Minutes and Acts of each other’s General Assemblies and General Synods as well as communications on major issued of mutual concern, and to solicit comments on these documents;
- c. to be diligent by means of discussions to use the contact for the purpose of reaching full correspondence.”

**Observations**

1. The committee reports that it sent a delegate to 52nd and 53rd General Assemblies of the OPC (pp. 1 & 2). Reports of these delegates are included in the Committee Report.
2. The committee reports that it has invited the OPC to send a delegate to the 1986 General Synod (p. 2).
3. The committee reports that copies of Acts of the G.A. and the General Synods of the Canadian Reformed Churches were exchanged (p. 2).
4. The committee reports that it “did mention contact by means of correspondence and delegates to their General Assemblies.”

**Recommendations**

Synod decides,

1. That the Committee for Contact OPC has seen to it that delegates were invited to the General Synod and sent to the General Assemblies (G.A.) of the OPC and has therefore executed the section “a” of the Rules for Ecclesiastical Contact;
2. that the Committee for Contact OPC has exchanged Minutes and Acts of each other’s General Assemblies and General Synods and has therefore executed the first part of rule “b” of the Rules for Ecclesiastical Contact;
3. that the committee gives evidence that it communicated with the OPC as required by the second part of rule “b”;
4. that although the committee has been diligent, there is no evidence from the Committee Report that there is progress in “reaching full correspondence,” re rule “c”.

The recommendations re point A are ADOPTED.

B. Synod 1983 gave the Committee the mandate to “publish for the benefit of our churches a detailed evaluation of the confessional and church-political divergencies, showing

proof that these divergencies do not form an impediment in recognizing the OPC as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ."

#### **Observations**

1. Synod notes that the committee published an "Evaluation of Divergencies."
2. The committee recommends synod to "adopt this report (Evaluation of Divergencies) given for the benefit of the churches as showing proof that these divergencies did not form an impediment in recognizing the OPC as a true church." (p. 2, end of IV)

#### **Considerations**

1. This Report may reflect the situation at the time recognition was given to the OPC (1977).
2. Because of various developments in the OPC after 1977, further discussion with the OPC concerning the divergencies remains necessary (Synod of 1983, *Acts*, Art. 55, C, 2, a).

#### **Recommendations**

1. Synod thanks the committee for publishing this report and discharges the committee from this part of its mandate.
2. Synod decides not to adopt this evaluation as final in view of the recent developments in the OPC.  
The recommendation re point 2 is DEFEATED.  
A motion, duly seconded, reads:  
To replace Considerations and Recommendations re point 2 as follows:

#### **Considerations**

1. General Synod 1980, *Acts*, Art. 97, II, C. Recommendations decided:
  - a. "To express regret that the evaluation of the divergencies, as discussed in the letter of April, 1976, was not explained in detail by the General Synod of Coaldale of 1977, before stating that these divergencies "do not form an impediment to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as churches of the Lord Jesus Christ."
  - b. To admit that this neglect may have given the impression in the churches that this recognition was "premature."
  - c. For the benefit of our churches a detailed evaluation of these divergencies, showing them not to be an impediment in recognizing the OPC as a true church, should yet be provided. To incorporate this task in the mandate of the Committee for Contact with the OPC.
  - d. To declare that this does not imply that the statement made by the General Synod of Coaldale of 1977 re the OPC as a true church was wrong."
2. Though the Committee for Contact had objected to this part of its mandate, the General Synod of 1983 repeated and continued this part of its mandate.
3. This part of the mandate was for historical purposes, i.e. to provide the detailed evaluation not given by the General Synod of 1977.
4. This mandate was not connected with the ongoing evaluation of recent developments.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Synod thanks the committee for publishing this detailed evaluation of the divergencies for the benefit of the churches.
2. Synod receives this report as the detailed evaluation of the divergencies which the General Synod of 1977 neglected to give for its decision to recognize the OPC as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
This motion is ADOPTED.  
Synod adjourns for supper.

EVENING SESSION — TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 1986

ARTICLE 127

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 25:2 and 4 be sung. Roll call is held. All members are present.

ARTICLE 128

**Report on Contact OPC (See Arts. 46, 53, 56, 67, 70, 124, 126)**

The discussion continues.

**MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, J, 1, point C.

A motion, duly seconded, reads:

To replace recommendations 3 and 4 as follows:

3. To charge the committee to continue the discussion on divergencies, which are an issue of mutual concern, and to report on this to the next synod.
4. To express the hope that this continued discussion will remove obstacles to full correspondence.

This motion is ADOPTED.

The amended point C reads now:

- C. Synod 1983 gave the mandate to "evaluate the reaction of the CEIR of the OPC regarding the divergencies, and come to the next synod with recommendations (cf. C. Considerations I, a)."

**Observations**

1. The committee has evaluated the reaction of the CEIR regarding the divergencies as given in its letter of October 25, 1983.
2. The committee notes that although some points of difference were clarified "this letter, however, did not bring us much closer to a uniformity of opinion with regard to the divergencies under discussion" (p. 46, b).
3. The committee states that "we seriously doubt whether it will serve a useful purpose to continue this discussion of divergencies on a committee level" (p. 46, e).
4. The committee recommends to synod:
  - a. To accept this evaluation of the reaction of the CEIR of the OPC regarding the divergencies.
  - b. To continue the committee with the mandate to continue the contact with OPC taking into account the rules for "Ecclesiastical Contact" which include "continued discussion" on "issues of mutual concern."
  - c. Not to charge the committee to continue the discussion on the divergencies between the confessional and church-political standards of the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church."

**Considerations**

1. It is regrettable that after so many years of discussion we have not come closer to uniformity of opinion.
2. Although the doubt expressed by the committee as to the usefulness of continued discussion may perhaps not be unfounded, this is not sufficient reason to discontinue this discussion on a committee level.
3. Despite similar objection in the past, previous synods have vigorously continued the mandate to discuss the divergencies. (Synod of 1971, Art. 92, p. 44; Synod of 1974, p. 58, Cons. 4, b and Recom. 3, b; Synod of 1977, Art. 91, p. 42, Cons.

- 4; Synod of 1980, Art. 152, D, 2, b, c, & e; Synod of 1983, Art. 55, C, 2, and Recom. d, c)
4. Synod of 1983 expressly tied the evaluations and discussions of the divergencies to the new developments (Synod of 1983, *Acts*, Art. 55, C, 2, a), and the committee itself stresses that the doctrinal issues re Blue Bell "are almost precisely the same as the confessional and church-government divergencies which we have been discussing with the OPC for some time now" (p. 13).
  5. Despite the given recognition which the Canadian Reformed Churches granted the OPC (Synod of 1977), it has been deemed necessary that "rules for Ecclesiastical Contact can serve as a basis for further discussion with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the hope and intent that eventually full correspondence expressing the unity of true faith can be established" (Synod of 1977, Art. 91, Cons. e, p. 42).

### **Recommendations**

Synod decides,

1. To take note of the reaction of the CEIR of the OPC regarding the divergencies but also to express disappointment that the letter of the CEIR did not bring us "much closer to a uniformity of opinion."
  2. To continue the committee with the mandate to continue the contact with the OPC taking into account the rules for "Ecclesiastical Contact" which include "continued discussion" on "issues of mutual concern."
  3. To charge the committee to continue the discussion on divergencies, which are an issue of mutual concern, and to report on this to the next synod.
  4. To express the hope that this continued discussion will remove obstacles to full correspondence.  
The recommendations re point C are ADOPTED.
- D. Synod 1983 gave the mandate to: "complete the discussion and evaluation of relationships which the OPC has with other parties, especially the RES, the CRC, and the PCA (see C. Considerations 3, b)."

### **Observations**

1. Concerning the OPC's contact with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) the committee recommends "that this relation be kept a topic of discussion and concern in our mutual contacts" (p. 5, The CRC).
2. Concerning the invitation of the PCA, the committee sees "that the OPC is not unanimous even in its committee on this important matter. There is concern that the reformed character of the OPC will be swallowed by a 'southern Presbyterianism' and 'evangelicalism.' We note these concerns with thankfulness, and we urge that our churches remember the OPC in prayer as they struggle to come to a decision" (p. 7, top).
3. Concerning the RES, the committee states that it "can appreciate the leadership which the OPC and its delegates took in discussion and action . . . yet we lament this decision of continued membership in the RES" (p. 8, middle).

### **Considerations**

1. The relationships which the OPC entertains with other parties (esp. RES, CRC, PCA), has had the serious and ongoing concern of the committee. The committee made various submissions and contacts concerning these matters.
2. It is to be noted that many of the issues with respect to these matters were not resolved and that synod shares the concerns of the committee.
3. It has been the stand of the Canadian Reformed Churches since 1971 (*Acts*, Art. 149, Cons. 5, p. 44) that the relationship of the OPC with the CRC and membership in the RES are impediments to reach full correspondence. This

is a stand which has never been repealed while the concerns about these very matters were maintained (c.f. *Acts* 1983, Art. 55, C, 3).

4. The committee considers that in case the OPC joins and is received into the PCA there are "provisions for continuing OPC" and that "we might be able to continue our contacts with OPC churches" and this may indeed be possible and desirable, but in case the OPC joins and is received into the PCA the official contact with the OPC will not be transferrable to the PCA.

#### **Recommendations**

Synod decides,

1. That the Committee for Contact OPC continue the contacts about the relationships which the OPC entertains with others expressing the following concerns:
  - a. that the relationship of the OPC with the CRC and their membership in the RES remain stumbling-blocks in reaching full correspondence;
  - b. to inform the OPC that in the event that the OPC joins and is received into the PCA, the official contact with the OPC is not transferrable to the PCA.  
The committee should continue to solicit clear commitments from the OPC concerning these matters.
2. To advise the churches to remember the OPC in their prayers as "they (the OPC) struggle to come to a decision" (re: invitation of PCA).  
After one round of discussion a motion to vote is ADOPTED.  
The recommendations re point D are ADOPTED.

### **ARTICLE 129**

#### **Adjournment**

Elder G.J. Nordeman requests that Psalm 133:1 and 2 be sung, and leads in prayer. Synod is adjourned.

### **MORNING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 1986**

### **ARTICLE 130**

#### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Hymn 59:1, 2, and 3 be sung, reads I Timothy 1:18-2:15, and leads in prayer.  
Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

### **ARTICLE 131**

#### **Acts**

Acts, Articles 122-129 are read and adopted.

### **ARTICLE 132**

#### **Report on Contact OPC (See Arts. 46, 53, 56, 67, 70, 124, 126, 128)**

Discussion re point E continues.

A motion, duly seconded, reads:

Replace Considerations by:

- b. Although "the committee considers that the GA has not allowed deviation from their standards, nor has it sanctioned heresy such as would require us to break off our relations with the OPC," its recommendation that "the Canadian Reformed Churches should use their ecclesiastical contact to address the OPC on this issue of fencing the Lord's table" indicates that the matter of fencing of the Lord's Supper is, indeed, a serious confessional divergency, which is a major issue of mutual concern.
- d. Although guests are not specifically mentioned in Article 61, Church Order, the conclusion of the committee, Observation 5, cannot mean that Article 61, C.O., has no bearing on the admission of guests to the Lord's Supper. Synod considers that Article 61, C.O., is the rule which governs the admission of all those who seek to partake in the Lord's Supper.

The motion is ADOPTED.

The amended point E reads now:

- E. Synod 1983 gave the committee the mandate "to pay special attention to the new developments in the OPC, with respect to the so-called Shepherd case, the Hofford case, and the 'fencing' of the Lord's Supper, and to come to the next synod with recommendations in this respect."

#### **Observations**

- 1. The committee gives a substantial report on the "new developments" in the OPC as requested by the General Synod of 1983, to wit, the "Shepherd Case," the "Hofford Case," "fencing of the Lord's Supper," and has also included in their report information about the "Controversy at Blue Bell."
- 2. Concerning the "Shepherd Case," the committee reports that it had no access to official information because it was a matter dealt with by a Theological Seminary which is independent from the OPC and that "Prof. N. Shepherd voluntarily resigned from the Presbytery and the OPC" (p. 8, 9).
- 3. Concerning the "Hofford Case," the committee gives four areas concerning which they would like to see the OPC addressed, and "considers that the GA has not allowed deviation from their standards, nor has it sanctioned heresy such as would require us to break off our relations with the OPC" (p. 19, top).
- 4. Concerning the "fencing of the Lord's Supper," the committee with reference to Blue Bell states that "the Church at Blue Bell adhered to distinctive doctrines and practices which we as churches share with them. It is our conviction that these teaching, confessions, and practices are clearly derived from Scripture. However, it was precisely because of these distinctive, reformed principles that the church life was made intolerable for them by the interim Session. Ultimately, they saw the need to secede from the OPC in order to survive as a reformed church" (p. 19).
- 5. Concerning our own practice of admission to the Lord's Supper, the committee concludes "that our churches never adopted a general rule (in the Church Order) for admission of guests to the Lord's Supper, and that we therefore cannot ask this from the OPC either."
- 6. The committee recommends:
  - a. To pass on the report about fencing of the Lord's table (including the sections A, B, and C) to the OPC through its Committee for Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations.
  - b. To ask the OPC to study this report and to respond to it. This response should pay attention to the related doctrinal subjects which were listed in the section dealing with the controversy at Blue Bell.
  - c. To invite their committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations to have joint meeting(s) about this matter of mutual concern (p. 19, bottom).

### **Considerations**

- a. It is evident (Observation 2), that the "Shepherd Case" is not a matter of the OPC as such, but of an independent Theological Seminary and that Dr. N. Shepherd voluntarily withdrew his membership from the OPC.
- b. Although "the committee considers that the GA has not allowed deviation from their standards, nor has it sanctioned heresy such as would require us to break off our relations with the OPC, its recommendation that "the Canadian Reformed Churches should use their ecclesiastical contact to address the OPC on this issue of fencing the Lord's table" indicates that the matter of fencing of the Lord's Supper is, indeed, a serious confessional divergency, which is a major issue of mutual concern.
- c. The practice in the Canadian Reformed Churches with respect to the admission to the Lord's Supper is clearly regulated in Article 61 of the Church Order as follows: "The consistory shall admit to the Lord's Supper only those who have made public profession of the Reformed faith and lead a godly life. Members of sister-churches shall be admitted on the ground of a good attestation concerning their doctrine and conduct."
- d. Although guests are not specifically mentioned in Article 61, Church Order, the conclusion of the committee, Observation 5, cannot mean that Article 61, C.O., has no bearing on the admission of guests to the Lord's Supper. Synod considers that Article 61, C.O., is the rule which governs the admission of all those who seek to partake in the Lord's Supper.
- e. The Canadian Reformed Churches have from the beginning of contact with the OPC considered the admission to the Lord's Supper as an essential matter of discipline.

### **Recommendations**

1. Synod expresses its thanks to the committee for the work it has done to make this report.
  2. Synod concludes that since the "Dr. N. Shepherd Case" has not been dealt with by the ecclesiastical courts of the OPC, it is not a matter about which Synod can judge.
  3. To pass on the report about fencing of the Lord's table (including the sections A, B, and C) to the OPC through its committee for Ecumenicity, along with the above considerations of the General Synod of 1986 and invite the CEIR to have meetings about these matters.
  4. To ask the OPC to study this report and to respond to it. This response should pay attention to the related doctrinal subjects which were listed in the section dealing with the controversy at Blue Bell.
  5. To invite their committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations to have joint meeting(s) about this matter of mutual concern" (p. 19, bottom).  
The recommendations re point E are ADOPTED.
- F. Synod 1983 gave the committee the mandate to "inform the churches about the progress made by means of press releases."

### **Observation**

The committee informs synod of the publications made.

### **Recommendation**

Synod thanks the committee for having done this work.

The recommendation re point F is ADOPTED.

- G. Synod 1983 gave the committee the mandate to "report on its activities and findings to the next general Synod."

**Observation**

Synod has received an extensive report from the committee.

**Recommendation**

Synod thanks the committee for having done this work.  
The recommendation re point G is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 133**

**Letter from Committee for Contact OPC**

Committee 4 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, J, 1, b Letter from the Committee for Contact OPC.
- B. **OBSERVATION**  
The committee informs the General Synod of 1986 that the Rev. P. Kingma was not able to approve the report of the committee. His name at the end of the report only shows that he belonged to the committee.
- C. **RECOMMENDATION**  
Synod receives this letter for information.  
The recommendation is ADOPTED.  
Synod is adjourned for lunch.

**AFTERNOON SESSION — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 1986**

**ARTICLE 134**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 24:1, 2, and 5 be sung.  
Roll call is held. Elder H. Veenendaal is absent with notification.  
Synod is adjourned. The committees meet.

**EVENING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 1986**

**ARTICLE 135**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 148:1 and 4 be sung.  
Roll call is held. All members are present.

**ARTICLE 136**

**Letters Re Contact OPC**

Committee 4 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda VIII, J, 4 Appeal of br. J. Tillema.  
VIII, J, 6 Appeal of Smithville.  
VIII, J, 7 Appeal of Attercliffe.
- B. **OBSERVATIONS**
  1. The Church at Smithville requests synod "to present the churches as yet with a detailed and complete evaluation of the divergencies between the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches and to prove on the basis of Scripture and the confessions that these divergencies do not form an impediment to (continue) to recognize the OPC as a true Church of Jesus Christ," or if the proof cannot be given:

- a. "to terminate the official ecclesiastical contact with the OPC;
  - b. to continue the contact with the OPC on the basis before 1977;
  - c. to evaluate thoroughly the relationship between the OPC and the Christian Reformed Church as well as its relationship to the PCA;
  - d. to examine the church-political structure of the OPC with a view to its hierarchical tendencies."
2. The Church at Attercliffe requests synod:
    - a. "to present the churches as yet with a detailed and complete evaluation of the divergencies and to give reason on the basis of Scripture and confession that these divergencies do not form an impediment to (continue) to recognize the OPC as true churches of Jesus Christ . . . ;
    - b. to terminate the official ecclesiastical contact with the OPC in view of the recent developments . . . ;
    - c. to continue to contact with the OPC on the basis before 1977."
  3. Br. J. Tillema requests Synod to "break all contact with the OPC. I will mention only one of the reasons: the OPC allows almost anyone to attend the Lord's Supper . . . ."
  4. Both the Churches at Attercliffe and Smithville note that the General Synod of 1977 had made a decision without first giving proper grounds and that the General Synods of 1980 and of 1983 left "the important evaluation of those divergencies in the hands of a committee of synod without specifying that this evaluation must yet be dealt with at the broadest assembly of the Canadian Reformed Churches."
  5. Both the Churches at Attercliffe and Smithville express concern about the "new developments." The Church at Attercliffe states that "it is evident from history of the Reformation Church at Blue Bell as well as Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel, MD, that the divergencies are greater than some had suspected at first."

#### C. **CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Although the impression may be given from the decisions of the General Synods of 1980 and 1983 that the Committee for Contact OPC as given the mandate to find the grounds for a previous General Synod decision, they were in fact given the mandate to publish "for the benefit of the churches a detailed evaluation of these divergencies, showing them not to be an impediment in recognizing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true church . . . ."
2. Although the General Synod of 1983 was of "the opinion that an evaluation of divergencies should have been given before the General Synod of 1977 decided to recognize the OPC as a true church . . . ." this "neglect" itself does not nullify the decision of the General Synod of 1977.
3. Synod has decided to "receive this report ('Evaluation of Divergencies') as the detailed evaluation of the divergencies which the General Synod of 1977 neglected to give for its decision to recognize the OPC as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ."
4. Although the "new developments" in the OPC are of concern and may perhaps be reason to review our official ecclesiastical contact with the OPC, the Churches at Attercliffe and Smithville should not overlook that time is needed to solicit a response to our concerns about "new developments" and to evaluate the reply which the OPC gives.

#### D. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decide:

1. To inform the Churches at Attercliffe and Smithville, and br. J. Tillema of the decisions made concerning the contact OPC.

2. Not to deal any further with the requests of the Churches at Attercliffe and Smithville, nor with the request of br. J. Tillema.  
The recommendations are ADOPTED.

#### ARTICLE 137

#### **Overture Classis Ontario South re Contact OPC**

Committee 4 presents:

**A. MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, J, 2 and 3.

A motion, duly seconded, reads:

Replace Considerations, 3, by:

3. Synod recognize that the "Hofford" issue is a matter which is as yet not finished in the minor assemblies (Art. 30, Church Order).

Replace Recommendations, 2, by:

2. Synod decide to ask Classis Ontario South to cooperate fully with the Committee for Contact with the OPC regarding the "Hofford" issue.

The motion is ADOPTED.

The amended report reads now:

**B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. Classis Ontario South of March 5, 1986, requests Synod to "address the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the concern of the Canadian Reformed Churches on the doctrinal and church political issues which compelled the Reformation Church at Blue Bell to withdraw from the OPC. The doctrinal issues are the following:

- a. The doctrine of the covenant.
- b. Confessional membership.
- c. Restricted communion.
- d. The doctrine of the church.
- e. The autonomy of the local church.

Grounds:

- a. As Canadian Reformed Churches we have 'Ecclesiastical Contact' with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We have mutually recognized one another as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet a local OP Church felt compelled to withdraw from the OPC because its Reformed identity was being jeopardized. This gives reason for concern regarding our mutual recognition of one another.
  - b. Doctrinal and church political issues were at stake in the controversy at Blue Bell. On the one hand, the handling of these issues caused the church-members at Blue Bell to withdraw from the OPC. On the other hand, the Canadian Reformed Churches could receive this church without hesitation, and this was due in part to these same Reformed views and practices. This gives reason for concern regarding our doctrinal and church political unity. The Canadian Reformed Churches, which share the Reformed doctrine and practices with the Church at Blue Bell, must ascertain whether this Reformed doctrine and practice is acceptable to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church or whether the Canadian Reformed Churches are compelled to break the temporary ecclesiastical relationship."
2. Classis Ontario-South judged that "the separation of the Church at Blue Bell from their Orthodox Presbyterian Church was warranted in order to continue their Scriptural and Reformed distinctives which were at stake . . . ."

3. Classis Ontario-South has sent a letter to the Philadelphia Presbytery of the OPC addressing them concerning how they have dealt with Blue Bell.
4. Classis Ontario-South also forwards a document "convinced of the need for Synod to seriously take into consideration the report and its conclusions when judging the case of Tri-County Reformed Church, and when discussing our relationship with the OPC."

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Classis Ontario-South is correct in stating that the acceptance of Blue Bell into the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches has an effect on the relationship between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the OPC.
2. Previous and present General Synods have instructed the Committee for Contact OPC to discuss the doctrinal and church political divergencies with the OPC in view of the "new developments."
3. Synod recognizes that the "Hofford" issue is a matter which is as yet not finished in the minor assemblies (Art. 30, Church Order).

**D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Synod decides to inform Classis Ontario-South that the request is already included in the mandate for the Committee for Contact OPC.
2. Synod decides to ask Classis Ontario-South to cooperate fully with the Committee for Contact with the OPC regarding the "Hofford" issue.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 138**

**Adjournment**

Elder H. Veenendaal requests that Psalm 111:1 and 5 be sung, and leads in prayer and thanksgiving.

Synod is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — THURSDAY, MAY 1, 1986**

**ARTICLE 139**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 27:2 and 6 be sung, reads I Timothy 3:1-18, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

**ARTICLE 140**

**Acts**

Acts, Articles 130 — 138 are read and adopted.

**ARTICLE 141**

**Appeal of br. H. Boersma**

Committee 4 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, J, 5.

A motion, duly seconded, reads:

Replace Considerations and Recommendation as follows:

**Consideration**

- 1. This is an appeal against the decision of Classis Ontario-South of Sept. 11, 12/85. Such an appeal should go to Regional Synod East.

**Recommendation**

Synod declares this appeal inadmissible.

This motion is DEFEATED.

A motion, duly seconded, reads:

Delete Observations 4 and 5.

Replace Considerations and Recommendation as follows.

**Considerations**

- 1. Although br. H. Boersma is correct in stating that the decision of Classis Ontario-South to admit the Reformation Church at Blue Bell has an effect on the relationship which our whole federation has with the OPC, he does not prove it to be against the Church Order for a classis to receive another church into the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2. An appeal against a classis-decision should be addressed to the next regional synod.

**Recommendation**

Synod decides not to grant the request of br. H. Boersma.

This motion is ADOPTED.

The amended report reads now:

**B. OBSERVATIONS**

- 1. The br. H. Boersma request the "General Synod to condemn this decision (i.e. of Classis Ontario-South re: admission of the Reformation Church at Blue Bell in the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches)."
- 2. Br. H. Boersma states that this matter of admitting a church into the federation of churches "is a matter belonging to the churches in common."
- 3. Br. H. Boersma furthermore states; "In addition, the relationship of our whole federation with the OPC will undoubtedly be influenced by the decision."

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

- 1. Although br. H. Boersma is correct in stating that the decision of the Classis Ontario-South to admit the Reformation Church at Blue Bell has an effect on the relationship which our whole federation has with the OPC, he does not prove it to be against the Church Order for a Classis to receive another church into the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2. An appeal against a classis-decision should be addressed to the next Regional Synod.

**D. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decides not to grant the request of br. H. Boersma.

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 142**

**Letter re Forms for Public Profession of Faith and Baptism**

Committee 4 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, B, 3.

The report is discussed.

Synod is adjourned for lunch.

**ARTICLE 143**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 29:1 and 3 be sung. Roll call is held. Rev. J. Geertsema arrives later.

**ARTICLE 144**

**Letter re Form for Public Profession of Faith and Baptism (See Art. 142)**

Committee 4 presents:

A. **MATERIAL**, Agenda, VIII, B, 3 Letter from br. B. Moes c.s. re:

Forms for Public Profession of Faith and Baptism.

B. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. The brs. note that in the previous edition of the Forms for Public Profession of Faith in the first question and in the Form for Baptism in the second question the formulation was, "... the articles of the Christian faith and which is taught here in this Christian church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation" and that the General Synod of 1983 decided that the formulation of this question in these forms be "summarized in the confessions and taught here . . . ." They request this synod to "rescind the current formulation and to return to the original wording."
2. These brs. contend that the present formulation is "in conflict with the confessions" in that "it conflicts with question and answer 22 of the Heidelberg Catechism which teaches that a christian must believe 'all that is promised us in the gospel which the articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith teach in a summary.' Answer 23 goes on to explain that these articles are, in fact, none other than the articles of the Apostles' Creed. No mention is made of additional confessions."
3. These brs. contend that the present formulation is "in conflict with accepted reformed practice." They refer to the General Synod of Utrecht of 1923, and the formulation of the General Synod of Arnhem of 1981. From this they conclude that "since attestations are issued on the basis of one's public profession of faith and walk of life, it is inconsistent to admit members of the Dutch sister-churches unless they declare agreement with what the new formulation asks of members of the Canadian Reformed Churches."
4. The brs. question the procedure by which the General Synod of 1983 made a change in formulation from the committee report which used the word "creed" instead of "confession" to the present formulation without request from any of the churches. They state that "no mention is made of changing the meaning of the existing forms."
5. The brs. contend that the present formulation is "in conflict with reality" because "it is questionable whether every believer must, or even is able to give allegiance to ALL formulations used in the confessions in order to be admitted to the sacraments."
6. Synod of 1983 observed (Acts, Art. 145, 8) that "brother W. VanderKamp requests synod to inform him whether the interpretation of the word 'creeds' in the questions found in the forms for baptism and for the public profession of faith includes the Three Forms of Unity." This synod considered (under Consideration B, 4) that "in the fourth question on page 121, the wording should be as follows '... the Word of God summarized in the confessions and taught

here in this Christian church' " and it considered under number 5 (p. 107) that "the use of the word 'confessions' instead of 'creeds' in the questions of the Forms for Baptism and Public Profession of Faith answers the question posed by brother W. VanderKamp."

### C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. The brs. are incorrect in suggesting that the present formulation is in conflict with the confessions because when we confess in the Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 22,
  - Q. "What, then, must a Christian believe?"
  - A. All that is promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith teach us in a summary" it does not suggest that this basic summary excludes the further confession given in the "Three Forms of Unity."
2. It is historically correct that the formulation "articles of the Christian faith" has been used. However, by removing this phrase from its context, the brs. overlook that the questions asked never excluded the allegiance to all the confessions which are maintained by the Canadian Reformed Churches. The statement ". . . as is taught here in this Christian Church" means one gives allegiance to all the confessions of the church. Synod of 1983 has already judged that the formulation, "the Creeds as taught here in this Christian Church," means "the confessions as they are taught here in this Christian Church" (See Observation 6).
3. The brs. are correct in stating that the Committee for Liturgical Forms as given the mandate by the General Synod of 1977 to "update the language" and therefore the General Synod of 1983 had no right to change the meaning of the forms. But from the above consideration "2", it is evident that the meaning of the forms is not changed by the linguistic revision which was made.
4. Although the Dutch sister-churches have a different formulation ". . . in de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis is samengevat en in de christelijke kerk alhier geleerd wordt," the meaning is not different, as is evident from the above consideration 2. The formulation adopted by the General Synod of 1983 does therefore not introduce "tension and endangers inter-Church relations . . ."
5. The brs. do not prove that the present formulation is "in conflict with reality" nor that it is impossible for anyone to keep the Scriptural command (Romans 10: 9, 10; Rev. 2: 26) and "wholeheartedly believe (agree with) the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian Church."\*

\*This quotation is taken from the Form for the Public Profession of Faith. The same formulation is used in the Form for Adult Baptism, except that instead of the word "believe," the word "agree with" is used. In the Form for Infant Baptism the formulation, "Do you confess the doctrine . . ." is used.

### D. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide not to grant the request of the brs. B. Moes, P. Roukema, D. Vander-Boom, and W. VanderKamp.

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

## ARTICLE 145

### Correspondence with Churches Abroad (General)

Committee 3 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, G, 3a Report from the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad.  
G, 3b Letter from Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad.

## B. OBSERVATIONS — General

1. General Synod Cloverdale 1983 gave the committee the following mandate:
  - a. To continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.
  - b. To request the Free Reformed Churches of Australia to make their revised version of the Church Order available to our committee for correspondence for possible comments and/or recommendations.
  - c. To add to the present rule c of the Rules for Correspondence: "re: proposals for changes in the Three Forms of Unity, the sister churches abroad shall receive ample opportunity (at least three years) to forward their judgment before binding decisions will be made." Rule c reads then as follows:

"To inform each other concerning changes of, or additions to, the Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while corresponding churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable. Regarding proposals for changes in the Three Forms of Unity, the sister churches abroad shall receive ample opportunity (at least three years) to forward their judgment before binding decision will be made.
  - d. Again to request the Netherlands sister-churches permission to publish the translation of the Form for Ordination/Installation of Missionaries for use in the Canadian Reformed Churches.
  - e. To request the churches abroad that in the matter of relationships or contacts with third parties "there be consultation and coordination between sister churches.
  - f. To request the churches abroad that contacts in countries where sister churches are already established be made not independently but in conjunction with these sister churches.
  - g. To charge the committee to send an invitation to sister churches abroad at least one year prior to the date the next general synod is to convene and to have our churches represented by a delegate to general synods of such churches abroad, if invited and when feasible." (Acts 1983, Art. 99, D, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
2. Free Reformed Churches of Australia
  - a. The committee scrutinized a copy of the new revised Church Order. No basic objections are reported.
  - b. An invitation to attend the General Synod of Launceston of 1985 was declined for cost reasons.
  - c. General Synod of Launceston:
    - i This Synod adopted most of the *Book of Praise* for use in the FRCA.
    - ii The number of FRCA churches in the federation is increased by one, making five in total.
    - iii Regarding relations with other churches, it was decided that the recognition of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Free Church of Scotland were made with "undue haste and without due consideration." The FRCA deputies were charged to as yet investigate these churches and to submit extensive reports to the next synod.
    - iv Synod also decided to change the name of the correspondence deputies to "Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad."
    - v Synod furthermore decided that "there should be only one form of permanent ecclesiastical fellowship between sister churches, any rules for

temporary ecclesiastical contact should make clear that the contact has as its aim the establishment of a sister-church relationship.”

- vi Synod instructed the Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad to investigate the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia with a view to Art. 29 of the Belgic Confession and to report to the next synod.
  - vii Synod decided to investigate whether or not the Reformed Church of Japan and the Presbyterian Church of Uganda could be recognized as true churches with a view to entering possible sister-church relationships. It also urged the Reformed Church of Japan to break its ties with the RES.
  - viii Regarding the ICRC, synod decided to seek membership. Synod took over all the amendments to the ICRC Constitution as proposed by the Canadian Reformed Churches. General Synod of 1987 will have to make a decision concerning continuing membership in the ICRC.
  - ix Synod mandated its deputies to explore the possibility of the FRCA becoming formally involved in the maintenance of the Theological College of Hamilton or Kampen.
- d. The committee concludes with the recommendation that the correspondence with the Free Reformed Churches in Australia be continued in accordance with the adopted rules.
3. De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland
- a. The GKN have been informed about the decision of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 that related to our relationship with them.
  - b. The request for permission to publish the translation of the Form for the Ordination/Installation of Missionaries is granted by the General Synod of Heemse.
  - c. The Dutch deputies have kept our committee informed as far as developments with the OPC are concerned. At the present time it is one-sided; the OPC either does not receive the GKN mail or else it does not respond.
  - d. Committee-member, Rev. J. Visscher, addressed the General Synod of Heemse as a welcomed guest. He attended discussion of matters relating to the Psalms, relations with Korea, Taiwan, etc. Rev. Visscher explained “several decisions of the General Synod of Cloverdale that had a bearing on our relationship with the Dutch churches.”
  - e. During the discussion with the representatives of the Free Reformed Church of Ireland it became apparent that the Irish and Scottish churches have some reservations about the rules for correspondence.
  - f. The committee reports that the Acts of the General Synod of Heemse disclose that this synod, among other things, decided:
    - i to adopt in a definitive form the revisions of all the creeds, liturgical forms, and prayers. Also adopted were the 150 psalms and the 41 hymns in a new version. A church-book will be published which will also contain the Church Order;
    - ii to send a letter to the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands as an appeal for unity in the faith;
    - iii to continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the following churches:
      - a. Canadian Reformed Churches
      - b. Free Reformed Churches of Australia
      - c. Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika
      - d. Reformed Churches of Indonesia at East-Sumba Savu

- e. Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland
  - f. Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin)  
to continue Ecclesiastical Contact with the following churches:
    - a. Free Church of Scotland
    - b. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, Second Presbytery  
to continue the offer of provisional Ecclesiastical Contact with the following churches:
      - a. Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka
      - b. Reformed Church of Japan
      - c. Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (Dopperkerken)  
to continue with contacts with the following churches:
        - a. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church — U.S.A.
        - b. The Presbyterian Church in America
        - c. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland
        - d. Reformed Churches of New Zealand
        - e. Orthodox Presbyterian Church of New Zealand
        - f. Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika
        - g. Church of Christ in the Sudan, under the Tiv
        - h. Iglesia Reformada Presbiteriana in Spain
        - i. Greek Evangelical Church
  - vii to charge a committee to study the entire matter of the functioning of the forms of the ecclesiastical relations together with the existing rules, and to allow the committee meanwhile to apply the existing rules for Ecclesiastical Contact in a flexible manner;
  - viii regarding the ICRC, Synod decided to declare to be in agreement with the Basis, Constitution, and Regulations as formulated by the Constituent Assembly.
- g. The committee scrutinized the revision of the creeds, liturgical forms and prayers as far as they were published in the acts. They consider the revision to be in accordance with Holy Scripture and in harmony with reformed church-polity.
  - h. The committee concludes with the recommendation that the correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland be continued in accordance with the adopted rules.
4. Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika  
The committee reports:
- a. They have informed the DVGKSA about the decisions of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 dealing with Inter-Church relations.
  - b. The South African deputies state that DVGKSA has been offered a "Fraternal Relationship" by the Korean churches.  
They propose to accept this offer "in order to give a name to the fact that we have much in common and that we regularly keep each other informed about our activities and decisions."
  - c. The General Synod of Capetown of 1984 decided:
    - i The rejection of double correspondence (correspondence with more than one "church denomination" in the same foreign country) must, according to the General Synod of Capetown of 1984, be understood in the following manner — "that one should not resign oneself as churches to a 'double correspondence' because in our judgment one resigns then

to a sinful situation of division.”

- ii Agreement is expressed with the decisions of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 regarding ecclesiastical relations (*Acts*, Cloverdale, Art. 110).
  - iii Synod expresses its concern to the General Synod of Heemse for the fact that this synod appears to introduce another relationship among churches, called “Ecclesiastical Contact.” In particular they are concerned because the GKN continues conditionally to offer this relationship to Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (Dopperkerken). This is a church that has no relationship at the present time with this church.
  - iv The Synod appointed a committee that was charged to study the Westminster Standards to ascertain whether they will form an obstacle to joining the ICRC.
- d. The committee concludes with the recommendation that the correspondence with the Die Vrije Gereformeerde kerken in Suid-Afrika be continued in accordance with the adopted rules.

#### C. CONSIDERATION

1. From the correspondence with and the *Acts* of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, we may gratefully conclude that these churches are faithful to God’s Word and the Church Order.
2. The committee has fulfilled their mandate.

#### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decides,

1. To continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.
2. To charge the committee to send an invitation to sister churches abroad at least one year prior to the date the next general synod is to convene and to have our churches represented by a delegate to general synods of such churches abroad if invited and when feasible.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

#### ARTICLE 146

##### Correspondence with Churches Abroad (Korea)

Committee 3 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, G, 1, 3, a and b.

The report is discussed.

#### ARTICLE 147

##### Adjournment

Elder H.A. Berends requests that Psalm 84:5 and 6 be sung, and leads in closing prayer. Synod is adjourned.

#### MORNING SESSION — FRIDAY, MAY 2, 1986

#### ARTICLE 148

##### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Hymn 29:1 and 2 be sung, reads I Timothy 4:1-16, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. All members of Synod are present.

## ARTICLE 149

### Acts

Acts, Articles 139-147 are read and adopted.

## ARTICLE 150

### Correspondence with Churches Abroad (Korea) (See Art. 146)

Committee 3 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, G, 1 Letter from Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, VIII, G, 3a Report of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad.  
VIII, G, 3b Appendices to the Report of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad.

### B. OBSERVATIONS

1. The committee received the following mandate:
  - a. to obtain and evaluate the complete text of the Koryu-Pa's Form of Government;
  - b. to enquire into the grounds of the many changes made in this Form of Government;
  - c. to seek an official evaluation from the Koryu-Pa of the confessional and church-political divergencies as these have been discussed and are being discussed with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church;
  - d. to seek information from the Koryu-Pa regarding its relations with the Hap-Dong Churches so that the implications of establishing correspondence with the Koryu-Pa may become completely clear in this respect (*Acts* 1983, Art. 105, D, 3).
2. The committee reports:
  - a. They have informed the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa of the decisions of the General Synod of Cloverdale and that no reaction was received.
  - b. The convener, the Rev. J. Visscher, met the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa representative to the ICRC, Prof. Dr. P.S. Oh, from whom he received the following information:
    - i The Form of Government is basically the same as the common Presbyterian Form of Government. It has been adopted to take into account the Korean situation.
    - ii No official contact exists between the Koryu-Pa and the Hap-Dong.
  - c. The convener emphasized to Prof. Dr. P.S. Oh, who received the decisions of the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983, that a reply would be very much appreciated and would be essential if the committee was to make a recommendation to the General Synod of 1986. No response has been received.
  - d. From the remarks made by Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes, professor at the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa seminary at Pusan, it was gleaned:
    - i That the Westminster Confession was adapted by the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa in 1970. The Korean translation still has errors that, although not major, need correction.
    - ii The Form of Government is based on the American form, but has been adapted to take into account the Korean situation.
    - iii One must be careful to view these churches through western eyes and keep in mind that the Korean people still have to learn to work with the Westminster Confessions.

- e. The committee states that the problems of language and communication continue to be encountered and make entering into and maintaining a correspondence relationship impossible.
  - f. The committee thinks that the mandate from the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 is not workable.
3. The committee recommends that:
    - a. The Canadian Reformed Churches recognize the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa as a true church of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
    - b. The implementation of entering into a formal relationship with the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa be postponed until such time as communication problems can be resolved.
  4. The Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church requests synod to take away an inconsistency which exists in Consideration 3a of the Acts, Art. 105 of the General Synod of Cloverdale. According to this church, the inconsistency is this that the recognition of the OPC preceded the detailed evaluation of the confessional and church-political divergencies, while the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa evaluation must be made prior to recognition.

### C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. From the committee report it becomes clear that no official communication has taken place. Some informal discussion occurred between the convener, Rev. J. Visscher, and the ICRC representative of the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa.
2. General Synod of Edmonton of 1965 judged that correspondence with churches abroad should be established only after an accurate and serious examination has shown that these churches not only officially have adopted the Reformed confessions and church government, but also practically maintain the same (Acts, Art. 41, II, Edmonton, 1965).
3. The General Synod of Smithville expressed its concern regarding the importance of communications with these churches and charged the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to evaluate the communication with the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa as to the question whether official ecclesiastical correspondence, even if it would be warranted in principle, can be responsibly maintained, due to distance and language (Synod of Smithville of 1980, Acts, Art. 153, E, 4, b).
4. Formal recognition of the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa as true churches of Jesus Christ should not be based on testimony of sister churches only, or on ICRC membership. Such recognition remains the churches' own responsibility.
5. Mere formal recognition of the PCK as a true church of Jesus Christ without the possibility to implement such recognition by entering into a correspondence relationship with the PCK renders such recognition ineffective.
6. Both the General Synod of Smithville and the General Synod of Cloverdale expressed their regret that with regard to the OPC the publication of the detailed evaluation of the divergencies was not given before stating that these divergencies do not form an impediment to recognition. It is therefore understandable that the General Synod of Cloverdale did not consider it edifying to proceed with ecclesiastical fellowship until this evaluation for the benefit of the churches was completed.

### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To recognize with regret that due to language and communication difficulties, a correspondence-relationship with the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa can neither be established responsibly nor maintained fruitfully at this time.
2. To advise the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington of this decision.
3. To express gratitude to the committee for all the work done in this respect, and

to charge them with the following mandate:

- a. to explain to the PCK this decision of the General Synod of Burlington West of 1986;
- b. to respond to any reaction, inquiries, and information the PCK may direct to our churches;
- c. to be diligent in the endeavour to improve communications with the PCK so that the "entering into and the maintaining of a correspondence-relationship" becomes possible;
- d. to report to the next general synod.

The report is discussed.

A motion to vote is ADOPTED.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

Synod is adjourned for lunch.

#### **AFTERNOON SESSION — FRIDAY, MAY 2, 1986**

##### **ARTICLE 151**

###### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 116:1 and 8 be sung. Roll call is held. Rev. J. Geertsema is absent with notification.

##### **ARTICLE 152**

###### **Theological College — Finances and Property**

Synod enters into closed-restricted session.

Committee 3 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, A, 2, 3 (See Art. 154).

Recommendation D, 4 is ADOPTED.

Closed-restricted session is terminated.

Synod is adjourned.

The committees meet.

#### **EVENING SESSION — FRIDAY, MAY 2, 1986**

##### **ARTICLE 153**

###### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 4:3 and 4 be sung. Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

##### **ARTICLE 154**

###### **Theological College — Finances and Property (See Art. 152)**

Committee 3 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, A, 2 Board of Governors.

a. Report to General Synod of 1986.

b. Letter from the Executive Committee of the Board.

c. Supplementary Report from the Board of Governors.

d. Letter from the Board of Governors, April 4, 1986.

A, 3 Letter from the Church at Houston.

## B. OBSERVATIONS

### 1. Property and Finance Committee Activities Generally

- a. With gratitude the Finance and Property Committee reports that they did their work in brotherly harmony.
- b. The committee met fourteen times. Much of the work was caused by the purchase of the new premises for the college, and planning the additions and renovations.

### 2. Physical Plant

- a. The property on Queen Street was sold for \$165,000.00 cash.

Prior to this, the building was offered for sale to the Board of the Teacher's College. It was not suitable for their purpose. Construction of the addition and renovations could be completed at the cost of \$193,705.37. Appreciation is expressed to the contractor, M.G. Construction Ltd., employees and subcontractors, and to the architect, br. L. Lodder, for the splendid cooperation.

The move to the new premises was arranged with students and other members of the Hamilton congregation, which meant a significant saving.

- b. Student accommodation is not available in the new college building.
- c. The caretaking of the building on Queen Street was carried out by br. G. Meyer at \$180.00 per month. For the new premises a complete review of the janitorial services was undertaken.
- d. A building-fund drive was held in the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. Special mention is made of the Australian sister churches who contributed \$6,335.45. From the Women's Saving Action \$125,000.00 was received for the new building. The total results of the College Building-Fund Drive are \$81,171.88.

The committee expresses its sincere gratitude for this generosity.

### 3. Salaries

- a. As a result of a salary study among Canadian Reformed ministers, it was decided to increase the salaries of the professors effective January 1, 1985, to the amount of \$34,000.00. A further increase was deemed necessary with the result that the salaries as of January 1, 1986 are \$35,258.00, plus a housing assistance allowance.
- b. The Executive Committee of the Board of Governors presents this synod with further information about the procedures taken by the Finance and Property Committee to arrive at this increase in salaries and the committee states to be aware of the responsibilities toward a fair remuneration of those working at the college, but to be equally aware of a similar concern for the churches and their members who must maintain the college financially.
- c. Mrs. M.K. Marren will be employed during the summer months to assist in organizing the library and in the computerization of the same.
- d. The Finance and Property Committee has been requested by the Board of Governors to review the salary schedule for professors for 1986.

### 4. Financial

- a. The committee is grateful for the good cooperation and the prompt payment from almost all the churches. Although there is a considerable amount of

arrears, it is noted that this is mainly due to the difficulties of one of the churches to meet financial obligations.

- b. With regard to the financing of the new facilities it is expected by the committee that an amount of \$60,000.00 will remain outstanding. This will be paid over a period of fifteen years.
- c. The Church at Houston submits to this synod the suggestion to pay off this amount (\$60,000.00) sooner through an increase in the college contributions for a few years, since otherwise interest has to be paid for some fifteen years.
- d. Audited financial statements for the year ending May 31, 1984, and May 31, 1985, are sent to this synod as appendices to the reports for the years 1984 and 1985. The board recommends that synod considers the audited financial statements and the report of the auditor for the previous fiscal periods, and to appoint Robinson, Lott & Brohman, Chartered Accountants, as auditors until the next synod.

5. Budget

The 1983/1984 budget needed an increase from \$31.00 to \$33.00 per communicant member. The budget 1984/1985 contained an increase in expenditures, since the College now employs four full-time professors. The contributions increased by \$6.00 per communicant member effective January 1, 1985. For 1986 the contributions could stay the same, namely \$39.00 per communicant member.

However, the Finance and Property Committee did inform the board that it is only possible to obtain a balanced budget with an increase in the assessment of 10% to \$43.00 per communicant member effective January 1, 1987. The committee feels that this is the maximum increase that can be permitted at this time.

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Although the suggestion of the Church at Houston has some merit because it would save a considerable amount to be paid in interest, the Finance and Property Committee feels that an additional increase of the contributions by the churches cannot be permitted at this time.
2. Seeing that the present salaries of the professors are \$35,258.00 which results in a considerable amount of income tax, and since the professors do not enjoy other benefits, the request of the Board of Governors to the Finance and Property Committee to review the salary schedule for professors for 1986 is justified.
3. Although the Finance and Property Committee is aware of its responsibilities toward a fair remuneration of those working at the college, and is also aware of a concern for the churches who must maintain the college financially, these concerns may not be allowed to cause a situation in which professors are unable to do their work without undue worries.
4. In addition, it should be remembered that professors at the Theological College do not have benefits equal to those enjoyed by ministers.
5. It is fair that the Board of Governors, via its Finance and Property Committee, looks for ways and means to compensate for this financial disadvantage the professors at the college have by:
  - a. fixing the salaries of the professors in such a manner that they are the equivalent of an average salary of a minister in the Hamilton/Burlington area with its living conditions, to which should be added an amount of cash equal to the cash consideration for the following compensations and benefits enjoyed by such a minister:
    - i 50% of the average car-allowance;
    - ii the equivalent of benefits for dwelling and utilities.
  - b. adjusting (grossing up) the addition of these benefits (i and ii above) assuming

- a marginal tax rate of 35% for the taxation increase resulting from those amounts becoming taxable income;
- c. adjusting the salaries annually, as a rule on January 1st by applying the Canadian Consumer Priced Index Change for the last twelve-month period ending October 31st.
- d. establishing the average benefits and average minister's salaries in the Hamilton/Burlington area. The Finance and Property Committee shall, from time to time, but at least once per two years, survey the stipend and benefits paid to ministers in the Hamilton/Burlington area.

#### D. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decide:

1. To express gratitude to the churches for their faithful and regular support of the Theological College and for their special contributions to the College's Building Fund.
  2. To take note of the audited financial statements and the report of the auditors for the years ending May 31, 1984, and May 31, 1985; to add these reports and statements as appendices to the Acts of Synod; and to relieve the treasurer of the Board of Governors of all responsibilities for the years indicated.
  3. To appoint Robinson, Lott & Brohmann, Chartered Accountants, as auditors until the next General Synod.
  4. To direct the Board of Governors to fix salaries payable to all professors in accordance with the stipulations mentioned in Consideration 5, a, b, c, and d, effective January 1, 1987, and to direct the Board of Governors that these stipulations are to replace the housing assistance allowance policy as adopted by the Board of Governors and approved by this 1986 General Synod, Acts, Art. 10, also effective January 1, 1987.
  5. To express thankfulness to the Lord that the college was able to function under His blessing with the necessary funds from the churches.
- The recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 5 are also ADOPTED.

### **ARTICLE 155**

#### **Theological College, Board of Governors**

Committee 3 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, A, 2a Report of the Board of Governors.  
A, 2c Supplementary Report of the Board of Governors.

#### B. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. Due to the early date of this synod of 1986, the board was unable to cover in its report to this synod three academic years and had to restrict itself to the academic years 1983/1984 and 1984/1985.
2. The work at the Theological College could be continued without interruption, although illness among the students gave reason for concern.
3. The governors who visited the lectures during the past two years reported on good effort and hard work displayed by staff and students, and that the instruction is done in harmony with the Word of God.
4. Seven students completed their studies. For the academic year 1985/1986 no new students arrived. The enrolment stands at ten.
5. The board is thankful to report that after several years of intensive searching, a more suitable building for our college could be purchased. The acquisition and expansion of the new premises were facilitated by a generous donation from the Women's Savings Action and by a successful building-fund drive held among

the churches of our federation and our Australian sister-churches.

6. The board acknowledges the spiritual and financial support which the college continues to receive from the churches. The interest of the church members is also apparent at the annual Convocation/College Evening. The continued efforts of the Women's Saving Action to enrich the library are greatly appreciated.
7. Deputies for the Training for the Ministry of the Word of our Australian sister-churches requested the board to give information on the possibilities that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia would become formally involved in the maintenance of our college. The board answered them by a letter of January 25, 1986, and requests synod to approve the response sent to the above deputies.
8. The board also requests this synod to approve the establishing of a two-year program leading to a diploma in theological studies. The explanation and details of the program were contained in a report of the senate to the board.
9. The Church at Hamilton requested the board to establish a special missionary training at the college. The board asked the faculty for advice. The faculty reported that such a training of one year (two semesters) can be made available and gave the board an outline of the courses involved. The board agreed with this report and this training is now available.
10. The board submits for the information of synod a copy of by-law, number 4 (relating to the operation and function of the senate), and a copy of By-law, number 5 (relating to academic regulations).

#### **C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Although it would be desirable that our Australian sister-churches in the future are able to establish an Australian training for the ministry, it is a laudable fact that they are exploring the possibility of becoming formally involved in the maintenance of the Theological College.
2. From the report of the senate to the board, it appears that there is a need for establishing a two-year program leading to a diploma in theological studies. Mission-aid workers in the fields of education, health care; relief workers in the third world countries; pastoral assistants and workers in the field of home mission should have a general theological schooling, in addition to the special field for which they have studied.
3. It is beneficial for the churches sending out a missionary that the college offers a special, missionary training.
4. It is beneficial to the churches that the faculty continues to offer evening series of lectures.

#### **D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decides,

1. to express gratitude that the work at the Theological College continues without interruption and that all instruction is given in harmony with the Word of God and in agreement with the confessions of the churches;
2. to express gratitude that a more suitable building for the college could be acquired and that this was possible due to the generous donation of the Women's Savings Action and a building-fund drive held among the churches and the Australian sister-churches;
3. to acknowledge gratefully the spiritual and financial support which the College continues to receive from the churches;
4. to approve the response of the Board of Governors to the Deputies for the Training for the Ministry of the Word of the Australian sister-churches, expressing the hope that these churches will become more involved in the maintenance of the college;

5. to approve the establishing of a two-year program leading to a diploma in theological studies;
6. to thank the faculty for making available to the churches a special, missionary training at the college;
7. to express appreciation for the work done by the faculty to serve the churches in general with their expertise, and to encourage the faculty to publish the results of their academic endeavours to the benefit of all the churches;
8. to receive and adopt the report and the supplementary report of the Board of Governors and all appendices;
9. to acknowledge gratefully and approve the actions of the Board of Governors and officers of the college as mentioned in these reports.  
The recommendations are ADOPTED.

#### **ARTICLE 156**

##### **Adjournment**

Elder E.J. VanWoudenberg requests that Hymn 60:2 and 3 be sung, and leads in prayer. Synod is adjourned.

#### **MORNING SESSION — SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1986**

#### **ARTICLE 157**

##### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 107:1 and 12 be sung, reads 1 Timothy 5:1-16, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

#### **ARTICLE 158**

##### **Acts**

Acts, Articles 148-156 are read and adopted.

#### **ARTICLE 159**

##### **Letter from br. L. VanZandwyk (Re "only-begotten" and "Christian")**

Committee 1 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, C, 7 Letters from br. L. VanZandwyk dated Feb. 11/86 and April 8/86 — Appeal and request to this 1986 General Synod to "restore the words 'only-begotten' and 'Christian' to their rightful place in both creeds and confessions."
- B. **OBSERVATIONS**
  1. Br. L. VanZandwyk observes that the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale decided "to restore the expression 'only-begotten Son' to its rightful place in both creeds and confessions, but that 'only-begotten Son' is still not restored in Art. 18 of the Belgic Confession (p. 452, *Book of Praise*) in the prayers of thanksgiving in the Forms of Adult and Infant Baptism (p. 587 & 592, *Book of Praise*), in the Canons of Dort, Chapter I, Art. 2 (p. 532), and in the Canons of Dort, II, 4 (p. 545 & 546)."

2. Br. L. VanZandwyk observes that the expression "Christian church" has not been restored to its rightful place in the title of Art. 27 of the Belgic Confession (p. 461), which used to read, "The Catholic, Christian Church" (p. 377, old *Book of Praise*).

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Since the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale decided against the deletion of the words "only-begotten" in the above-mentioned places, it would constitute an inconsistency not to restore the words "only-begotten Son."
2. With respect to the second request re "Christian" in the title of Art. 27, B.C., it should be noted that a similar proposal was defeated at the General Synod of 1983. Br. L. VanZandwyk gives no (new) grounds why this should now be changed.

**D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decide:

1. To accede to br. L. VanZandwyk's request regarding the word "only-begotten," but not regarding the title of Art. 27, Belgic Confession.
2. To pass on this decision to the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*.  
The recommendations are ADOPTED.

## ARTICLE 160

### Letter from br. C. Groenewegen (Re Church Order)

Committee 3 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, F, 4 Letter from br. C. Groenewegen regarding revision of the Church Order (with appendices)

**B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. Br. Groenewegen requests this synod "to appoint a committee on revision of the Church Order. This committee is to consist of ruling elders, pastors and/or theologians. The ruling elders (in service or retired) should make up 50% of the committee," and he suggests that this committee receive the mandate to undertake a general revision of the present Church Order.
2. Br. Groenewegen proposes a revised Church Order which should not be binding upon the congregations but should rather be understood as a model of an "ongoing revision."
3. Br. Groenewegen complains that important information concerning his proposal and suggestions have been withheld by the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale from this generation and those to follow.
4. Br. Groenewegen claims that he presents new grounds for the same material (Letter, April 15, 1986, p. 3).

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. It is evident from the *Acts* of the 1983 General Synod, Art. 91, C. Considerations 2, a and b, that it paid attention to the suggestions proposed by br. Groenewegen. The 1983 General Synod discharged the Committee for the Revision of the Church Order.  
It is not possible to appoint a committee as envisioned by br. Groenewegen, since the churches do not have the type of office-bearers which he suggests (ruling elders in service or retired).
2. A Church Order is binding by mutual consent of the churches, and its purpose is to maintain good order in the church of Christ, I Cor. 14: 33, 40.
3. It is left to the discretion of each general synod to judge what is to be recorded.

4. Scrutiny of material and grounds, presented to the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale and to the 1986 General Synod of Burlington West, warrants the conclusion that br. Groenewegen submits the same material without new grounds.

**D. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decides to deny the request.

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 161**

**New Melody, Apostles' Creed**

Committee 4 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, B, 4, 5.

The report is discussed and taken back by the committee for further consideration.

**ARTICLE 162**

**Guidelines for General Synod (See Art. 76)**

Request for Reconsideration of Agenda Item I, 2 (General Synod Guidelines). As a consequence of changing guideline I, C also to change guideline I, D to read "twenty-two copies" instead of "thirty copies."

Ground

This 1986 General Synod of Burlington West in Acts, Art. 76, changed the previous guideline (I, C) to read "all material submitted to the convening church shall be sent to all delegates and the first alternates." This means that only twenty-two copies, not thirty, are required.

The request is granted.

The proposed change is ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 163**

**Motion of Order**

A motion, duly seconded, reads:

To request Dr. J. Faber to be present during all the discussions dealing with Agenda items H, 1-3 and 5-11 for advice if and when called upon by the chair.

The motion is DEFEATED.

**ARTICLE 164**

**Adjournment**

Elder T.M.P. VanderVen requests that Psalm 128:1-3 be sung, and leads in closing prayer.

Synod is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — MONDAY, MAY 5, 1986**

**ARTICLE 165**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 48:1 and 4 be sung, reads I Timothy 5:17-25, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. Elder G.J. Nordeman is absent.

## ARTICLE 166

### Acts

Acts, Articles 157-164 are read and adopted.

## ARTICLE 167

### Appeal re Edmonton

Committee 2 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, H, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10.

On request of Committee 2, synod decides to discuss this report in closed session.

The report is discussed.

Synod is adjourned for lunch.

## AFTERNOON SESSION — MONDAY, MAY 5, 1986

## ARTICLE 168

### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 25:7 and 10 be sung.

Roll call is held. All members of Synod are present.

## ARTICLE 169

### Appeals re Edmonton (See Art. 167)

Committee 2 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, H, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10.

After some discussion the plenary session is adjourned and the committees meet.

## EVENING SESSION — MONDAY, MAY 5, 1986

## ARTICLE 170

### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Hymn 1A be sung.

Roll call is held. Rev. J. Geertsema is absent.

## ARTICLE 171

### Adjournment

The rest of the evening is used by the committees to finish their reports.

Rev. W. Pouwelse requests that Hymn 63:1 and 2 be sung, and leads in prayer.

The plenary session is adjourned.

**MORNING SESSION — TUESDAY, MAY 6, 1986**

**ARTICLE 172**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 72:1 and 10 be sung, reads I Timothy 6:1-10, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

**ARTICLE 173**

**Acts**

Acts, Articles 165-171 are read and adopted.

The plenary session is adjourned.

The committees meet.

**AFTERNOON SESSION — TUESDAY, MAY 6, 1986**

**ARTICLE 174**

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 33:5 and 6 be sung.

Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

**ARTICLE 175**

**Contact with Churches Abroad**

Committee 3 presents:

PART I: ICRC

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, G, 2 Letter from the Ebenezer Can. Ref. Church at Burlington East.
  - G. 3 (a) Report from the CCCA.
  - (b) Appendices to Report from the CCCA.
  - G. 4 Letter from brothers in Carman.

**B. OBSERVATIONS**

- 1. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad reports:
  - a. that the conference meeting took place in Edinburgh, Scotland;
  - b. that the following churches were participating as members of the ICRC
    - Canadian Reformed Churches
    - Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland
    - Free Church of Scotland
    - Free Reformed Churches of Australia
    - Gereja Gereja Reformaci in Indonesia
    - Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland
    - Presbyterian Church in Korea
    - Free Church in Southern Africa
    - Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
    - Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland;

- c. further, the following churches were represented by "visiting observers"
    - Orthodox Presbyterian Church in New Zealand
    - Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore
    - Free Reformed Churches of North America
    - Free Reformed Churches in South Africa
    - Iglesia Evangelica Presbiteriana del Peru
    - Iglesia Reformada Presbiteriana (Spain)
    - Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (South Africa)
    - Orthodox Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
    - Reformed Church in Japan
    - Christian Witness to Israel
    - Free Church in India;
  - d. the next meeting is proposed for 1989 in Vancouver, BC;
  - e. "the amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws of the ICRC" as proposed by the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale, "could not be dealt with because the provisions for amending these documents could not be met. They have been placed on the agenda of the 1989 meeting;"
  - f. they recommend that these "constitutional amendments as proposed by the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale be set aside, with the exception of the possible inclusion of a clause to explain our relationship to an understanding of the Basis;"
  - g. they further recommend that
    - i. the Church at Cloverdale be requested to organize a prayer service before the commencement of the 1989 meeting of the conference
    - ii. the professors J. Faber and C. VanDam be appointed as advisors
    - iii. two members of the committee be designated as delegates
    - iv. the committee submit to the conference a list of suitable topics after consultation with the sister churches
    - v. the Canadian Reformed Churches assume all reasonable costs, including the expenses of an outing for the delegates;
2. The Ebenezer CRC at Burlington wishes to amend the proposal of the 1983 General Synod Cloverdale (*Acts*, Art. 121, D, 1, c) concerning Art. V (Authority) of the Constitution of the ICRC. This church suggests the following reading: "member-churches are to be informed of the decision of the Conference . . ." rather than be "urged to consider" as proposed by the 1983 General Synod Cloverdale. This consistory is afraid of an "outside" body initiating matters at our major ecclesiastical assemblies.
  3. The brothers from Carman claim that the ICRC is not a decision-making body, and therefore cannot determine its own constitution. They claim that such a constitution needs to be ratified by the member-churches before the conference can be instituted. These brothers present their objections to the constitution, in particular with regards to the purpose of the ICRC (*Acts*, General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983, p. 329). Their basic objection to the stated purpose is that there can be no expression of the unity of faith unless there is full ecclesiastical correspondence.
  4. They propose that the purpose of the ICRC should be
    - a. "To assist the member-churches by examining the doctrinal divergencies of their confessions and church polity and examine each others' applications of the confessions and Church Order so that the churches may determine whether it is possible to express the unity of faith by full ecclesiastical

correspondence, and that this remain the only purpose of the ICRC until the stated purpose has been accomplished within a reasonable length of time which is to be determined by the churches.”

- b. “That for all the above reasons General Synod decides that the Canadian Reformed Churches will terminate their membership in the ICRC unless the above purpose is adopted by the member churches” (The 1983 General Synod, Acts, Art. 121, C, 6).

### C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Report of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad clearly presents the proceedings of the ICRC. The committee makes a number of acceptable proposals in preparation of the next ICRC meeting. An invitation to one or more of our professors should be made relative to the topics to be discussed.
2. The amendments proposed by the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 (Acts, Art. 121, D, 1) have been placed on the agenda of the 1989 meeting of the ICRC, but the committee’s request to set aside these proposed amendments cannot be granted in full for the following reasons:
  - a. Re: amendment to “Art. II — Basis”: although those present at the conference appeared to understand the intent, the committee itself recognizes that the present formulation of the “Article II — Basis” may be confusing to others. An addition in the minutes of a meeting is not sufficient to clarify an article as important as the basis of the conference.
  - b. Re: membership in the RES: General Synod of Cloverdale considered membership in the RES an impediment for membership in the ICRC. Our Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad argues that membership in the WCC and “any other organization whose aims and practices are deemed to be in conflict with the Basis” should remove the concern of the General Synod of Cloverdale, and that, if we insist on adding the RES, other members may well add “a host of other ecclesiastical organizations.” However, it must be remembered that our churches, in particular in the contacts with the OPC, have deplored membership in the RES.
  - c. Re: amendment “Art. V — Authority”: the concern expressed by the Church at Burlington East is justified. Therefore, “Art. V — Authority” should be amended to read: “The conclusions of the conference shall be advisory in character. Member churches are to be informed of these conclusions and are recommended to work towards their implementation.”
  - d. Re: “Art. III, 5 — Purpose”: the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad argues that the conference as a non-ecclesiastical body indeed can and may “present a Reformed testimony to the world” since such a testimony cannot be considered as contrary to Art. 30 of the C.O., which forbids churches to deal with non-ecclesiastical matters. The committee therefore suggests that the proposed amendment be withdrawn. Since the conference can speak out on matters which are legitimately placed on its agenda by member churches, the amendment proposed by the General Synod of Cloverdale is in fact confusing. Therefore it should be withdrawn.
  - e. Re: Art. II concerning the election of officers: the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad suggests that the proposed reading (“Each Conference shall elect. . .”) is merely stylistic. Although the General Synod of Cloverdale does not give reasons for its proposed amendment, it must be remembered that the conference is not an ecclesiastical assembly, while it needs a more or less permanent executive to enable it to function. This article, however, fails to indicate the length of the term of service for each officer.

- f. The suggestion of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad that the amendment to Regulations Art. II, 4, b, iv ("publish materials, reports or other publications as authorized by the conference;") so that it reads "to forward to the churches material . . ." is merely stylistic and can be accepted, since the churches will be informed by their delegates, and there is no reason why the proceedings of the conference, including papers presented could not receive wide(r) publications.
3. The objections of the brothers in Carman against the "Purpose" of the ICRC are based on their opinion that the unity of faith can only be expressed by means of a relationship on the basis of our rules of correspondence. Such a statement has never been made by our churches, as illustrated by the fact that the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale did not reject "Art. III — Purpose (1)", as well as in the temporary ecclesiastical contact with the OPC. This does not mean that membership in the ICRC can be taken as replacing sister church relationships. The ICRC might indeed help "to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship" by providing a forum where churches may meet with each other. But formal recognition of churches as true Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ should not be based on testimony of sister churches only or on ICRC membership; such recognition remains the churches' own responsibility. Therefore no amendment to the "Purpose" as proposed by the brothers in Carman is necessary.

#### **D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decide:

1. To instruct the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to prepare the next meeting of the ICRC as they have outlined in their report by:
  - a. requesting the Canadian Reformed Church at Cloverdale to organize a prayer service before the commencement of the 1989 meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches;
  - b. consulting the sister churches on suitable topics for the 1989 meeting of the ICRC;
  - c. by assuming all reasonable cost related to their role as host on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches;
  - d. depending on the nature of the matters to be discussed to invite either one or both of the professors of the Theological College recommended by the committee as advisors to the conference;
  - e. designating two members of the committee as delegates.
2. To advise the executive of the ICRC that the amendments as proposed by the General Synod of Burlington West of 1986 be placed on the agenda instead of those proposed by Synod Cloverdale 1983, to wit:
  - a. that a stipulation be included in the "Basis" of the ICRC that the delegates subscribe only to the standards of the churches of which they are a member;
  - b. that membership of the RES is an impediment to membership of the ICRC;
  - c. that "CONSTITUTION Art. V — Authority" be amended to read:  
"The conclusions of the conference shall be advisory in character. Member churches are to be informed of these conclusions and are recommended to work towards their implementation."
3. to deny the request of the brothers in Carman;
4. to advise the Ebenezer Church in Burlington and the brothers in Carman of this Synod's decision.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

The chair rules that, according to Art. 32, C.O., the Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer, being one of the appellants, cannot take part in the vote.

Synod is adjourned for supper.

ARTICLE 176

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 119:1 and 13 be sung. Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

ARTICLE 177

**Contact with Churches Abroad**

Committee 3 presents:

**PART II: NAME CHANGE & RULES**

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, G, 3a Report of the CCCA.

3b Appendices to the Report of the CCCA.

**B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad proposes to change its name to "Committee on Inter-Church Relations" for the following reasons: the word correspondence does not "convey properly the true nature of the work" of this committee. This word means very little and does not naturally allude to relations between churches.
2. The General Synod of Cloverdale (*Acts*, Art. 110, D, 1, 2) decided to mandate the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad "that whenever a discussion with the sister-churches on rules to cover ecclesiastical relationships is initiated, to urge the sister churches to maintain "correspondence" according to adopted rules as the only form of permanent ecclesiastical relationship" and "to inform the sister-churches that the Canadian Reformed Churches have not made it a common practice to formalize ecclesiastical contacts with churches with which correspondence cannot yet be established."
3. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad reports that the matter of rules for ecclesiastical relationships (The General Synod of Cloverdale, *Acts*, Art. 110) "remains unresolved. The committee of the GKN is at the moment busy studying the rules for correspondence" for the purpose of revision. The Australian sister churches "maintain that a temporary relationship can be used if it would further the goal of a sister church-status." The South African sister-churches are considering an unofficial "second type of relationship in addition to correspondence."
4. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad recommends,
  - a. to change the name of the committee as indicated above;
  - b. to continue discussion with the sister-churches regarding a common approach to inter-church relations.

**C. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. The proposed name, "The Committee on Inter-Church Relations," does not describe the purpose of the committee well, since it does not show that we are dealing with churches abroad. Therefore the name, "The Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad," is better, and is in line with the names chosen by our sister-churches.
2. From the information supplied by the committee it can be noted that:
  - a. our sister churches were informed about the decisions made by the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983;

- b. not all sister-churches think alike on the need of one type of church relationships;
  - c. especially the Dutch sister-churches appear to favour other relationships in addition to the sister-church relationship;
  - d. from the mandate given by the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 (*Acts*, Art. 110, D, 1, 2) it becomes evident that this Synod is concerned about,
    - i) establishing third party relationships without consultation;
    - ii) possible interference by a foreign church in the internal ecclesiastical affairs of a given country;
    - iii) the introduction of different types of permanent relationships;
  - e. they request a new mandate, instructing them to consult with the sister-churches in the hope that a common approach to Inter-Church relations might yet be developed.
3. The General Synod of Smithville of 1980 (*Acts*, Art. 154, D, 1, 2) concluded that "there is no reason to establish a different form of permanent ecclesiastical relationship with other churches in the world than as regulated in the rules for correspondence."  
 "These rules can be applied realistically according to the circumstances . . . ."
4. The request from the committee to receive the new mandate mentioned in 2, f above resulted from the mandate given by the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 (*Acts*, Art. 99, D, 5, a) which urges consultation and coordination concerning third-party relationships between churches.

**D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decides,

- 1. to change the name of this committee to "The Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad;"
  - 2. to charge this committee:
    - a. to continue to address the sister-churches on the matter of church-relations, setting forth the decisions and concerns of the Canadian Reformed Churches, as outlined by the General Synods of Smithville (*Acts*, Art. 154, D, 1, 2) and Cloverdale (*Acts*, Art. 110, D, 1);
    - b. to evaluate the reactions of the sister-churches in these matters with respect to a possible common approach;
    - c. to report to the next general synod with suitable recommendations.
- The recommendations are ADOPTED.

**ARTICLE 178**

**Contact with Churches Abroad**

Committee 3 presents:

**PART III: FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

- A. MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, G, 3a Report of the CCCA.  
 3b Appendices to the Report of the CCCA.

**B. ADMISSIBILITY**

The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad has never been directly mandated by a General Synod to search out churches with which possible sister-church relationships might be established. However, since the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale accepted the second purpose of the constitution of the ICRC which encourages "the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the member churches," the committee is correct in making the request to take up contact with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS). In addition, in view of the fact that in the ICRC we meet with churches with which we do not have any form of contact, a decision in this matter is desirable.

### C. OBSERVATIONS

1. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad recommends that this Synod decide to instruct it as follows:
  - a. "to take up contact with the Free Reformed Church of Scotland with a view to officially recognize them as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and enter into a sister-church relationship;
  - b. to keep the current sister-churches informed of all progress made in this regard and to work in cooperation with them;
  - c. to submit its recommendations to the next general synod."
2. The committee supports this recommendation by:
  - a. describing the development of an initial contact with this church since the Constituent Assembly of the ICRC in Groningen;
  - b. commenting on the teaching and practices of this church in relation to the marks of a true church as described in Art. 28, B.C., concluding that "your delegates came away with a positive impression as regards the FCS;"
  - c. outlining the history of the FCS from the times of the Reformation to the present, concluding that "if this brief historical overview reveals anything, it is that the FCS has remained faithful to her reformed heritage;"
  - d. noting that the FCS maintains "the 'original' Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as well as the Scottish Confession of Faith, 1560;"
  - e. noting "that via our membership in the ICRC we do enter into a certain undefined and indirect relationship with the FCS." The committee submits in particular "the Second Purpose of the ICRC" as a ground for investigating "whether a relationship with the FCS might be possible;"
  - f. pointing out that our sister-churches in Australia and the Netherlands have taken up contact with the FCS with a view to entering into correspondence."

### D. CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad served the churches well by providing extensive information about the Free Church of Scotland.
2. The matter of contact with churches abroad for the purpose of investigating possible sister church relationships has received attention at various General Synods: e.g. Hamilton (1962), Acts, Art. 139; Edmonton (1965), Acts, Art. 141; Coaldale (1977), Acts, Arts. 94 & 95; and Smithville (1980), Acts, Art. 154. A survey of the various Acts of General Synods shows that the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad has never received a mandate to search out churches with which possible sister-church relationships might be established.
3. The committee does not address the issue decided upon by the General Synod of Toronto of 1974 (Submission of the Church at Edmonton re the National Presbyterian Church, Acts, Art. 64) and the General Synod of Coaldale of 1977 (Appeal of the Church at Edmonton, Acts, Art. 94), although this submission and appeal are almost identical to the recommendation of the committee.
  - a. The General Synod of Toronto of 1974 did not accept the submission of the Church at Edmonton which states (in part) that "contacts with . . . churches abroad . . . clearly 'pertain to the churches of the major assembly in common' " (Acts, Art. 64, Observation 2).
  - b. The appeal of the Church at Edmonton to the General Synod of Coaldale of 1977 requests this Synod "to add to the mandate of the Committee on Correspondence with the Churches Abroad the phrase 'to seek contact with other churches abroad of which it can be supposed that there is a possibility for correspondence in order to investigate this possibility and to report

about this to a following General Synod' ” (Acts, Art. 94, Observation 2, a). The 1977 General Synod of Coaldale judged that the Church at Edmon-ton did not supply grounds for this proposal.

4. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad justifies its request to initiate contact with the FCS on the basis of our membership in the ICRC, which has led to “a certain undefined and indirect relationship with the FCS,” but this in itself cannot be accepted as sufficient ground to accede to the committee’s request.
5. The Ebenezer Church at Burlington East has warned this Synod that it is afraid of an “outside” body initiating matters at our major assemblies (c.f. Acts, Art. 150, B, 2).
6. This Synod considered that “formal recognition of the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa as true Churches of Jesus Christ should not be based on testimony of sister-churches only, or on ICRC membership. Such recognition remains the churches’ own responsibility” (Acts, Art. 150, C, 4).
7. Since the FCS has member churches in Canada, local investigation as urged by various General Synods (e.g. Toronto 1974, Acts, Art. 20) can take place. Such investigation can be greatly assisted by the information supplied by the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad.

#### **E. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decides,

1. to thank the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad for the material received;
2. not to accept the recommendation of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad;
3. to instruct the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to continue to inform the churches about the history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government, and practices of churches which participate in the ICRC and with whom we have no sister-church relationship;
4. to report to the next General Synod.

The recommendations are DEFEATED.

A replacement motion, duly seconded, reads as follows:

#### **PART III: FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

##### **A. MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, G, 3a Report of the CCCA

3b Appendices to the Report of the CCCA

##### **B. ADMISSIBILITY**

The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad has never been directly mandated by a General Synod to search out churches with which possible sister-church relationships might be established. However, since the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale accepted the second purpose of the constitution of the ICRC which encourages “the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the member churches,” the committee is correct in making the request to take up contact with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS). In addition, in view of the fact that in the ICRC we meet with churches with which we do not have any form of contact, a decision in this matter is desirable.

##### **C. OBSERVATIONS**

1. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad recommends that this Synod decide to instruct it as follows:
  - a. “to take up contact with the Free Reformed Church of Scotland with a view to officially recognize them as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and enter into a sister-church relationship;
  - b. to keep the current sister-churches informed of all progress made in this

regard and to work in cooperation with them;

c. to submit its recommendations to the next general synod."

2. The committee supports this recommendation by:

a. describing the development of an initial contact with this church since the Constituent Assembly of the ICRC in Groningen;

b. commenting on the teaching and practices of this church in relation to the marks of a true church as described in Art. 28, B.C., concluding that "your delegates came away with a positive impression as regards the FCS;"

c. outlining the history of the FCS from the times of the Reformation to the present, concluding that "if this brief historical overview reveals anything, it is that the FCS has remained faithful to her reformed heritage;"

d. noting that the FCS maintains "the 'original' Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as well as the Scottish Confession of Faith, 1560;"

e. noting "that via our membership in the ICRC we do enter into a certain undefined and indirect relationship with the FCS." The committee submits in particular "the Second Purpose of the ICRC" as a ground for investigating "whether a relationship with the FCS might be possible;"

f. pointing out that our sister-churches in Australia and the Netherlands have taken up contact with the FCS with a view to entering into correspondence."

#### D. CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad served the churches well by providing extensive information about the Free Church of Scotland.

2. The matter of contact with churches abroad for the purpose of investigating possible sister church relationships has received attention at various General Synods: e.g. Hamilton (1962), *Acts*, Art. 139; Edmonton (1965), *Acts*, Art. 141; Coaldale (1977), *Acts*, Arts. 94 & 95; and Smithville (1980), *Acts*, Art. 154. A survey of the various Acts of General Synods shows that the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad has never received a mandate to search out churches with which possible sister-church relationships might be established.

3. The committee does not address the issue decided upon by the General Synod of Toronto of 1974 (Submission of the Church at Edmonton re the National Presbyterian Church, *Acts*, Art. 64) and the General Synod of Coaldale of 1977 (Appeal of the Church at Edmonton, *Acts*, Art. 94), although this submission and appeal are almost identical to the recommendation of the committee.

a. The General Synod of Toronto of 1974 did not accept the submission of the Church at Edmonton which states (in part) that "contacts with . . . churches abroad . . . clearly 'pertain to the churches of the major assembly in common' " (*Acts*, Art. 64, Observation 2).

b. The appeal of the Church at Edmonton to the General Synod of Coaldale of 1977 requests this Synod "to add to the mandate of the Committee on Correspondence with the Churches Abroad the phrase 'to seek contact with other churches abroad of which it can be supposed that there is a possibility for correspondence in order to investigate this possibility and to report about this to a following General Synod' " (*Acts*, Art. 94, Observation 2, a). The 1977 General Synod of Coaldale judged that the Church at Edmonton did not supply grounds for this proposal.

4. Since the decisions of the General Synod of Toronto of 1974 and Coaldale of 1977 dealt with a request for entering into contact with a church with which there was no contact in any way, this cannot be used as ground for not granting the request of the committee. The ground for granting the request is already adopted with the adoption of Art. III, Purpose, sub. 2 of the Constitution of the ICRC.

## **E. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod decides,

1. to thank the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad for the material received;
2. a. to charge the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to open contacts with the FCS to investigate and evaluate their history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government, and their practices in order to ascertain whether we should recognize them as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and should enter into a sister-church relation with them;  
b. to instruct the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to continue to inform the churches about the history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government, and practices of the other churches which participate in the ICRC and with whom we have no sister-church relationship;
3. to keep the current sister churches informed of all progress made in this regard and to work in cooperation with them;
4. to submit its findings and recommendations to the next general synod;
5. to keep the churches informed of progress made.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

### **ARTICLE 179**

#### **Adjournment**

Rev. W. Huizinga requests that Psalm 66:1 and 2 be sung and leads in prayer. Synod is adjourned.

### **MORNING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 1986**

### **ARTICLE 180**

#### **Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Psalm 90:1, 7, and 8 be sung, reads I Timothy 6:11-21, and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. Rev. J. Geertsema arrives later.

The chairman addresses the organist of the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church, br. E. VanderVeen, who faithfully has played the organ every morning during Synod. He expresses the appreciation of Synod for his work. Br. E. VanderVeen responds with some appropriate words.

### **ARTICLE 181**

#### **Acts**

Acts, Articles 172-179 are read and adopted.

### **ARTICLE 182**

#### **Appeals re Edmonton**

Committee 2 presents:

- I. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10.

Discussion is continued in closed session.

Synod is adjourned for lunch.

ARTICLE 183

**Reopening**

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 127:1 and 2 be sung. Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

ARTICLE 184

**Appeal re Edmonton**

Committee 2 presents:

I. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, H, 2 Letter from the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton re Arts. 148, 165, & 166 of the Acts of the 1983 General Synod

II. **ADMISSIBILITY**

The letter of the consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton is an appeal against Arts. 148, 165, and 166 of the Acts of the 1983 General Synod. This appeal is thus at the proper place and can be declared admissible.

III. **OBSERVATIONS**

A. The consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton appeals against the considerations of the Articles 148, 165, and 166 of the Acts of the 1983 General Synod. The considerations in Arts. 148, 165, and 166 read:

(Art. 148)

1. It is regrettable that the General Synod of Smithville of 1980 did not publish the grounds for its decision mentioned above.
2. From both the above submissions it is evident that the issue is: Does Art. 28 of the Belgic Confession call the believers to prove that they are church members or to join the church while not being members at that moment?
3. Article 28 of the Belgic Confession states clearly:
  - a. No person ought to withdraw from the church.
  - b. All men are in duty bound to join themselves to the church, thereby maintaining the unity of the church.
  - c. It is the duty of all believers to join themselves to this congregation.
  - d. All those who separate themselves from it act contrary to the ordinance of God.
  - e. All those who do not join themselves to it act contrary to the ordinance of God.
4. The statement that "all believers already belong to the church" would nullify the above confession.
5. Although we confess in Lord's Day 7 that those are saved who are ingrafted into Christ by a true faith, yet it is obvious that Q. & A. 55 describes the communion of saints as a characteristic of and a gift to the church.

(Art. 165)

1. To restrict the term "doctrine" to "the principle of the sermon" is unwarranted and arbitrary, since this so-called "principle" was elaborated on by Rev. S. DeBruin in his sermon as well as in the "hand-out."
2. As unspecified parts of the sermon were withdrawn, it would be incorrect to base a judgment on it.

3. From Observation 8 it is clear that Rev. S. DeBruin teaches:
  - a. that all believers are members of Christ's Church;
  - b. that, in fact, a believer cannot become a member since he is a member already;
  - c. that there is a plurality of churches;
  - d. that the communion of saints is as broad as the holy, catholic church (as consisting of all true believers);
  - e. that one's "spiritual well-being" may make it mandatory to leave a certain church without it having become a false church.
4. In our confession we state:
  - a. that no person ought to withdraw from the church;
  - b. that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it;
  - c. that all believers are to join themselves to this congregation;
  - d. that all who separate themselves from it or do not join themselves to it act contrary to the ordinance of God.
5. To state that all true believers are already members of Christ's Church would nullify the above confession.
6. To state that there is a plurality of churches in fact undermines the confession that everyone is in duty bound to join the church and to this end "ought diligently and circumspectly to discern from the Word of God which is the true church."
7. What the church believes and confesses has been summarized in the Three Forms of Unity. The Regional Synod West of September 20-22, 1983, therefore was correct in answering br. H.J. Noot's second request by referring him to the confession.

(Art. 166)

1. Br. Werkman overlooks the fact that our confession does not say that errors and impurities make a church a false church, but that the false church is the opposite of the true church.
2. Although unspecified parts of the sermon of Lord's Day 21 were withdrawn, Rev. S. DeBruin himself stated that the "hand-out" contains what he teaches concerning the church.
3. In Lord's Day 7 we confess that those are saved who are ingrafted into Christ by a true faith. Regional Synod West of Sept. 20-22, 1983, correctly stated that the true believers "thus are included into the church gathering work of Christ (congregatio)." Regional Synod West, however, upholding the judgment of Classis Alberta and Manitoba of May 3-5 and June 15-16, 1983, hereby leaves room for identifying being "included in the church gathering work of Christ" and "being a member of Christ's Church," thus trying to answer the question how it is possible that there are true believers who yet are not members of Christ's Church (coetus). Rev. S. DeBruin clearly tries to find an answer to the same question, the answer which the Lord has reserved for Himself, Deut. 29: 29.
4. However, the statement that "all who have received a true faith become by virtue of that faith 'members of Jesus Christ and of his church' . . . and as mutual members of the same body (Article 28) they are therefore duty-bound to join themselves to Christ's Church" in fact nullifies what we confess in this very same 28th Article, namely,
  - that no person ought to withdraw from the church;
  - that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it;
  - that all believers are to join themselves to this congregation;

that all who separate themselves from it or do not join themselves to it act contrary to the ordinance of God.

5. The statement that there is a plurality of churches in fact undermines the confession that everyone is in duty bound to join the church and to this end "ought diligently and circumspectly to discern from the Word of God which is the true church."
  6. Although some statements and teachings of Rev. S. DeBruin are to be rejected, yet it cannot be said that he attacks the confessions and has thereby broken the promise given when he signed the Subscription Form for ministers of the Word. Coming with a certain interpretation of the confession which is to be rejected does not necessarily mean launching an attack on the confession.
- B. Regarding Article 148, the Immanuel consistory requests General Synod to make the following judgments:
1. "The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has erred in its judgment made in Article 148, C, 2.  
Ground This is an unsubstantiated observation in the form of a question, which is not a consideration and therefore cannot be a synodical judgment.
  2. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has erred in its judgment made in Article 148, C, 3.  
Ground A partial summary of an article of the confession without any elaboration cannot be received as being a consideration, and therefore it cannot be accepted as being a judgment.
  3. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has erred in its judgment made in Article 148, C, 4.  
Ground The "consideration" is an unsubstantiated allegation which does violence to what we confess in Articles 27, 28, and 35 of the Belgic Confession; Lord's Day 7 and 21; Heidelberg Catechism; and Canons of Dort II, 9; III/IV, 11-14; V, 9.
  4. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has erred in its judgment made in Article 148, C, 5.  
Grounds
    - a. There are no grounds provided for the synodical claim to something being obvious, as such it cannot serve as a judgment.
    - b. The consideration is confusing since it leaves room for the idea that the communion of saints can be spoken of as a gift added to the holy, catholic church instead of it being identical to or with the holy, catholic church.
- C. Regarding Article 165 and 166, the Immanuel Church at Edmonton requests Synod to judge that:
1. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has erred in its declarations and judgments as recorded in its Acts, Article 165, C, 3, 4, 5, and 6, and in Article 166, C, 3, 4, 5, and the first part of 6.  
Grounds
    - a. This synod has not provided any valid Scriptural and/or confessional substantiation for its doctrinal judgments in its considerations, as is required in God's Word.
    - b. The Acts of this synod show no evidence that it has properly considered the Scriptural and confessional givens from the "hand-out" by Rev. S. DeBruin, which was used to come to its judgments.
  2. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has erred in its use of Article 28 of the Belgic Confession when judging the teaching of Rev. S. DeBruin.

### Grounds

- a. Its partial summary of Article 28 of the Belgic Confession leaves room for, and even posits the wrong understanding that membership in the one holy, catholic church, as confessed in Article 27, 28, 35, Belgic Confession; Lord's Day 21, Heidelberg Catechism; and the Canons of Dort II, 9 and V, 9, is limited to being a member of a local true church.
  - b. The terms "congregatio" and "coetus," as well as their explanation and use by the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 have no confessional status or authority.
  - c. Its judgment re "nullifies" does violence to what we proclaim in our "Form for Adult Baptism," and it leaves room for the semi-Arminian idea that membership in the holy, catholic church depends in the first place on the act of man, instead of on the sovereign foregoing act of God, to which all believers are obliged to respond in covenantal obedience, by seeking to join, or institute with fellow believers, a local true church.
3. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has erred in its judgments in Article 165, C, 6, and Article 166, C, 5.

### Grounds

- a. These judgments have been destroyed by the General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 with its own judgment in Article 166.C, 1, which by implication agrees with the judgments made by Regional Synod West 1983, Classis Alberta/Manitoba May 3-5 and June 15-16, 1983, and also implicitly with what is taught by Rev. S. DeBruin on this point in his "outline."
  - b. These judgments have been contradicted by the fact that this same Synod has recognized that the holy, catholic church is revealed in the world as a plurality of various churches which can be joined in an International Conference of Reformed Churches.
  - c. The General Synod of 1983, while using Rev. S. DeBruin's "outline" in coming to these judgments, has not refuted any of the Scriptural and confessional givens provided by him.  
Nor has it provided any valid grounds for the accusation made against Rev. S. DeBruin as required according to God's Word, II Cor. 13: 1; I Tim. 5: 19; L.D. 43, Heidelberg Catechism.
4. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has judged that Rev. S. DeBruin has not broken his Subscription Form promise. It has thereby nullified, undermined, and destroyed its own foregoing judgments against him re his alleged nullifying and undermining of the confession.

### Grounds

- a. The last decision of a General Synod overrules any previous decision even when this takes place during the same General Synod in judgments on the same matter. In Article 166, C, 6 it constitutes a summation judgment.
  - b. When a General Synod judges a minister of the Word to have remained faithful to his Subscription Form promise, this automatically rules out any allegations of his having nullified or undermined the confession.
  - c. Our God "is not a God of confusion but of peace" (I Cor. 14: 33) nor is He a God who condones contradictions (Matt. 5: 37; II Cor. 1: 17, 18; James 5: 12).
5. The General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 has erred by having made unsubstantiated judgments against the teachings of Rev. S. DeBruin, and it has thereby publicly dishonoured his name.

- a. The General Synod of 1983 has not shown any valid proof from Scripture or the confessions while making public judgments regarding the alleged erroneous teaching of Rev. S. DeBruin.
  - b. It is a Scriptural principle that a person is innocent until proven guilty, and that the burden of providing proof lies with the accuser.
  - c. Those who read the Acts of synod may not, and cannot assume what a synod may have meant or intended with its judgments, but they are limited to how the Acts read. A synod has no right to burden the churches with contradictory judgments, nor with judgments devoid of substantiation.
- D. The Immanuel Church at Edmonton points to:
1. Art. 35, Belgic Confession, to demonstrate how God regenerates people and thereby "incorporates them 'into His family which is His church' " and this is "effected by the Word of the gospel in the communion of saints of the body of Christ . . . and this is 'common to all . . . the elect of God.' "
  2. Lord's Day 21 (55) where it is stated that "believers, all and every one as members of Christ have communion with Him," in order to show that "no such gifts can be received outside the communion of saints (body of Christ)."
  3. Canons of Dort II, 9 and V, 9, to show that "every true believer, whether in an instituted church or in isolation, . . . ought never to doubt 'that they are and always shall remain true and living members of the church.' "
  4. The Form for Adult Baptism (the third question) to prove that an adult who has come to faith and desires baptism "has already become a member of God's family (the holy, catholic church) by faith" before he becomes a member of the local church before his baptism. This leads to their conclusion that the action of God in joining the believer to His family (the holy, catholic church) precedes the action of the believer in joining himself to a local, true church (see p. 11).
  5. Concerning the communion of saints and its relation to the church of Christ, they write,  
 "In brief, General Synod 1983 has limited the communion of saints to being an observable, local gift to each church instead of it being a confessed reality which is as broad as the holy, catholic church we confess in Article 27, Belgic Confession."
- E. As supporting evidence, the Immanuel Church at Edmonton attached the "hand-out" of Rev. S. DeBruin of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton (Appendix 1). In this "hand-out" the pastor of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton says, "let us make our starting point with the assertion and confession that . . . our covenant God . . . will accomplish His eternal plan concerning all those chosen in Jesus Christ from before the foundation of the world" (p. 4). He then goes on to make the following points:
1. "A true faith is a gift of God which is 'conferred on the elect at a time and place of God's own choosing.' "
  2. "By a true faith the elect are in due time 'ingrafted' into Jesus Christ and with this action of God they also receive 'all (Christ's) benefits' . . . 'treasures and gifts.' "
  3. "All who have received a true faith become by virtue of that fact 'a member of Jesus Christ and of His Church (third question in the Form for Adult Baptism) and as mutual members of the same body' (Art.28, Belgic Confession) they are therefore duty-bound to join themselves to Christ's Church (when possible) wherever she has become visible."
  4. "Everyone who has been ingrafted into Jesus Christ by a true faith HAS

(emphasis is ours) true unity of faith with all other members who have similarly been ingrafted, wherever these members may be in the world."

5. "There is only one holy, catholic church . . . This holy congregation is still being gathered by God's Word and Spirit, and will not be complete until the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

Part of this holy congregation is already with Christ in heaven, part has been and is gathered on earth today, and a part is yet to be gathered." (All these quotes are from p. 4.)

6. Instead of the word pluriformity he uses the term plurality for "the obvious number of different churches or church federations in the world." To explain this concept he refers to how he instructs the young people, "that when they are away from home on the Lord's Day they should first of all seek a Canadian Reformed Church (when possible) and after that look for a church close to one's own, e.g. Christian Reformed or Free Reformed, then various Presbyterian Churches which still maintain the Westminster Standards, Evangelical or Confessional Lutheran churches, Missionary Alliance, any church where God's Word still receives a place of honour. None such churches can be classified as being false re Article 29, Belgic Confession" (p. 10).
7. Concerning the communion of saints, he writes that "in principle the communion of saints is as broad as the holy, catholic church, i.e. they cover each other perfectly." "It is in Jesus Christ and through Him that all true Christians are related to each other, regardless of where they may be in the world." "ALL are brothers and sisters and thus children of the same Father in heaven."

This communion of saints must thus be practiced and shared with all believers, who together comprise the holy, catholic church, according to this viewpoint.

#### IV. CONSIDERATIONS RE THE APPEAL OF THE IMMANUEL CHURCH AT EDMONTON

##### A. Re Art. 148 of the 1983 General Synod.

1. Re Observation B, 1 (of this report).

Although Art. 148, C, 2 (1983) indeed only observes the two basic viewpoints, nevertheless it was a valuable point which led to the next consideration.

2. Re Observation B, 2 (against Art. 148, C, 3 of the 1983 General Synod).

Art. 148, C, 3 (General Synod of 1983) summarizes the essential parts of Article 28, Belgic Confession. The appellants claim that thereby Article 28 is separated from Article 27. But this is not true. While Article 27 gives an overview of the "one, catholic or universal church," in Article 28 the norms for believers (to join the church, to maintain the unity of the church, to submit to the instruction and discipline of the church, to bend their necks under the yoke of Christ, and to serve the edification of the brotherhood) are given. These are not two churches but one church. To join the assembly of true believers is to join the one, holy, catholic and Christian church. Thus the 1983 General Synod, in its summary of the norms which Christ maintains in gathering the holy and universal church, pointed to and preserved the dynamic character of the church.

3. Re Observation B, 3 (against Art. 148, C, 4 of the 1983 General Synod).

The appellants uphold the statement that "all believers already belong to the church," and therefore reject this consideration.

Reference is made to Articles 27, 28, 35 of the Belgic Confession, Lord's Day 7 & 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort II.9, III/IV.11-14, V.9, as well as to the third question of the Form for Adult Baptism to support their contention.

- a. Art. 27 as an introductory article describes the church in general terms. It nowhere states that everyone who is a believer is already a member of the (holy, catholic) church even if the believer is not a member of a true, local church. This would make the concept of the holy, catholic church into a nebulous term devoid of meaning, since "church" means an assembly which Jesus Christ gathers, defends, and preserves, and which can be discerned by means of three marks, i.e. the preaching of the pure Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of discipline.
- b. Art. 28 again refers to the church as an assembly and congregation (congregatio and coetus as interchangeable terms) of the redeemed. The appellants then use the identification of the church in Articles 27 and 28 in an axiomatic manner as a syllogism. They work with two interconnected syllogisms as follows:
 

First Syllogism

  - i The holy, catholic church is the assembly of all the elect and regenerated.
  - ii Belief is a fruit of election.
  - iii Therefore all believers, even if they have not (yet) joined a true church, are members of the holy, catholic church.

Second Syllogism

  - i The communion of saints is as broad as the holy, catholic church.
  - ii All believers are members of the holy, catholic church.
  - iii Therefore all believers share in the communion of saints.

This theological construction (attempting to systematize a broken and sinful situation), whether intentionally or not, undermines the urgent call for all believers to join the true church wherever God has established it, and it neglects the norms mentioned in Art. 28. Scriptural evidence for this consideration can be found, e.g. in I Corinthians. In this letter the apostle addresses himself to the Church at Corinth with its official congregational meetings ("when you are assembled," 5: 4; 14: 26; "when you assemble as a church," 11: 18; 14: 23), in which discipline is exercised (5: 4, 5) and the Lord's Supper is celebrated (11: 20), where the Word is preached (14: 19) and where outsiders and even unbelievers may come in and be convinced by the preaching (14: 22-24) and where the believers receive their appointments, gifts, and assignments in their special office and in the office of all believers (12: 27-31). The church (ekklesia) in Paul's letter is the assembly of the saints which is called together.
- c. Art. 35, B.C., is adduced as support for the appellants' view. But that the Lord's Supper nourishes those "whom He has already regenerated and incorporated into His family, which is His Church," should be seen within (and not outside of) the context of this Article. The article refers to the twofold life of the believers. For the support of the regenerated life, believers, as the family of God, need the living bread from the table of Jesus Christ. One should not therefore draw the wrong conclusion from this that there is a nebulous concept of the holy, catholic church of all the regenerated and the elect, a church which is contrasted with the local, true churches.
- d. Lord's Day 7 (20) answers the question who are saved. The answer stresses the need for a true faith by which one is grafted into Christ and by which we accept all his benefits (which the Heidelberg Catechism usually summarizes as the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal

- life). To deduce that this answer teaches that every believers is incorporated into the body of Christ, the church, even before they officially join themselves to the church, is a misuse of the answer and of the word "church."
- e. Lord's Day 21, Q. & A. 54 indeed gives an overview of Christ's work of gathering the congregation chosen to everlasting life. The norms (by the Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith) are included. This general definition therefore does not postulate a vague concept of a non-observable, catholic church which is to be separated from the local gatherings.
- Q. & A. 55 does teach that every believer enjoys participation ("koinonia," cf. I Cor. 10: 16) in Christ and in His benefits. These believers must use such participation for the mutual benefit of all the members of the local, true community of saints (I Cor. 12: 7, 14-26).
- On the basis of this fellowship with Christ, the members of the congregation as members of the body of Christ are called to pursue unity and brotherly love and to avoid divisions, to edify each other and be edified.
- Unfortunately, owing to the brokenness and sinfulness here on earth, not every believer has joined the true church wherever God has established it, and not every believer thus does practices the fellowship of saints as he/she ought. What is normative for us is that Christ and His apostles apply the terms, the communion of saints or the body of Christ, to the local, true churches. For example, Paul in speaking to the saints in Corinth says, "you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (I Cor. 12: 27).
- f. Canons of Dort. Canons of Dort II.9 accents how the counsel of God to redeem a chosen people cannot be frustrated but will be fulfilled. As a consequence the elect will be gathered into one flock under one Shepherd. But the expression "church of believers" should not be quoted out of context to prove something it was not intended to prove, i.e. that the church is the number of the elect who have come to faith. Canons of Dort V.9 speaks of the assurance of perseverance of the saints in faith. By God's preserving grace they surely believe that they are and always will remain true and living members of the church. To deduce from this that this article teaches that believers, before joining the local church of Jesus Christ, already are members of an ill-defined universal church is a misuse of this article.
- g. Form for Adult Baptism, Third Question. The statement that "by the power of the Holy Spirit you have become a member of Jesus Christ and His Church" should again not be taken out of its setting. An adult has come to the church to hear the proclamation of redemption and for instruction in the way of salvation; the person has appeared before the consistory to be examined; and now that adult stands up in the congregation to have his membership in the church and kingdom of God sealed. Under those circumstances this language is understandable (cf. the parallel in the case of infant baptism, in which the infants "must be grafted into the Christian church" (Q. & A. 74) and yet "as members of His Church ought to be baptized" (Form). One should not press this language to posit a Scripturally unknown concept of a non-observable church of the elect and regenerated.
- B. Re Arts. 165, 166 of the 1983 General Synod.
1. Re Observation C, 1 (against Arts. 165, C, 3, 4, 5, and 166, C, 3, 4, 5 of the 1983 General Synod).

The appellants complain that no valid Scriptural and confessional substantiation was provided, and that the "hand-out" of Rev. DeBruin was improperly considered. The 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale indeed pointed to various parts of the confessions, but the particular references to the confessions are not accepted by the appellants.

Moreover, since the confessions were not questioned, it is illegitimate to complain that they predominantly were quoted and summarized. After all, the confessions have been accepted as faithful summaries of God's Word.

2. Re Observation C, 2 (against the alleged wrong use of Art. 28, B.C., in judging the teachings of Rev. DeBruin).

It is wrong to suppose that the 1983 General Synod posited a narrow view of the church as though the only believers are in recognized, true and local churches. Together with the 1984 General Synod of Heemse of our Dutch sister-churches (cf. its "Uitspraak . . . inzake de leer van ds. Joh. Hoorn over artikel 28 NGB"), we reject such a narrow view. The summary of article 28, B.C., as given by the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale accented the norms which apply to the believers and which Christ maintains in gathering His church.

The appellants correctly state that the terms "congregatio" and "coetus" in article 28, Belgic Confession, are used interchangeably for variety and can be seen as describing two aspects of the one church-gathering work.

The reference to the third question in the Form for Adult Baptism has been answered above (cf. Consideration A, 3, g).

3. Re Observation C, 3 (against Arts. 165, C, 6 and 166, C, 5 of the 1983 General Synod).

The appellants, by improper implications, draw wrong conclusions from Art. 166, C, 1. This is clear from Art. 166, C, 3.

That the Canadian Reformed Churches have joined the International Conference of Reformed Churches does not mean we believe a plurality of churches as described in the "hand-out" (see esp. pp. 9-11). This is a conference of Reformed member-churches who have recognized each other's confessional and church-governmental standards. One of the purposes of this conference is "to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the member-churches." Thus there is no acceptance of the concept of a plurality of churches.

4. Re Observation C, 4 (against the considerations of Art. 165, 166 of the 1983 General Synod, since this General Synod stated that Rev. S. DeBruin did not break his ordination vows).

This consideration (Art. 166, C, 6) has indeed caused confusion, as is also apparent from the other appeals on this matter. Since the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale gave no further explanation of this consideration, one can only go by the literal text itself. This text in itself is indeed inconsistent. To nullify or undermine the confessions is indeed to attack them; and not to break one's pledge in the Subscription Form means that one keeps to the confessions. One cannot maintain both. After saying that some statements and teachings of Rev. S. DeBruin are to be rejected, this consideration should not have gone on to retract this declaration by stating that this "does not necessarily mean launching an attack on the confession."

5. Re Observation C, 5 (against the first sentence of Art. 166, C, 6 of the 1983 General Synod).

That "some statements and teachings of Rev. S. DeBruin are to be rejected" is indeed vague, though some references to these teachings may be found in the previous considerations of *Acts*, Arts. 165, 166 of the 1983 General

Synod. Specific errors should have been mentioned, so that the consistory could also have exercised proper supervision of the doctrine of its minister. The 1983 General Synod attempted to uphold the name of Rev. DeBruin in Art. 166, C, 6 by stating, "yet it cannot be said that he attacks the confessions and has thereby broken the promise given when he signed the Subscription Form for ministers of the Word."

## V. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### A. Pastoral Considerations.

1. The consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton wrongly lays the blame totally on the 1983 General Synod decisions for the confusion and damage done to the congregation there. It is nevertheless imperative that this General Synod speak clearly in order to restore and preserve "the peace of Jerusalem" (cf. also the appeals of J. Werkman, H. DeJong, T. & M. Vander-Zyl, and H. Noot).
2. The supporting materials of the appeal from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton as well as some of the appeals of persons from Edmonton reveal how these issues cause deep divisions. From these documents we discern two opposing and hostile factions.

These factions seem to feed on each others' weaknesses and extremes. For example, the "hand-out" uses belligerent and antagonistic language (accusations against church-members for being isolationistic, ignorant, loveless, weak in faith, dishonouring Christ, and being theological nitpickers — cf. pp. 2-3). On the other hand, some appellants counter with such terms as devious doctrine, unrighteousness, and accused heresy. There is a need for all concerned to exercise restraint and humility; for recognition of one another as brothers in Christ; for respect of the office-bearers; and for priestly and pastoral edifications of the body of Christ, as we are taught for example in Gal. 6:1-6.

### B. Church Political Considerations.

1. It is the task of the consistory/council to supervise the doctrine and life of its minister(s) as well as of the elders and deacons to ensure that the office-bearers maintain their pledge when they signed the Subscription Form. The consistory also has the task to discipline any office-bearer who impenitently contradicts the Scripture or the confessions.
2. It is the task of the classis to ensure that the ministers maintain what they pledged at classis by their subscription to the Scriptures and the confessions. Maintenance of the Scripture and confessions should also be an important point on the agenda of the church visitors appointed by the classis.
3. It is not in the jurisdiction of the general synod to do what a consistory and classis should do. A general synod cannot exercise discipline over office-bearers who contradict their subscription to the Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity, but it can and should decide if certain doctrinal matters contradict the Subscription Form or not.

### C. Doctrinal Considerations.

1. Re the confession about the church.  
Scripture and the confessions speak about the church in a general way and a more specific way. On the one hand, there is the general aspect of Christ's work of gathering all those whom the Father has given Him and whom He regenerates. This gathering-work of Christ is broader than the local, true churches. It is therefore within the bounds of Scripture and the confessions to say concerning the holy, catholic church that it is the gathering of those who are chosen and by regeneration are ingrafted into Him. Calvin calls

this the church as God sees it, cf. Eph. 1, 5:32; Col. 1:10, 24; Art. 27, Belgic Confession;

Lord's Day 21 (Q. & A. 54). There is also the more specific aspect of the holy, catholic church as it is gathered locally by Christ in true churches, in the unity of the true faith, according to the norms to which we are bound for the gathering of the church. Although Scripture and the confessions place the church-gathering work of Christ on the foundation of God's decree of election, of which regeneration is a fruit, this does not mean that they teach that election and regeneration as God's invisible work are now the norm for the gathering of the church (Deut. 29: 29). The norm is and remains what God's Word teaches, namely, that Christ gathers it in the unity of the true faith, according to the marks of the true church. When Art. 27, B.C., speaks about the holy, catholic church as congregation and assembly of the true Christian believers, this church is gathered locally by Christ — the word "ecclesia" indicates a visible assembly of believers. These believers are bound to the norms which Christ has given regarding the gathering of His church, cf. Arts. 28, 29 of the Belgic Confession. By taking election not only as their starting point but also as their norm, the appellants neglect the true norms for the gathering of the church as confessed in Art. 29, B.C., and they also neglect the norms for church membership as pointed out in Art. 28 of the Belgic Confession and in L.D. 21 (54) with the words, "by His Spirit and Word in the unity of the true faith" (cf. John 17:20; Acts 2:42; I John 1: 3; II John 9-11; III Joh̄n 5-8).

2. Re The Plurality of the Churches.

When Scripture speaks of churches in the plural, it speaks of a plurality of local, true churches (e.g. Rev. 2 & 3). A plurality of churches does not mean a plurality of differing beliefs and confessions. Christ does not work for a plurality in the latter sense, but for unity and purity. For example, Christ in His seven letters maintains the purity of doctrine, calls for godliness of life, and exercises discipline against some churches, even warning one that if it does not repent, He will remove the lampstand. When Rev. DeBruin in his "hand-out" applies the term "plurality," he applies it to different local churches within different denominations or church groups (p. 10, cf. Observation E, 6). This is a consequence of his use of election and regeneration as a starting point for his definition of the church. Since, according to him, regenerated people reside in various "churches" and "church federations" and thus have various confessions, he consequently arrives at this conclusion. But thereby the norms for the church, as we read them in Christ's seven letters, and as confessed in Art. 29, Belgic Confession, and in Q. & A. 54, Heidelberg Catechism ("in the unity of the true faith") are again neglected, and the congregation becomes confused.

3. Re The Communion of Saints.

The Apostles' Creed further characterizes the church as the communion of saints. The Heidelberg Catechism explains this communion of saints as having two sides. There is the participation in Christ, which makes the communion of saints a gift, and there is the fellowship of believers who are to be a hand and foot for each other. This latter aspect shows that the communion of saints is a normative description of the church. In order to be gathered, defended and preserved, the church is bound to Christ's norms, and these same norms apply to the communion of saints, cf. Arts. 28, 29, Belgic Confession. The communion of saints must be exercised and has to function there where the true church of our Lord Jesus Christ is gathered in the unity of the true faith.

Rev. S. DeBruin and the consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton

state that the communion of saints “is as broad as the holy, catholic church,” defining the church as those who are elected and regenerated, i.e. saints, who are by faith ingrafted into Christ. Rev. S. DeBruin also states that the “communion of saints is not just a legal relationship or entity, but it must also be (and become) a functioning relationship” (“hand-out”, pg. 12). These views do not take into consideration that the gathering of local, true churches is essential to the gathering of the holy, catholic church. Thus Articles 28-32 of the Belgic Confession are again neglected.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above considerations, General Synod decides,

1. that the explanations and applications (as pointed out in the above considerations) of Rev. S. DeBruin, as supported by the consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton, concerning:
  - the confession about the church
  - the issue of the plurality of the churches
  - and the confession about the communion of saints
 are not in harmony with the Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity, and are therefore to be rejected;
2. that Art. 166, Consideration 6, of the *Acts* of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale was inconsistent and is hereby rescinded;
3. that the appeal of the Canadian Reformed Church (Immanuel) at Edmonton is hereby answered.  
 General Synod beseeches all the office-bearers of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton to bring their views, their preaching, teaching and ruling in harmony with the Scriptures and the Three Forms of Unity, and thus in line with their ordination vows and their signature under the Subscription Form.  
 The recommendations are ADOPTED.

## ARTICLE 185

### Appeals re Edmonton

Committee 2 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, H, 1 Letter from Rev. D. DeJong of Burlington East re Art. 148 of the *Acts* of the 1983 General Synod.
- B. **ADMISSIBILITY**  
 The letter of the Rev. D. DeJong is an appeal against Art. 148 of the *Acts* of the 1983 General Synod. This appeal is thus at the proper place and can be declared admissible.
- C. **OBSERVATIONS**
  1. Rev. D. DeJong appeals against the considerations in Art. 148 of the *Acts* of the 1983 General Synod, which read:  
 “C. CONSIDERATIONS
    1. It is regrettable that Synod Smithville 1980 did not publish the grounds for its decision mentioned above.
    2. From both the above submissions it is evident that the issue is: Does Art. 28 of the Belgic Confession call the believers to prove that they are church members or to join the church while not being members at that moment?
    3. Article 28 of the Belgic Confession states clearly:
      - a. No person ought to withdraw from the church.
      - b. All men are in duty bound to join themselves to the church, thereby maintaining the unity of the church.

- c. It is the duty of all believers to join themselves to this congregation.
  - d. All those who separate themselves from it act contrary to the ordinance of God.
  - e. All those who do not join themselves to it act contrary to the ordinance of God.
4. The statement that "all believers already belong to the church" would nullify the above confession.
  5. Although we confess in Lord's Day 7 that those are saved who are ingrafted into Christ by a true faith, yet it is obvious that Q. & A. 55 describes the communion of saints as a characteristic of and a gift to the church.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

To send the above Considerations to the Churches at London and Neerlandia as Synod's judgment on the issue raised in their appeals."

2. Rev. D. DeJong requests General Synod to declare "that the judgment as given by Synod Cloverdale 1983 in its considerations. *Acts*, Art. 148, should not have been made, and to rescind this judgment, on the following grounds:
  - a. that this judgment was based on a wrongly formulated issue;
  - b. that this judgment wrongly has narrowed down the work of Christ in the gathering of His church as confessed in Lord's Day 21 of the Catechism and Article 27 of the Belgic Confession, and is in conflict with the third questions in the Form for the Baptism of Adults;
  - c. that this judgment is dangerous for the unity of faith, seeing that the fourth consideration has been repeated in *Acts*, Art. 165 (C. 5) and Art. 166 (C. 4), which repetition tends to stress this interpretation of our confession concerning the church as part of the accepted doctrine of the Canadian Reformed Churches, against which nothing may be taught."

#### **CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Indeed the 1983 General Synod correctly formulated the crucial issue, which was and is whether everyone who is brought to faith in Jesus Christ is thereby already a member of Christ's church.

In denying this, the General Synod of 1983 did not reject Christ's world-wide gathering of His church. It is wrong to suppose that the 1983 General Synod posited a narrow view of the church as though the only believers are in recognized, true and local churches. Together with the 1984 General Synod of Heemse of our Dutch sister-churches (cf. its "Uitspraak . . . inzake de leer van ds. Joh Hoorn over artikel 28 NGB"), we reject such a narrow view. Thus the 1985 General Synod of Heemse maintained that there are believers outside of the church. The summary of article 28, B.C., as given by the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale accented the norms which apply to the believers and which Christ maintains in gathering His church. The General Synod of 1983 stressed that Christ not only brings persons to faith, but also draws those people, calling them into the communion of His Church. In this work He maintains the norms and means He revealed in His Word (i.e. the Word of the Holy Spirit, the ministries of office-bearers, the preaching, the use of the sacraments, the exercise of church discipline, and all means of grace).

2. Scripture and the confessions speak about the church in a general way and a more specific way. On the one hand, there is the general aspect of Christ's work of gathering all those whom the Father has given Him and whom He regenerates. This gathering-work of Christ is broader than the local, true churches. It is therefore within the bounds of Scripture and the confessions to say concerning the holy, catholic church that it is the gathering of those who are chosen and by regeneration are ingrafted into Him. Calvin calls this the church as God sees

it, cf. Eph. 1: 5-32; Col. 1: 18, 24; Art. 27 of the Belgic Confession; L.D. 21 (Q. & A. 54). There is also the more specific aspect of the holy, catholic church as it is gathered locally by Christ in true churches, in the unity of the true faith, according to the norms to which we are bound for the gathering of the church. Although Scripture and the confessions base the church-gathering work of Christ on God's election and its fruit, regeneration, this does not mean that they teach that election and regeneration as God's invisible work are now the norm for the gathering of the church (Deut. 29: 29). The norm is and remains what God's Word teaches, namely, that Christ gathers it in the unity of the true faith, according to the marks of the true church. When Art. 28, B.C., speaks about the holy, catholic church as congregation and assembly of the true Christian believers, this church is gathered locally by Christ — the word "ecclesia" indicates a visible assembly of believers. These believers are bound to the norms which Christ has given regarding the gathering of His Church, cf. Art. 28, 29 of the Belgic Confession. By taking election not only as his starting point but as the norm (cf. his distinction between being a member of the church already, and being all ready to join the church), the appellant neglects the true norms for the gathering of the church as confessed in Art. 29, B.C., and he also does injustice to the norms for church membership as pointed out in Art 28 of the Belgic Confession and in L.D. 21 (54) with the words, "by His Spirit and Word in the unity of the true faith" (cf. John 17:20; Acts 2:42; I John 1:3; II John 9-11; III John 5-8).

3. The Apostles' Creed further characterizes the church as the communion of saints. The Heidelberg Catechism explains this communion of saints as having two sides. There is the participation in Christ, which makes the communion of saints a gift, and there is the fellowship of believers who are to be a hand and foot for each other. This latter aspect shows that the communion of saints is a normative description of the church. In order to be gathered, defended and preserved, the church is bound to Christ's norms, and these same norms apply to the communion of saints, cf. Arts. 28, 29, Belgic Confession. The communion of saints must be exercised and has to function there where the true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is gathered in the unity of the true faith.
4. The following considerations are made concerning the specific references to the confessions:
  - a. Art. 27 as an introductory article describes the church in general terms. It nowhere states that everyone who is a believer is already a member of the (holy, catholic) church even if the believer is not a member of a true, local church. This would make the concept of the holy, catholic church into a nebulous term devoid of meaning, since "church" means an assembly which Jesus Christ gathers, defends, and preserves, and which can be discerned by means of three marks, i.e. the preaching of the pure Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of discipline.
  - b. Art. 28 again refers to the church as an assembly and congregation (congregatio and coetus as interchangeable terms) of the redeemed. The appellant then uses this description of the church in Articles 27 and 28 to claim that all the believers, as redeemed and regenerated, are already members of the holy, catholic church, though they may not be all ready to join the true church (attempting hereby to systematize a broken and sinful situation). This view undermines the urgent call for all believers to join the true church wherever God has established it, and it neglects the norms mentioned in Art. 28. Scriptural evidence for this latter consideration can be found, e.g. in I Corinthians. In this letter the apostle addresses himself to the church at Corinth with its official congregational meetings ("when you are assembled," 5:4; 14:26; "when you assemble as a church," 11:18; 14:23), in which discipline is exercised (5:4, 5) and the Lord's Supper is celebrated (11:20),

where the Word is preached (14:19) and where outsiders and even unbelievers may come in and be convinced by the preaching (14:22-24) and where the believers receive their appointments, gifts, and assignments in their special office and in the office of all believers (12:27-31). The church (ekklesia) in Paul's letter is the assembly of the saints which is called together.

- c. Form for Adult Baptism, Third Question. The statement that "by the power of the Holy Spirit you have become a member of Jesus Christ and His church" should again not be taken out of its setting. An adult has come to the church to hear the proclamation of redemption and for instruction in the way of salvation; the person has appeared before the consistory to be examined; and now that adult stands up in the congregation to have his membership in the church and kingdom of God sealed. Under those circumstances this language is understandable (cf. the parallel in the case of infant baptism, in which the infants "must be grafted into the Christian church" (Q. & A. 74) and yet "as members of His church ought to be baptized" (Form). One should not press this language to posit a Scripturally unknown concept of a non-observable church of the elect and regenerated.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

On the basis of the above considerations, General Synod decides to deny the appeal of the Rev. D. DeJong.

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

### **ARTICLE 186**

#### **Appeals re Edmonton**

Committee 2 presents:

##### **A. MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, H, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10.

Appeal of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton against Art. 166, considerations 4, 5, and 6 of the 1983 General Synod.

Appeal of br. J. Werkman against the same.

Appeal of the Canadian Reformed Church at Smithers against the same.

Appeal of br. H. Noot against the same.

Appeal of br. and sr. T. & M. VanderZyl against the same.

##### **B. ADMISSIBILITY**

The consistory of the Providence Church at Edmonton, the Church at Smithers, br. H. Noot, and br. and sr. T. VanderZyl of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton appeal Acts, Art. 166, Considerations 4, 5, and 6 of the 1983 General Synod. These appeals are thus properly placed before this General Synod and can be declared admissible.

The appeal of br. J. Werkman is against the same decision of the 1983 General Synod. However, br. J. Werkman has withdrawn himself from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton and therefore is technically outside the jurisdiction of this General Synod. Nevertheless, since he withdrew owing to difficulties directly related to the issues of the appeal, General Synod declares this appeal admissible in the hope that it may help in reconciling br. J. Werkman with the consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton.

##### **C. OBSERVATIONS**

1. The consistory of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton requests synod to "reconsider Considerations 4, 5, and 6 of Article 166 of the Acts of General Synod Cloverdale 1983, and revise the wording as necessary to provide the churches with a clear and unambiguous judgment regarding the allegations of br. J. Werkman" on the ground that "the judgment of Synod Cloverdale is contradictory, ambiguous and confusing. It has not solved the local prob-

- lem and placed the consistories confronted with the situation in an untenable position.”
2. Br. J. Werkman requests synod “to do justice to our previous appeal and to determine whether these teachings of Rev. DeBruin may be taught in our churches.” His grounds are that the 1983 General Synod “did not deal with the substance of my appeal” and that the pronouncement in Consideration 6 contradicts and nullifies Considerations 4 and 5.
  3. The consistory of the Church at Smithers requests this synod to judge that,
    - a. Synod 1983 was correct in its judgment that the teaching that “all who have received a true faith become by virtue of that faith ‘a member of Jesus Christ and of His church’ . . . and as mutual members of the same body (Art. 28) they are therefore duty-bound to join themselves to Christ’s church” in fact nullifies what we confess in this very same 28th article.
    - b. Synod 1983 was wrong in its judgment that statements and teaching that nullify and undermine the confessions do not constitute attacks on the confessions and do not touch the promise given in the Subscription Form.
    - c. Synod 1983 should have confined itself to judging the teachings and statements of Rev. DeBruin in the light of God’s Word and/or the confessions and should have left the consequences of such a judgment to the parties involved.”
  4. Br. H. Noot requests synod to judge that General Synod 1983 was correct in its judgments as found in Art. 165, C, 5 and 6, and in Art. 166, C, 4 and 5, and in the first part of Art. 166, C, 6, but that General Synod 1983 was wrong in its judgment as found in Art. 166, C, 6, that “nullifying and undermining statements and teachings do not constitute attacks on the confession or that this does not break the promise given when the subscription form was signed,” and that “the Immanuel Council stands behind teachings and statements that nullify and undermine the confession.” His basic ground is that the statement in Consideration 6 nullifies the preceding considerations.
  5. In their appeal against Art. 166, C, 6, of Synod of Cloverdale of 1983, br. and sr. T. and M. VanderZyl request Synod “to make a clearcut decision . . . regarding the teachings of Rev. S. DeBruin.” Their basic ground is that the decision of the General Synod of Cloverdale, Acts, Art. 166, is contradictory, unclear and confusing. In a number of considerations the appellants try to indicate why the teachings of Rev. DeBruin are “against the Subscription Form” and why they “attack the confessions.”

**D. CONSIDERATION**

The appeals are all answered in the decision of Synod 1986 regarding the appeal of the consistory of Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton.

**E. RECOMMENDATION**

Synod decides,

to send the answer to the appeal of the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton to,

1. the Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton;
2. br. J. Werkman;
3. the consistory of the Canadian Reformed Church at Smithers;
4. br. H. Noot;
5. br. and sr. T. and M. VanderZyl.

The recommendation is ADOPTED.

## ARTICLE 187

### Appeals re Edmonton

Committee 2 presents:

A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, H, 9 Appeal from H. DeJong of Edmonton.

#### B. **ADMISSIBILITY**

The Regional Synod West of February 5-7, 1985, judged that br. H. DeJong has placed himself outside of the jurisdiction of general synod by the schismatic act of withdrawing from the church before the church-orderly way had been exhausted. Nevertheless, since he withdrew owing to difficulties directly related to the issues of the appeal, general synod declares this appeal admissible in the hope that it may help in reconciling br. H. DeJong with the consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton.

#### C. **OBSERVATIONS**

1. In this appeal br. H. DeJong "makes a serious complaint on the grounds of Art. 31, C.O., regarding the way (his) objections were dealt with" by Regional Synod West of February 5-7, 1985. He requests that this General Synod make the following pronouncements:
  - a. Regional Synod West of February 5-7, 1985, did not really compare the (10) complaints with Scripture, the confessions and the Church Order.
  - b. That according to the adduced Scripture passages, br. H. DeJong and others answered the call of elder J. Werkman in order to remain true to the Scripture, confessions, and Church Order, and at the same time he made an appeal to the major assemblies.
  - c. That the grounds used to answer the call of elder J. Werkman are similar to those given by the Blue Bell Reformation Church, which grounds were accepted by Classis Ontario South of Sept. 11-12, 1985.
  - d. That Regional Synod West of February 5-7, 1985, used the pronouncements of the 1983 General Synod (Art. 166, C, 6) without really checking the points raised by br. H. DeJong in his appeal.
  - e. That based on Scripture, confessions and Church Order, those who answered the call of elder J. Werkman acted rightly.
  - f. That Art. 166, C, 6 of the 1983 General Synod conflicts with similar pronouncements made in Art. 166, C, 1-5, and must be dropped.
  - g. That the appeal made by the consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton is proof that it binds the congregation to un-scriptural doctrines and has therewith "placed itself outside of the Federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches."
2. In his appeal, br. H. DeJong further observes that the above "Observation 1, f" is at the same time a request to revise the content of the pronouncement of the 1983 General Synod in Art. 166, C, 6.

#### D. **CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Regional Synod West of February 5-7, 1985, considered that the act of br. H. DeJong, in answering the call of elder J. Werkman to withdraw from the church before the church-orderly way had been exhausted, was schismatic.
2. Regional Synod West of February 5-7, 1985, correctly pointed out that "if he cannot accept the decision of the 1983 General Synod, he should seek to have it revised by appealing to the next general synod."
3. The appeal of br. H. DeJong ultimately deals with Art. 166 of the Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale.
4. This 1986 General Synod has made a decision in connection with other appeals against Art. 166 of the Acts of the 1983 General Synod of Cloverdale.

## E. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decides,

1. to send its decision regarding the appeal (from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton) against Art. 166 of the Acts of the 1983 General Synod to br. H. DeJong;
2. to underline the admonition Regional Synod West of February 5-7, 1985, made in one of its considerations to br. H. DeJong, namely, that he undo his schismatic act by reconciling himself with the consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

Synod is adjourned for supper.

## EVENING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 1986

### ARTICLE 188

#### Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting and requests that Psalm 46:1 and 2 be sung.

Roll call is held. All members of synod are present.

### ARTICLE 189

#### New Melody, Apostles' Creed

Committee 4 presents:

- A. **MATERIAL** — Agenda, VIII, B, 4 Letter from the Church at Coaldale re alternate melody for Hymn 1.  
B, 5 Letter from sr. D. Jansen re melody of Hymn 1.

#### B. OBSERVATIONS

1. Both the Church at Coaldale and sr. D. Jansen propose an alternate melody, composed by D. Zwart, Jr., for Hymn 1.
2. The Church at Coaldale states that "both the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* and General Synod of Cloverdale of 1983 failed to reckon with a previous Synodical decision of the General Synod of Smithville of 1980, *Acts*, Art. 122."
3. The wording given along with the submitted melody is the "previous text" of the Apostles' Creed.
4. Synod has decided (*Acts*, Art. 101) to "instruct the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* to insert the word 'Christian' in Hymn 1A if this is possible."
5. The present Hymn 1A is the "previous text" of the Apostles' Creed.

#### C. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Hymn 1B is evidence that the General Synod of 1983 took the consideration of the General Synod of 1980 into account, namely, that "an alternate melody for Hymn 1 is desirable, since there still are complaints about the existing one as being too 'gregorian'" (*Art. 122, C, 1, 4, a, p. 85*). However, Hymn 1B is unsuitable as a replacement of the previous Hymn 1.
2. The 1980 General Synod adopted a revised text for the Apostles' Creed (*Acts*, Art. 107) which was amended by the 1983 General Synod (*Acts*, Art. 70) and this "new text" should be used.
3. The "new text" of the Apostles' Creed does not appear to fit the melody composed by D. Zwart, Jr.

#### D. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decides,

1. to pass on this melody (cf. Observation 1) to the Standing Committee for the

*Book of Praise* so that they may consider if it can be adapted to the "new text" or whether a new melody can be found for this "new text;"

2. to instruct the committee to report back to the next general synod.

The recommendations are ADOPTED.

## ARTICLE 190

### Appointments

General Synod makes the following appointments:

#### 1. **Board of Governors**

##### A. Ministers (Eastern Canada):

The Revs. P. Kingma, J. Mulder, and Cl. Stam

Substitutes:

The Revs. J. VanRietschoten, M. Werkman, and J. DeJong (respectively).

##### B. Ministers (Western Canada):

The Revs. M. van Beveren, M. VanderWel, and J. Visscher

Substitutes:

The Revs. B.J. Berends, C. VanSpronsen, and J.D. Wielenga (respectively).

##### C. Non-ministers:

The brs. H. Buist, C.G. Heeringa, H. Kampen, C.M. Loopstra, and A.L. Vanderhout.

#### 2. **Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad**

The Revs. Cl. Stam, M. van Beveren, and J. Visscher (convener), and the brs. E.C. Baartman, H.A. Berends, and A.C. Lengkeek.

#### 3. **Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise***

The Rev. J. DeJong, Profs. Dr. J. Faber and C. VanDam, Dr. W. Helder (convener), br. M. Kampen, sr. H. VanHalen, and br. J. VanHuisstede.

#### 4. **Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church**

The Revs. R. Aasman, J. Mulder (convener), Dr. J. Faber, and the brs. J. Boot, and T.M.P. VanderVen.

#### 5. **Committee on Bible Translations**

The Rev. J. DeJong, Prof. J. Geertsema, Rev. P. Kingma, Rev. J. VanRietschoten (convener), and Prof. C. VanDam.

#### 6. **Churches for Days of Prayer**

The Churches at Burlington West and Edmonton (Providence).

#### 7. **Church for the Administration of the General Fund**

The Church at Carman.

#### 8. **Church for the General Archives**

The Church at Burlington East.

#### 9. **Church for the Inspection of the General Archives**

The Church at Burlington West.

#### 10. **Church to Audit the Finances of the 1986 General Synod**

The Church at Burlington East.

#### 11. **The Address Church**

For Canada: the Church at Burlington East.

For the U.S.A.: the Church at Grand Rapids.

#### 12. **The Committee for the Printing of the Acts**

The first and second clerks e.t. of the 1986 General Synod.

### **13. The Convening Church for the Next General Synod**

The Church at Winnipeg. General Synod is to be convened in the fall of 1989. General Synod decides that the committees shall have the right, in case a vacancy occurs, to bring their membership up to its original strength in order to fulfill their mandates.

### **ARTICLE 191**

#### **Farewell to Rev. W. Huizinga**

Rev. J. Mulder, in his capacity as convener of the Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, expresses the gratitude and appreciation for the work done by the Rev. W. Huizinga in his capacity as member of this committee.

The chairman adds some well-chosen words as a farewell to Rev. W. Huizinga, who accepted a call to the Free Reformed Church of Armadale, Western Australia.

### **ARTICLE 192**

#### **Question Period, Art. 44, C.O.**

The chairman gratefully notes that censure is not necessary.

### **ARTICLE 193**

#### **Acts**

Acts, Articles 180 — 192 are read and adopted.

### **ARTICLE 194**

#### **Press Release**

The moderaman of synod is charged to approve the press release.

### **ARTICLE 195**

#### **Closing**

The vice-chairman, Rev. C. Stam, speaks words of gratitude to the chairman, Rev. M. van Beveren. He thanks the chairman for the way he has given leadership and chaired the meetings. On behalf of the members of synod he presents to the chairman a lasting symbol of the appreciation. He wishes the chairman the Lord's blessing in the future.

The chairman addresses synod with the following words:

"The eleventh General Synod of our churches is coming to a close. We are thankful to the Lord that He enabled us to do the work to which the churches called us. He took care of us and gave physical and mental strength to complete our task.

For twenty days we have intensively been involved in the process of making decisions. We can testify that the members of synod were dedicated to their task, each one using his personal talents. In many cases the brethren made overtime by working late at night after the closing of evening sessions. Sure, there have been signs of strain, especially at the end of a week. But we can be thankful that none of the members was incapacitated by a breakdown or illness.

We may also mention with thankfulness that the brotherly spirit and cooperation prevailed even when discussions were tense and a unanimous decision could not

be reached. Such a brotherly unity is a gift from the Lord who is the Builder of the church. At the beginning of every session we have asked the Lord that he might give us His guidance and wisdom. When we, listening to His Word in obedience, have tried to the utmost of our abilities to work for the upbuilding of His Church, we can leave the result of our work to Him. He will use our efforts and labour to the glorification of His Name, and we can be comforted by His Word that it is not by power nor by might, and not by human wisdom that His church is built, but by His Spirit. His ways are higher than our ways. Through faith in that Word, brotherly spirit could prevail even when sometimes personal views were not in line with the conviction of the majority.

An important event which we should mention is that synod appointed a professor of New Testament at our college who is to take the place of Prof. L. Selles. It was an impressive moment when Rev. J. Geertsema informed synod that he had decided to accept the appointment. We could express our gratitude to the Lord that He provided for the continuation of the training for the ministry.

We enjoyed the presence of the fraternal delegate from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Rev. G.D. Jerrell of New Mexico. We could share with him our concerns about the future of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but also assure him of our joy about the faithfulness to the Scripture which is found in his churches.

It is impossible to elaborate on the many happy moments during this synod. There was room for fun and laughter. It would be tempting to act as a monitor who would survey the behaviour and personal peculiarities of each of you. But I think we already heard too many jokes, especially about the chairman.

I thank you for bearing with me. If as chairman I ruled too strictly or too leniently over you, let it be your comfort that if I did not do so deliberately, I did it innocently. From my fellow-officers I received all the assistance and cooperation I could expect, for which I am thankful.

Great appreciation should be expressed to the convening church, firstly for the excellent preparation of synod. We certainly do not blame the convening church for the fact that some documents reached the delegates late. In most cases the cause was to be found in the early date of this synod, and the convening church did its utmost to diminish the inconvenience.

Then, during synod, we received the outstanding care of the ladies of the congregation. We cannot mention all those sisters who served us so well, but an exception should be made for Mrs. E. Dykema and Mrs. J. Mulder, who organized the meals and refreshments to the satisfaction of all. The faithful help of Mr. and Mrs. A. Buist as caretakers of the church did not go unnoticed. And we cannot forget the hospitality we received in the Burlington congregation.

That we have been together in weakness will be apparent when the *Acts* will be published. But we also worked while having the promise of our God that our labour is not in vain in the Lord. That is why we can depart in gratitude and leave for our homes and for the tasks that await us in the congregations knowing that He will fulfill His purpose for us and for His churches.

May the Lord be with you.

Thank you."

The vice-chairman requests that Psalm 135:1, 6, and 9 be sung, and leads in thanksgiving and prayer to the Lord.

General Synod of Burlington West of 1986 is closed.

By order of Synod,  
M. van Beveren, chairman  
Cl. Stam, vice-chairman  
W. Pouwelse, first clerk  
W. Huizinga, second clerk



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## APPENDIX I

### STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK OF PRAISE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

#### REPORT TO THE GENERAL SYNOD OF BURLINGTON WEST, 1986

Esteemed brethren,

The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* hereby presents its report to your assembly.

#### 1. PUBLICATION

- a. The newly revised and completed edition of the *Book of Praise*: Anglo-Genevan Psalter appeared in February 1985. The copies that had been ordered in advance were promptly delivered to the congregations, where they were gratefully received.
- b. The committee wishes to express its thanks to Premier Printing Ltd. for their fine cooperation in this publishing venture. Every effort was made to keep the price down, though by no means at the expense of the quality of the finished product. In keeping with the terms of our agreement, Premier Printing efficiently handled all the commercial aspects of publication, providing the committee with a detailed disclosure of the cost of producing the *Book of Praise* as well as any requested information regarding its distribution.
- c. It may be of interest to Synod to know that approximately 19,600 copies were printed. Over 16,000 of these were distributed within our confederation of churches; close to 2,400 were ordered by our Australian sister churches, while several hundred were purchased by others. As of Dec. 31, 1985, there were fewer than 700 copies left.
- d. The committee hopes to proceed with a second printing after the General Synod of Burlington West, 1986. It will then be possible to include any changes that Synod may adopt.

#### 2. CORPORATE STATUS

In accordance with previous Synod decisions, the committee has maintained its status as a corporation (516455 Ontario Ltd.). Although we are not involved in financial transactions, we in this capacity can legally exercise control over the *Book of Praise* as authorized by General Synods.

#### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend to Synod,

- a. that the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* be re-appointed;
- b. that this committee be given the mandate
  - i to see to it that the *Book of Praise* remains available to the churches at a reasonable price;
  - ii to make the necessary arrangements with printers and others for the production and distribution of the *Book of Praise*;
  - iii to maintain its corporate status in order to be able to protect the interest of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*;
  - iv to implement all Synod decisions relating to the contents of the *Book of Praise*;

- v to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* among others;
- vi to serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed;
- c. that any changes to be included in the next printing be passed on to the committee as soon as possible;
- d. that Synod provide the committee with any available information that may be relevant to the preparation of future printings of the *Book of Praise*.

Respectfully submitted,

J. DeJong  
W. Helder  
M. Kampen  
C. VanDam  
C. van Halen-Faber  
J.G. Van Huisstede  
January 31, 1986

## APPENDIX II

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR CONTACT WITH THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO GENERAL SYNOD 1986

#### I. MANDATE

General Synod 1983 gave the Committee the following mandate:

- a. to continue contact with the OPC, while taking into account the rules for "Ecclesiastical Contact";
- b. to publish, for the benefit of our Churches, a detailed evaluation of the confessional and church-political divergencies, showing proof that these divergencies do not form an impediment in recognizing the OPC as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ;
- c. to evaluate the reaction of the CEIR of the OPC regarding the divergencies, and to come to the next Synod with recommendations (cf. C. Considerations 1,a);
- d. to complete the discussion and evaluation of the relationships which the OPC has with other parties, especially the RES, the CRC and the PCA (see C. Considerations 3,b);
- e. to pay special attention to the new developments in the OPC, with respect to the so-called Shepherd case (see B. Observations 2,a,1,ii,iii), the Hofford case (see B. Observations 2,b) and the "fencing" of the Lord's Supper (see B. Observations 2,c,i,ii,iii, and d), and to come to the next Synod with recommendations in this respect;
- f. to inform the Churches about the progress made by means of press releases;
- g. to report on its activities and findings to the next General Synod.

#### II. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Committee met regularly throughout the period from 1983-1985. All the appointed members were able to serve on the Committee. Our convener remained Rev. J. Mulder, our treasurer was Br. J. Boot and our secretary Rev. W. Huizinga. Minutes of all the meetings were kept and signed. All correspondence was carefully kept and is available for the General Synod.

Classis Manitoba/Alberta asked us for advice whether they should exchange delegates with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC. The Committee gave positive advice affirming such exchanges, and gratefully acknowledges the good cooperation it received from the Classis Manitoba/Alberta. This Classis kept your Committee informed of developments by means of letters and a delegate's report. We lamented the fact that Classis Ontario South, though it was asked by your Committee, did not offer such cooperation, though we were both dealing with the "Hofford Case" and the controversy at Blue Bell. Thankfully we may report that just before this report was sent to the printers we received a letter from Classis Ontario South of Dec. 11/85 in which they pledge their cooperation in the matter of the controversy at Blue Bell. We received a letter and a Classical Committee report from this Classis. Thus far Classis Ontario South has not cooperated with us concerning the "Hofford Case."

The Committee noticed that the 1983 General Synod included the new developments within the OPC. Consequently the Committee included a new development in the OPC. The controversy at the Blue Bell OPC, as it related to the issue of fencing the Lord's Table, was examined. This seemed all the more imperative since the Blue Bell Church seceded from the OPC and has become affiliated with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Our report will follow the above-mentioned mandate, dealing with each part in turn.

#### III. Re: "a)

The Committee did maintain contact by means of correspondence and delegates to their General Assemblies. In 1984 Rev. J. Mulder was our delegate to their 52nd

GA and in 1985 Rev. P. Kingma went as our delegate to their 53rd GA. Both delegates' reports have been added to this report as appendices.

We have also invited the OPC to send a delegate to the 1986 General Synod.

We have sent copies of our 1983 Acts of the GS. They have now sent copies of the minutes of all their General Assemblies since 1980. In addition the Committee has purchased copies of *The Standards of Government, Discipline and Worship of the OPC*, issued in 1985 (sixth edition).

#### IV. Re: "b)

The Committee considered the mandate closely. The mandate was somewhat ambiguous and open to various interpretations. One of the Committee members, Rev. P. Kingma was convinced that the mandate issued a challenge to the Committee to come forward with proof that these divergencies indeed do not form an impediment for our recognition of the OPC as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, since this Committee was to fulfill what had not been done in 1977, the Committee saw that its task was to provide the grounds for the 1977 decision. Indeed, the mandate was to show proof that these divergencies do not form an impediment in recognizing the OPC as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Seeing that Synod wanted the Committee to supply the documented proof for the 1977 decision to recognize the OPC as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Committee wrote the evaluation with this aim in mind. The Committee has thus published a detailed evaluation of the divergencies for the benefit of the Churches.

A copy of this published evaluation (cf. *Clarion*, Vol.34, Nos. 10, 11, May 17/85 and May 31/85) is attached to this report as Appendix 2. We would like to note that the Rev. P. Kingma was not able to approve of this publication for the benefit of the Churches. It was understood in the Committee that this disapproval did not prevent him from publicly speaking or writing about these apparent divergencies.

The Committee would like to make one clarification with respect to the report submitted to the 1983 GS. In the 1983 Acts (Art. 55, C., Considerations, 1a.) it is stated that we were inconsistent, since we asked that part of our mandate concerning the evaluation of the divergencies be eliminated and that on the other hand we asked that Synod renew the mandate to evaluate these divergencies. Apparently Synod did not discern well that the request for the elimination of part of the mandate concerned the task to publish for the sake of the Churches a detailed evaluation. The Committee never asked for the elimination of the mandate to evaluate the divergencies. It objected to supplying proof for the 1977 Synod decision. A Committee should not supply proof for a Synod decision after the decision has been reached. For what status does such a Committee submission have? We are not an ecclesiastical Assembly, but only a servant of Synod. To whom does a Church or member appeal if they do not agree with our submission written for the benefit of the Churches?

We would therefore like Synod to take note of the fact that our report to the 1983 GS included the request to eliminate a Committee submission to supply proof for the 1977 decision (cf. Appendix VIII, p. 301, III).

We would also recommend that Synod adopt this report given for the benefit of the Churches as showing proof that these confessional and Church governmental divergencies did not form an impediment in recognizing the OPC as a true Church.

#### V. Re: "c)

1. Our mandate is "to evaluate the reaction of the CEIR of the OPC regarding the divergencies, and to come to the next Synod with recommendations." Since we did not meet with the CEIR, the "reaction of the CEIR" is the letter of October 25, 1983 sent by the CEIR to our Committee on Contact with the OPC. Synod 1983 received a copy of this letter and a copy is attached to this report (Appendix 1).
2. In this letter the CEIR first gives some *background information* about the history

of the OPC and the "Dutch influence" in the development of the OPC via men as VanTil, Kuyper, Stonehouse and G. Vos. The blending of American and Scottish Presbyterianism with continental traditions make the OPC unique but not as "uniform" as the Canadian Reformed Churches with their continental Reformed background, according to the CEIR. In spite of these various traditions, the OPC sincerely lives under its Confession and catechisms, is Reformed and reforming and submits itself to the authority of the Lord and His Word. Another factor in the development of the OPC is that many members have a non-Reformed background. Although a transition is made by these members, many still struggle with their past theological liberalism and Arminian evangelicalism.

Your Committee is of the opinion that this different historic and confessional background is indeed an important factor to be kept in mind when evaluating the existing divergencies. Synod Coaldale 1977 also recognized this in its consideration for the decision to recognize the OPC as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Acts*, Art. 91, II).

3. Reacting to our objections against the concept of a "*visible and invisible Church*," CEIR states that although many in the OPC are uncomfortable with confessional expressions to this effect, the use of the distinction "*congregatio et coetus*" in our Churches seems to parallel the use of the distinction between the visible and invisible Church in their standards.

Your Committee has its doubts about the validity of this parallel. The use of the words "*congregation*" and "*coetus*" in the latin text of the Belgic Confession, Art. 28, is not to be considered as two descriptions of two Churches, for it should be kept in mind that the Belgic Confession uses these words interchangeably, and these words may be used to clarify *two aspects* of the one Church of Christ. Furthermore, although the distinction between visible and invisible Church has in some practical ways led to the acceptance of the theory of the pluriformity of the Church, the history of the OPC and the way this Church uses its relations with other Churches (e.g. with the Canadian Reformed Churches), demonstrates that they believe in the unity of the Church of Christ. CEIR rightly refers to a report on "*The Biblical Basis for Ecclesiastical Union*" submitted to its 28th General Assembly and to the writings of John Murray who wrote,

The purpose stated in Jesus' prayer — "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me" — implies a manifestation observable by the world. The mysterious unity of believers with one another must come to visible expression so as to be instrumental in bringing conviction to the world. (*Collected Writings*, Vol. I, p. 271)

When the CEIR at this point asks whether the Canadian Reformed Churches are not practising a form of "international pluriformity," since the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Lib.) and the Canadian Reformed Churches are not one Church, this question is based on a misunderstanding, according to us. The full sister Church relation of "Church Correspondence" between two or more national Federations of Churches is based on the mutual recognition of each other as true Churches of Christ and on the fact that they are one in the faith. Maintaining such a relation may not be called "practising a form of international pluriformity," as if this were something similar to A. Kuyper's idea of the pluriformity of the Church.

4. As to the "*assurance of faith*" the CEIR feels that there is no basic difference between the Westminster Standards and the Reformed Confessions. They refer to the Canons of Dort, Chapter V, Art.11, which says that "believers in this life have to struggle with various doubts, and . . . they do not always feel this full assurance of faith . . ." The fact that the OPC often has to work with people of an evangelical background with an "easy believism" ("just trust in Jesus") plays a role here, according to the CEIR. Overagainst this they wish to stress

the warnings and commands of Scripture to persevere, without denying that the focus of faith is the Lord and His promises.

Your Committee does appreciate this awareness of an easy "believism," especially against the background of an Arminian evangelicalism. Although the expression, "the essence of faith" (Westminster Confession, Ch. 18, 32; L. Catechism, A. 81), could be amended, it cannot be denied that also in the OPC it is proclaimed that the assurance of faith is to be found in Jesus Christ and His promises, and not in the personal experiences of the believer.

5. In their reaction to our questions relating to the *covenant of grace* CEIR admits that this is a matter of difference in the OPC, as it was in The Netherlands before and after the "pacification formula" of 1905. Since there are two "lines of the covenant" in the Westminster Standards, this is also reflected in the practical approach, for some emphasize that the covenant of grace is made with the elect, while others try to combine the two. Since this is an "unsettled issue" in the OPC, CEIR stresses that the Canadian Reformed Churches can especially be of help in this area to the OPC in coming to a clearer understanding.

According to us we have to acknowledge that indeed there are these "two lines of the covenant" in the Westminster Standards. Neither one of them has been exclusively elevated to a binding doctrinal statement. Consequently we also have to acknowledge that in this respect a different approach as to the practical work in the congregation is possible in the OPC. On the other hand, it is also true that in practice the doctrine of the Larger Catechism, Answer 166, that "infants descending from parents . . . professing faith in Christ . . . are in that respect within the covenant, and are to be baptized" certainly functions in the OPC as an acknowledgement of the covenant of grace that God made with the believers and their seed. We should be willing in a continued contact to enrich each other with the Scriptural knowledge and understanding of the covenant of grace.

6. Coming to a *conclusion* of our evaluation of the reaction of the CEIR regarding the divergencies, your Committee is of the opinion that,
  - a. the letter of the CEIR of the OPC, dated October 23, 1983, is written in an open and brotherly spirit and has clarified some points of difference;
  - b. this letter, however, did not bring us much closer to a uniformity of opinion with regard to the divergencies under discussion;
  - c. this is only partly due to the fact that this latest reaction of the CEIR misses somewhat the doctrinal depth and clarity of a previous communication of the CEIR (April 14, 1976);
  - d. this is mainly because these points under discussion are related to the different ways the Westminster Standards on the one hand and the Three Forms of Unity on the other hand approach the doctrine of the Church, the covenant of grace, the assurance of faith, etc. These differences are embedded in the historical and confessional history of the OPC and the CRC;
  - e. although the Westminster Standards could benefit from a careful emendation with regard to the formulation of these points of doctrine in order to improve the Scriptural contents of these Reformed Confessions, we seriously doubt whether it will serve a useful purpose to continue this discussion of divergencies on a Committee level;
  - f. both Churches should honestly recognize these differences and be willing in a continued contact to enrich each other with the Scriptural knowledge and understanding of the doctrine of salvation.
7. Considering what have been mentioned above we *recommend* Synod with respect to this part of our mandate:
  - a. to accept this evaluation of the reaction of the CEIR of the OPC regarding the divergencies;

- b. to continue the Committee with the mandate to continue the contact with the OPC, taking into account the rules for "Ecclesiastical Contact," which include "continued discussion" on "issues of mutual concern";
- c. not to charge the Committee to continue the discussion on the divergencies between the confessional and church-political standards of the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

#### **VI. Re:"d)**

This part of the mandate concerns the relations which the OPC has with other parties. As an introduction to their relation with third parties we quote from the report of the CEIR to the 51st GA:

### **CONTACT WITH OTHER CHURCHES**

#### **A. Churches in Official Contact**

Our Church continues official contact with various other Churches in several different ways on the denominational level:

1. By membership in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) — five Churches.
2. By membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) — 32 Churches, in 18 countries.
3. Directly with Churches that have jointly with us approved a policy of fellowship entitled "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship." These Churches are members of NAPARC, and we normally exchange fraternal delegates for Synods and General Assemblies.
4. Directly with other Churches, by means of correspondence and/or exchange of fraternal delegates, that:
  - a. Are members of the RES — Reformed Churches of Australia, Reformed Church in Japan, Reformed Churches of New Zealand.
  - b. Are not members of either NAPARC or the RES — Canadian Reformed Churches, Reformed Church in the U.S. (Eureka Classis), Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hap Dong), and Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin).

This summary describes which relations the OPC has with other Churches and how such relations are exercised.

#### **1. The Christian Reformed Church**

In our submission to General Synod 1980 the Committee explained how the OPC and the CRC are both members of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). The member Churches, the Basis and purpose of this council were included in that report (cf. *Acts*, 1980, p. 190). In our evaluation of this relation we mentioned the historical ties between these Churches and the help which the CRC gave the OPC in its "infant" stage. As of late this relation has not progressed in the direction of closer ties or unity. Instead their contacts in NAPARC and RES often find them opposed to each other on questions such as women in office, the place of the synodical GKN in the RES, and the practice of diaconal aid to others. We repeat that it is indicative that the OPC entertains seriously the invitation to join the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), but that it has sought no similar merger with the CRC in the United States of America. The OPC has received from us our last appeal to the CRC.

We recommend that this relation be kept a topic of discussion and concern in our mutual contacts.

#### **2. Presbyterian Church in America**

In 1983 the PCA surprisingly proposed and approved at their General Assembly (GA) the invitation to the OPC to join and be received into the PCA.

This invitation was then sent to the Presbyteries of the PCA for approval. Three-fourths of the Presbyteries had to approve. This happened. So now the invitation has been delivered to the Assemblies of the OPC. The Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations (CEIR) of the OPC is charged with preparing a full report and recommendations on this invitation. Since they were not able to accomplish this before the GA held in June, 1985, the matter will be dealt with at the 1986 GA of the OPC. This 1986 Assembly should vote on whether or not to propose to the Presbyteries that they approve joining. The voting requirements to join are a two-thirds majority of one Assembly, approval by two-thirds of the Presbyteries, and a two-thirds majority of the following Assembly. The CEIR of the OPC promised to keep us informed and to send us a copy of their report to their GA.

Included in their report may be provisions for a continuing OPC in the eventuality that the invitation is accepted. This means that we might be able to continue contacts with OP Churches most probably even if the joining and receiving takes place. Also, it should be mentioned that the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC, which has strongly opposed en masse such a joining with the PCA in the past, has taken up contact with the Classis Alberta/Manitoba. It is difficult for the Committee to evaluate this possible union. We have expressed in the past our fear that the OPC might be swallowed by a more broadly evangelical federation and thus lose its doctrinal emphasis.

Just recently (Dec. 30/85) the report of the CEIR concerning the invitation to join and PCA was received in the mail. We will include some highlights from this final report of the Committee to the 1986 General Assembly.

This historic document contains:

- I. INVITATION FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
- II. BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH
- III. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTS OF JOINING
- IV. FACTS REGARDING THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
- V. CONCLUSION
- VI. RECOMMENDATION

APPENDIX A — List of Presbyteries and Membership

APPENDIX B — Map of Presbytery Boundaries

As far as the invitation itself goes there is one later development. The PCA had pledged to "honour the commitments of the OPC." However, the 13th (1985) General Assembly of the PCA has restricted that pledge in that the PCA will no longer (after the Chicago RES) pursue consideration of membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, and that it will affiliate with any other inter-Church body only by the deliberate action of the General Assembly.

The section on the Biblical principles for Church unity is a reprint of the 1961 (28th) General Assembly statement by the OPC on "the Biblical Basis of ecclesiastical union" (prepared for its discussions with the Christian Reformed Church). Added to this older statement is a further statement on the nature of the Church, the unity of the Church and a section dealing with "toward perfecting Biblical unity." This complete section is very valuable.

The recommendation comes in the form of alternatives. The first one is the recommendation to accept the invitation and to join the PCA. Eleven grounds are listed for this first recommendation. There is no provision for a continuing OPC in this alternative. If this recommendation is accepted, the OPC would join the PCA as of Jan. 1, 1988.

The alternative recommendation is thankfully and politely to decline the invitation for the time being, and to free the PCA from continuing the invitation so graciously issued. Nine grounds are listed for this alternative. The disunity within the OPC, caused by this decision; the fear that 50 years of Reformed

maturation in doctrine and polity will be in vain; the distrust of the growing use of Committees of commissioners in PCA General Assemblies and its overly large Assembly; and the presence of some disturbing liberal elements in the PCA are some of the more important grounds.

We see that the OPC is not unanimous even in its Committee on this important matter. There is concern that the Reformed character of the OPC will be swallowed by a "southern Presbyterianism" and "evangelicalism." We note these concerns with thankfulness, and we urge that our Churches remember the OPC in prayer as they struggle to come to a decision.

### 3. The Reformed Ecumenical Synod

The membership of the GKN (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland — Synodical) has caused us to object to the membership of the OPC in the RES. The liberal trends within the GKN and its dual membership in the World Council of Churches (WCC) are reasons from the recent past which occasioned this objection on our part. In combined meetings with the CEIR of the OPC we have repeated this objection of ours.

In 1984 the RES met in Chicago. The issue of the GKN membership consumed at least twice as much time as any other issue. The RES adopted the following recommendations:

"That Synod express to the GKN its conviction and concern that on certain points . . . the GKN are departing from the testimony of Scripture and the substance of the Reformed Confessions."

The deficiency in the discipline of the GKN, the study report *God With Us*, the report on *Homophilia* and the booklet, *In liefde trouw zijn* are cited as examples of this.

On the matter of how to deal with the GKN's pastoral advice to homosexuals there was no unanimity. A minority report spearheaded by the OPC delegation submitted the following report:

1. That Synod request the GKN
  - a. to withdraw its pastoral advice of November 1979 together with its clarification of this advice given in November 1980 which allows practicing homosexuals to partake of the Lord's Supper and to hold Church office, and
  - b. to declare that according to Scripture all homosexual practice is sin;
2. That if the GKN is unable to comply with this request, Synod request the GKN to withdraw from the RES by December 31, 1986."

As one of the grounds the report stated that nothing less than the course of action recommended above can restore the mutual confidence within the RES, as well as the credibility of the RES itself. (The above citations are taken from the Acts of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, Chicago 1984, pp. 52-67).

This minority report was defeated by a tie vote. In its place the RES appealed to the GKN to respond to the disappointment and disillusionment of the Churches of the RES and to withdraw their pastoral advice in the matter of homophilia. If the GKN is unable to do so it must seriously consider that several Churches will find it difficult to stay in the RES with the GKN.

This weakened decision left the OPC with a difficult choice. In their report to the 1985 GA the CEIR addresses the question whether Scripture requires them now to withdraw. Their answer is that texts such as II Cor. 6:14, 17 do not require this since the RES in contradistinction from the GKN has not committed itself to ungodliness and unbelief, but continues to condemn the wrong beliefs and practices of the GKN. Though the RES should do more than it has, they are happy with what it has done. Also, the CEIR explains that within the GKN there is no unity but variety. A majority either scorns

the RES as a club of conservative Churches who always criticize them or it ignores the RES. A conservative group, represented for instance by Prof. Klaas Runia, cling to the RES as a tie which will somehow help to reverse the deviant trends in their Churches. A radical wing views the RES as a golden opportunity for exporting its new theological and ethical insights to other "less enlightened" third world Church members. The CEIR report considers it the task of the OPC to help preserve the RES as an effective forum for assisting other smaller member Churches like itself, particularly the non-Western Churches, rather than thinking of abandoning it to the theological tides from the GKN.

Although we as yet do not have the official minutes of the the 1985 General Assembly, we have been informed that this latest Assembly of the OPC after lengthy debate has defeated a motion that called for the withdrawal of the OPC from the RES. The Assembly adopted the recommendation to request the Committee on RES matters to prepare a plan for the future response of the OPC to the RES in view of the failure of the RES Chicago 1984 to deal adequately with the crisis created by the continued membership of the GKN in the RES, and to report to the 54th GA (1987). It instructed the same Committee to write a letter to the Interim Committee of the RES expressing the alarm of the OPC that the failure of RES Chicago 1984 to confront the GKN with a clear ultimatum concerning their membership in the RES has severely compromised the integrity of the RES, and that a copy of this letter be sent to each of the member Churches of the RES.

We can appreciate the Reformed leadership which the OPC and its delegates took in the discussion and action on the membership of the GKN within the RES. That the RES expressed its conviction and concern that on certain points the GKN are departing from the testimony of Scripture and the substance of the Reformed Confessions is also a healthy sign. Yet we lament this decision of continued membership in the RES. It is our conviction that membership in the RES constitutes a bond if not a partnership with the GKN, a member Church of great influence in the RES. To have severed the membership and this relation with the GKN would have left a solid, Reformed testimony to the other Churches. A documented communication to all the member Churches of the RES could have been sent to help these Churches and to give them assurance of continued assistance.

#### **4. The Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland — Vrijgemaakt**

These sister Churches through their Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) have communicated with us and kept us up to date on their contact with the OPC (during 1981-1984, Synods of Arnhem to Synod of Heemse).

Our sister Churches certainly have kept their promise not to run ahead of us in their contacts with the OPC. Their contacts have been slow and cautious.

They did exchange letters and interview the Rev. John Galbraith of the OPC (while he was in The Netherlands as moderator of the RES). The Rev. Galbraith also gave them substantial information about the OPC and its relations with other Churches.

They lament that the correspondence does not amount to much, and they ask whether the OPC, PCA have a real interest in their Churches, or whether they are too far removed from the North American horizon.

As a matter of interest the CRCA has also taken up contact by letter with the PCA. This contact is also in the "infant stage."

### **VII. Re: "e) to pay special attention to the new developments in the OPC"**

#### **1. The Shepherd Case**

Although we cannot add anything substantial to our report to the 1983 GS, yet

we will report what we know for the sake of clarity. The issues raised by the views of Prof. N. Shepherd about justification and works never reached the General Assembly. The only records lie with the Westminster Theological Seminary, which is independent of the OPC. The Presbytery of Philadelphia of the OPC of which he was a member held discussions about his views on justification and works. They did not condemn them but declared them not to be un-Scriptural and also within the bounds of the Westminster Confession. However, Prof. N. Shepherd voluntarily resigned from the Presbytery and the OPC, "transferring" to the Christian Reformed Church, before the Presbytery could fully resolve the matter of his views. We have officially requested any and all minuted decisions of the Presbytery of Philadelphia relating to the views of the then Prof. N. Shepherd.

Once more, we have no right or mandate to start questioning the Westminster Theological Seminary which is independent of the OPC. Also, it seems pointless to list all the views which Presbytery approved. It is our contention that this case has been closed through the departure of Prof. N. Shepherd to the Christian Reformed Church. We have no access to any other official information which would relate to our contacts with the OPC, than what has been stated above.

#### A. *The Controversy at Blue Bell*

##### i. An Introduction

The CCOPC has received information about the fencing of the Lord's Table in the OPC from another local Session of the OPC. At the Blue Bell OPC the issue of the supervision of the Lord's Table, along with other issues, led to the Secession of that Church from the OPC and to the formation of the Reformation Church at Blue Bell, PA. This Church has requested official contact with the Classis Ontario South of the Federation of Canadian Reformed Churches, with a view to affiliation with our Churches on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity and accepted Church Order of Dort. It is our opinion that it is worthwhile and even necessary to examine what happened there with a view to the issue of fencing the Lord's Table.

In order to see this issue in its proper perspective it would be best to introduce some background information. This information is taken from the survey of "The Controversy at Blue Bell OPC" as written by the Session of the Reformation Church in Blue Bell. We follow their outline, understanding that this might offer an unbalanced version. We have requested official minutes from the Presbytery of Philadelphia about the controversy at Blue Bell. Thus far we have not received any minutes. The Presbytery asked the CEIR what would be appropriate to release to us, and thus far the Presbytery had not received any answer. This cumbersome approach has made it difficult for us to receive information from both sides, even though it must be stated that we in no way disbelieve what the brothers in Blue Bell wrote about the controversy.

Blue Bell OPC through its teaching and ruling elders had gained some Reformed distinctives such sermons using the Heidelberg Catechism, a confessional membership, and a restricted communion. However, after the departure of their minister the two ruling elders opposed each other in how to lead the congregation further. One led the Church very clearly in the direction of the Protestant Reformed Churches. The other vigorously opposed this. As a compromise the Presbytery with the Session agreed to have the first elder resign and to declare the other inactive. In their place the Presbytery appointed an interim Session of elders from outside of the congregation. This interim Session systematically attempted to remove the above-mentioned Reformed distinctives of this congregation. All attempts at receiving their own elders who could lead the Church according to these norms were blockaded. In the end, since the Church

courts were exhausting the Church, the congregation voted to leave the OPC. They did so in accordance with the rules stipulated in the Form of Government of the OPC, XVI. 6.

To give an impression of the way in which they were dealt with we quote one of the teaching elders of the interim Session who in a letter to one of the members of the congregation stated:

"I have told you all along that if you felt you could not in good conscience accept the OPC's position on these matters (the doctrinal issues mentioned below), I would help you do whatever was needed to permit you to seek affiliation elsewhere. The offer still stands." (Letter from the Rev. J. Mitchell to Mr. Bret Davis, dated May 20, 1984)

Though the Church did not acquiesce in this view of "shopping" for one's particular "brand" of Church, it had to face the consequence that its position was not being tolerated by the interim Session which was governing them.

At present after discussing and requesting affiliation with the Canadian Reformed Churches through Classis Ontario South, they have been admitted into the Federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches on the basis of God's Word as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity and of the accepted Church Order of Dort.

## ii. Doctrinal Issues in the Controversy

The doctrinal issues involved were as follows:

a. **The Doctrine of the Covenant.** They believe that the covenant of grace which God establishes with His people is one-sided in its initiation but two-sided in its operation. God in His sovereign grace establishes the covenant with undeserving people. In this covenant there are promises and obligations. The two parties promise adherence to these provisions. Thus the promise of the covenant comes with the command to believe and to obey. It is made with believers and their seed. It is not made only with the elect. Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of the covenant.

At the Table of the Lord only those covenanted members who have publicly pledged to maintain the promises and obligations of the covenant should sit down to remember and believe the death of the Mediator of the covenant through whose blood the new covenant of grace is established. These covenantal members also pledge to keep the whole covenant: all its promises and obligations.

b. **Confessional Membership.** The Church at Blue Bell maintained the need to keep and demonstrate the unity of faith in one common salvation by means of one common Confession. Even as all the members of the covenanted people of Israel submitted themselves to the terms, the promises and commandments, of the old covenant at Mt. Sinai, so also they want all members to confess the teachings, both the promises and the obligations, of the new covenant. They did not consider "a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ" sufficient. Every member of Christ must pledge allegiance to Christ by professing the same faith as the Church. They therefore require an intelligent profession of the Reformed faith as confessed by the Church in its Confessions. Only in this way can the unity of the Church be safeguarded, and only thus can the unity which is expressed at the Lord's Table be demonstrated.

c. **Ecclesiology.** Their view of the Church also determined the stand about the supervision of the Lord's Table. They rejected the concept of the invisible Church overagainst the visible Church. By means of the latter concept it is thought that many who belong to the invisible

Church by election and regeneration but who do not belong to the visible Church may attend the Lord's Table. The Church must also accept them because they belong to the invisible Church. For the doors of the Church must not be narrower than the gates of heaven, it is argued by defenders of this position. The Church at Blue Bell argued that the concept of the invisible Church, as it functions today, is not only non-Biblical but un-Biblical. Overagainst such a view, they posit the Reformed position that the Church in the Scripture refers to the visible body of believers who are ruled by the whole counsel of God through the elders and deacons appointed by Christ. It is the duty of these leaders to maintain the purity of doctrine and conduct, also as it pertains to the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

- d. **The Autonomy of the Local Church.** They maintain a typically Reformed Church Polity in that the local Church/Session should be governed by its own leaders, and that such leaders should not be imposed from without. Also, they defend the position that Christ has entrusted His authority, the keys of the kingdom, to the officers of the local Church directly. Elders do not receive their authority from the Presbytery but from Christ. These elders must exercise the keys of authority for the benefit of the congregation, also in the fencing of the Lord's Table. They do not float into congregationalism or independentism, but recognize the catholicity of the Church and eagerly pursue affiliation with a Reformed Federation of Churches.

- iii. **Fencing the Lord's Table**

In the OPC the supervision of the Lord's Table is left to the discretion of the local Session, though the local Session is responsible to the Presbytery. Very often this means that while the members of the congregation are closely supervised in their doctrine and conduct by the elders, guests and visitors in the service are left free to attend or not to attend the Lord's Table. Some Churches require that guests be interviewed by the Session beforehand. Others leave it up to the individual guest. In every case the minister issues a solemn warning, explaining who may come and who may not. This warning, which can be taken from the Directory for Worship or which can be the pastor's own similar formulation, applies to all present and runs as follows (we quote the text from the Directory for Worship):

"It is my solemn duty to warn the uninstructed, the profane, the scandalous, and those who secretly and impenitently live in any sin, not to approach the holy Table lest they partake unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body, and so eat and drink condemnation to themselves. Nevertheless, this warning is not designed to keep the humble and contrite from the Table of the Lord, as if the Supper were for those who might be free from sin. On the contrary, we who are invited to the Supper, coming as guilty and polluted sinners and without hope of eternal life apart from the grace of God in Christ, confess our dependence for pardon and cleansing upon the perfect sacrifice of Christ, base our hope of eternal life upon his perfect obedience and righteousness, and humbly resolve to deny ourselves, crucify our old natures, and follow Christ as becomes those who bear His name. Let us therefore, in accordance with the admonition of the Apostle Paul, examine our minds and hearts to determine whether such discernment is ours, to the end that we may partake to the glory of God and to our growth in the grace of Christ." (Directory for Worship, Chapter IV.)

The Church at Blue Bell however did not consider such an oral, general warning sufficient. They wrote:

“Restricted communion, then, involves the elders and revolves about their proper exercise of the keys of the kingdom. The Table is not open to every individual; and it is not up to the individual to decide whether or not he ought to partake. That is the role of the elders. It is their duty to ensure that all who partake of the Table fulfill the Biblical requirements for Table fellowship.

Thus, to say that a mere oral warning from the pulpit suffices to discharge the elders’ responsibility is simply wrong. Unlike the call of the gospel, the fellowship of the Table is not indiscriminately offered to all. The Table is only for those who rightly discern the body and blood of Christ; and it is the task of the elders to determine who it is that has this discernment. The individual, then, may not decide for himself on the basis of an oral warning. The elders must see to it that they uphold the Word of God. And this they do by applying the Biblical criteria: a profession of the true religion, a godly life, and membership in a true Church.”(From the document entitled *The Controversy at Blue Bell*, OPC pp. 60-61)

#### iv. Subsequent Developments

These views of the Blue Bell OPC were not tolerated by the interim Session which was assigned by the Presbytery to this Church. One of the leaders of the interim Session wrote to them the following:

“... the interim Session is the Session of Blue Bell, a fact that no one is happy with, but a fact that must be acknowledged . . . . If you feel your interests are being damaged and your distinctive position is being threatened and you cannot accept our contrary counsel, then use the avenues established in the Church to seek redress. And if this effort fails to bring satisfaction, then you are in a position to seek another affiliation where your views will be accepted . . . . It should be abundantly plain that the OPC is not going to tolerate the rigid view of the “true Church” held by several of you, that it is not willing to see your view as permissible in some supposed area of toleration. The answer to the complaint of Barry Hofford should have been enough to make this clear, but it seems not to have registered with you; that answer was adopted by the General Assembly without audible dissent. I do not recall any similar instance of such near unanimity regarding so basic a question in all my years in the OPC. And the Presbytery’s rejection of Ken Kok (turned down for licensure as a minister on the basis of adherence to the same distinctives; Ken Kok is a member of Blue Bell Church — explanation is ours), also with near unanimity, should have confirmed to you that the OPC is not open to your position . . . . Very early on I suggested that, if the congregation really wanted to follow this doctrine of the “true Church” in fencing the Table and admitting to membership, then I would at least prepare you for the day you could depart from the OPC and go your own way. I am still willing to assist in this if that is what you want.” (Letter from Teaching Elder J. Mitchell to Bret Davis, dated May 20, 1984)

It should be understood that these are the views of one man, a teaching elder in the interim Session assigned to the then Blue Bell OPC. They do not necessarily reflect the view of the whole interim Session nor of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. We quote this letter because it set the tone for the relations between the Church members and the interim Session. Ultimately, the members felt forced to leave the OPC. They did not wait till the doctrinal issues were adjudicated by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and thus these issues also could not be taken to the General Assembly. According to the brothers at Blue Bell, the Church courts ex-

hausted them instead of they exhausting the Church courts. There was a deadlock. The interim Session would not give them elders who could rule the Church according to their Reformed views and practices. Meanwhile the interim Session had full power over and in the pulpit and over the congregation. It was for these reasons that the brothers felt compelled to withdraw from the OPC. As Committee we want to stress that this controversy remained localized, and that it only in part (only the issue of assigning an interim Session without the congregation was adjudicated by Presbytery) reached the Presbytery of Philadelphia. Thus it was a local matter.

It is our contention that the issues raised in this controversy are important and that this controversy demonstrates the need to discuss these doctrinal issues more closely with the OPC. We must not lose sight of the fact that these doctrinal issues are almost precisely the same as the confessional and Church governmental divergencies which we have been discussing with the OPC for some time now. For this reason we reviewed the Controversy at Blue Bell.

B. *"The Hofford Case"*

i. The History of the Complaint

A disagreement arose in the Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church at Burtonsville, MD, in the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic concerning the proper administration of the Lord's Supper. Basically the issue surrounded the admission or non-admission of visitors and guests to the Lord's Table. It did not involve the supervision of the members of the local Church.

In 1972 Pastor Barry R. Hofford raised questions about the proper fencing of the Lord's Table. After discussing the matter, the Session requested the advice of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. In April 1972 a Special Committee on Restricted Communion presented a report which became the Presbytery's advice to the Burtonsville Session. As a result, the Burtonsville Session adopted a policy of restricted communion in which both verbally and in writing it was made clear that members in good standing of other evangelical Churches were welcome to participate. This policy was practised unchallenged until the Spring of 1982.

In the Spring of 1982 Pastor Hofford made it known to the Session that he had come to the conviction that the above-mentioned policy was not in accord with the Bible. After discussing this conviction, and the reasons for it, the Session adopted an interim method of administering the Lord's Supper which satisfied Pastor Hofford's conscience.

The interim method admitted to the sacrament only those visitors who were members in good standing of other OP Churches and could be certified as such by either a letter from their Session or by the testimony of at least two competent witnesses. This policy was only an interim method in order to allow the Session to study the matter further. However, before the interim period came to an end Pastor Hofford, for personal reasons, resigned as pastor of the Burtonsville Session. When the interim period then came to an end in October 1982, the Session reverted to its former policy because they were not convinced that their former pastor's views were required by the Bible.

Since the Committee has above quoted the verbal warning made to the Church before the communion of the bread and wine, we think it is good to publish what the Burtonsville Session published in their bulletin for fencing the Lord's Table in the way adopted in 1972 and which was reintroduced after the interim method:

### *Participation in the Lord's Supper*

The elders of Covenant OPC have been given by God the responsibility of shepherding this Assembly of Christ's Church. One portion of their ruling is the administration of the sacraments. Accordingly, the elders have determined that to participate in the Lord's Supper here at Covenant a person must be:

1. A communicant member in good standing of this congregation.
2. A communicant member in good standing of another evangelical congregation of Christ's Church having been baptized into the name of the Triune God.

Not all congregations are evangelical. *An evangelical Church* may be defined as one which believes that the Bible is the inerrant and authoritative Word of God, and that saving faith in Jesus Christ is the only way by which we as sinners may escape God's righteous judgment. The officers of an evangelical Church seek to preach God's Word, to administer the sacraments and to exercise discipline in the Church in accord with the Bible.

Persons in both of the above categories are requested to record their participation using the communicant forms provided. Persons outside of these categories should not partake of the elements of the sacrament. If you have questions concerning your eligibility to participate in the sacrament with us, you should meet with the elders prior to participation.

Pastor Hofford (now only a minister of the regional Church or the Presbytery) plus nine other members of the Burtonsville Church complained to the Burtonsville Session about this reversion to the old policy of fencing the Lord's Table. The complaint (dated October 15, 1982) was denied. These members then took their complaint to the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. The Presbytery set up a special Committee to investigate the complaint and to make a recommendation. From this Committee came a majority report and a minority report. The end result was that the complaint was again denied. This took place on April 15, 16/1983.

Rev. B.R. Hofford and the nine members then took their complaint to the Fiftieth (1983) General Assembly of the OPC. The text of the complaint and the answer of the Assembly are attached as Appendix 5. We consider the matter sufficiently important that our General Synod should have the full text of the decision of this broadest Assembly (it is added to this report as Appendix 5). The General Assembly of the OPC denied the complaint of the Pastor Hofford c.s.

- ii. An Evaluation of the Complaint and the Answer of the General Assembly
  - a. The Scope of the Decision

It is important to understand the scope of the decision of the General Assembly. For the impression could be given that this decision compels all Sessions to follow suit, or that the interim method of fencing the Lord's Table as described above has now been condemned by the General Assembly.

The submission was in the form of a complaint. We would call it an appeal to the broadest Assembly. Thus it was not a proposal to adopt the policies included in the interim report even though the argumentation followed the line of reasoning of the so-called interim method. The submission itself is headed as a complaint and is introduced as such. This is important, for it means that the General Assembly did not deny a proposal, for example, to amend their Directory of Worship according to a stricter method of fencing the Lord's Table. The

General Assembly denied a complaint that a Session was not fully executing their responsibility in supervising the Lord's Table.

Also, we read in the answer of the General Assembly that the local Session is empowered with the duty and right to order the public worship and the administration of the sacraments. The reply of the Assembly confirms that it is the responsibility of the Session to determine who shall or who shall not be admitted to the Lord's Table (cf. B. 4). The real question is whether the Session fulfilled its responsibility.

b. The Duties and Authority of the Session

In the Form of Government (FOG) of the OPC it is clearly stated that

"The Session is charged with maintaining the government of the congregation. It shall oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship . . . . It shall receive, dismiss, and exercise discipline over the members of the Church . . . ." (FOG XIII. 7)

The Westminster Confession of Faith, which the Session and the elders pledge to uphold, stipulates that

"Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's Table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto." (XXIX. 8)

Concerning admission to the Lord's Table the Directory for Worship (DFW) stipulates that

"No one shall be allowed to take part in the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper who has not first made public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord." (V. 4)

It might also be informative to note that at the public profession of faith four questions are posed. They read as follows:

1. Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?
2. Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself but in Jesus Christ alone?
3. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve Him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature, and to lead a godly life?
4. Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this Church and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine of life, to heed its discipline? (DFW V. 5).

We have quoted these sections from the standards of the OPC in order to give a factual account of how they regulate the admission to the Lord's Supper. We notice great similarities with our standards and procedures. We also notice that those who profess the faith in the OPC Churches do not bind themselves to the Confessions of the Church. Yet one could argue that adherence to the full Word of God implies this, since the Confession only summarizes and repeats the Scriptures. Nevertheless, if those professing the faith can be asked to adhere to the full Word of God, why cannot they also not bind themselves to the Confession which agrees with the Word of God?

This short overview stresses again that the issue is not and need not be that the Session takes no responsibility for the supervision of the

Lord's Table, nor that the Session does not properly fulfill its task with respect to its own members or new members. The complaint focused on the supervision of visitors at the Lord's Table.

Apparently, this matter of supervision is not explicitly covered in the standards. The Session, who has the task to supervise the Lord's Table, must thus use the principles of its standards. One principle that is mentioned more than once in the reply of the General Assembly concerns the matter of recognizing other "evangelical" Churches. In FOG IV. 4 the division of the Church into groups or denominations is mentioned with sadness. It states,

"The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have gravely departed from apostolic purity; yet all of these which maintain through a sufficient discipline the Word and sacraments in their fundamental integrity are to be recognized as true manifestations of the Church of Jesus Christ. All such Churches should seek a closer fellowship, in accordance with the principles set forth above."

Therefore, when the General Assembly answers that the Session had the full right to administer the Lord's Supper as they do, this answer does seem to agree with their FOG. The General Assembly, in our view, could have made a reference to the fact that the OPC has Inter-Church Relations with a number of Churches in the U.S.A., and that these Churches could have been listed, instead of using the vaguer concept of "evangelical Churches," as the Burtonsville Session does.

- c. To whom does the task belong — the Session or the General Assembly?

The specific issue therefore concerns the admission of guests to the Lord's Table. Should the local Session make its own regulations for this, keeping in mind the local circumstances, or should the General Assembly legislate this by a provision in the *Form of Government* or the *Directory for Worship*?

The practice of the OPC and the answer of the GA was that this is the prerogative of the local Sessions. They must adopt rules in accordance with the standards of the Church. Your Committee is convinced that we have the same practice. To document that statement we refer to our standards. Lord's Day 30, Ques. and Ans. 81, 82 give the general Biblical principles for admission to and exclusion from the Lord's Table. The Belgic Confession Art. 35, and the *Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper* describe the manner in which it should be celebrated. Our Church Order specifies only which members of the local Church may be admitted ("only those who have made public profession of the Reformed faith and lead a godly life"), and that members of sister Churches who have moved and who submit an attestation to the local Church should be admitted on the basis of a good attestation (cf. Joh. Jansen, *Korte Verklaring Van De Kerkenordening*, Kampen, 1923, pp. 273ff). The Church Order does not specify anything about the rules for admitting guests to the Lord's Table. This is left up to the local Churches.

To confirm this we refer to some works on the Church Order. We refer firstly to H. Bouwman, *Gereformeerde Kerkrecht*, Tweede Deel, Kampen, 1934, pp. 390-392. Here he deals with the question, "How must the requests of strangers to partake of the Supper be handled?" He clearly says that the local Consistories must deal with these re-

quests on an individual basis, always maintaining the necessary supervision. F.L. Rutgers in his *Kerkelijke Adviezen*, Tweede Deel, Kampen, 1922, pp. 156 (#126), 159-166 (#130), also deals with the subject of how to deal with guests at the Lord's Table. That this was needed was because the Church Order did not explicitly cover this subject, but only gave basic guidelines. Again, the Consistories had to deal individually with such requests in accordance with the principles of the Word of God and the Confessions. We hope in the next section to quote the specific advices which Bouwman and Rutgers gave for such requests. Our conclusion is therefore that our Churches never adopted a general rule (in the Church Order) for admission of guests to the Lord's Supper, and that we therefore cannot ask this from the OPC either.

d. Did the General Assembly sanction rules which are insufficient?

In order to evaluate the decision of the GA whether it condoned rules which are insufficient or sufficient, we must also examine our own practices.

We have the practice of using (travel-) attestations for those who travel and who wish to celebrate the Lord's Supper in a sister Church. This is a good practice. Thereby the overseers of the Church which is visited receives testimony about the doctrine and conduct of the visitor(s) from the overseers who are responsible for these members. Apparently this method was also in use during the "interim period" and was not protested in any of the Church courts. The *Report of Special Committee on Restricted Communion* (April 15, 1972) refers to this method of supervision the Lord's Table, especially in Reformed Churches, and clearly implies that a local Session would be in its rights to follow it (cf. p. 128, C. 4, 5).

But there may be circumstances when such an attestation is not present from the overseers of a sister Church. What must be done then? We refer to what H. Bouwman says,

"The Church has always admitted 'guests,' provided they are real 'guests,' i.e. members of other Christian Churches whose confession agrees with its own sufficiently and who were lawfully prevented from celebrating the Lord's Supper in their own Church. This happened in the past with Lutherans who came to places where there was no Lutheran Church but there was a Reformed Church and vice versa, with Reformed people who came to places where there was no Reformed but only a Lutheran Church. But the Churches have always considered it necessary to see to it that the required supervision came to its right in such cases . . . ." Problems can arise in the infrequent occurrence of a request from a foreigner who stays here only temporarily to be admitted to the Table. The consistory must then be convinced:

- a. That the person is admitted to the Lord's Table in his own Church. This can be ascertained from a reliable, written testimony or from a declaration by the person making the request, or from those who know the person.
- b. That their walk of life is irreproachable.
- c. That their personal conviction of faith agrees with the confession of our Church.

" . . . if it is clear from reliable testimony that all is in order, one should not object to admitting them." (cf. the reference above; the translation is ours.)

Dr. F.L. Rutgers quotes a question from a Missionary preacher in Djakarta about which guests should be admitted to the Lord's Table. He gives specific advice and then offers this more general advice for such cases in general:

"A rule has never been set in our Churches for such cases, that such requests would be simply denied, and that thus no one would be admitted except those who are within the circle of those who are known by the Consistory as members of the local Church. That would indeed not be showing love and would be unbrotherly and it would be in conflict with the Christian Confession of the unity of the Church and of the communion of the saints . . . . Thus, on the one hand, all strangers must not be denied unconditionally; but, on the other hand (and this is not of less importance), all strangers must not be admitted unconditionally only on the ground of their own responsibility . . . . And therefore the local Churches here have always seen to it that the necessary supervision would come to its right as much as possible, when they for one time admitted to the Lord's Supper believers from elsewhere who remained in their midst temporarily.

This has happened and still happens though the Churches have not deliberately and formally adopted rules for it . . . . To set up rules for this which will give a formal decision covering every situation, is also impossible . . . . Therefore it was and is the practice to judge each case separately; always maintaining the basics, i.e. that it must be sufficiently clear that . . . ." (he then lists the same three requirements as listed above in the quote from Bouwman). (pp. 160-162 in the reference given above; translation is ours)

e. Conclusion

Our evaluation is thus that indeed the local Session should not leave it solely to the individual (guest) to determine to partake or not of the Lord's Supper. This decision must be made by the overseers. It is our impression from the answer of the GA to the complaint that in the OPC individual responsibility is stressed. Corporate responsibility for the sins of others as it relates to the celebration of the Lord's Supper is either denied or diminished in scope (cf. C. 8 of the reply to the complaint, p. 125). (The quotation from Calvin's *Institutes* (4, 1, 19) should not be used to condone laxity by the overseers (Pastor Hofford was an overseer) but was written by Calvin against Anabaptists and others who demanded perfect holiness and who would not sit at the Table because of so-called "unworthy partakers" and thus destroyed the unity of the Church.) On the other hand, in Ques. and Ans. 82, Heidelberg Catechism, we confess both corporate responsibility with respect to the Lord's Supper celebration and the need for the exercise of the keys of the kingdom to insure that the covenant not be profaned and the wrath of God not be kindled against the whole congregation. This confession makes it more urgent for us to fence the Lord's Table closely, i.e. also in deciding which guests may attend the Table.

On the other hand, we should not take too rigoristic an approach, as though the admission to the Lord's Table of someone who does not have an attestation from a sister Church, is against the Bible, Confessions, and the Church Order. Our study of our standards and the quotes from H. Bouwman and F.L. Rutgers as well as actual practices in the Reformed Churches should caution us against this. Accepting guests from other Churches under certain conditions is not disallowed in our *Church Order*, and should be decided by the local Church council.

That the GA approved of this same procedure in the Burtonsville Session cannot thus be outrightly condemned. At the same time we mention that more direct measures should be taken by the overseers to insure that their guidelines are kept.

We thus conclude that this is "a matter of mutual concern" and should be a subject of our ongoing ecclesiastical contact with the OPC. There are some areas of concern which the Canadian Reformed Churches through its Contact Committee should point out to the OPC. Specifically we would like point out the following areas:

1. The need for direct supervision of guests by the overseers who should determine who may attend the Lord's Table.
2. The desirability for using (travel-) attestations.
3. The need to see to it that certain conditions are met by guests who are to be admitted to the Lord's Table.
4. The need for corporate responsibility with respect to attendance at the Lord's Supper.

Finally, the Committee considers that the GA has not allowed deviation from their standards, nor has it sanctioned heresy such as would require us to break off our relations with the OPC.

### C. *Recommendations*

These recommendations will cover both the Blue Bell Controversy and the Hofford Case as they related to the subject of fencing the Lord's Table. It will be noticed that recommendation 1 incorporates the conclusions made in these two respective sections.

The Church at Blue Bell adhered to distinctive doctrines and practices which we as Churches share with them. It is our conviction that these teachings, Confessions, and practices are clearly derived from Scripture. However, it was precisely because of these distinctive, Reformed principles that Church life was made intolerable for them by the interim Session. Ultimately, they saw the need to secede from the OPC in order to survive as a Reformed Church. The Canadian Reformed Churches maintain ecclesiastical contact with the OPC. We have recognized them as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, there were some apparent divergencies which needed closer attention and mutual discussion. General Synod 1983 gave the added mandate to investigate the issue of fencing the Lord's Table. The foregoing account of the controversy at Blue Bell OPC and the "Hofford Case" prove the relevance of this part of the mandate.

It is the conviction of the Committee that the Canadian Reformed Churches should use their ecclesiastical contact to address the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on this issue of fencing the Lord's Table. We should consider this a major issue of mutual concern (from rule b. for "Ecclesiastical Contact"). In the report above we have offered our comments on their decision to deny the complaint, and this report should be passed on to them.

To be specific then we recommend:

1. To pass on the report about the fencing of the Lord's Table (including the sections "A," "B," and "C") to the OPC through its Committee for Ecumenicity.
2. To ask the OPC to study this report and to respond to it. This response should pay attention to the related doctrinal subjects which were listed in the section dealing with the Controversy at Blue Bell.
3. To invite their Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations to have joint meeting(s) about this matter of mutual concern.

**VIII. Re: "f)** to inform the Churches about progress made by means of press releases.

The Committee has released for publication the evaluation of the divergencies for the benefit of the Churches. Also it has published the reports of the delegates to the last two General Assemblies of the OPC. These reports contained useful information besides the report on the Assemblies. Unfortunately, we were not able to have combined meetings with the CEIR. If this had occurred, then a press release would have been given.

It should be mentioned (see above re "Introductory Remarks") that the Classis Alberta/Manitoba has contacts with the Presbytery of the Dakotas and these contacts are reported in its press releases. Also, Classis Ontario South has admitted the Reformation Church at Blue Bell, Pa. as an American Reformed Church in the Federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Classis Ontario South of Dec. 11, 1985 has sent us information about this decision and about its intention to make a submission to General Synod about the consequences of the controversy at Blue Bell for our ecclesiastical contact with the OPC. Press releases about these items were also published.

With this we conclude our report. We wish the General Synod God's blessing and guidance in all its deliberations. May the decisions about the contact with the OPC also serve the Church-gathering work of our Lord.

Humbly submitted,  
John Boot, treasurer  
Dr. J. Faber  
Rev. W. Huizinga, secretary  
Rev. P. Kingma  
Rev. J. Mulder, convener

## APPENDIX II A

### COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICITY AND INTERCHURCH RELATIONS ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH REV. JACK J. PETERSON, SECRETARY 3334 N.W. LOOP 410, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78213, OCTOBER 25, 1983

The Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
Reverend Wietse Huizinga, Secretary  
349 Stone Church Road, East  
Hamilton, Ontario L9B 1B1  
Canada

Dear Brothers,

We apologize to you for taking so long to respond to your letter of October 13, 1978. One reason, as you know, is that we were engaged in merger negotiations which led to the invitation of the Presbyterian Church in America for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to join their Church, which invitation was not ratified by their Presbyteries, and now there may be a renewal of that invitation.

However, we ask your forgiveness in not responding sooner. We rejoice that the Synod Coaldale 1977 recognized "The Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession" and that we together have entered into the temporary relationship called "ecclesiastical contact." We have enjoyed the presence of Brothers Faber and Huizinga at recent meetings of our General Assemblies. We pray that our contacts may develop into a closer walk together in the ways of our Lord.

Before we attempt to answer the specific points of your letter, let us set before you some background material. The OPC began its separate existence in 1936 to continue the witness of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. In the formation of our Church and in the formation of Westminster Theological Seminary (7 years earlier) there was significant Dutch influence. The teaching of Professors Van Til, Kuiper, and Stonehouse enriched the Church by introducing us to the continental tradition. They were able to make the transition from subscription to the Three Forms of Unity to our Confession of Faith and Catechisms. Professor John Murray, steeped in the Scottish Presbyterian tradition, but also deeply influenced by Geerhardus Vos, instructed more than one generation of OP ministers in careful exegesis including insights from the Biblical theological perspective.

Another factor that is significant in our background is that many of our people have come out of non-Reformed background including even paganism to a Confession of the Reformed faith. We have only begun to reap the harvest of men reared in our Church who are entering office in the Church. There are those who struggle with their past. Our responses to many of the issues we face have been shaped by our reaction to theological liberalism and Arminian evangelicalism.

It is the blending of American Presbyterianism, Scottish Presbyterianism and continental Reformed traditions that have enriched the Church and makes the OPC unique. It also means that there is not the uniformity in our Church that there is in your Churches, for various traditions are found in varying degrees and with varying effects. You will find those whom you would call scholastic, and you will also find those who share your covenantal approach. Yet, we all sincerely live under our Confession and Catechisms, Reformed and reforming, submitting to the authority of the Lord and His Word.

Let us now look at your points A-1 through 5, B-1 through 3, and Inter-Church relations.

#### **A. 1. Visible and Invisible Church**

Many, if not most, in our Church are uncomfortable with our confessional statements on visible and invisible Church because of the modern developments in the doctrine of the Church particularly in dispensationalism. We also have been taught by Professor Murray whom you quote. If the Confession were being written

today, against the contemporary false teachings, the language would be different. In fact, some in the Church feel that the confessional statements should be changed.

However, the confessional documents antedate the modern errors. Your own W. Pouwelse has commented on that (*Clarion*, May 6 and 20, 1983). Of special interest to us was the reference to Professor Schilder's Commentary on the Belgic Confession and the use of the words *congregatio* and *coetus* which seem to parallel the usage of visible and invisible in our Confession.

Your fear that this will lead us to the theory of pluriformity of the Church has not come to the surface in the OPC, at least with any strength. Our Church believes strongly in the unity of the Church of our Lord, and the history of our Church demonstrates that. As early as 1961 a report was presented to our Twenty-eighth General Assembly called "the Biblical Basis for Ecclesiastical Union" (see *minutes*, 28th GA, pp. 90-92, cf. also, John Murray: *Collected Writings*, Vol. 1, pp. 269-272). This report has been a guide in our relations to other Churches and our pursuing the goal of Church union. From another perspective, we do not have difficulty with the study of the GKN (Liberated) called *For the Sake of True Ecumenicity*, point I, Fundamental Considerations, which addresses the same point. To put it in still a different way, there are some of us who wonder if your Churches are not practicing a form of international pluriformity. Why should not the Liberated Churches of Canada and in The Netherlands, for example, be one Church?

Having said all that, we must answer your question: "Do the Westminster Confession Art. 25 and the Larger Catechism Ques. and Ans. 64-66 not need correction?" The answer is that the Church is divided on the question of confessional revision. One group says that we are not a creed-writing age, and that to tamper with the wording of the Confession would make it easier for error to enter the Church. Others say that the Confession should be the living Confession of the Church, reflecting the principle that the Church is Reformed and reforming.

A further consideration in this regard is the matter of subscription to the Confession of the Church. In the second ordination vow of the OPC the question is asked: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?" This vow and an affirmative answer to it, has never been interpreted by us as involving an ipsissima verba understanding of subscription. What is demanded is a sincere receiving and adopting as our own the confessional documents as containing the system of doctrine set forth in the Scriptures.

#### **A. 2. Assurance of Faith**

We feel that the two sets of confessional traditions do not basically differ. There is stress on the assurance that a believer has in both, and a realization that "believers in this life . . . do not always feel this full assurance of faith" (C.D., Article 11), in both.

From our perspective, in working with people of evangelical training, we find an easy believism ('just trust in Jesus') coupled with a false doctrine of eternal security making such people resistant to the warnings of Scripture and the commands of Scripture to persevere. This is not to deny that the focus of faith is the Lord and His promises.

#### **A. 3. Covenant of Grace**

Let us speak honestly to you, the questions related to the covenant of grace are a matter of difference within our Church. This was true also, as you told us in the meeting of November 6, 1981, in the GKN which led to the pacification formula of 1905. There are two lines of the covenant in our Church's confessional standards. There are those in our Church who emphasize the line that the covenant is made with the elect, and there are others who feel that the covenant is made with believers and their seed, and there are those who try to combine

the two. This is an unsettled issue in our Church. That is why at that November 6, 1981 meeting it could be said that the concept that prevails is that the covenant was made with the elect and their seed, and also that the ten points about the covenant in the booklet *For the Sake of True Ecumenicity* (pp. 10-11) by the GKN (Liberated), could also be affirmed.

Because of this situation it is difficult to answer the questions you ask, and the questions of Professor Faber in his *Clarion* editorial of February 26, 1982, the last paragraph. To date all the above positions are held in the Church.

In this area especially, because of your historical perspective, you can be of help to us in grappling with these problems.

The rest of the items have been discussed with you so that the issues are before us. On the matter of the descent into hell we are in basic agreement. On the Sabbath we are strict on paper but you are less strict; in practice the reverse seems to be true — perhaps that is a caricature, but there is some truth there too.

On matters of polity you correctly state that there is "no ready made solution" available. It will take further discussions.

This letter has been very frank with you concerning ourselves. We are undergoing some deep testings at the hand of the Lord. We find that we must commit ourselves again and again to the Word of the Lord as we seek to live before Him in obedience to that Word.

We rejoice in your stand for the truth. We rejoice in that covenant that binds us together under our Mediator the Lord Jesus. Our prayer is that we may walk together in that fellowship of the Spirit, in the Love of God, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We would as a Committee like to hear from you further, as we seek to draw closer together in our ecclesiastical contact, looking for fuller correspondence.

With brotherly greetings,  
Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations  
Jack J. Peterson, Secretary

**APPENDIX II B**  
**EVALUATION OF DIVERGENCIES**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**Mandate**

The General Synod of Cloverdale 1983 charged the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church "to publish, for the benefit of our Churches, a detailed evaluation of the confessional and Church-political divergencies, showing proof that these divergencies do not form an impediment in recognizing the OPC as true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ," Acts, Art. 55.

According to Article 29 of the Confession of Faith the true and the false Church are easily recognized and distinguished from each other. The true Church is to be recognized by the following marks: it practices the pure preaching of the gospel; it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them; and it exercises Church discipline for correcting and punishing sins. In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head.

**Prehistory**

The Synod of Coaldale 1977 recognized with thankfulness the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession.

This recognition was in line with statements of several previous Synods. Already in 1965 Synod Edmonton declared that the OPC as a Presbyterian Church is a fruit of the Calvinist Reformation. It has Confessions and a Church Polity which are of a Calvinist character. In this century it has decidedly chosen for orthodoxy and against modernism.

In 1967 the General Synod of our Netherlands sister Churches accepted the statement of the Regional Synod of Groningen that the Westminster Confession of Faith is a completely Reformed Confession ("een voluit Gereformeerd belijdenisgeschrift"). Synod Orangeville 1968 of our Canadian Reformed Churches expressed its gratitude that it is evident that in many respects the good fight of the faith is being fought in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Synod New Westminster 1971 gratefully acknowledged that the OPC is a group of Churches that commit themselves to the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God and that wish to maintain the Creeds, based on this Word of God. The OPC desires to regulate and order the government of the Church in accordance with the Scriptural Confession, namely, that in accordance with the Form of Government, Chapter 1, 7 all its decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God.

But what about the divergencies in Confession and Church Polity?

Synod Coaldale 1977 considered that these divergencies, notwithstanding the fact that continued discussion of them is desirable, are to be explained from the different origins of the Confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Westminster Confession of Faith with its related Doctrinal Standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

This Synod of Coaldale, that recognized the OPC as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, had access to a letter of the OPC Committee of Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations of April 14, 1976. This letter confirmed that the OPC wholeheartedly adheres to the Westminster Confession of Faith and maintains the rules for Church Polity as laid down in the Form of Government. It also confirmed — according to a consideration of our Synod — that the divergencies having been discussed in this letter do not form an impediment to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. Among others, this consideration led Synod Coaldale 1977 to its recognition of the OPC.

Although Synod 1980 upheld this recognition of the OPC as a true Church, it expressed regret that the evaluation of the divergencies, as discussed in the letter of April 1976, was not explained in detail. It mandated our Committee to perform what Synod 1977 should have done. Synod 1983 renewed this mandate.

### **General Remarks**

Before we now enter into a detailed evaluation of the confessional and Church political divergencies, we make some general remarks about the application of Article 29 of our Confession of Faith.

Although there are differences between a person and a community, it is remarkable that Article 29 speaks not only of the true Church but also of those who are of the Church. True Christians are not perfect in this life — “great weakness remains in them” — but they fight against it by the Spirit all the days of their life. By way of parallel one might say that the Confession does not state that a true Church is perfect. It rather presupposes that great weakness remains in a true Church as it remains in true Christians of whom it is a congregation or Assembly (Art. 27). Our Confession is not only directed against Roman Catholicism but also against Anabaptism which revived the schismatic tendencies of Donatism.

In this context we may also mention the fact that the Confession acknowledges that hypocrites are mixed in the Church along with the good. They are not part of the Church, although they are outwardly in it.

In Book IV of his *Institutes* Calvin, who had great influence upon the formulation of our Confession of Faith, writes as follows:

The pure ministry of the Word and pure mode of celebrating the sacraments are, as we say, sufficient pledge and guarantee that we may safely embrace as Church any society in which both these marks exist. The principle extends to the point that we must not reject it so long as it retains them, even if it otherwise swarms with many faults. What is more, some fault may creep into the administration of either doctrine or sacraments, but this ought not to estrange us from communion with the Church (IV.1.12).

There are articles of doctrine disputed among the Churches which still do not break the unity of faith. Calvin reminds us of the apostle's words, “Let us therefore, as many are perfect, be of the same mind; and if you be differently minded in anything, God shall reveal this also to you” (Phil.3:15), when he writes,

But since all men are somewhat beclouded with ignorance, either we must leave no Church remaining, or we must condone delusion in those matters which can go unknown without harm to the sum of religion and without loss of salvation.

In agreement with our Confession and in the line of Calvin's instruction concerning the Holy, Catholic Church Synod 1980 rightly considered the fact that a Church may be called a true Church according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession, while this does not mean that it is a “pure” or “perfect” Church (cf. Revelation 2 and 3). A true Church can still have weaknesses but yet fight the good fight of faith and listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd.

In the context of these general remarks about doctrinal and Church political divergencies we also refer to Article 50 of our Church Order that states, “With foreign Churches of Reformed Confession a sister Church relationship shall be maintained as much as possible. On minor points of the Church Order and ecclesiastical practice Churches abroad shall not be rejected.” Although there may be a difference of opinion about the question what constitutes “minor points” (or “non essentials” in the old text of Art. 85), it is clear that also with respect to Church Order and ecclesiastical practice the Reformed Churches never adopted an absolutist or rigoristic approach which would prevent us from acknowledging that the grace of God has also been given to others.

## II. DOCTRINAL DIVERGENCIES

### 1. Visible and Invisible Church

The Westminster Confession Ch. 25 par. 1,2 speaks about the catholic or universal Church which is invisible and about the visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (cf. Larger Catechism, Q. and A. 64-66).

In their report to Synod 1971 our Deputies made the remark that the terms visible and invisible Church, used in these articles, are not derived from the Scriptures but they give expression to a Scriptural distinction, namely, the distinction between the whole number of the elect *and* all those who profess the true religion with their children. This distinction is rooted in the Scriptures, Eph. 1:4, Acts 13:48, John 15:2, I Cor. 1:2 and is in agreement with the contents of Heidelberg Catechism Answer 54 and Belgic Confession Article 29. The former confesses that the Son of God gathers a Church chosen to everlasting life of which I am a living member, and the latter distinguishes the true believers from the hypocrites who are mixed in the Church with the good, yet are not of the Church.

Our Deputies concluded already in 1971 that this divergency in Confession is not of such a nature that it should prevent the Canadian Reformed Churches from recognizing the OPC as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In addition to this examination and evaluation we may remark that the use of the term "invisible" goes back to Augustine. In his work *On Baptism, against the Donatists* he speaks about false Christians who are enemies of the brotherly love, whether they are openly without, or appear to be within. "While they seem to be within, they are severed from that invisible bond of love." (PNPF IV, 445). Augustine refers in this context to I John 2:19 and II Tim. 2:16-21.

In the Middle Ages similar expressions were used by Wycliffe and Hus and this led to the use of the terms "visible and invisible" with respect to the Church in Luther, Zwingli and Calvin.

As far as Calvin is concerned, he makes a distinction between the visible Church and all God's elect (IV. 1.2) and says that the article of the Creed also applies to some extent to the outward Church (3). This is "the Church visible, which falls within our knowledge." He writes,

For we have said that Holy Scripture speaks of the Church in two ways. Sometimes by the term "Church" it means that which is actually in God's presence, into which no persons are received but those who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Then, indeed, the Church includes not only the saints presently living on earth, but all the elect from the beginning of the world. Often, however, the name "Church" designates the whole multitude of men spread over the earth who profess to worship one God and Christ (IV. 1.7).

Calvin makes thus a distinction between that which is invisible to us and visible to the eyes of God alone, and that which is called "Church" in respect to men. He explains,

Just as we must believe, therefore, that the former Church, invisible to us, is visible to the eyes of God alone, so we are commanded to revere and keep communion with the latter, which is called "Church" in respect to men (7).

Our Deputies have rightly warned against a *polarization* of the visible and invisible Church. It results in a low esteem for what is called the visible Church, a weakening of Church-consciousness, a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the calling to separate from the false Church, and the rise of the "theologoumenon" of the pluriformity of the Church which is neither taught by the Scriptures nor by the Reformed Confessions and which proved to be an undermining factor in the fight against the sins of the Church and for the Reformation of the Church.

This warning against a polarization, however, should not blind us for the fact that

the Westminster Confession does not show a low esteem for what is called the visible Church. It is called "the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation." In the following section (Art. 25.3) the Westminster Confession declares:

Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.

The following Articles 26-31 all deal with the Church: the communion of saints, the sacraments, baptism, the Lord's Supper, Church censures, Synods and councils.

In Art. 25.4 the expression is found, "This Catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible." It reminds us of what we confess in Art. 27 Belgic Confession: the Holy Catholic Church sometimes for a while may look very small, and as extinct in the eyes of man. Although the terminology "visible — invisible" is not used in our Belgic Confession — for which we may be thankful, the distinction between the Church in the eyes of God and the Church in the eyes of men, as stressed by Calvin, is certainly present. It shows that in this respect there is no real contrast in the doctrine about the Church between the Westminster Confession and our Confession of Faith.

Further, it must not escape our attention that the Westminster Confession knows of the dreadful possibility that Churches "have so degenerated, as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan" (Art. 25.5). The letter of the OPC Committee d.d. April 14, 1976, pointed out that the Westminster Confession does distinguish between the true and the false Church.

Finally, this letter spoke about the distinction between "the Church visible and the Church invisible" as "the covenantal understanding of Church with its focus on the Church as visible" and "viewing the Church from the perspective of election." The Orthodox Presbyterian brothers tried to make clear that they do not think of two separate Churches but of two aspects of the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. When they defined the Church "in part, in terms of election," they wrote, "Since the identity of the elect is known only to God, this Church is, to the human eye, invisible."

Undoubtedly our General Synod 1977 must have recognized in this description the reference of Augustine to II Tim. 2:19 ("The Lord knows those who are His") and the manner in which Calvin spoke about the Church *coram Deo*, "in God's presence." This must have led this Synod to the consideration that the divergencies, "notwithstanding the fact that continued discussion of them is desirable, are to be explained from the different origins of the Confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Westminster Confession of Faith with its related Doctrinal Standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church," and to join our Deputies in their 1971 conclusion that the divergencies in Confession are not of such a nature that they should prevent the Canadian Reformed Churches from recognizing the OPC as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In concluding this part of the evaluation of the doctrinal divergencies we may add that our Synod of Edmonton 1965 already declared that in this century the OPC had decidedly chosen for orthodoxy and against modernism. This choice with its accompanying Church struggle was not impeded by the Westminster Confession but stimulated by it, e.g. by what it states concerning the purity of particular Churches which are members of the catholic visible Church. The OPC itself is fruit of Church Reformation in the twentieth century, not in spite of the Westminster Standards but because of faithful adherence to them.

## 2. The Covenant

The 1971 Report of Deputies drew attention to an ambiguity in the Westminster Standards with respect to the question with whom the covenant of grace was made.

The Larger Catechism, Answer 31 states that it was made with Christ as the second Adam and in Him with all the elect as His seed.

Our Deputies rightly remarked that the texts to which Answer 31 refers — I Cor. 15:22, 45; Eph. 1:4; II Tim. 1:9 — do not speak of the people with whom the covenant was made, but of them who become partakers of the covenant-goods.

The Larger Catechism itself, however, confesses in Answer 166 that “infants descending from parents either both or one of them professing faith in Christ and obedience to Him, are in that respect within the covenant, and are to be baptized.” Our 1971 Deputies were of the opinion that in distinction from Answer 31, this Answer 166 agrees with the Scriptures which teach that the covenant was made with the believers and their seed, Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:39; I Cor. 7:14.

The OPC Committee in its letter of April 1976 acknowledged that there is dual emphasis in the Westminster Standards regarding the covenant, parallel to the distinction between the Church as visible and the Church as invisible. They pointed out, however, that there is no doctrine of the covenant in the Three Forms of Unity except by implication.

One could take this remark as to remind us that, although the Reformed Churches (Liberated) have rejected the binding to the Kuyperian doctrinal pronouncements of Synod Sneek-Utrecht 1942 concerning covenant and baptism, they have not denied that within the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches there has been freedom of different approaches with respect to the relation between God’s election and His covenant.

The OPC Committee rejected “the error of a doctrine of presumptive regeneration of the children of the covenant” and assured us, “Together with you, we would seek to avoid this misappropriation of the doctrine of election by proper attention to the doctrine of the covenant of grace which is made with believers and their seed.”

We may add some quotations from the 1975 edition of *The Standards of government and worship of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church*. In the Form of Holy Baptism (pp. 74ff.) we do not read of a covenant with the elect, but we encounter these expressions: “It (baptism) is a sign and seal of the inclusion of the person who is baptized in the covenant of grace . . . (B)aptized persons are called upon to assume the obligations of the covenant . . . (T)he promise of the covenant is made to believers and to their seed, as God declared unto Abraham . . . In the new dispensation no less than in the old, the seed of the faithful, born within the Church, have, by virtue of their birth, interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it and to the outward privileges of the Church.”

In the principles of public worship it is stated: “Public worship differs from private worship in that in public worship God is served by His saints unitedly as His covenant people, the body of Christ. For this reason the covenant children should be present so far as possible as well as adults.” (68).

The directory for public profession of faith speaks about “classes in Christian doctrine for the covenant youth” and the form begins with the words:

Beloved in the Lord Jesus, we thank our God for the grace which was given you, in that having come to years of discretion, you have accepted God’s covenant promise which was signified and sealed unto you in your infancy by holy baptism (81).

One may conclude from the Directory for Worship that in practice in the OPC the doctrine of the Larger Catechism Answer 166 functions as an acknowledgement of the covenant of grace that God made with the believers and their seed.

Although also in this respect continued discussion is desirable (as Synod Coaldale 1977 stated) since weaknesses and imperfections in the Westminster Standards could benefit from a careful emendation, the divergency now discussed was not an impediment to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### 3. Assurance of Faith

The Westminster Confession Ch. 14.2 gives a description of faith, while Ch. 18.3 speaks about the personal assurance of grace and salvation in these words, "This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be a partaker of it." Also Answer 81 of the Larger Catechism states, "Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it."

The 1971 report of our Deputies aired the opinion that this Confession regarding the lack of full assurance in the believer agrees with Article 16 of Ch. 1 of the Canons of Dort which speaks of "those in whom a living faith in Christ, an assured confidence of soul, peace of conscience, an earnest endeavor after filial obedience, a glorifying in God through Christ, is not as yet strongly felt."

The OPC Committee in its 1976 letter referred also to the Canons of Dort, Fifth Head, Article 11 which says "that believers in this life have to struggle with various doubts, and that under grievous temptations they are not always sensible of this full assurance of faith and certainty of persevering." The OPC Committee recognized the dangers of subjectivism and mysticism, but pointed out that they are also found among Reformed people in The Netherlands and on the North American continent oriented to the Three Forms of Unity. They appreciated our testimony to the fact that the hope and joy of the believer is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ and His promises, and not in his own personal experience.

Although the expression about "the essence of faith" could be amended, Synod 1977 could also in this point not deny that a Church that adheres to the Westminster Standards can be called a true Church.

### 4. The Observance of the Law

Chapter 21 of the Westminster Confession declares: "As it is the law of nature that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath . . ." It speaks about the Lord's Day as the Christian Sabbath.

The 1971 Report of our Deputies stated that the Larger Catechism spelled out the meaning of the Ten Commandments in great detail and that the correctness of some words and expressions could be questioned. But although deputies preferred the interpretation of the commandments as given in the Heidelberg Catechism, they did not feel free to declare that the explanation presented in the Larger Catechism deviates from the contents of Scripture and Confession.

Later they brought forward the question whether in the explanation of the fourth commandment full justice is done to the progress in the history of salvation. The OPC Committee referred to the word "Sabbath" in our Heidelberg Catechism and answered that they do not regard the redemptive significance attached to the fourth commandment as exhausting its significance, or the mediatorial accomplishment of Christ as bringing to an end its redemptive significance. "The recurring Sabbath teaches us to look forward to the consummation of redemption and the inauguration of the eternal Sabbath of which the people of God have a foretaste in this life but which is yet in its fullness outstanding. The shift from the seventh day to a first day Sabbath is accounted for in terms of the progress of the history of redemption."

One could add that, although the Westminster Standards by way of comparison refer to "the law of nature," which is infelicitous, the institution of the Sabbath is clearly described as one by God's Word.

Although there is a difference in approach with respect to the fourth commandment between the continental Reformed Confessions and the Westminster Standards which were influenced by Puritanism, one should certainly not make this an impediment for acknowledging a Presbyterian Church that adheres to these Standards as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### III. CHURCH — POLITICAL DIVERGENCIES

When we enter upon a discussion of the Church-political divergencies that exist between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, we may again refer to the 1971 report and the 1978 letter of our Deputies (*Acts New Westminster* pp. 66-68 and *Acts Smithville* pp. 199-201).

The 1971 report spoke about a considerable difference. The Form of Government of the OPC is based on the principle that the local Churches are branches of the Church universal, while our Church Order proceeds from the completeness and the autonomy of the local Churches as Churches of Christ. This difference makes itself felt in the description of the nature of major Assemblies and their authority.

In 1978 the OPC adopted a new Form of Government and as could be expected, it remained a typically Presbyterian one: "In accordance with the teaching of Scripture, the many members of this Church universal are to be organized in local and regional Churches . . ." (II.3). This Form of Government speaks of the local Church and its Session, the regional Church and its Presbytery, and the whole Church and its General Assembly. There are, therefore, three governing bodies or Assemblies which have the same kinds of rights and powers. "Each governing Assembly exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters belonging to it . . . The lower Assemblies are subject to the review and control of higher Assemblies, in regular graduation" (XII.2).

Church government is described as a valid and authentic jurisdiction to which Christians are commanded to submit themselves. The Westminster Confession is quoted, when it is stated that the decision of Church officers, when properly rendered and if in accord with the Word of God, "are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in His Word" (III.5). Deliverances of the General Assembly, if declarative of the Word of God, are to be received with deference and submission not only because of their fidelity to the Word of God but also because of the nature of the General Assembly as the supreme judicatory of the Church (XV.8).

In our 1978 letter our Deputies wrote to the OPC Committee that we keep having difficulty with the structure of the OPC Church government. The regional Church with its Presbytery dominates the local congregation and Session, while in our Church Order local Churches are not under the care of, nor subject to the review and control of a broader Assembly. It cannot be denied that there are considerable divergencies in Church Polity between the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches.

Nevertheless, the underlying unity also in Church government should never be forgotten. In a beautiful manner the new Form of Government begins with a chapter, entitled, *Christ, the King and Head of the Church*. It quotes Isaiah 9:6,7; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23 and Ephesians 4:10-12, concluding that Jesus Christ gave offices necessary for the building of His Church, for making disciples of all nations and perfecting His saints.

There is therefore but one King and Head of the Church, the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, who rules in His Church by His Word and Spirit. His mediatorial office includes all the offices in the Church . . . The authority of all such mediatorial office rests upon His appointment, who has ordained government in His Church, revealed its nature to us in His Word, and promised His presence in the midst of His Church as this government is exercised in His Name.

Christ as the King and Head orders His Church by the rule of His Word; the pattern of officers, ordinances, government, and discipline is set forth in Scripture and is to be observed as the instruction of the Lord. "Church government must conform to the Scriptural pattern and follow the specific provisions revealed in the New Testament." The new Form of Government of the OPC is not only remarkable because

of this Christological and Scriptural approach to Church government but also because of its emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, as is evident in these words:

Jesus Christ, having ascended into heaven, abides in His Church by the Holy Spirit whom He has sent. Through His Spirit He has given His Word revealing His ordinances; through the Spirit also He exerts His saving and governing power in the teaching of His Word and the administration of His ordinances. Only by the gifts and calling of the Spirit are men endowed and qualified for office in Christ's Church (Chapter 1.4).

In this confessional first chapter it is stated that the Presbyterian Form of Government seeks to fulfill the Scriptural requirements for the glory of Christ, the edification of the Church, and the enlargement of that spiritual liberty in which Christ has set us free. In the last expression we recognize the usage of Galatians 5 in a Reformed and anti-hierarchical manner.

These Scriptural principles are recognizable in the chapters that follow in the Form of Government. Chapter III, e.g., about the nature and exercise of Church power begins with this anti-hierarchical statement.

The power which Christ committed to His Church is not vested in the special officers alone, but in the whole body . . . . The power of believers in their general office includes the right to acknowledge and desire the exercise of the gifts and calling of the special offices. The regular exercise of oversight in a particular congregation is discharged by those who have been called to such work by vote of the people.

The general office of all believers is thus clearly acknowledged.

The supreme rule of Christ by His Spirit and Word and the spiritual liberty of all believers are safeguarded in the following clause,

All Church power is only ministerial and declarative, for the holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. No Church judicatory may presume to bind the conscience by making laws on the basis of its own authority; all its decisions should be founded upon the Word of God (III.3).

This statement reminds us not only of the Westminster Confession, Article XX.2, but also of our Belgic Confession, Article 7 and Article 32. It is repeated in an important chapter (XV.8) of the Form of Government, dealing with the whole Church and its General Assembly: "the General Assembly is not invested with power, by virtue of its own authority, to make pronouncements which bind the conscience of the members of the Church." We have already indicated that we have difficulty with the description of the nature of ecclesiastical authority, especially when Chapter XV.8 states that the deliverances of the General Assembly are to be received with difference and submission *also* because of the nature of the General Assembly as the supreme judicatory of the Church. Nevertheless, we must not overlook the restrictions in Chapter III and Chapter XV. The decisions of Church officers are to be received "*when properly rendered and if in accord with the Word of God.*" It reminds us of the important Article 31 of our Church Order, "Whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, *unless* it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order."

A similar restriction is found in Article XV of the Form of Government when it defines the reception of deliverances of the General Assembly by the words: "*if declarative of the Word of God*" and when it grounds this reception with submission in "*their fidelity to the Word of God.*"

On the basis of these or similar expressions our deputies concluded already in 1971 that, although considerable divergencies exist, there is no difference in the essential truth of Christ's Headship over His Church and of the absolute authority which His Word should have in the government of the Church.

If we now scan the new Form of Government, we see other anti-hierarchical elements. Chapter XVI is a new chapter dealing with congregational meetings. A stated meeting

shall be held at least once annually to consider the affairs of the congregation. Other meetings shall be called when the Session deems it to be for the best interests of the congregation or when requested in writing to do so by one-fourth of the communicant members. It is remarkable that the Form of Government gives regulations for the transaction of specific matters of business and for the procedure of voting in these congregational meetings. Minutes have to be approved by the congregation before the close of the meeting. The Form of Government even states:

A congregation may withdraw from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church only by an affirmative vote of the congregation at two successive meetings of the congregation . . . .

Although one could ask whether these regulations for congregational meetings do full justice to the office of overseers and whether they do not lead into the direction of congregationalism, one may certainly not allege that hierarchism in the OPC has taken away the rights of Christ's congregation and its members.

The Session, which is called, "the governing body of the local Church," consists of its pastor, its other ministers, and its ruling elders. Chapter XIII.4 mentions that the Session shall choose its own moderator annually from among its members. This new regulation (the old form had the pastor always as the moderator of the Session) certainly diminishes "the special place of the ministers among the office-bearers of the Church," against which our report 1971 protested.

The form has, as far as we can see, a new clause about the final authority over the use of Church property. It describes the task of the Session as follows:

The Session is charged with maintaining the government of all the congregation. It shall oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship; it shall concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation. It shall receive, dismiss and exercise discipline over the members of the Church, supervise the activities of the diaconate, the board of trustees and all other organizations of the congregation, and have final authority over the use of the Church property (XIII.7).

Sure, the following sentence mentions that the Session also shall appoint ruling elder commissioners to higher Assemblies and the expression shows again that Presbyterianism describes the Presbytery and General Assembly as higher courts or judicatories. But we must not forget that in the case of appeals our Reformed broader Assemblies *also* acts as "courts." Moreover, the description of the authority and task of the Session resembles that of the Consistories in Reformed Church government and clearly acknowledges the final authority of the Session over the use of the Church property.

In the past our Deputies rightly brought forward their objections against the special place of the Presbytery among the Church Assemblies, e.g. in the concept that "the Presbytery has the power to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the Churches under its care" (XIV.5). Nevertheless, we should not forget the function of Church visitors authorized by Classis according to Article 46 of our Church Order, and we should not forget that the Form of Government of the OPC specifically states, "always respecting the liberties guaranteed to the individual congregation under the Constitution." Those liberties of the congregational Assemblies have been spelled out in the chapters we quoted about the Session and the congregational meeting.

As far as the General Assembly is concerned, Chapter XV regulates that it "shall consist of not more than one hundred and fifty-five voting commissioners." This number may seem small to Presbyterians in the U.S.A. but it is large for us who are used to a delegation of sixteen brothers via Classis and Regional Synods. In the event that the General Assembly fails to establish such proportions, "the next General Assembly shall consist of every minister and of one ruling elder from every local Church" (XV.2). As far as representation is concerned, one must conclude that the local congregations in Presbyterianism are certainly not far removed from their General Assembly.

In this context another regulation must have our attention.

Deliverances, resolutions, overtures, and other actions which have the effect of amending or adding to the subordinate standards shall not be binding unless they have been approved by the General Assembly and Presbyteries in the manner provided in this Form of Government for the amendment of the Constitution (XV.8).

It shows that even the General Assembly itself — however broadly composed of ministers and ruling elders commissioned by the Presbyteries — cannot immediately amend or add to the Confessions, the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline and the Directory for the Public Worship. It requires consideration and decision by the Presbyteries. The reports about voting by Presbyteries e.g., concerning proposals of merger, have made clear to us that we cannot condemn the Presbyterian Church Polity as mere hierarchism. The many safeguards which have been built into the system caution against such a generalizing statement.

The 1971 report of our Deputies concluded that although the differences in Church Polity should remain a point of serious discussions, they need not prevent the Canadian Reformed Churches from recognizing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ and from entering into correspondence with this Church.

We hope that our evaluation has underlined this conclusion that truly Presbyterian Churches acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the Church and accept His Word as the only rule for faith and order. A true Church governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head. Presbyterian Church government as such does not prevent recognition of a Church as a true Church, according to Article 29 of our Belgic Confession.

#### **IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In conclusion we would like to add a historical note. Last year we commemorated the sesquicentennial of the Secession in The Netherlands of 1834 (the "Afscheiding"). During this commemoration it was mentioned that the Synod of Leiden 1857 sought ecclesiastical contact or fellowship with the Free Church of Scotland and that Deputies of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland visited Kampen. The Rev. A. Brummelkamp and the Rev. S. Van Velzen were delegated to Scotland. At the Synod of Hoogeveen in 1860 the Churches of the Secession received official delegates of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Brummelkamp Jr. writes that the Seceded Church in The Netherlands then and later owed much to its correspondence with the Scottish brethren and to their rich experience. In 1877 Brummelkamp and Van Velzen participated in the Pan Presbyterian Council which intended to establish communion or fellowship between Presbyterian Churches.

It shows that the fathers of the Secession, who firmly adhered to Articles 27-32 of the Belgic Confession, recognized faithful Presbyterian Churches as true Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Canadian Reformed Churches are in the line of the tradition of Reformed Churches on the continent of Europe, when they in their contacts not only with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church but also within the International Conference of Reformed Churches recognize in Presbyterianism a fruit of the Reformation that God graciously gave to His Church in the sixteenth century.

Permanent contact in the unity of true faith and continual discussion of divergencies may express the catholicity of the Church of God and enrich the body of Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit, until we all attain to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The Committee for Contact with the OPC

## APPENDIX II C

### REPORT OF THE FIFTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HELD MAY 31 - JUNE 7, 1984, GENEVA COLLEGE, BEAVER FALLS, PA U.S.A.

The undersigned attended the 51st General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) from Monday, June 4, 1984 - Wednesday, June 6, 1984, as delegate of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

He hereby submits the following report:

1. Your delegate was well received and he was introduced to the Assembly by the stated clerk, the Rev. John P. Galbraith. On motion he was enrolled as corresponding member. As such he addressed the Assembly once to thank the Assembly for the cordial reception and to convey our brotherly greetings.

He assured the Assembly of a keen interest within the Canadian Reformed Churches as to the life and activities within the OPC.

He informed them about the completion of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter, the *Book of Praise*, and the appointment of Dr. K. Deddens as the fourth professor at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

He further mentioned that in the coming years the OPC may be undergoing some deep testings in view of the invitation issued to the OPC by the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and also as to determining the position of the OPC in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES).

He expressed the expectation that in these matters which are also important for the Canadian Reformed Churches, the OPC would seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in obedience to the Word of God. He also requested them seriously to consider what effect decisions to be made in these matters may have on the already accepted relationships with the Canadian Reformed Churches and others.

2. a. The 51st General Assembly (GA) received a letter from *the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)* which officially extended the invitation to the OPC to join the PCA under the same plan agreed upon by the Churches in 1981.  
b. Little attention was given to this matter by this 51st GA, since it was agreed that this invitation of the PCA will be brought before the 52nd GA in 1985.  
c. The GA did instruct the Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations (CEIR) "to inform the Church regarding the principles, procedures and issues entailed in the question of responding to the invitation to join the PCA, and any other material that would be considered relevant, during the year preceding the 52nd GA."

The Assembly allowed the editor to devote an entire issue of *New Horizons*, if needed to this matter.

- d. In the meantime it can be reported from a letter dated December 28, 1984 sent by CEIR to all Sessions of the OPC, that much time has been devoted to the study of Biblical principles of Church unity and that the CEIR has recognized certain areas of importance for considering the invitation as:

The Book of Church Order of the PCA; Organizational structure; Method of supporting denominational benevolences; Faith and Life Character of the PCA; Deacons and Trustees functions; Presbytery boundaries.

In meetings of representatives of both Churches the following matters of concern were inquired about and discussed:

Principles and practices of foreign Mission work; Principles and practices of Home Mission work; Methods of supporting Missions; Free Masonry; Particular sections of the Book of Church Order; Church discipline; Charismatic issues; Status of baptized children, etc.

- e. Although the CEIR has endeavored to make a recommendation to the next GA (1985) it has found it impossible to assemble, distill, and publish the information concerning the invitation to join the PCA, needed by the Churches and the Presbyteries, to consider this invitation responsibly. CEIR is continuing its work and plans to submit a report to the 1985 GA. However, it will present a recommendation for action by the 1985 Assembly only if this report can be in the hands of the Churches by February 1, 1985. Therefore it is highly unlikely that CEIR will submit a specific recommendation to the 1985 GA.
- f. It is noteworthy, according to your reporter, that the Presbytery of Northern California sent an overture to the 51st GA to the effect that, in the event both Churches approve of the invitation of the PCA, the OPC does so with the following provisions:
- that arrangements be made by the GA for a continuing Church to be known as "The Orthodox Presbyterian Church";
  - that a fair and equitable distribution of the assets be allocated to the continuing Church;
  - that the GA make whatever provisions and arrangements are necessary to insure the continuing of a Church known as "The OPC" for those who for consciences' sake are unable to join with the PCA.
- The GA referred this overture to the CEIR to report to the 52nd GA (1985) concerning the matters raised.
- g. It appears that the OPC is seriously considering the invitation to join the PCA but wants to make sure that all Sessions have the opportunity to evaluate fully and carefully the invitation of the PCA before a decision is made.
3. a. The Committee on *Reformed Ecumenical Synod Matters* (CRES) reported to the 51st GA that it had carried out the instruction of the 49th GA (1982). Since the RES Interim Committee did not recommend that the membership of "De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" (GKN) in the RES be terminated, the CRES sent (February 28, 1984) to the RES Chicago 1984 the OPC Assembly's request that the RES "declare the GKN . . . to be not eligible for continued membership in the RES."
- The CRES told the RES in this letter that this drastic conclusion was not reached hastily nor on the basis of one or two issues. Some of those issues are:
- membership in the World Council of Churches;
  - women in teaching and ruling office;
  - retention in teaching office of men who openly deny the central doctrines of the Reformed Confessions;
  - the admission of homosexuals to the Lord's Supper and to ecclesiastical office;
  - the report on Scripture ("God with us") that in spite of stated intentions, undermines the inspiration and authority of Scripture;
  - the coming reunion with the Hervormde Kerk.
- In this letter to the RES the CRES emphasized that these departures from Scripture of the GKN are occurring in an unbroken line year after year, in spite of the extended advice of member Churches. The OPC therefore pleads for "firm action" of the RES Chicago 1984 in order to preserve the RES' Reformed character.
- b. The same Committee sent also a letter (dated February 28, 1984) to all the Churches that are a member of the RES, pleading with them to support the OPC at the RES 1984 in its endeavor to prevent the RES and its member Churches of losing their Reformed character. They write, ". . . Obviously a course has been set in the GKN . . . that diverges from the Word of God, from the Reformed standards . . . If the GKN will not change its course — and they have proved they will not — then the RES must. In a way the choice is very simple: will the RES be a Reformed body, or will it not . . . ? All the evidence shows that the GKN will not go the RES' way. The RES cannot go the GKN's way."

- c. Earlier already (September 20, 1982) the CRES had sent a letter to the GKN to tell them "how gravely it felt about . . . your deviations, over a number of years, from Reformed (i.e. Biblical) teachings . . . We plead that you will, by God's grace, come back to the faithfulness to the Word of God from which your Reformed brethren of the RES believe that you have departed on so many occasions . . . As long as you follow the course that you have begun and, at this juncture seem determined to continue, you are destroying the existence of the RES as a Reformed body . . ."
- d. The 51st GA dealing with this part of the report decided to request the RES 1984 to place consideration of the membership of the GKN in the RES as the first order of business of the Synod.
- One of the grounds for this request was: "the GKN's continued membership in the RES is of such prominence and importance to the future of the RES that it will hang over all the other business of the Synod until that question has been settled."
- e. In the meantime it can be reported that the RES Chicago 1984 (to which the GKN sent two women as part of their delegation) did not grant the OPC's request to "declare the GKN not eligible for continued membership in the RES." A minority advisory report asked the RES to request the GKN:
- to withdraw its so-called pastoral advice on homosexual practice, or else
  - to withdraw from the RES by December 31, 1986.
- This recommendation failed by one vote (28 - 28, with one abstention).
- The RES decided to request the GKN to withdraw its pastoral advice concerning homosexual practice, or
- "If it is unable to comply with this request to seriously consider the fact that several Churches would find it difficult to stay in the RES with the GKN."
- f. i The RES membership of the OPC has been a point of discussion and an obstacle to full unity since the beginning of the contact between OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- ii However, according to your reporter, it must be stated that the OPC has taken its membership very seriously and for instance has warned the GKN and other member Churches in a Scriptural way, and called upon them to return to faithfulness to the Word of God.
- iii Since the RES Chicago 1984 did not take the "firm action" the OPC considered necessary to preserve its Reformed character, the OPC would seriously jeopardize its own Reformed witness by continuing its membership in the RES.
4. a. The Committee on Reformed Ecumenical Synod matters as well as the CEIR informed the 51st GA in their reports about *the International Conference of Reformed Churches*. The main items of the tentative constitution concerning the basis, membership, and purpose, were passed on to the GA.
- It was noted:
- i that an invitation had not been issued to the OPC to participate in the first Constituent Assembly of the ICRC in 1982;
  - ii that the Canadian Reformed Churches in their Synod 1983 declined to propose that the OPC be invited to the meeting of the ICRC Edinburgh 1985, although such action was proposed to their 1983 Synod by one of their Committees;
  - iii that not enough was known at this moment about the ICRC to make a recommendation either to apply or not to apply for membership;
  - iv that the OPC should continue to observe the development of the ICRC and report at a later GA about it;
  - v that observers should be sent to the meeting of the ICRC in Edinburgh, Scotland.

- b. The 51st GA decided indeed to authorize the CRES, in consultation with the CEIR, to appoint two persons to attend the next meeting of the ICRC, to be held September 3 - 13, 1985, in Edinburgh, Scotland. They will be sent as observers or some other non-delegate status acceptable to the ICRC.
- One of the grounds for this decision was that if at the time of the 1985 GA the sending of observers seems unnecessary or undesirable the Assembly could cancel the authorization without harm or prejudice to the persons involved.
5. a. In its report to the 51st GA the CEIR informed the GA about the continuing *contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches*. The decisions of Synod Cloverdale 1983 concerning this contact were reported in full to the Assembly.
- Also the subjects regarding their standards of faith presently under discussion were mentioned and the GA was informed that these subjects and others will be further discussed in future meetings of the CEIR and our Committee for Contact with the OPC.
- b. The CEIR also reported that it has correspondence with several Churches abroad for the purpose of exploring the possibility of a relationship of some nature. These include the Free Church of Scotland, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland; also "the Netherlands Reformed Church, which separated some years ago from the "Article 31" Reformed Churches, and with which we have had contact through their observers at the meetings of the RES. and through members associated with our Missionary work in Ethiopia and now in Kenya."
6. a. Another matter of interest for our Churches was the report of a Committee appointed by a previous GA (1980) to study "*the Scriptural principles of the diaconal ministry of the Church.*"
- This was the third year that the OPC discussed the extent of the Church's diaconal concerns.
- The Study Committee presented a majority and minority report.
- b. The majority report, "Scriptural Principles Relevant To World Diaconal Involvement," defends the position that also non-Christian individuals should receive help, encouragement and if necessary the direct assistance of the Church's deacons.
- c. The minority report recognizes that the Bible focusses diaconal aid on Church or covenant members (with whom we are in covenant relationship) and it upholds that the family and individual in the Church is first in line to exercise care and assistance.
- Although under certain circumstances also "non-covenantal" persons should receive diaconal help, cf. Gal. 6:10. this report cautions the Church to use this aid as a major evangelistic tool "since neither Jesus nor the Early Church did this, Mark 1:37-38; John 5:3, 5-9."
- d. The result of the lengthy discussion was that the GA decided to refer both reports to the Churches for their study.
- A motion to continue the study was voted down thereby disbanding the Study Committee.
- The GA decided further to inform the RES Chicago 1984 that the Assembly has given diligent study to the principles of diaconal ministry, but that it is unable to send conclusions to the RES at this time.
7. The 51st GA decided that the 52nd GA will convene Thursday, May 30, 1985, on the campus of Eastern College, St. Davids, PA.
8. In conclusion your delegate may report that especially during intermissions there was ample opportunity for personal conversations; several commissioners requested

clarification concerning some decisions of General Synod Cloverdale 1983 regarding our contact with the OPC, our position with regard to the supervision of the Lord's Supper, the involvement in the so-called "Hofford-case" and related matters. This personal contact was most enjoyable and instructive.

Humbly submitted by your delegate,  
J. Mulder

## APPENDIX II D

### DELEGATES REPORT ON THE FIFTY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MAY 30 TO JUNE 6, 1985 EASTERN COLLEGE ST. DAVIS, PENNSYLVANIA

#### 1. Attendance

The total attendance of voting commissioners was about 130 out of an allotted 153 (about 88 of 93 teaching elder commissioners and about 42 of 60 ruling elder commissioners. Commissioners represent Presbyteries).

Your delegate attended the Assembly from Tuesday, June 3 through Thursday June 6 to the close of this 52nd General Assembly at about 3:50 p.m.

#### 2. Introduction and Addresses to the General Assembly

Soon after arrival your delegate, together with others, was introduced to the Assembly by the Rev. J.P. Galbraith, stated clerk of the Assembly and chairman of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations. On motion he was received as corresponding member. It was your delegate's turn to address the Assembly after Rev. Dr. Smith of the PCA and Rev. Compton of the Free Church of Scotland had spoken. As could be expected, Dr. Smith, stated clerk of the PCA, focused the attention of the Assembly on the invitation issued to the OPC to join the Presbyterian Church in America. But an unexpected remark was made by the Rev. D. Compton of the Free Church of Scotland in his speech. Having informed the Assembly of a recent development of Free Reformed Churches of Scotland established in Canada, Rev. Compton added that joining the Canadian Reformed Churches was not considered feasible because of the different cultural background — the Canadian Reformed Churches showed too much of a Dutch cultural background.

The import of the speeches of the two former speakers and the upcoming bi-centennial celebration of the OPC gave substance and form to your delegate's address.

In his address your delegate started by referring to the remark of the previous speaker, Rev. D. Compton, and told the Assembly that your delegate had a Frisian cultural background and belonged to the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A., which is affiliated with the Canadian Reformed Churches. All this illustrated that these Churches could not simply be traced back to a Dutch cultural background.

He continued by making the assertion that Christ's Church is not marked by any cultural background but by the Confession and teaching of the truth of the Word of God. The attention of the Assembly was first drawn to Matthew 28:19 and 20 where the risen Lord, having assured His apostles that He had received universal authority, gives then a mandate which emphasizes two aspects: 1) "initial teaching" (matheteuoo — to make disciples), and 2) a "continued teaching" (disdaskoo — to impart instruction, to instill doctrine into, to explain, to expound) to preserve all things whatsoever the Lord had commanded them. This mandate was explained as to imply the gathering and preservation among all nations of Churches marked by holding on to "the traditions which you were taught" (II Thess. 2:15). This led your delegate to refer to the history of the OPC, the invitation to join the PCA and the planned bi-centennial celebration of its existence as the true continuation of the Presbyterian Church of America, whereby the OPC has claimed to hold on to "the traditions" of the apostolic teaching and to obey the apostolic admonition to "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us," II Thess, 3:6.

With a view to considering a merger with the Presbyterian Church in America and the celebration of their 50th anniversary as OPC the Assembly was recommended to be faithful to the Head of the Church and to be guided by His Spirit and Word, rightly to honour Christ in true remembrance of His historical deed of Reformation.

The Canadian Reformed Churches would thereby know what the Orthodox Presbyterian Church holds to doctrinally and confessionally.

In conclusion, brotherly greetings were conveyed to the Assembly.

### 3. Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations

The following recommendations were adopted:

- a. "That the GA indicate to North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council and the member Churches that it approves a study of procedures concerning the reception of fugitives from the discipline of member Churches, and authorize the Committee of Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations to appoint a representative to serve on a joint NAPARC study Committee on that subject."
- b. "That the GA approve the Golden Rule Comity Agreement proposed by NAPARC, and commend it to the Sessions, Presbyteries, and the Foreign and Home Missions Committees of the OPC for their adoption and implementations."

The Golden Rule Comity Agreement is as follows:

Comity has meant different things to different people. We representatives of the Home Missions Agencies and Committees or Boards of our denominations resist territorial statements on comity in light of the social and cultural complexity of North American society and the great spiritual need of our countrymen who are apart from Jesus Christ. Out of a concern to build the Church of Jesus Christ rather than our own denominations and to avoid the appearance of competition, we affirm the following courteous code of behavior to guide our Church planting ministries in North America:

1. We will be sensitive to the presence of existing Churches and Missions ministries of other NAPARC Churches and will refrain from enlisting members of these enlisting ministries.
  2. We will communicate with the equivalent or appropriate agency (denominational Mission Committee or Board, Presbytery Missions or Church extension Committee, or Session) before initiating Church planting activities in a community where NAPARC Churches or Missions ministries exist.
  3. We will provide information on at least an annual basis describing progress in our ministries and future plans.
  4. We will encourage our Regional Home Missions leadership to develop good working relationships.
- c. "That Overture 4 to the 51st GA (from Northern California re: a continuing Church in the event that the OPC joins and be received by the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) be placed on the docket of the 53rd GA at a point in the docket after the decision of that Assembly re the invitation of the PCA to join and be received."

The Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations reports extensively on the invitation from the Presbyterian Church in America and mentions that it was extremely difficult to produce a report due to new developments which are:

1. The PCA has, since 1981, decided very definitely that for the foreseeable future they will have a large General Assembly with virtually no meaningful debate on the floor of the Assembly. In 1981 it was expected that they would go to a smaller representative Assembly soon.
2. Dependence on permanent Committees seems to have grown significantly since 1981 — decisions formerly in the hands of judicatories have been put into the hands of commissions, and steps are being taken that may result in greater power for agencies and their staffs.
3. Our counterpart Committee is completely new from the Ad Interim Committee with which we had previously worked, and they did not have the same understanding of the "Joint Statement" that we had had originally.
4. Questions that were raised in 1981 concerning the faith and life of the PCA

have had to be examined to see what has taken place in such matters in the ensuing years.

“Because of these differences, and not willing either to act as if they do not exist nor to simply shut the door on the invitation, we have had to work through the effect of the changes.”

The Committee regrets that it could not meet either its own goal nor the hopes of last year’s General Assembly, and believes that the Church has the right to be given adequate time to study and discuss the matter fully before it is asked to vote on the question. “Nothing may be hidden; no one may be forced to vote before he has had the opportunity to examine the information that has been given. The consequences of the response that our Church makes to this invitation are so immense that our whole Church — members and Sessions, as well as your Committee — must do no less than try to give it our very best effort.”

#### **4. Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES)**

- a. That the Committee on RES matters be requested to prepare a plan for the future response of the OPC to the RES in view of the failure of RES Chicago 1984 to deal adequately with the crisis created by the continued membership of the GKN in the RES, and report to the 54th GA (1987).
- b. That the Committee on RES matters be instructed to write a letter to the Interim Committee of the RES to express the alarm of the OPC that the failure of RES Chicago 1984 to confront the GKN with a clear ultimatum concerning their membership in the RES has severely compromised the integrity of the RES, and that a copy of this letter be sent to each of the member Churches of the RES.

#### **5. Committee on the Hermeneutics of Women in Ordained Office**

After lengthy debate the following motion was adopted:

That the pending matter be recommended to the Committee on the Hermeneutics of Women in Ordained Office: and that the Committee be enlarged by the election of two members and two alternates.

#### **6. Committee on Overtures and Communications**

Regarding 2 from the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic concerning paedocommunion, the recommendation was adopted to elect a Committee of three to study the issue of paedocommunion in the light of God’s Word, our Standards, and traditions, and that a budget of \$400 be established.

#### **7. Date and Place of the Next Assembly**

The 53rd GA is scheduled to begin Tuesday, June 10, 1986 at 10:00 a.m. at Eastern College, St. Davis, Pennsylvania.

#### **8. Report CEIR on Canadian Reformed Churches**

“Matters that have not progressed as much as we wish include a review of the “Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship,” our discussions with the Canadian Reformed Churches, and further development of fellowship with Churches abroad.”

#### **9. Concluding Remarks**

Many favourable comments have been received from commissioners about the address of your delegate, resulting in personal contacts during intermissions and afterwards by letters received. It appeared that there is a need for a brief explanation of the history of our Churches which could be handed out to people interested. There was a keen interest with some people in Reformed literature from “our side.”

The opportunity given to your delegate was used to make contact with many. And these contacts were rewarding. Not once the desire was expressed to have our Churches join the OPC, but rather the impression was given: what you have we are missing.

Respectfully submitted, P. Kingma

## APPENDIX II E

### COMPLAINT

#### Complaint 1

From Barry R. Hofford, *et al.*  
*Letter of Transmittal*  
April 22, 1983  
The Stated Clerk  
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Esteemed Brother:

We the undersigned filed the attached complaint against the Session of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Burtonsville, MD, on October 15, 1982. The Session denied our complaint, and we took the complaint to the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. At its meeting of April 15, 16, 1983, the Presbytery also denied the complaint. Having notified both the Session and the Presbytery, we now bring our complaint to be heard by you, the Fiftieth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

There are five reasons for our complaining against the denial of the Presbytery:

1. The Presbytery failed to show from Scripture that the arguments of the complainants for close communion ("close communion" as defined in the Minority Report of the Committee of Presbytery to study the matter) are wrong.
2. The Presbytery failed to show from Scripture that the arguments of the complainants against the practice of the Burtonsville Session are wrong.
3. The Presbytery failed to show from Scripture that the practice of the Burtonsville Session in administering the Lord's Supper is correct.
4. The Presbytery failed to disprove the arguments of the complainants that the practice of the Burtonsville Session is contrary to the subordinate standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
5. The Presbytery failed to show that the practice of the Burtonsville Session is supported by the subordinate standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Please note that the complaint itself represents only a summary of the various views held by the complainants, and therefore, it is necessary to consider the writings of the various complainants which express differing perspectives on this matter. We point this out because we have discovered from our experience with the Burtonsville Session and the Presbytery that these differing perspectives are not always clearly understood and given due consideration.

For your convenience we are including the following list of the major documents produced in the controversy:

1. "Report of the Special Committee on Restricted Communion," April 15, 1972; 4 pages (result of Burtonsville Session's request for advice from the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic)
2. "Some Remarks concerning the Lord's Supper," by Anton van der Jagt, November 1, 1982; 11 pages
3. "Session's Response to the Complaint," November 17, 1982; 7 pages
4. "Explanation of the Complaint of October 15, 1982," by Barry R. Hofford, December 1982; 48 pages
5. "Critical Review of the Reply of the Session of the OPC in Burtonsville to the Complaint," by A. van der Jagt, December 22, 1982; 7 pages
6. Letter of Elder Stephen Brown to the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic setting forth his view of the complaint, December 27, 1982; 3 pages
7. "Majority Report of the Special Committee of Five to Deal with the Complaint against the Burtonsville Session," April 1983; 10 pages

8. "Minority Report of the Special Committee of Five to Deal with the Complaint against the Burtonsville Session," April 1983; 39 pages
9. "A Critical Analysis of the Majority Report of the Special Committee of Five," B. Hofford, April 1983; 12 pages
10. "Review of the Report of the Special Committee of Five," A. van der Jagt, April 9, 1983; 9 pages
11. Letter of Elder Stephen Brown to the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic responding to the Majority Report, April 15, 1983; 9 pages

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In addition to the above materials, we are in the process of writing a synopsis of the issues involved in this complaint based on the resources outlined above. We hope to have this new material in the hands of all the commissioners to the Assembly prior to its commencement in June.

We realize that this is not only a complex question but also one which has broad implications for the entire Church. For these reasons, we would like to respectfully suggest that the Assembly give this issue to a Committee for study and a report to the Fifty-first General Assembly rather than come to a hasty and premature conclusion. Although we as complainants find ourselves in an unhappy position, we are more interested in having the concerns and issues voiced in the complaint fully and properly addressed from Scripture than in having an immediate response.

Since it is likely that some of us may not be able to be present when this matter comes up for discussion at the Assembly, those of us not able to attend request that the Rev. Barry R. Hofford represent us and our complaint at the Assembly. Please notify us through him when the complaint will be heard, and please address all correspondence to us through him.

Please be assured of our prayers for you as you seek to follow Christ in all things.

Sincerely,  
 /s/ Barry R. Hofford  
 Maureen E. Hofford  
 Cristine E. Brown  
 Stephen W. Brown  
 Russell L. Yeager  
 Denise Aline Yeager  
 A. van der Jagt  
 Eliz. P. van der Jagt  
 Michel R. Dumas  
 Richard C. Baybutt

### **Body of the Complaint**

And now, this 15th day of October, A.D. 1982, come Barry R. Hofford, *et al.*, and complaint against the decision of the Session of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church on September 30, 1982 to cease use of an interim method of administering the Lord's Supper (in which the Session exercised the final judgment as to who should be admitted to the Lord's Supper) and reverted to a formerly approved (March 20, 1982) method (in which visitors were allowed to exercise final judgment as to their eligibility for admission to the Lord's Supper). In support of said complaint we set forth the following reasons:

1. This decision to revert to a method in which visitors are allowed to exercise the final judgment as their eligibility for admission to the Lord's Supper is contrary to the teaching of Scripture that the elders as representatives of Christ who have been given the keys of the kingdom must exercise the final judgment as to who should be admitted to the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 16:17-19; WCF XXX; XIX, 8.)
2. Because of the current ecclesiastical confusion over the identification of the true and false Churches, this decision will allow visitors to decide to participate in the sacrament who may be members of false Churches. (FOG IV, 3.)

3. Because this decision leaves the final judgment in the hands of visitors, and because this method of administering the sacrament does not provide for the elders to always know in advance those who qualify for the sacrament, it allows those who make no profession of faith, those who may be living in public sin, and those who may be under censure from other Churches to participate in the sacrament and thereby desecrate that which is holy. (Matthew 7:6; I Corinthians 11:27; 5:11; DFW V, 4; WCF XIX, 8.)
4. This decision establishes a double standard for admission to the Lord's Supper: members of Covenant Church are admitted or excluded on the basis of final sessional judgment as to their standing in the Church, but visitors from other Churches are allowed to attend without any evidence from their overseers confirming their standing in the Church. (Proverbs 20:10.)
5. This decision implicitly contradicts the subordinate standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (DFW V, 1-4) which teach that the Session must make the final judgment for admission to the Church, and thereby the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, on the basis both of public profession and a consistent public life.
6. This decision implicitly contradicts the subordinate standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (FOG XIII, 9) which speaks of receiving and dismissing members of the Church on letters of commendation or certificates of standing.
7. This decision violates the second great commandment, that is, to love my neighbor as myself, because it fails to provide proper protection against eating and drinking judgment for those who do not qualify for this sacrament. (Matthew 22:37-40.)
8. This decision prevents members of the congregation of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church from participating in the Lord's Supper lest they share in the responsibility for the sin and consequent judgment that will come to those who partake unworthily of the sacrament. (Matthew 22:27-40; Romans 14:15; Genesis 4:9, 10; Nehemiah 13:15-18.)
9. This decision, because of its relegation of responsibility and resultant consequences, prevents Pastor Barry R. Hofford from administering the sacrament and thereby fulfilling his duties as an ordained minister of the Word. (FOG VI, 2; FOG XXIII, 8, nos. 3, 6, 7, 8.)

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## **REPORT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE #5**

### **The Complaint of Barry R. Hofford *et al.* against the Session of Covenant OPC (October 15, 1982)**

#### **A. The Committee finds this complaint to be in order and properly before this Assembly**

The complainants present a complaint that was first filed against the Session of Covenant OPC, Burtonsville, MD, on October 15, 1982. The Session denied the complaint and it was taken to the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic, which also denied it at its meeting of April 15, 16, 1983. The complaint is now brought to be heard by this Assembly. The complainants also complain against the action of Presbytery in denying their complaint. This secondary complaint is supported by alleging that the Presbytery failed to show from Scripture and the subordinate standards that the complainants were wrong.

The Committee in this report has dealt with the original complaint and has not sought to evaluate the merits of the complainants' grievance against the reasons adduced by Presbytery for denying the complaint.

Further, the Committee holds that the complainants cannot legitimately attach to their complaint all the writings of the various complainants "which express differing perspectives on this matter" as their letter of April 22, 1983, to the stated clerk seeks

to do. While the Committee has examined a large file of these writings and has consulted with Mr. Hofford, it bases its report on the complaint of October 15, 1982. We have sought to evaluate the complaint in the context of the writings, but we hold that these are not properly part of the complaint.

**B. The Committee recommends that the complaint be denied on the following grounds:**

1. The action complained against was within the proper authority of the Session of Covenant Church in the ordering of public worship and the administration of the Lord's Supper.

The complaint is against the action of the Session of Covenant OPC on September 30, 1982, to "cease the use of the interim method of administering the Lord's Supper at Covenant Church on October 1, 1982." The "interim method" referred to was defined at a special meeting of the Session on March 20, 1982. This method provided that: "(a) All communicant members in good standing of Covenant will be invited to participate, and (b) All communicant members in good standing of other congregations of the OPC will be invited to participate upon certification in advance by our Session. (Ordinarily, this certification will require a letter of standing from the Church of which they are members.)"

The interim method was adopted because the pastor, the Rev. Barry R. Hofford, informed the Session that he could not otherwise administer the Lord's Supper since he did not believe that without such restriction the Biblical requirements would be met.

The termination of the interim method restored a policy adopted by the Session on October 31, 1973, formulated as follows: "The Table will be verbally fenced but open to members in good standing with their Churches. It will be requested that those who partake will sign communion cards. The visitors' home Churches will be notified of their participation. Continued eligibility of adherents of Covenant Church will be considered by Session on an individual basis."

In determining those who would be invited to participate according to the more restrictive or the less restrictive policy, the Session was properly discharging its responsibility to order the administration of the Supper as part of the public worship of God.

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2. This action of the Session was taken after seeking and securing advice from the Presbytery of Mid-Atlantic on this specific issue. The action was in harmony with the advice provided in a report to the Presbytery of a special Committee on which Mr. Hofford served. (The report, dated April 15, 1972, accompanies the report of this Committee.)
3. As the report of the Presbytery shows, the practice of Presbyterian Churches has allowed for the procedure adopted by the Session. Further, Presbyterian government has always respected the authority of the Session of the particular Church to order the worship of the congregation in a manner that takes account of the circumstances of the Church.
4. The formulation of the issue in the complaint misconceives the actual question. The issue is not whether the individual or the Session is responsible for determining who shall be admitted to the Table. The sessional action complained against does not abdicate, deny, or nullify the Session's prerogative of admitting to the sacrament. Rather, it states the rule as to who shall be admitted, invites those who meet this qualification to partake, and provides a means of determining if this invitation has been abused. The issue, therefore, is whether the rule adopted by the Session and the means chosen to apply it are adequate to be a responsible exercise of sessional obligation.
5. The reasons set forth in support of the complaint do not validate it. The reasons

do affirm the responsibility of the Session to determine, on Scriptural grounds, eligibility for admission to the Lord's Supper. The action of the Session does not deny this responsibility, but rather assumes it. On the other hand, the complainants in their reasons assert, but do not establish, that the Session must require formal certification of standing from an individual's Session before admitting him or her to the Lord's Supper; that the individual's own testimony as to his Church membership and standing cannot be accepted; and, further, that failure to conform to this requirement is sinful, a violation of the law of love on the part of the Session. Still further, it is alleged that to participate in the Supper with those who partake unworthily involves sharing responsibility for their sin. This chain of argument is not established in its particular affirmations nor in their necessary connections.

**C. In response to the reasons adduced in the complaint, the Committee recommends that the Assembly refer to the complainants the following observations in answer:**

1. The exercise of the keys of the kingdom in Church discipline does indeed include the authority to exclude from the Lord's Supper those who do not confess Christ before men or whose lives contradict their profession. This authority is committed to the Church as a whole (I Cor. 5:4,11; cf. Matt. 18:17-20), and in particular to those who are called to govern in the Church in the Name of Christ (I Cor. 5:3-5; Heb. 13:17). Since individuals may be excluded from the Supper, and from the fellowship of the community, it is evident that the power to exclude implies the power to admit and to welcome in Christ's Name.

Yet in the action complained against, the Session has not abandoned its authority in discipline, but has determined that only professing Christians who are members in good standing of evangelical Churches may be admitted to the Table. Christ's requirement of confessing His Name before men is maintained and the discipline of His Church is respected. Since only Christians in good standing are admitted, the government of their particular congregation is acknowledged. Further, the limitation to evangelical Churches indicates concern that the individual's profession of faith be in the fellowship of a Church that corporately makes a credible Confession.

To be sure, the action of the Session complained against substituted a different method by which the Session exercised its supervision. The "interim" method that was expanded was a method that would admit to the Supper only Orthodox Presbyterians whose good standing was officially certified. The action of the Session therefore extended eligibility to the Supper beyond the OPC, an action that is in conformity with the FOG, Chapter IV;4.

Further, the action included a change in how those who met the Session's requirements for admission would be identified. Under the "interim" procedure (p. 122)

the Session would require identification and certification for each individual not personally known by the Session to be members in good standing of Covenant Church. The mechanics by which this would be enforced are not at issue. Separate seating arrangements may have been made (or planned), or verbal instructions may have been relied upon. Under the procedure that was resumed by sessional action, individuals were permitted to identify themselves as being in that class of persons admitted by the Session to the Table. Verbal instructions were relied upon, but they were presented in the Church bulletin as well as spoken in the administration of the Supper. The Session also made further provision to guard against ignorant or willful violation of the Session's instructions in the administration of the Supper. The Session registered those who partook of the Supper and thereby secured the names of the Churches to which the participants belonged. They then notified the home Church of visitors who partook. This responsible action provided a double safeguard. First, if a person

who had been suspended from the Table by his home Church partook of the Supper, his Church would be in a position to deal with this breach of discipline. Second, if the Church named on the registry card was not an evangelical Church, the Session would have various possible courses of action to follow in instructing or remonstrating with the participant.

Permitting those who seek admission to the Supper to identify themselves as meeting the qualifications established by the Session cannot be said to be contrary to the teaching of Scripture regarding the keys of the kingdom. Christian love "believeth all things" (I Cor. 13:7), is ready to credit the world of a brother or sister, and cannot be charged with sin for failing to demand, as the condition of Table fellowship, official certification. The spiritual hospitality of welcoming love may be imposed upon or abused, and the complainants are properly sensitive to the judgment that may be incurred. But there are other dangers that the complaint does not recognize: dangers of a denominational exclusivism in practice if not in principle, an exclusivism that may compromise our witness to the Table as the Lord's.

2. It is true that there are false Churches in the world, both Churches that were once true and have become apostate (e.g., Unitarian) and Churches that never have been Churches of Christ, although claiming the name (e.g., Mormon). It is also true that we must apply the marks of the Church to distinguish between the true and the false. Yet this necessity does not require the conclusion that the only judges competent to apply the marks of the Church are the highest courts of denominational communions. Denominational division introduces many irregularities in Church Order; congregational independency adds more. But the Form of Government of our denomination recognizes this problem and the existence of many true Churches, however imperfect they may be in doctrine or practice (FOG, IV:4). The Session did not err in allowing for the recognition of Churches as true Churches of Christ even though our denomination has taken no official position as to their status. To sustain the complaint would be to reduce the Churches recognized as true, at least for the present, to our own communion. It may also be acknowledged that, as Reason Two of the complaint alleges, the Session's action increases the possibility that a member of a false Church may participate in the sacrament. To the degree that this is the case, the Session's action restores an administration of the sacrament that is less desirable than an arrangement that would restrict participation more narrowly. Yet this consideration, taken alone, cannot be determinative. It must be weighed in relation to the comparative advantages and disadvantages of other arrangements. This may be compared to provisions for admission to Church membership. More stringent requirements would presumably decrease the number of persons admitted who are unworthy and insincere. But we cannot argue from this that more stringent requirements are always to be preferred.

Just as we risk abuse by limiting our requirements for Church membership so as not to deny baptism to the weak who make a creditable profession of faith, so we may risk abuse of the Supper in limiting our requirements for visitors to members of evangelical Churches, but we may do so in order not to deny the Supper to those who are joined to Christ and to His Church visible.

The privilege of offering to visitors the sacrament of the Supper is not simply a gracious extension of Christian communion on the part of the government of

(p. 123)

a particular Church. Far less is it an irregular or unauthorized assumption of spiritual jurisdiction. It is rather a proper and requisite expression of the catholicity of the Church and of the character of Church government presented in the New Testament. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a bond and pledge of our communion with Christ first of all, and then with each other, as members of His mystical body (WCF, XXIX:1). Ministers who declare the words of institution are

ministers of Christ, and the other ruling elders share with them in ministering the ordinances of the Lord. They govern in Christ's Name because they have received gifts of Christ for rule (Rom. 12:3-8). These gifts must be recognized in an orderly way by a local Assembly, but they are Christ's gifts to His universal Church and not simply to one particular congregation (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-16). It is for this reason that Paul can commend those with special gifts for ministry among congregations in other areas (Rom 16:1, 2; I Cor. 16:12; Eph. 6:21; 22; Phil. 2:19-23). So, too, the Church is described as "those who call upon the Name of the Lord" in a particular place (I Cor. 1:2). Presbyterian government emphasizes the universal communion of the saints (WCF, XXVI). This communion "as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus" (WCF, XXVI:2; cf. the proof texts: Acts 2:44, 45; I John 3:17; II Cor. 8:9; Acts 11:29, 30). The government of the Church is therefore manifested at different levels: the house-Church, the city or regional Church, the Church universal (cf. FOG, Ch. IV). Christians visiting in another area can claim the ministry of those gifted and recognized as Church officers, and Church officers ought to recognize in turn their obligation to minister to those who come within the practical scope of their ministry and who respect their calling. While letters of reference can appropriately be given to attest Church membership as well as Church office, they cannot be made so essential that a Session be held to err for not regularly requiring them.

3. The third reason of the complaint emphasizes again that the less restrictive policy of admission to the Supper runs the risk of having unqualified people take the Supper. It heightens this concern by declaring that the holy may be desecrated. Of course the desecration cannot properly be said to affect the sacrament as such. As the Confession says, ignorant and wicked men may "receive the outward elements in this sacrament; yet, they receive not the thing signified thereby" (XXIX:8). The "great sin against Christ" of the ignorant and ungodly when they partake is to their own condemnation. The complainants properly point out that the Confession adds, "or be admitted thereto." Since we cannot judge the secrets of the heart, there is no way that a Session can avoid admitting some who may be ignorant or ungodly. Sessions may seek different means of identifying the unworthy and of instructing those who are ignorant and confronting those who are ungodly. Yet we cannot support the contention of the complainants that only by knowing in advance each participant, and receiving credentials in some way, can the Session escape responsibility for desecrating the sacrament.
4. The fourth reason of the complaint alleges a double standard for admission to the Lord's Supper. Members of the Covenant Church, it is said, are admitted by one standard and visitors by another. But the complainants cannot actually contend that the standards are different. In both cases what is required is good standing in a true Church. The alleged difference is therefore not in the *requirement* as to standing but rather in the *attestation* of standing. The difference presented in the fourth reason really reduces to this: the Session can attest the good standing of the members of Covenant Church but in its admission policy lacks confirming evidence from the overseers of the visitors. As has been pointed out, sessional procedures may differ as to the attestation that is requested or required, but a Session may not be censured for determining to honor self-testimony expressed by voluntary participation in the sacrament in response to clear and sufficient instruction and warning.
5. The fifth reason alleges that the decision of the Session implicitly contradicts the Director for Worship (V:1-4), which teaches that the Session admits to the Church on the basis of both public profession and consistent public life. The directory does require a public profession of faith and a week of notice to allow  
(p. 124)  
for allegations of facts regarding the person that might appear to be irreconcilable with a sincere profession.

Since the qualification required by the Session's policy for admission to the Supper includes good standing in a Church that requires a credible Confession, an uncontracted profession is indeed being required. The issue concerns only the manner in which this qualification is required.

6. The sixth reason alleges another implicit contradiction of our subordinate standards. Since the Form of Government (XIII:9) speaks of receiving and dismissing members of the Church on letters of commendation or certificates of standing, it is argued that letters or certificates are similarly required for admission to the Supper. The analogy is reasonable, but the very fact that the standards require certificates or letters for admission to the membership of the Church but not for the sacrament of the Supper tells against it. To call it an implicit contradiction is much too strong. There may be merit in a proposal for Churches to issue annual wallet-sized certificates of standing. Such a letter not only certifies standing but commits the person concerned to the care of another Session. A proper dismissal of a Church member naturally requires a letter since it must not merely affirm membership but communicate an action of dismissal to the receiving Church. A greater formality accompanying receiving people into permanent Church membership is understandable in view of the responsibilities and privileges of full membership in contrast to the privileges of a visitor.
7. The seventh reason applies the law of love (Matt. 22:37-40) to the situation of a less restrictive policy of admission. In repetition of what has been said, it may be observed that the law of love is directed not only to the unworthy, to seek to deter him from participation to his own judgment, but also to the worthy to encourage him to participate for his own blessing. The action of the Session aims to secure both of these ends in the difficult circumstances that surround the observing of the Supper in the present fragmentation of Christ's Church.
8. In the eighth reason, the complainants allege that all who partake of the Supper as administered by the Session of Covenant Church would share in the responsibility for the sin and judgment of those who partake unworthily. They have therefore refused to partake of the Supper and have urged the members of the Church not to partake.

It cannot be the case that the complainants know in advance that unworthy individuals will be present and will partake at a given celebration of the sacrament. It is the possibility of this occurring that constitutes their grievance.

Two related questions are at issue. First: does the participation of one who is unworthy invalidate the sacrament or involve others in sin? Calvin's answer to this question is unequivocal: "Let these two points, then be considered as decided: first, that he who voluntarily deserts the external communion of the Church where the Word of God is preached, and the sacraments are administered, is without any excuse; secondly, that the faults either of a few persons or of many, form no obstacles to a due profession of our faith in the use of the ceremonies instituted by God; because the pious conscience is not wounded by the unworthiness of any other individual, whether he be a pastor or a private person; nor are the mysteries less pure and salutary to a holy and upright man, because they are received at the same time by the impure" (Institutes IV:1:19).

In I Corinthians 11:29 the scope and character of the Lord's chastening for an unworthy manner of participating in the Supper is said to be condemnation of the guilty individual. There is no indication that the Supper itself is polluted so as to be made invalid nor that others who partake with the offender are also brought under condemnation. This is the more striking in view of the fact that the unworthy manner that Paul has been speaking of is outward, publicly observable behavior.

The second question is: does the alleged laxness of the Session's administration of the Supper constitute a sin that all who participate in the Supper necessarily

share? There may be many faults or irregularities in connection with the administration of the Supper as all will acknowledge. But what sin in administration would require abstinence from the Table of the Lord? Since the Supper is a sacrament ordained by the Lord and since He commands us to observe it till He come, no error or impropriety in its administration can excuse our rejection of the Table unless the nature and meaning of the sacrament itself is altered. If the sacrament is presented on an altar as an unbloody sacrifice, it is the character of the Supper itself that has been changed, and participation becomes wrong in conscience. (p. 125)

But no such change in the character of the sacrament has been brought about by the action of the Session complained against. The Assembly does not wish to usurp the responsibility of the Session in determining the best method of exercising its administration of the Supper. There may be wiser ways in the given situation. But the Supper is being responsibly administered; it is the Lord's Table. To refuse to partake and to seek to dissuade others from partaking is to break the communion of Christ's Church by an action that denies a mark of the true Church to Covenant OPC. Despite the glaring laxity and abuse of the Lord's Table at Corinth, Paul never counsels withdrawal from the Supper. Rather, he continues to advocate eating and drinking with self-examination (I Cor. 11:28) and improved corporate direction: divisions are to be corrected, and orderly procedure followed (I Cor. 11:18, 19, 33, 34).

9. The ninth reason of the complainants alleges that the action of the Session prevents Pastor Barry R. Hofford from administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This is an extension to the pastor of the principle stated in reason eight, and the same answer can be given. The fact that he favored a more restrictive method of administering the Supper should not have prevented the pastor from discharging his ministry at the Table of the Lord. Respecting the fact that the pastor conceived of the issue as one of conscience, the Session did not insist that he preside, but was willing to secure the services of another minister. While such an arrangement should not continue indefinitely, it did offer the pastor as a complainant relief from the greater involvement in the method of administration to which he objected.

**D. The Committee recommends that the Fiftieth General Assembly commend to the Church for its study the report of the Special Committee on Restricted Communion (April 15, 1972) from the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic.**

**Grounds:**

1. This report contains guidelines based upon relevant Biblical and confessional support.
2. It does not attempt to legislate but rather encourages Sessions to give careful attention to exercise care, charity, and faithfulness in the administration of the Lord's Supper.
3. Its potential for usefulness is found in its concise, clear, and practical contents. The report is four pages in length.

**REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RESTRICTED COMMUNION  
April 15, 1972**

This special Committee was erected by the Presbytery at its December 11, 1971 meeting to comply with the request of the Session of Covenant Church, Burtonsville, for advice "as to the proper practice of discipline at the Lord's Table and to provide an explanation of the Scriptural basis for that practice." The special Committee consisting of Messrs. Doepke, Hofford, and Vail, met twice for discussion, elected the undersigned as chairman, and requested him to write the report of the Committee.

**A. The Scriptures teach that the Church Session is responsible for the administration of the sacraments. This teaching is set forth in the following manner:**

1. The keys of the kingdom of heaven, implying stewardship over the household of God, authority to admit or exclude from membership in the visible Church, and participation in its ordinances, were committed to the apostles by the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Church (Matt. 16:19, 18:18-20; John 20:20-23; Eph. 2:19, 20; I Tim. 3:15).

(p. 126)

2. This administrative jurisdiction of the apostles included the oversight of the sacraments (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:42; I Cor. 4:1; 10:16, 17; 11:17-34).
3. The Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit and the apostles, appointed elders to continue to govern the Church and to administer His ordinances in it (Acts 14:23; 20:17; 28; I Tim. 5:17).
4. Therefore it is now the duty and prerogative of the Church Session to determine who is eligible to participate in the sacraments. The OPC recognizes this and clearly states in the Form of Government IX, 6, [XIII, 7], "The Church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation . . . to receive members into the Church . . . to suspend and exclude from the sacraments."

**B. Now the question arises, what Scriptural guidance does the Session have in determining eligibility for participation in the Lord's Supper?**

1. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself admitted to the Supper those who were His disciples (Matt. 26:20, 26; see also Lk. 22:14, 19, 20).
2. The apostles admitted those who publicly professed faith in Jesus Christ, were baptized, and continued in the fellowship of the Church (Acts 2:38-42; I Cor. 1:2; 10:16, 17; 11:23, 26).
3. The apostles excluded those from participation who though they professed to be Christians were nevertheless living ungodly and immoral lives (I Cor. 5:1-13, note especially vs. 11; II Cor. 6:14-16; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15).

In this connection, the statement of the Confession of Faith, XX, 8 is pertinent: "All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's Table; and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto."

4. Therefore we conclude that the Church Session should admit to the Lord's Table those who make a credible profession of faith in Christ, that is, a profession that shows a competent knowledge of the gospel and understanding of the spiritual significance of the Lord's Supper, coupled with a life of obedient discipleship.

**C. Next there is the question of how the Session should determine the eligibility of participants in the Lord's Supper, that is, how these Scriptural principles should be applied.**

1. In the case of the congregation of the local Church, the Session determines eligibility for participation through the regular procedures for instructing, examining and receiving candidates into communicant membership of the Church. (See Directory for Worship, Chapter V, of public profession of faith in Christ. Note especially section 4, "No one shall be allowed to take part in the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper who has not first made public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as His Savior and Lord.")
2. In addition to the regular procedure for receiving communicant members, the Session also has the responsibility to admit to the Lord's Table only those who are able to participate in a worthy manner. Such worthy participation requires "competent instruction in the gospel doctrine, knowledge to discern the Lord's body; faith to feed upon Him, repentance, love and new obedience." (Charles

Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, pp. 623ff; see Hodge for a full discussion on this point). The Session, however, is not able to examine the hearts of men, and so must limit itself at this point to the declaration the minister gives at the time of administration concerning who may come to the Lord's Table and who are excluded according to the Word of God (Directory for Worship, IV, C, 2).

3. Since the Lord Jesus Christ commanded all of His disciples to partake of the Supper, and offers Himself in communion to all true believers, the Session should not exclude from participation in the Lord's Supper any brethren who are visiting from other evangelical Churches. That the Presbyterian Church has regularly included such may be seen from the following citations:

"It is customary to invite all Christians present to unite in the service who are in good and regular standing in other evangelical Churches. But it is not in accordance with the spirit and usage of the Presbyterian Church to extend such invitations to persons who are not members of any evangelical Church" (p. 127)

(J.A. Hodge, *What Is Presbyterian Law*, p. 91).

"He, (the minister), shall invite to partake of the sacrament all those who, repenting of their sins, and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, desire to live as becometh followers of Christ. Since by the Lord's appointment, this sacrament sets forth the communion of believers, the minister, before the celebration begins, should invite all those who are communicants in good standing in any evangelical Church, to participate in the sacrament" (Directory for Worship, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., 1950).

4. Two methods are commonly used to determine whether visitors to the service are qualified to participate in the Lord's Supper. The first, and most common in the OPC, as well as in other Presbyterian Churches, is to have the minister make a statement at the beginning of the service, clearly setting forth the Scriptural qualifications for worthy participation, and then inviting those who meet these qualifications to participate, and then in warning those who are not qualified of the consequences of partaking if not qualified, but leaving it to the individual to decide whether or not he is eligible. The second, and most common in the Reformed Churches, is to require visitors who wish to participate to meet with the Session before the service for questioning concerning eligibility. The Session then either approves or disapproves the person for participation.
5. Which of these methods should be followed by our Churches? It appears from the teaching of the Scriptures and the provisions of the subordinate standards of the Church that either method is permitted. It is not specified in Scripture or in the subordinate standards what particular method of restriction must be used. That a form of restriction is required is evident, but what form is not. It would not be proper for the Presbytery therefore to require the Churches to follow one particular method to the exclusion of the other without first obtaining an amendment to the Directory for Worship which now permits either method to be used. It appears that the Session of Covenant Church desires the Presbytery to make such a determination for the Churches of the Presbytery. But in the final analysis it is the prerogative of the Church Session to determine which method shall be used.

#### **D. Some further considerations:**

1. In addition to the difference in procedure for determining the eligibility of visitors to participate in the Lord's Supper, there also appears to be two methods of distributing the elements which differ somewhat from each other. According to the first, which appears to be the common practice of the OPC, the elders pass the elements along each row of the congregation and permit the individual to decide at that point whether to participate or not, after being instructed concerning the requirements for worthy partaking, and being warned against unworthy participation. The second method is for the elder to present the elements only

to those whom the elder himself judges to have met the outward qualifications for worthy participation, not of course, presuming to judge the state of the heart. Again we would say that the Church Session itself must decide which of these procedures to follow.

2. Some have interpreted the words "or be admitted thereunto" in the Confession of Faith, XXIX, 8 (see above B, 3) as requiring the Session to examine visitors to determine their eligibility to participate before they are allowed to do so. It has been the understanding of the Presbyterian Church that these words refer to the Session's responsibility for exercising discipline over the members of the local congregation, a procedure which is carried out in distinction from its invitation to visiting brethren from other evangelical Churches to participate. In support of this view, the following considerations are offered:
  - a. An examination of that whole paragraph in the Confession reveals that it is dealing primarily with those who are living ungodly lives, a matter which the Session is unable to judge in the case of visitors to the services, but is able to judge in the case of the congregation. The proof texts that are offered also refer either to the process of self-examination, or to the discipline of members (p. 12B) for those matters which require direction observation of their lives.
  - b. Charles Hodge in an article, entitled "The Lord's Table for the Lord's People," in his book, *Church Polity*, p. 218 says, "as to the knowledge and deportment of persons applying, the Session must judge, save in the case of persons invited to sit from other Churches." This would imply that the Confession of Faith was being interpreted as above.
3. Finally, the appeal is made by some to the present ecclesiastical situation in our nation as requiring an examination of visiting brethren before they are admitted to the Lord's Table. It is noted that the great diversity in belief and practice among the various denominations and Churches, the alarming increase in apostacy, and the general failure to exercise Church discipline all demand that the Church Session follow the more restrictive methods of admitting applicants to the Lord's Table. This argument has merit. it would be well for Church Sessions, which must assess local conditions and decide which procedures should be followed in their particular circumstances, to give serious attention to these trends in the Church, and determine whether the practice being followed at present truly meets the situation in accordance with the requirement of the Lord, that all things be done decently and in order, and not to give that which is holy to the dogs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurence N. Vail, chairman

The Assembly recessed at 12:10 p.m. the following prayer led by Mr. George.

### **Wednesday Afternoon, June 8**

Consideration of the Complaint was continued.

It was moved to adopt the recommendation in part B of the report of Advisory Committee #5.

During the course of debate, Mr. Hofford was granted one additional speech. Mr. Woolard requested that his negative vote be recorded.

On a lost motion that would have referred to the Committee on Revisions to the Book of Discipline and the Directory for Worship the documents relevant to the Complaint as well as the issue of the proper fencing of the Lord's Table, Mr. D.W. Keister requested that his affirmative vote be recorded.

During the course of debate, Mr. Hofford was granted an additional five minutes to speak to the question.

The pending question (the recommendation in part B of the report of Advisory Committee #5) was carried.

On separate motions the recommendations in parts C and D were adopted.

The moderator requested Mr. D.E. Johnson to lead the Assembly in prayer in regard to our pastoral concerns in the matter just completed.

## APPENDIX III

### COMMITTEE ON CORRESPONDENCE WITH CHURCHES ABROAD REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD BURLINGTON-WEST 1986

Esteemed Brethren,

We hereby submit to you a report on the activities of the Committee for Correspondence With Churches Abroad, appointed by General Synod 1983.

#### I. MANDATE

General Synod Cloverdale 1983 gave our Committee the following mandate:

##### A. General

- “1. To continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.
2. To request the Free Reformed Churches of Australia to make their revised version of the Church Order available to our Committee for Correspondence for possible comments and/or recommendations.
3. To add to the present Rule c of the Rules for Correspondence: ‘re proposals for changes in the Three Forms of Unity, the sister Churches abroad shall receive ample opportunity (at least three years) to forward their judgment before binding decisions will be made.’”

Rule c reads then as follows:

To inform each other concerning changes of, or additions to, the Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while corresponding Churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable. Regarding proposals for changes in the Three Forms of Unity, the sister Churches abroad shall receive ample opportunity (at least three years) to forward their judgment before binding decisions will be made.

4. Again to request the Netherlands sister Churches permission to publish the translation of the Form for Ordination/Installation of Missionaries for use in the Canadian Reformed Churches.
5. a. To request the Churches abroad that in the matter of relationships or contacts with third parties “there be consultation and coordination between sister Churches.
- b. To request the Churches abroad that contacts in countries where sister Churches are already established be made not independently but in conjunction with these sister Churches.
6. To charge the Committee to send an invitation to sister Churches abroad at least one year prior to the date the next General Synod is to convene and to have our Churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of such Churches abroad, if invited and when feasible.” (Acts 1983, Art. 99, D, 1,2,3,4,5)

##### B. Korea

- “a. to obtain and evaluate the complete text of the Koryu-Pa's Form of Government;
- b. to enquire into the grounds of the many changes made in this Form of Government;
- c. to seek an official evaluation from the Koryu-Pa of the confessional and Church-political divergencies as these have been discussed and are being discussed with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church;
- d. to seek information from the Koryu-Pa regarding its relations with the Hap-Dong Churches so that the implications of establishing correspondence with

the Koryu-Pa may become completely clear in this respect." (Acts 1983, Art. 105, D, 3)

### **C. Relations with Churches**

- "1. That whenever a discussion with the sister Churches on rules to cover ecclesiastical relationships is initiated, to urge the sister Churches to maintain Correspondence according to the adopted rules as the only form of permanent ecclesiastical relationship.
2. To inform the sister Churches that the Canadian Reformed Churches have not made it a common practice to formalize ecclesiastical contacts with Churches with which correspondence cannot yet be established." (Acts 1983, Art. 110, D, 1, 2)

### **D. The International Conference of Reformed Churches**

- "1. to join the ICRC with the clear instruction to move the following amendments to the proposed Constitution:
  - a. a stipulation in the Basis of the ICRC that the delegates subscribe only to the standards of the Churches of which they are members;
  - b. that membership of the RES is an impediment to membership in the ICRC;
  - c. that under 'Authority' (Art.V) change 'are urged to receive the decisions' to 'urged to *consider*';
  - d. to add to Purpose (Art. V, 5) 'to encourage each other as member Churches to . . .';
  - e. to amend the Regulations (Art. II, 4, b, iv) 'to forward to the Churches material . . .';
  - f. to amend the Regulations (Art. II) 'Each Conference shall elect . . .'
2. to request the ICRC at Edinburgh to deal with:
  - a. the doctrine of the Church in the Reformed Confessions;
  - b. the doctrine of the Covenant in the Reformed Confessions;
  - c. the exercise of inter-Church relations.

To give these matters priority after amendments to the Constitution before attending to matters of Mission.

3. to appoint Prof. Dr. J. Faber as an advisor to accompany two of the members of the Committee for Correspondence to the Conference 1985 at Edinburgh;
4. to report to the next General Synod on the activities of the ICRC;
5. to authorize the Committee to invite the ICRC to hold its second Conference, to be held in 1989, in the Vancouver area, as guests of the Canadian Reformed Churches." (Acts 1983, Art. 121, D, 1,2,3,4,5)

## **II. RULES FOR CORRESPONDENCE**

The rules for correspondence referred to in our mandate are:

- a. To take mutual heed that the corresponding Churches do not deviate from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, Church government and discipline.
- b. To forward to each other the agenda and decisions of the broader Assemblies and to admit each other's delegates to these Assemblies as advisors.
- c. To inform each other concerning changes of, or additions to, the Confession, Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while the corresponding Churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable. Regarding proposals for changes in the Three Forms of Unity, the sister Churches abroad shall receive ample opportunity (at least three years) to forward their judgment before binding decisions will be made.

- d. To accept each other's attestations and to permit each other's ministers to preach the Word and to administer the sacraments.
- e. To give account to each other regarding correspondence with third parties (*Acts* 1962, Art. 139; *Acts* 1968, Art. 79, 6, b)

### III. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Declarations

- a. The following ministers of the Canadian Reformed Churches, planning to travel abroad, requested and received a declaration that they are ministers in good standing in the Churches: The Revs. B.J. Berends, J. DeJong, M. van Beveren, D. VanderBoom.
- b. The following ministers of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland visited Canada: The Revs. Tj. Boersma, K. Deddens, J.H. van der Hoeven.

From the Deputies of these Churches, your Committee received a declaration stating that they were ministers in good standing.

#### 2. Acts — Yearbooks — Books of Praise

- a. When the *Acts* of General Synod Cloverdale 1983 were received a sufficient number of copies were sent to the sister Churches.
- b. The *Yearbook* of our Churches, although not an official publication, was sent to all the sister Churches as well. It keeps them somewhat informed about our Churches and supplies pertinent data about statistics and addresses.
- c. As soon as the new and completed *Book of Praise* was published a number of copies were ordered and sent to the sister Churches.

#### 3. Notifications and Invitations

Letters of notification and invitation were sent to the sister Churches regarding the convening of General Synod Burlington-West 1986. Copies of the Provisional Agenda were sent.

#### 4. Interim Report

No interim reports were published by the Committee as a whole, although the convener did publish his address to Synod Heemse 1984 of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland in *Clarion* (Vol. 33, No. 13, 1984), in addition, he wrote an extensive report in *Clarion* (Vol. 34, No. 23, 24, 25, 1985) on the first meeting of the ICRC.

### IV. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

#### 1. Correspondence

- a. After General Synod Cloverdale 1983 met, the Free Reformed Churches of Australia were informed about the decisions that pertained to them, as well as other matters that had to do with inter-Church relations. They were requested to send us as yet a copy of their revised Church Order.
- b. In Oct. 1984 we received a copy of the revised Church Order which was then scrutinized by your Committee. Their revision appears to be based in part on the revisions made by our sister Churches in The Netherlands, as well as the Canadian Reformed Churches. A number of additional changes were called for seeing the particular situation in Australia with only a small number of Churches. On the whole, your Committee had no basic objections to this revision.
- c. In Oct. 1984 we also received a copy of the interim report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the FRCA. It brought us up to date on various developments in the FRCA, especially as that related to contact with third parties.
- d. In March, 1985 we were advised about the General Synod of the FRCA that would meet in Tasmania, as of June 1, 1985. An invitation to attend was in-

cluded, but declined for cost reasons. Your Committee sent fraternal greetings instead via the mail.

- e. Attempts have been made to discover exactly what happened to the letter that was supposed to have been received by the General Synod 1980 from the FRCA regarding cooperation on the *Book of Praise*. It appears that it was lost by the postal service. As a result, we propose to drop this matter seeing that we now know the contents of this letter (see our report to General Synod 1983, Acts 1983, p. 311) and that time and events have passed this matter by.
- f. In April, 1985 a provisional agenda for General Synod 1985 was received and taken note of.
- g. In May, 1985 a request was received to pass on to the FRCA a copy of our translation of the changes made to the Form of Government of the Korean Presbyterian Church. This request was met.
- h. A copy of the Acts 1985 of the FRCA was received at the ICRC gathering in Edinburgh in September of 1985. Additional copies were received by mail.
- i. As soon as we were informed about the date of the convocation of General Synod 1986 Burlington-West, we informed the FRCA and invited them to send their fraternal greetings either in person or by mail.
- j. It would be in place here to inform you that we are experiencing some postal problems from time to time. This has not undermined the basic communication but it has slowed it down at times and made additional letters necessary.

## 2. Acts of Synod Launceston 1985

The 1985 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia met from June 1-10, 1985 in Launceston, Tasmania. From the Acts we would like to inform you about some of the highlights.

- a. Regarding the *Book of Praise* Synod decided to adopt the revisions to the Psalms and Prayer sections. As to the Hymn section, it added to its approved list the numbers 1B and 39. (At present 34 of the 65 Hymns in our *Book of Praise* have been adopted for use in the FRCA. As Committee we have never been informed as to what now the objections are to the other 31 that have not been adopted.)

As for the Ecumenical Creeds and the Three Forms of Unity in their revised format, they were adopted provisionally for use in the Churches. Deputies were instructed to study the inclusion of the word "Christian" in the Apostles' Creed, and to report to the next Synod. As for the Liturgical Forms, they were all adopted for use, with the exception of the Forms for Excommunication of Non-Communicant Members, the Ordination of Missionaries, and the Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper (Abbreviated) which were adopted provisionally.

- b. Regarding *Byford*, Synod took note of the institution of a new congregation in Western Australia, called the Free Reformed Church of Byford. This brings to five the number of Churches in the federation.
- c. Regarding the *Church Order*, Synod made a number of refinements and amendments to the Church Order which had been revised in 1983. None of the changes were major.
- d. Regarding *Mission*, it was decided that the next Synod would deal with the transfer of Mission assets to the Church at Albany for work in Papua New Guinea.
- e. Regarding *Relations with other Churches*, Synod made quite a number of decisions:
  - i. In response to various appeals, Synod agreed that decisions recorded in Art. 72 and 75 of the Acts 1983 were made with "undue haste and without due consideration." These Articles pertain to the recognition of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of

Ireland, and the Free Church of Scotland. Synod agreed that these types of decisions should not be made on the basis of oral information. Deputies were charged to as yet investigate these Churches and to submit extensive reports to the next Synod.

- ii Synod also agreed to change the name of its Committee from "Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches" to "Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad." This change is in line with our Dutch sister Church, only they use the word "Committee" and not "Deputies."
  - iii On the matter of Rules for Temporary Contact, the Synod decided that "there should be only one form of permanent ecclesiastical fellowship between sister Churches and this under the mutually accepted rules for correspondence, any rules for temporary ecclesiastical contact should make clear that the contact has as its ultimate aim the establishment of sister Church relationship." It would appear that this rule makes it possible for the FRCA to use ecclesiastical contact as a temporary relationship and as a steppingstone to ecclesiastical fellowship. In this the FRCA follows the model of the GKN.
  - iv Synod decided to continue its correspondence relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Presbyterian Church in Korea, De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, the Gereja-gereja Reformasi Indonesia di Sumba Timur-Sabu, and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika.
  - v Synod decided that an indepth evaluation should be made of the two chapters added to the Westminster Confession of Faith by the Presbyterian Church in Korea.
  - vi Synod instructed its Deputies to inform the Reformed Churches of New Zealand that its sister Church relationship with the Reformed Churches in Australia and its second level correspondence with the GKN (Synodical) are impediments for continuing the existing contact.
  - vii Synod decided to investigate whether or not the Reformed Church of Japan and the Presbyterian Church of Uganda could be recognized as true Churches with a view to a possible sister Church relationship. It also urged the Reformed Church of Japan to break its ties with the RES.
  - viii With regard to the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, a letter was received by Synod in which the PCEA stated, "Synod recognizes the Free Reformed Churches of Australia to be true and faithful Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, rejoices at the opportunity of involvement together in the International Conference, and expresses the hope that continued contact will open the way to closer relations in the future; at the same time recognizing our mutual responsibility to exhort one another to continued obedience to the Word of God, and to the doctrine and practice which is according to godliness."  
In response, Synod expressed its joy and gratitude with the resolution of the PCEA. It added, however, that not enough was known about the PCEA to be able to recognize it as a true Church of our Lord. Further, it instructed its Deputies to investigate the PCEA with a view to Art. 29 of the Belgic Confession, and to report to the next Synod.
  - ix On the matter of the ICRC, Synod decided not to rescind the decision of the previous Synod to seek membership. It decided to send two delegates to the first meeting at Edinburgh. Furthermore, it took over all of the amendments proposed by the Canadian Reformed Churches, as well as the topics proposed by the CRC. It said that Synod 1987 will have to make a decision on continuing membership in the ICRC depending on the report of the delegates and the Deputies.
- f. Regarding the *Revised Standard Version*, Synod instructed its Deputies to give

the matter of Bible translation further study, to monitor the work of the Translation Committee of the RSV and to invite submissions from the congregations on this issue, to report to the next Synod. A number of appeals and letters regarding the use of the RSV were passed on to the Deputies.

- g. Regarding *Training for the Ministry*, Synod mandated its Deputies to explore the possibility of the FRCA becoming formally involved in the maintenance of Kampen or Hamilton; to promote increased levels of awareness in the FRCA of the duty to give regularly and sufficiently to this cause.
- h. Regarding the *Westminster Confession*, Synod defeated a proposal to study and evaluate the Westminster Confession on the grounds that the FRCA recognizes the Westminster Confession to be a Reformed Confession and that it is not the task of Synod to make official pronouncements regarding the Westminster Confession. Its task is rather to promote a knowledge and understanding of this Confession.

### 3. Conclusion

From the correspondence received and from the Acts 1985 we may conclude with gratitude that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia continue to be faithful to the Word of the Lord, to the Confessions, and to the Church Order.

### 4. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to Synod that the correspondence which we have with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia be continued in accordance with the adopted rules.

## V. DE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN IN NEDERLAND

### 1. Correspondence

- a. After General Synod Cloverdale 1983 was terminated, we informed De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland about the decisions of Synod which had either a direct or indirect bearing on them. We also repeated the request to publish the translation of the Form for the Ordination/Installation of Missionaries in our new *Book of Praise*. This request was granted by Synod Heemse.
- b. In January of 1985 we received a letter from the Dutch Deputies in which they informed us about their contacts with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America. To date these contacts have borne very little fruit because letters go unanswered. Nevertheless, Synod Heemse 1984 instructed the Deputies to persist in their attempts. The Deputies assured us that they will keep us informed of future developments and not proceed at a faster pace than our Churches.
- c. In March of 1985 we wrote to the Dutch Deputies informing them about the make-up of our delegation to Edinburgh and expressed the hope that they would place more matters on the agenda than Mission. In that same month we received a letter from the Deputies informing us about Synod Heemse's decisions on the ICRC. This Synod expressed its agreement with the Basis of the ICRC and instructed its Deputies to propose an addition to the Regulations which would see the delegates rise to express their agreement with the Basis. It also proposed that a study Committee on Missions be set up and that the costs of the Conference be carried by an assessment based on the number of communicant members.

In agreeing with the Basis, Synod stated as grounds that the differences between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards have never been a hindrance to acknowledging that each other's Confessions are Reformed. Also, it stated that agreement with the Basis means that the member Churches have found nothing in each other's Confessions that constitute an impediment as far as full participation in the Conference is concerned.

- d. In May, 1985, the Deputies asked us to react to the magazine *Lux Mundi* and to advertise its availability in our Church press. We also advised them to advertise in a number of leading American publications.
- e. As soon as we were informed about the date of Synod Burlington-West 1986, we wrote to the Deputies and invited them to extend their fraternal greetings. We also had to request copies of the *Acts* of Synod Heemse again. We received them only in December on 1985. That explains in part the tardiness of this report.

## 2. Representation at Synod Heemse 1984

- a. Synod Cloverdale 1983 instructed the Committee "to have our Churches represented to General Synods of such Churches abroad, if invited and when feasible." (*Acts* 1983, Art. 99, D, 6). In light of this mandate, and the fact that we sent no one to Synod Arnhem 1981, as well as the fact that Synod Heemse had certain matters on its agenda that would affect our Churches, it was decided to send the Rev. J. Visscher, as a member of the Committee to Synod Heemse.
- b. Rev. J. Visscher attended the Synod on June 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15. On Wednesday, June 6, in the evening Session, the Synod welcomed the delegates of the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and the Free Church of Scotland. All the delegates were invited to address Synod, which your representative did in the Dutch language. An English version of that address is attached to our report as an appendix.

On Thursday, June 7, your delegate sat in on three Committees dealing with Missionary training, inter-Church relations and the Church book.

During the plenary Sessions which your delegate attended matters relating to the Psalms, relations with Korea, Taiwan, prayers, forms, and appeal cases were handled. When the Synod went into closed Session, your delegate was requested to be present.

- c. On June 9, 1984, your representative traveled to Kampen where a special meeting was held with the GKN's Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (Anglo-Saxon section). Also present were Rev. J.N. Macleod representing the Free Church of Scotland and the Rev. N. Whitla of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

In the discussions attention was paid to the rules for correspondence, relations with third parties, pulpit fellowship, levels of ecclesiastical fellowship, temporary ecclesiastical contact, and other matters. In the course of the discussions it became clear that the Irish and the Scottish Churches have some reservations about the rules for correspondence as they currently present themselves. The opinion was expressed that at several points they were not practical and that at other points they could be construed as interference in the life of a foreign sister Church.

The Free Church expressed a willingness to consider correspondence, but the advice was given to refrain from being too aggressive in terms of approach and timetable. It was also stated that the Free Church has a history of different levels of inter-Church relationships.

Your delegate took the added opportunity to explain several decisions of Synod Cloverdale that had a bearing on our relationship with the Dutch Churches.

The place and function of the ICRC in the matter of inter-Church relations was also discussed at some length.

- d. On Tuesday, June 12, 1984, your delegate met once again with the Synod sub-Committee dealing with inter-Church relations. This time the whole afternoon was devoted to a discussion of the Canadian reaction to the Dutch Deputies' report to Synod, and the decisions of Synod Cloverdale.
- e. It should also be mentioned that your delegate became the center of some

controversy due to the machinations of the Dutch press. He was interviewed for an article in *Reformatorsch Dagblad* which appeared on June 9, 1984 and which gave the impression that the sister Churches in Canada and The Netherlands were at loggerheads. Several quotations were taken out of context and others were badly misconstrued. In addition, certain words of Prof. J. Kamphuis were also misrepresented and made to convey a certain message, namely, of "Liberated ecclesiastical imperialism."

As a result, when Synod met again on Tuesday, June 12, 1984, the members were in an uproar.

In order to calm the waters and to set the record straight, your delegate suggested that another interview be held, only this time it was scheduled with *Nederlands Dagblad*. This interview-article appeared in the June 16th issue.

**Conclusions:**

- i Your representative was very well received. He was admitted to all the Sessions of the Synod and to its Committees;
- ii A number of problems and misunderstandings could be dealt with in a positive and constructive manner;
- iii The use of theological professors and members of Committees as advisors to Synod impressed your delegate. It made for faster and more effective decision-making;
- iv The rules for correspondence are not without their difficulties when it comes to applying them to Churches that have a different historical and confessional background, as in the case of the Churches in Ireland and Scotland. Some of these difficulties are imagined and can be removed through mutual consultation and education. Others may require some modifications in the rules before they are removed.

**3. Acts of General Synod Heemse 1984-85**

- a. Synod adopted in a definitive form the revisions of all the Creeds, liturgical forms and prayers. Also adopted, after many years of study, were the 150 Psalms in a new version, and 41 Hymns. A "Church Book" (*Book of Praise*) will be published which will also contain the Church Order.
- b. It was decided to appoint General Deputies for matters related to the work of *deacons*. Their mandate is to give advice to the local Churches and to take the initiative only in emergencies.
- c. Synod decided to send again a letter to the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken* in The Netherlands as an appeal for unity in the faith.
- d. Synod had to deal with appeals regarding the teaching of *Rev. Joh. Hoorn*, minister of the Church at Grootegast. This minister held and publicly promoted the view that the exhortation of Article 28 of the Belgic Confession to join the Church and unite with it, is not addressed to those outside the fellowship of the Church but is an admonition to those who belong to the Church and that they live in accordance with this membership. According to *Rev. Hoorn*, there are no believers apart from those who regularly attend the Assembly of the Church.

The decision of Synod was to reject the teachings of *Rev. Hoorn* as being contrary to Scripture and the Confession. With many Scripture references Synod showed that those teachings do not acknowledge the wide extent of Christ's work and the mercy of God in gathering His Church. It was stated that *Rev. Hoorn* ought to publicly recant his views.

- e. Much attention was paid to the *international relations* in which our Netherlands sister Churches are involved.
  - i The Ecclesiastical Fellowship was continued with the following Churches: *Canadian Reformed Churches, Free Reformed Churches of Australia, Vrije*

*Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, Reformed Churches of Indonesia on East-Sumba/Savu, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin).*

- ii Upon the request of the *Reformed Churches of Indonesia on East-Sumba/Savu* it was decided to send out a second Missionary-lecturer to teach at their Theological School.
- iii The two Missionary-professors, Rev. J.M. Batteau and Dr. N.H. Gootjes, are to continue their work at the Korea Theological College and the Kosin College.
- iv The Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad was charged to continue to investigate what changes have been made in the Confessions and Church Order of the Korean sister Churches, and to gather more information about the *Korean Presbyterian Church (Reformed)*.
- v As it was reported that the *Free Church of Scotland* considers the existing rules for correspondence impractical, further discussions were deemed necessary before the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship could be realized. The provisional relation of Ecclesiastical Contact was continued.
- vi Also with the *Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, Second Presbytery*, the provisional relation of Ecclesiastical Contact was continued. More information on the relation between the *First Presbytery* and the *Second Presbytery* was considered necessary.
- vii Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the *Igreja Presbiteriana Coreana do São Paulo* could not be realized as the congregation had ceased to exist.
- viii The offer of provisional Ecclesiastical Contact extended to the *Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka* and the *Reformed Church of Japan* was maintained. The same relation is still offered to *Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika* ("Dopperkerken"), but then under certain conditions.
- ix Contacts with the following Churches will be continued: The *Orthodox Presbyterian Church* in U.S.A., The *Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)*, *Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, Reformed Churches of New Zealand*, the *Orthodox Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, Church of Christ in the Sudan under the Tiv, Iglesia Reformada Presbiteriana in Spain* and *Greed Evangelical Church*.
- x The Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad had reported that the application of the existing rules for ecclesiastical relations with Churches of Presbyterian signature met with difficulties. The Committee had also proposed that in the relationship "Provisional Ecclesiastical Contact" the word "provisional" be deleted in order to make it a permanent relation, and to add as a new rule "to accept each other's attestations." Synod decided to charge that Committee to study the entire matter of the functioning of the forms of the ecclesiastical relations together with the existing rules, and to allow the Committee meanwhile to apply the existing rules for Ecclesiastical Contact in a flexible manner.
- xi Regarding the *International Conference of Reformed Churches* Synod decided:
  - a. to declare to be in agreement with the Basis, Constitution and Regulations as formulated by the Constituent Assembly;
  - b. to charge their Committee to send delegates to the Conference at Edinburgh 1985, and to present to that Conference a proposal re Mission (see our report on the ICRC).
- xii Concerning the *Canadian Reformed Churches* it was further decided:
  - a. to express the thankfulness of the Netherlands Churches that the vacancy at the Theological College at Hamilton due to the retirement of Rev. G. VanDooren, could be filled;

- b. to inform our Churches that there are no objections that the Form for the Ordination of Missionaries be translated into English for use in the Churches;
  - c. to keep the Canadian Deputies informed on the contact of the Christian Reformed Church with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church;
  - d. to keep the Canadian Deputies informed on the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- f. The *next General Synod* is scheduled for April 22, 1987 and is to be held at Spakenburg-Noord.

#### 4. Evaluation

In accordance with the Rules for Correspondence, the revisions of the Creeds, liturgical forms and prayers as far as they were published in the *Acts*, have been scrutinized by your Committee.

Your Committee declares that it considers those revisions to be in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and in harmony with Reformed Church Polity.

Not available to your Committee were the completed revised text of the Canons of Dort, the Forms for Excommunication and Readmission and some prayers. The scrutiny of those texts will have to wait until the "Church Book" has been received.

#### 5. Conclusion

From the correspondence and the *Acts* of General Synod Heemse 1984-85 the Committee may conclude with thankfulness that de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland desire to be faithful to God's Word and to abide by the Reformed Creeds and Church Order.

#### 6. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to Synod to continue the correspondence with De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland in accordance with the adopted rules.

### VI. DIE VRIJE GEREFORMEERDE KERKE IN SUID-AFRIKA

#### 1. Correspondence

- a. Immediately after Synod Cloverdale 1983 concluded Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika were informed about the decisions dealing with inter-Church relations.
- b. In Feb., 1984 we were informed about the Synod of the DVGKSA which would be held DV from April 5-9. In response we sent them the fraternal greetings of the Canadian Reformed Churches via the mail.
- c. In Feb., 1985 we were informed about the next Synod which would be held in April of 1986. Once again the fraternal greetings were sent. We also received an indication that these Churches look forward to having a delegate from the CRC present at their next Synod. Due to the costs to the Churches of sending delegates to Holland and Scotland, your Committee did not feel free to send someone at this time to South Africa. We are of the opinion that in the future consideration must be given to sending delegates to Australia and South Africa. These Churches have never been visited by any delegate from the CRC. They also are very sensitive to their isolation from the sister Churches. The Lord willing and monies permitting, an opportunity may present itself in the years to come.
- d. As soon as we were informed about the convocation of Synod 1986 at Burlington-West, we informed the DVGKSA and invited them to send their fraternal greetings. We also requested them to send us copies of their *Acts* 1984 Capetown by air mail, since they were never received by us and our report to Synod 1986 had to be prepared. In Nov. of 1985 these *Acts* arrived.
- e. In Jan. of 1986 we received the fraternal greetings of the DVGKSA addressed

to Synod Burlington. Furthermore, the Deputies informed us that DVGKSA has been offered a "fraternal relationship" by the Korean Churches. The South African Deputies add, "we have now accepted their offer, but emphatically not as (a lower level of) official ecclesiastical correspondence, but merely to give a name to the fact that we have much in common and that we regularly keep each other informed about our activities and decisions. As long as we have not resolved the language barrier, which plays a dominant role in the official correspondence relationship, we have no objection to, in this way, giving expression to the fact that we have regular contact with each other. Whether this stand will meet with our coming Synod's approval will be known in a few months time."

They also request us to send them any material that we may have on the Korean Churches relating to amendments to the Confessional Standards, Form of Government, Manual of Discipline and Directory of Worship.

They conclude, "it would appear that our contacts with Korea develop along the same lines and with the same problems. Therefore, it would be very useful if we could come to a common approach and consult and inform each other regularly on further developments in this regard."

## 2. Acts of General Synod Capetown 1984

General Synod of Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika met at Capetown on April 5, 6, 7 and 9, 1984. All three Churches, Capetown, Johannesburg, and Pretoria were legally represented. Two delegates were present from the "Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland." These two delegates, Rev. H.J. de Vries and Br. J.J. Schreuder and also Rev. F.J. van Hulst, the newly "called" minister of the Church at Capetown, were welcomed to the meeting and received the privilege to serve the meeting in an advisory capacity.

Of the decisions made by this Synod, the following ones are worthy of mention because they may be of interest to our Churches:

- a. General Synod 1982 of Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke had condemned "*double correspondence*" (correspondence with more than one "Church denomination" in the same foreign country) as being in conflict with God's Word where it orders in II Timothy 2:19, "Let everyone who names the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity." This consideration had raised some questions in both the Netherlands sister Churches and in Church "denominations" within South Africa.

During the discussion of the report of Deputies for contact with South African Church "denominations" Synod Capetown decided that this consideration of the previous Synod should be read in the following manner: "that one should not resign oneself as Churches to 'double correspondence' because in our judgment one resigns then to a sinful situation of division."

- b. General Synod 1982 had decided to leave it to the freedom of the Churches to request a licence to perform *marriages* for a minister. This Synod also adopted a set of rules for the above. The Church at Capetown came to Synod Capetown 1984 with an appeal against Art. 14, 3 of these rules. This article reads: "When applicant(s) are not yet communicant members of Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke or a corresponding Church, the Consistory shall consult the neighbouring Consistory to determine whether confirmation of that marriage can take place on behalf of the government by a 'confirmer' from Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke. In such a case one must be on guard that the confirmation of the marriage does not become a Church service in disguise."

In the letter of appeal the Consistory of Capetown referred to Art. 70 of the Church Order and stated that the marriages of believers should be confirmed before the congregation and that unbelievers should have their marriages per-

formed at the courthouse. Synod decided to reject Capetown's appeal.

- c. Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Churches reported to Synod Capetown 1983 that they received an invitation to Synod 1983 of the *Canadian Reformed Churches* held at Cloverdale and the agenda for this meeting. They also received a copy of the report of the "Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad" to Synod Cloverdale. In a supplementary report the South African Deputies informed Synod 1984 about the decisions of Synod Cloverdale, among others, Acts, Art. 109. The following paragraph in the Acts Capetown, Art. 23, 2 should be of particular interest to our Churches: "These decisions of Synod Cloverdale, in particular those concerning ecclesiastical relations, meet with general approval by Synod and Synod decides unanimously to continue the correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches."
- d. During the discussion of the section of the report to Synod by the Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Churches, dealing with The Netherlands, Synod deals with a request from the Dutch Deputies for Correspondence to be informed about the grounds on which Synod Johannesburg rejected the form of "temporary ecclesiastical contact." Although Synod Capetown could not speak for Synod Johannesburg, the Synod still obliged by giving a number of reasons why the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke did not take over the form of "temporary ecclesiastical contact."

Another matter of concern that the Deputies brought to Synod was a news report in *Nederlands Dagblad* stating that the Dutch Deputies for Correspondence had proposed to Synod Heemse to scratch the word "temporary" in "temporary ecclesiastical contact" and to accept each others attestations. In the discussion the Dutch advisors gave an explanation of the reasons for deleting the word "temporary." It had to do with the Presbyterian view on the Church and that there is a clear difference between ecclesiastical contact and correspondence. However, Synod Capetown still decided to express its concern about this news report to Synod Heemse, in particular because Synod Arnhem 1981, conditionally decided to offer "temporary ecclesiastical contact" to a third party: "Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika."

Synod decided unanimously to continue the correspondence according to the established rules.

- e. Synod Johannesburg 1982 had given Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Churches the mandate to investigate to what extent the language differences with the *Reformed Churches in East Sumba/Savu* would be an obstacle to the exercise of correspondence according to the established rules and to look for another form of contact that is "Scripturally responsible." In accordance with the recommendation of the Deputies, Synod 1984 decided to inform these Churches that they are true Churches of Jesus Christ, but that at that stage it was not feasible to watch over each other. This will be done in brotherly letters of encouragement and wishes of God's blessings; it would be done more than once and could include the exchange of information, decisions etc. Synod had decided that the rules for correspondence should not be applied flexibly and that no second set of rules should be established.
- f. Synod Johannesburg 1982 had given Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad the following mandate concerning the *Korean Presbyterian Church*:
  1. To continue the attempts for contact with the KPC;
  2. Taking into account the language differences to prepare a "Scripturally responsible form" of exercising ecclesiastical communion with the KPC and
  3. to report to Synod.In their report the Deputies informed Synod that the Korean Presbyterian Church in its General Assembly of Sept. 23-28, 1982 had decided to offer the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika the relationship of "official correspondent relations," they proposed to use the English language in correspondence.

A question from the Deputies whether the KPC can maintain “double correspondence” was answered in the affirmative.

Synod decided not to accept the offer of correspondence from the Korean Presbyterian Church as yet, because it was not clear what type of correspondence was meant with “official correspondent relations”; it must prevent that “double correspondence” results; and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke was not finished as yet with the study of the Westminster Standards.

- g. Synod adopted a set of rules for correspondence with Churches abroad that appears to be a faithful *translation* in Afrikaans of the rules accepted by the Dutch sister Churches at Synod Arnhem 1981.
- h. Synod also decided to send a letter to the *South African government* regarding two pieces of legislation.
  - 1. Regarding the law on mixed marriages, the Synod explained that the prohibition of mixed race marriages cannot be based on the Bible.
  - 2. Regarding the immorality Law that forbids immorality between Whites and Non-whites, Synod stated that the Scriptures state, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” There is no restriction to persons of a different race or nation. Therefore the law should be changed in such a manner that all immorality is forbidden and the mention of races should be eliminated.
- i. Synod 1982 had decided to send two delegates to the *Constituent Assembly of the International Conference of Reformed Churches*. These delegates served Synod 1984 with a lengthy report. The delegates recommended to Synod:
  - 1. to postpone the decision to take part in the ICRC until the Westminster Standards can be accepted as Reformed Confessions and it can be established that all participating Churches are true Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ and as such there is unity of faith with them;
  - 2. to send one or two observers to the first ICRC at Edinburgh;
  - 3. to appoint deputies for the study of the Westminster Standards;
  - 4. to inform the interim secretary of the ICRC of these decisions.

In the discussion the Dutch “advisors” made a strong plea to accept the Westminster Standards as Reformed Confessions and to participate in the ICRC. They pointed out that already in 1936 Synod Amsterdam recognized the Free Church of Scotland as a Corresponding Church and recognized the Westminster Standards as Reformed Confessions.

In spite of this, the Synod adopted the recommendations of the delegates.

### **3. Conclusion**

From the correspondence and the *Acts* received, we may conclude, with gratitude, that Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika desires to be faithful to the Word of God, the Reformed Confessions and the Church Order.

### **4. Recommendation**

On the basis of the above, the Committee recommends to Synod to continue the relationship with Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.

## **VII. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA (KORYU-PA)**

### **1. Correspondence**

- a. A few months after Synod Cloverdale 1983 closed, your Committee wrote to Korea informing them about the decisions of the Synod which related to the PCK. Quite a number of months later it was all returned to us in a battered condition. We then sent a new letter with the relevant enclosures and solicited their response. No reaction was received.

- b. In Sept. of 1985 at the ICRC meeting in Edinburgh the convener of your Committee talked with Prof. Dr. P.S. Oh about the relations between our respective Churches. He was also asked about several matters. Regarding the Form of Government, he informed us that it is basically the same as the common Presbyterian Form of Government as one finds it in North America among the PCA and OPC. As for the changes made to it, he replied that they had to do with the local situation. They were not really changes in substance but more a matter of revision and updating. The basic Presbyterian polity remains in force. With respect to their relationship to the Hap Dong Churches, he stated that no official contact existed between the Koryu-Pa and the Hap Dong. They remain friends, but the Hap Dong are not willing to entertain anything more because of their isolationist viewpoint.

The meeting ended with Prof. Oh being given yet another copy of the decisions of Synod Cloverdale 1983. Emphasis was placed on the fact that a reply would be very much appreciated and was essential if the Committee was to make recommendations to Synod 1986.

At this late date no response has been received.

- c. The Deputies of the Free Reformed Church of Australia requested a copy of our translation of the changes to the Korean Form of Government. This has been sent.

## 2. Additional Information

After having read the Acts of Synod Heemse 1984-85 we would like to pass on to you some additional information gleaned from the remarks made by Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes, professor at the PCK seminary at Pusan.

- a. Regarding the manner in which the PCK approaches inter-Church relations, he stated that it recognizes Churches and Missionary organizations who work together with it. Promoting the Church gathering work of the Lord Jesus Christ is not so much the criterion, as is the degree to which they are involved with others and can work in a profitable way with other Churches and/or organizations.
- b. Prof. Gootjes also informed Synod Heemse that from 1910 to 1970 the PCK had really no Confession. Its adoption of the Westminster Confession only came about in the year 1970. In addition, the translation of the old English of the Westminster Confession into Korean was not without its difficulties. Still today there are errors that, although not major, need to be corrected.
- c. On the point of the Form of Government, Gootjes stated that this is based on the American Form, but has been adapted to take into account the Korean situation.
- d. As to the question whether the Korean Churches really live up to the Confession, he said that one must be careful when one tries to view these Churches through Western eyes. In Korea the people still have to learn to work with the Westminster Confession, which has come to them from abroad. Yet it is a great thing that they have embraced this Confession and try to live out of it.

## 3. Evaluation

Taking into account our mandate from Synod 1983, the developments to date, as well as other information, your Committee comes to the following evaluation:

- a. On the basis of past studies, reports, investigations, discussions with sister Churches in Australia and The Netherlands, studies and comments of the Professors J.M. Batteau and N.H. Gootjes, contacts via the ICRC at Groningen and Edinburgh, there is every reason to declare that the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa or Kosin) is a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. Problems of language and communication continue to be encountered and make entering into and maintaining a correspondence relationship impossible.
- c. The mandate your Committee has received from Synod Cloverdale 1983 is,

because of the above, not workable. To evaluate the complete text of the Form of Government presents numerous problems: How shall we obtain a copy when we receive no response to our requests? How shall we read it when it is in the Korean language? Does the Synod wish to spend a large sum of money in order to have it translated?

To enquire concerning the grounds of many of the changes made is a charge which is made impossible not only by language differences but also by the fact that your Committee is not composed of Koreans who live in Korea and understand all of the factors that went into this revision. Insofar as we were able we evaluated the changes and declared them to be no impediment. Was it really realistic of Synod 1983 thereafter to ask us to search out the grounds? That was not our original mandate.

From our own reports to you, as well as from other sources, we have rather exhaustively studied the relationship between the Koryu-Pa and the Hap Dong. We have never received even a letter from the Hap Dong and all the indications are that these Churches are rather isolationist, as well as splintered. We therefore feel that on this issue the matter is as clear as it will ever be. The Hap Dong poses no problems when it comes to recognizing the Koryu-Pa.

- d. Together with the PCK, the Canadian Reformed Churches are members of the ICRC. This implies a certain indirect recognition. The delegates to Groningen and Edinburgh were never instructed to request that the membership of the PCK be held in abeyance until our investigations were completed.
- e. All of our sister Churches either have correspondence with the PCK, as in the case of Australia and The Netherlands, or else they are considering some form of recognition, as in the case of South Africa. In addition, it should not be overlooked that our Dutch sister Churches have two representatives teaching in Korea on a permanent basis. They have never yet called into question the validity of having a relationship with the PCK.

#### **4. Recommendation**

On the basis of the above, your Committee recommends to you the following course of action:

- a. that the Canadian Reformed Churches recognize the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Koryu-Pa or Kosin) as a true Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;
- b. that the implementation of entering into a formal relationship with the PCK be postponed until such time as communication problems can be resolved.

### **VIII. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES**

#### **1. Correspondence**

- a. On Jan. 13, 1984, your Committee wrote to the provisional secretary of the ICRC and informed him of the decision of the CRC to join the Conference, to move certain amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws, to request that a number of topics be placed on the agenda, and to invite the Conference to hold its 1989 meeting in the greater Vancouver area.
- b. At the same time your Committee also wrote to Prof. Dr. J. Faber and informed him of his appointment to act as advisor to the CRC delegation. He was also invited to address the Conference on the topic, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Reformed Confessions."
- c. During January 1984, a letter was also written to the Rev. J.N. Macleod asking him to address the Conference on the topic, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in the Reformed Confessions."
- d. On March 20, 1985, we informed the provisional secretary that the CRC delegation to the ICRC meeting at Edinburgh would be composed of the Rev. M. van Beveren and J. Visscher, with Prof. Dr. J. Faber as advisor. We also in-

formed him that the Rev. J. Visscher, would introduce the topic, "The Exercise of Inter-Church Relations."

## 2. ICRC — Edinburgh 1985

- a. For an extensive report on the Conference meeting in Edinburgh, you are asked to consult the accompanying appendix. This material has already been printed in *Clarion* and most of the members of Synod will be familiar with it.
- b. We would, however, like to bring to your attention a number of points:
  - i In many respects this first meeting experienced a number of start-up difficulties relating to organizational procedures, constitutional questions, and insufficient information;
  - ii It soon became apparent that the agenda was a rather one-sided character in that most of the topics were filled with considerable theological content. This situation arose because most member Churches did not exercise their respective rights of input. This matter was addressed at the meeting and it is hoped that the next meeting will see a greater variety of topics and levels of presentation;
  - iii The topics suggested by the Canadian Reformed Churches on Church, covenant, and inter-Church relations were received on a positive note. No fundamental disagreements were experienced and a great deal of agreement was evident. When differences did surface they could be traced to differing historical developments and practices. Unfortunately, the matter of inter-Church relations did not receive quite the airing that had been hoped for. Further discussion will be needed in this area. Still, a start has been made and the member Churches now receive a time during which to become acquainted with different perspectives and understandings on this matter. Hopefully, this will augur well for the future;
  - iv The topics dealing with piety in the Psalms and the sacraments stimulated good discussions. The latter made more than a few waves but the waters calmed considerably after further clarifications were made. The speaker on the topic of the sacraments and new life in the Spirit made quite a number of statements, not all of which it seemed were representative of the thinking in the Free Church of Scotland, nor of Scottish Presbyterian theology. While this led to disagreement, it was not so that the end result was in conflict with the Basis of the Conference;
  - v The Conference admitted as new members: the Free Church in South Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. This admission was granted after a sub-Committee of Rev. J.N. Macleod, Prof. H.M. Ohmann, Rev. A. Veldman, and Rev. J. Visscher, scrutinized the documents presented, interviewed the representatives of these Churches at length about the history and faithfulness of their Churches and determined that each of them is striving for unity with Churches which are already members of the Conference;
  - vi The amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws of the ICRC could not be dealt with because the provisions for amending these documents could not be met. They have been placed on the agenda of the 1989 meeting (see more about this matter below);
  - vii A Committee to deal with matters relating to Missions was agreed upon. This Committee has the potential to do very profitable work for the member Churches. Over against those who seem to see this type of Committee as a vehicle for interference in the Missionary dealings of the member Churches, we would once again reiterate that its findings are not binding on the members but are of an advisory character.
  - viii A Committee to deal with the texts of the Ecumenical Creeds was also

appointed. This Committee arose as the result of a duly seconded motion made by the Rev. G. Van Rongen in response to several comments made by Prof. Dr. J. Faber in his paper. As in the previous case, the findings of this Committee will be of an advisory nature;

- ix As regards the next meeting of the Conference, more attention will have to be paid to organizational matters. The topics will need to encompass not only the theological, but also the ethical, pastoral, and missiology concerns of the member Churches.
- c. We would also like to take this opportunity to react to the amendments which the General Synod of 1983 wanted to see made in the Constitution of the ICRC.
  - i Synod 1983 wanted a "stipulation in the Basis of the ICRC that the delegates subscribe only to the standards of the Churches of which they are members." Your Committee is of the opinion that such a stipulation need not be added to the Basis. All the delegations spoken to by your delegates understood perfectly well that their subscription is only to the standards of the delegating member Church. If it would help to clarify certain misunderstandings that some people have, we would advise you to give us a mandate to request that the next meeting insert in its minutes an explanation along the following lines, "Subscription to the Basis means that we find nothing in the Confessions of the member Churches that hinders us from the fullest participation in this Conference in respect to its purpose."
  - ii Synod 1983 also requested us to inform the Conference that membership in the RES should be an impediment to membership in the ICRC. We, on our part, question the need for the Conference to include such a statement in its *constitutional documents*. As it now reads the Constitution under Article IV says, "Those Churches shall be admitted as members which . . . (c) are not members of the World Council of Churches or any other organization whose aims and practices are deemed to be in conflict with the Basis." (emphasis ours)  
Surely such a statement should suffice. If we as Canadian Reformed Churches insist on adding the RES, what is to prevent another member from requesting that the ICCC, the WARC and a host of other ecclesiastical organizations be added? The result would be that the ICRC would be perceived in a purely negative light as an anti-body, or as an organization in reaction. Needless to say, such an image should be avoided.
  - iii By the same token, we also have our difficulties with amending Art. III, 5, of the Purpose to read, "*to encourage each other as member Churches to present a Reformed testimony to the world.*"(amendment italic) In the case of our Churches we know this will never be done, especially taking into account Art. 30 of the Church Order. But why can the Conference, which is not strictly speaking an Ecclesiastical Assembly of one Church, but a meeting together of representatives from faithful Churches around the world, not issue a Reformed testimony?  
To speak specifically, at the Edinburgh meeting Prof. Dr. P.S. Oh of Korea warned about the dangers of a reemerging Shintoism and the serious impact that could have on the Churches in Asia. Should this matter be brought officially to the attention of the ICRC at Vancouver 1989, would it not be appropriate for the Conference to speak out in a clear, Scriptural manner? Again, the fear of some may be that in this way the Conference becomes politicized. We must recognize that danger, and as a member Church, be on our guard against it. On the other hand, we must not let dangers that may never materialize force us into a do-nothing, say-nothing posture when the cause of Christ and His Church is threatened.

- iv As for the other amendments proposed to Art. V dealing with Authority and Art. II of the Regulations, we consider them to be more stylistic than basic and would request you to reexamine whether or not they are really of such importance that they require formal constitutional amendment.

### **3. Vancouver 1989**

- a. At this early date it is not possible to make too many concrete proposals to you with regard to the meeting of the ICRC to be held D.V. in the greater Vancouver area in 1989.
- b. At present your Committee is considering a date in June of that year seeing that seems the most convenient for all parties concerned. The precise location remains a matter of discussion too, although the Church at Cloverdale because of its central place and its proximity to stores, post office, library, and other conveniences, is under serious consideration. Most likely the delegates will be given a choice of lodging: private homes, motels, and university residences. It should be mentioned that many of these details will have to be worked out in conjunction with the Interim Committee.
- c. It has become somewhat of a tradition, after Groningen and Edinburgh, that the hosting Church pays for incidental expenses relating to photocopying, typing, etc. It has also been so that this Church organizes an outing at its expense to some local place of note. The GKN offered the delegates a trip to Kampen and the FCS did the same with a trip to St. Andrews. If you do not object, then as good hosts a trip would be organized to some famous tourist attraction. We would, of course, try to keep expenses to a minimum.
- d. It would also be appropriate if you would appoint a local Church in the Fraser Valley to conduct a Prayer Service before the start of the Conference as has been done in The Netherlands and Scotland.
- e. With respect to the delegation to this Conference, we would propose that once again two members of the Committee for Correspondence be delegated as representatives of the Canadian Reformed Churches and that the Professors J. Faber and C. Van Dam be appointed as advisors. We nominate them in view of the fact that Prof. L. Selles is retiring this year and that Prof. Dr. K. Deddens is scheduled to return to The Netherlands in 1989.
- f. As for the topics to be dealt with, we can as yet not come up with concrete proposals seeing the time factor; however, with your leave we would approach the sister Churches in Australia and The Netherlands, and try with their help to arrive at a set of topics and speakers that would address the Conference on issues that are of mutual interest and concern.

### **4. Recommendations**

On the basis of the above, your Committee recommends the following:

- a. That the constitutional amendments proposed by Synod 1983 be set aside, with the exception of the possible inclusion of a clause to explain our relationship to an understanding of the Basis;
- b. That the Canadian Reformed Church at Cloverdale be requested to organize a Prayer Service before the commencement of the 1989 meeting of the Conference;
- c. That the Professors J. Faber and C. Van Dam be appointed as advisors and that two members of the Committee be designated as delegates;
- d. That the Committee submit to the Conference a list of suitable topics after it has consulted with the sister Churches on this matter;
- e. That the Canadian Reformed Churches assume all reasonable costs that relate to its role as host of the meeting of the Conference.

## **IX. ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS**

### **1. A Change of Names**

- a. You will have noted elsewhere in this report and previous ones that our sister Churches in Australia and The Netherlands have renamed their respective Committees. The GKN have called theirs "The Committee on Relations With Churches Abroad." The FRCA have called theirs "Deputies for Relations With Churches Abroad."
- b. The main reason for this change in both cases has to do with the fact that the word "correspondence" was discovered to be problematic. It failed to convey properly the true nature of the work of these Committees and gave the impression that sister Church relations really only had to do with exchanging a few letters.
- c. The fact that a new, more English-speaking generation has arisen and that more and more contacts are being made in the English-speaking world where the word "correspondence" means very little and does not naturally allude to relations between Churches has also played a role.
- d. In light of the above, and seeing that your Committee has experienced the same kind of misunderstanding, plus the rather mundane fact that it is time to have new letterhead printed, we decided to approach you with a proposal for a name change.
- e. We would ask you to give serious consideration to changing the name of your Committee to "The Committee on Inter-Church Relations." We are of the opinion that this name is both descriptive of our mandate and to the point. It communicates well in the English language and while not a duplication of what our sister Churches have, bears a resemblance to what they have adopted.

### **2. Rules for Ecclesiastical Relations**

- a. Synod 1983 instructed us to take up contact with the sister Churches on the matter of rules for ecclesiastical relationships (cf. Acts 1983, Art. 110). We did so by means of written and verbal communication.
- b. As you can gather from our report, however, the matter remains unresolved. The Committee of the GKN is at the moment busy studying the rules for correspondence and hopes to come to the next Synod with a proposal for revision. The sister Churches in Australia continue to maintain that a temporary relationship can be used if it would further the goal of sister Church status. The sister Churches in South Africa are going to consider a second type of relationship in addition to correspondence, but then on an unofficial level.
- c. Because of these developments your Committee would request that it receive a new mandate to consult with the sister Churches in the hope that a common approach might yet be developed.

### **3. The Free Church of Scotland**

Our final proposal which we address to you has to do with the Free Church of Scotland and initiating contact with it.

#### *a. Background*

As a Committee our acquaintance with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) began with the reports which we received from the deputies of our sister Church in The Netherlands to their Synods. From these reports we gleaned a great deal of information about the FCS: its history, Church life and practices. Still, it has to be admitted that for us this Church remained largely a name, and not much more.

That began to change, however, in 1982 when the Revs. M. van Beveren and J. Visscher were delegated to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at the Constituent Assembly in Groningen, The Netherlands. There we met

for the first time representatives of the FCS in the persons of the Revs. D. Lamont and J.N. Macleod. And then, as usually happens in those situations, you spend the first number of days sizing each other up. You inquire, you probe, you debate and slowly you get to know each other and the Churches that are represented. In the case of the Revs. J.N. Macleod and J. Visscher this whole process intensified even more because they spent day after day hammering out the Constitution and By-Laws, plus the Interim Regulations. As a result, your delegates may report that the first real impressions that we had were favourable in terms of the knowledge and commitment of these men to the Reformed faith.

Two years later, the Rev. Macleod and Visscher were to meet again in Heemse, and there once more opportunities presented themselves for discussion on all kinds of issues relating to their respective Churches. In addition, the groundwork was laid for later asking Rev. Macleod to address, on our behalf, the Conference at Edinburgh on the topic of "the doctrine of the covenant in the Reformed Confessions."

Finally, in September of last year, 1985, the Revs. M. van Beveren and J. Visscher, along with Prof. Dr. J. Faber, had the opportunity to travel to Scotland for the first meeting of the ICRC in Edinburgh and in that context to observe the FCS at close quarters. Their first impressions were sprinkled with culture shock. There is no doubt that the FCS does things differently. This became especially evident in the worship services where the liturgy is very simple, where organs of any kind are not to be found, where a precentor suddenly rises up and leads the congregation in singing, where the Psalter is divided in half — horizontally. But not withstanding all of these "novelties," your delegates made the necessary adjustments, and soon started to form opinions and evaluations.

With respect to the first mark of the true Church, namely, the preaching, they heard sermons delivered in three of the local Free Church pulpits in the Edinburgh area on two consecutive Lord's days. Some of the preaching was topical in approach, some had an experiential aspect to it, some of it was quite analytical, but all of it was Scriptural and Reformed. Homiletical approaches aside, they heard some sound preaching.

On the matter of the sacraments, not a great deal could be observed. They did discover that the FCS has quite a different approach to the celebration of the Lord's Supper in that most congregations celebrate it only twice a year. At the same time most members attend about half a dozen celebrations. You may wonder about that? The answer is that when the Lord's Supper is celebrated it is quite customary for members from neighbouring sister Churches to attend as well. Usually the actual preparations begin already at mid-week and it is customary for two or three preparatory services to be held during that week. In those services the nature of the Supper is extensively dealt with, as well as the matter of admission to the Supper and the consequences of partaking with an unregenerate heart. Finally, on the Lord's Day itself the actual Supper is administered.

On the matter of discipline, your delegation learned that the FCS is known for its strictness to Biblical norms. There was definitely no indication that discipline was either avoided, abhorred or trifled with. On the contrary, the impression was very strong that the FCS defends and promotes the holiness of the Lord in the lives of its Churches and members.

At the same time, it has to be admitted that what was seen by your delegates was only a very small segment of the FCS. It appears that most of the strength of the FCS lies not in the lowlands but in the highlands and the outer islands, especially the Island of Lewis where by far the largest concentration of FCS Churches and members are to be found. In part this explained why the Churches around Edinburgh were not that large.

To summarize this part, your delegates came away with a positive impression as regards the FCS and agreed that it would be of benefit to convey this to you. It was felt that if meaningful bridges are to be built from our Churches to the Presbyterian Churches in the ICRC, the key might well be the FCS.

b. *History*

With regard to the history of the FCS, we may report that it has over the years fought the good fight of the faith with courage and conviction. Its roots are to be found in the Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries so ably led by John Knox and Andrew Melville. Its constant foe has been episcopacy and the unrelenting attempts of the state to gain dominance over the Church. Its authentic voice has been heard in the National Covenant of 1638. Its witness has been borne in the blood of its thousands of martyrs.

We have not the time now to go into many details. We would point out though that the history of the FCS in more recent times centers around the dates of 1843 and 1900. It was in the year 1843 that Dr. T. Chalmers led a great contingent of ministers and members out of the Church of Scotland in reaction to the liberalizing and hierarchical trends that prevailed there. Steadfastly, those who took part in the Disruption of 1843 maintained that they were the true and lawful Church. They insisted on retaining the name "the Church of Scotland" only they added to it the word "Free." As one of their leaders said, "The date of the existence of the present Established Church of Scotland is 1843; the date of *our* existence is 1560."

But history did not stop at 1843. In subsequent decades the FCS experienced many blessings under the Lord's hand. But then it began to change. How come? As G.N.M. Collins, the noted Free Church historian points out in his book *The Heritage of Our Fathers*, "The first and basic cause was, we may believe, the pride of achievement." Another sign of decline was, ironically enough, a zeal for ecclesiastical reunion. So fervent were some for reunion that they compromised on vital principles. Also, the FCS began to change her attitude to the Holy Scripture and the Westminster Confession of Faith. Liberalism in the form of the Higher Critical school made its impact felt. Revivalism under the leadership of Moody and Sankey with its Arminian stance gained a large following. Anti-confessionalism surfaced in its various forms.

All of these developments and others came to a head in the controversy surrounding the Declaratory Act. Properly understood a Declaratory Act, as its name suggests, was an act whereby a General Assembly would declare what it understood to be the true meaning, or meanings, of passages in the Westminster Standards whose importance might be uncertain. These Acts then functioned as explanatory Acts. However, in the movement for union between the FCS and the United Presbyterian Church which took place in the 1890s the Declaratory Act began to be used as a means of introducing doctrinal changes. Modifications were made in the doctrine of the corruption of man's whole nature by the Fall, in the matter of the Civil Magistrate. Allowances were made for "diversity of opinion" when it came to the Confession.

The result was that the changes proposed and made were unacceptable to a minority of the members of the FCS. They voted against the union decided on in May of 1900. Once again a minority found itself claiming to be the true continuation of the Church of Scotland. Only in this instance this claim had enormous repercussions with respect to Church properties. The Free Church remnant maintained that the new United Free Church had abandoned the Establishment Principle, a principle firmly embedded in the constitution of the Free Church. As a result court battles ensued. These culminated in the matter coming before the House of Lords which sided with the minority.

Needless to say the hue and cry from the side of the United Free Church against the verdict of the House of Lords was no minor thing. The FCS was harassed

and its position misrepresented to the extreme. Finally, a Royal Commission was appointed which recommended the appointment of an Executive Commission to divide the funds and properties of the FCS between the rival claimants. Parliament followed the advice of the Commission in part and passed an act dividing the properties and funds, a division in which the FCS did not really receive what was right and equitable.

All in all it was a sad and divisive period in Scottish Church history. The wounds of which took many years to heal. Nevertheless, the faithful remnant in the FCS continued to persevere. And the Lord blessed them. The FCS resumed her Mission work in South Africa, made a new beginning in India and initiated new activity in Peru. Emigration brought her new congregations in Canada and the U.S.A. At the present time there are small congregations still in Michigan (U.S.A.), Prince Edward Island, Toronto and Vancouver.

On the homefront the FCS has shown herself to be neither sectarian nor isolationist. In 1930 she invited the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Free Presbyterian Church to work toward fuller cooperation with a view to possible union. The Free Presbyterian Church declined outright and to this day continues to go its sectarian way. The Reformed Presbyterians responded more positively and attempts to merge continue.

In summary, if this brief historical overview reveals anything, it is that the FCS has remained faithful to her Reformed heritage.

c. *Confessional Standards*

With regards to its confessional standards it should be pointed out that the FCS has the "original" Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as well as the Scottish Confession of Faith, 1560. The word "original" is placed between quotation marks because there is a difference between the Standards of Presbyterian Churches in Scotland and America.

d. *Indirect Contact Via the ICRC*

Although it has been touched on already, we would emphasize that via our membership in the ICRC we do enter into a certain undefined and indirect relationship with the FCS. It should also be noted that several member Churches of the Conference in Australia, Ireland, South Africa are either direct offshoots of the FCS or of her Missionary activity. She thus has a central role in the Conference.

In addition, taking into account our emphasis on the ongoing Church gathering work of the Lord Jesus Christ, on the need to work for unity wherever possible with other true Churches, and the second Purpose of the ICRC "to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the member Churches," we have a responsibility to investigate whether a relationship with the FCS might be possible.

e. *Our Sister Churches and the FCS*

It should also be pointed out that both our sister Churches in Australia and in The Netherlands have taken up contact with the FCS with a view to entering into correspondence.

#### 4. Recommendation

Your Committee would thus recommend the following:

- a. That the name for the Committee be changed to "The Committee for Inter-Church Relations";
- b. That the Committee be charged to continue its discussions with the sister Churches in the hope that a common approach to inter-Church relations may be worked out;

- c. That the Committee be instructed:
- i to take up contact with the Free Church of Scotland with a view to officially recognizing them as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and entering into a sister Church relationship;
  - ii to keep the current sister Churches informed of all progress made in this regard and to work in cooperation with them;
  - iii to submit its recommendations to the next General Synod.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee,  
February 6, 1986  
E.C. Baartman  
A.C. Lengkeek  
M. van Beveren  
J. Visscher (convener)

## APPENDIX IV A

### REPORT OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE TO THE GENERAL SYNOD OF BURLINGTON WEST, 1986

Esteemed brethren,

The Board of Governors of the Theological College is pleased to present to your assembly its report over the academic years 1983/1984 and 1984/1985.

Due to the early date of Synod 1986, it is not possible to cover three academic years. The board may find it necessary to submit to you a supplementary report.

The board is thankful to report that the work could be continued without interruption, although illness among the students during the academic year 1984/1985 gave us reason for concern.

The governors who visited the lectures during the past two years reported on good effort and hard work displayed by staff and students, and that the instruction is done in harmony with the Word of God.

Seven students completed their studies. For the academic year 1985/1986 no new students arrived. The enrollment stands at ten.

After five years as lecturer of Ecclesiology, the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene requested to be released from his obligations towards the College due to his retirement from the active ministry and his intended move to British Columbia. The board is thankful for his faithful labour until the end of the academic year 1984/1985.

The Rev. G. VanDooren, although retired as lecturer in Diaconology in 1982, made himself available to continue as temporary instructor until the end of February 1984.

On September 7, 1984, Dr. K. Deddens could be installed as professor of Diaconology. His mandate was extended when he, after the retirement of Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, was also appointed professor of Ecclesiology.

As Prof. L. Selles, due to his age, is to retire as professor of New Testament at the end of the academic year 1985/1986, the board hopes to be able to submit to your assembly a recommendation for a successor.

The board is thankful to report that after several years of intensive searching, a more suitable building for our College could be purchased.

The acquisition and expansion of the new premises were facilitated by a generous donation of the Women's Savings Action and by a successful building fund drive held among the churches of our federation and our Australian sister churches.

After the Synod of 1983, the Academic Committee as well as the Board of Governors met three times. Numerous were the meetings of the Finance and Property Committee in their efforts to provide the churches with a functional building that can serve the training for the ministry for many years to come. Representatives of the Senate attended the meetings whenever consultation was deemed necessary. The reports of the Finance and Property Committee, approved and adopted by the board, will be submitted to your assembly as an appendix to this report.

We acknowledge the spiritual and financial support which the College continues to receive from the churches. The interest of the church members is also apparent at the annual Convocation/College Evening. The continued efforts of the Women's Savings Action to enrich the library are greatly appreciated.

May the God of all grace again bestow His blessings upon the College and upon all who are involved in the work.

We submit to your assembly the following recommendations for your consideration:

1. To receive and adopt this report and all appendices.
2. To accept the resignation of Mr. Arie Hordyk and Mr. Maas VanGrootheest as governors, and pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of By-law Number

**1 (as amended):**

- a. to appoint Hendrik Buist, Esq., (Burlington) and Caspar G. Heerings, Esq., (Dundas) as governors for a term from the date of their appointment until the third General Synod held after the date of their appointment;
  - b. to reappoint Anton L. VanderHout, Esq., (Hamilton) as governor for a term from the date of his reappointment until the second General Synod held after the date of his reappointment;
  - c. to reappoint Henk Kampen, Esq., (Richmond Hill) and C.M. Loopstra, LL.B., (Toronto) as governors for a term from the date of their reappointment until the next General Synod held after the date of their reappointment;
  - d. to appoint, elect, reappoint or reelect six active ministers as governors (in accordance with Section 3.04[a] of By-law Number 1 [as amended]) to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional Synod area.
3. To direct the Board of Governors to appoint a new professor of New Testament (as per a detailed report to be presented to Synod).
  4. To gratefully acknowledge the faithful labour of Prof. L. Selles as professor of New Testament since the establishing of the College.
  5. To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the auditor for the previous fiscal periods.
  6. To appoint Robinson, Lott & Brohman, Chartered Accountants, as auditors until the next assembly of Synod.
  7. To ratify and confirm the acts of the Board of Governors and officers of the College for the years 1983, 1984, and until the date of this report.

Submitted at Hamilton, Ontario, this 26th day of September, 1985, by the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Rev. J. Mulder, chairman  
Rev. J. Visscher, vice-chairman  
Rev. M. van Beveren, secretary  
Mr. A.J. Hordyk, treasurer  
Rev. J. Geertsema  
Mr. H. Kampen  
Rev. P. Kingma  
Mr. C.M. Loopstra  
Rev. Cl. Stam  
Mr. M. VanGrootheest  
Mr. A.L. VanderHout

**APPENDIX IV B**

**SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS TO THE  
GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES  
HELD AT BURLINGTON WEST, 1986**

March 20, 1986

Esteemed brethren,

In addition to their report of September 26, 1985, the Board of Governors of the Theological College brings the following to your attention.

1. In a letter dated October 25, 1986, the Deputies for the Training for the Ministry of the Word of our Australian sister churches requested the board to give information on the possibilities that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia would become formally involved in the maintenance of our Theological College.

The board answered by letter of January 25, 1986, and now requests your assembly to approve the response sent to the above deputies.

Copies of the letters of October 25, 1985, and January 25, 1986, are enclosed.

2. The Board of Governors requests your assembly to approve the establishing of a two-year program leading to a diploma in theological studies.  
The explanation and details of the program are contained in a report of the Senate to the Board of Governors dated July 5, 1985, of which a copy is enclosed.
3. With regard to missionary training, the Board of Governors agrees with a report of the Faculty dated May 27, 1985, which report was written in response to a request of the Board of Mission of the Church at Hamilton. A copy of this report is also enclosed.
4. For your information we submit to your assembly a copy of By-law No. 4 (relating generally to the Operation and Function of the Senate) and a copy of By-law No. 5 (relating to Academic Regulations).  
These By-laws have been adopted by the Board of Governors.
5. The Board of Governors further informs you that they have requested the Finance and Property Committee to review the salaries of the professors for 1986.

With brotherly regards,  
For the Board of Governors,  
M. van Beveren  
Encl.

July 5, 1985

To the Board of Governors of the  
Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Esteemed brothers:

#### **Diploma Course Theological Studies Report**

In reply to your letter d.d. September 18, 1984, in which you requested to investigate the need and feasibility of establishing a program leading to a degree or diploma in theological studies for B.A. students who do not have nor seek credits in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the Senate submits the following observations and recommendation.

#### **1. Need of such a program**

The Church at Toronto employs in its mission program helpers for the missionaries. The Mission Aid Committee of the Church at Surrey sends out workers in the fields of education, healthcare, and agriculture. The Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund looks for the possibility to commission relief workers to the third world. Although locally no assistants for pastors nor fulltimers for Evangelization have been appointed as yet, the time may come that this will be done. Persons willing to accept an appointment in one of these fields should have a general theological schooling, in addition to the special field for which they have studied.

The need for a program follows from these observations.

#### **2. Possibility**

The Theological College Act under which our College operates does not allow the Senate to confer a degree of theological studies but permits it to issue a diploma for such studies.

#### **3. Admission**

The Senate does not feel that a B.A. degree should be a mandatory requirement for admission for these studies. High school matriculation complimented by a diploma of a trade school or community College seems to be a sufficient standard for admission.

#### 4. Length and course of studies

The Senate has in mind a two-year program covering the core of theological subjects. The study should, wherever possible, be integrated with the regular study program of the theological students and include the following subjects:

Old and New Testament — Basic background material, thorough knowledge of contents of Old and New Testament. Principles and practice of exegesis.

Church History — A survey of church history.

Church Polity — Principles and essential rules of church polity.

Dogmatics and Symbolics — Summary of Reformed doctrine, contents of ecumenical creeds and Three Forms of Unity.

Diaconiology — Basics of catechetics, poimenics, missiology, and didactics.

Electives — Corresponding with the choice of work, to be taught wherever necessary by guest teachers.

#### 5. Recommendation

To decide to recommend General Synod 1986 to establish a two-year program leading to a diploma in theological studies.

Respectfully submitted,  
L. Selles

Hamilton, May 27, 1985

To the Board of Governors of the Theological College  
of the Canadian Reformed Churches at Hamilton, ON

#### **Re: Special Missionary Training**

Esteemed brethren!

In answer to the request of the Board of Mission, Hamilton (March 27, 1985), I write you on behalf of the Faculty that indeed that Faculty is open to the idea of giving a special missionary training. This training could be finished in one year (two semesters).

In this year, 50% must be spent on theology and 50% on non-theology (of the last part 25% on language study and 25% on special courses, for instance at McMaster University, e.g. in "Health and health care in the third world," as a sociology course; "Geography of Latin America;" and a course about native people, dependent on the future missionary field of the candidate).

The theological course can be divided in six parts:

1. Theory of Mission;
2. History of Mission;
3. History of Religions;
4. Missionary Anthropology;
5. A paper on an exegetical topic, related to missiology;
6. A paper and a book report, related to the work on the mission field.

This course links up to the missiology course of the College, but there is no overlapping.

The course has the following special topics:

**ad 1:** 1.1 place and task of missiology;

1.2 definition of mission, Biblical foundation;

1.3 approach and method (e.g. comprehensive approach, dialogue, communication, evangelistic preaching);

1.4 motives and purpose (e.g. threefold purpose according to Voetius, the three "selves", contextualization, church growth).

**ad 2:** 2.1 place, task, and division of history and mission;

- 2.2 general survey of the history of mission work throughout the ages;
- 2.3 summary of the history of the ecumenical movement in connection with mission work (with attention to the development of the W.C.C.).
- ad 3:** 3.1 introduction, division, definition;
- 3.2 survey of the various pseudo-religions of today;
- 3.3 crossroads in contemporary Latin America.
- ad 4:** 4.1 general survey of cultural anthropology;
- 4.2 cultural background of Brazil (or the country concerned).

As far as the number of lectures of this course is concerned, the theological part of this special missionary training will take two hours weekly in both semesters of one year (September until May).

On behalf of the Faculty,  
K. Deddens

#### **APPENDIX IV C**

#### **BY-LAW NUMBER FOUR (4)**

#### **A BY-LAW RELATING GENERALLY TO THE OPERATION AND FUNCTION OF THE SENATE OF THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**

BE IT ENACTED as a by-law of the THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES, as follows:

#### **1. COMPOSITION**

- 1.1 The Senate shall be composed of:
  - a. the Principal;
  - b. the Faculty; and,
  - c. such retired members of the Faculty as may be appointed by the Board of Governors.
- 1.2 Members of the Senate shall remain members until they no longer meet any of the conditions set out in section 1.1, or until suspended.
- 1.3 The Senate shall include the following executives:
  - a. a Chairman who shall be the Principal;
  - b. a Vice-Chairman who shall be the Vice-Principal;
  - c. a Secretary who shall be elected by a simple majority at a meeting of the Senate at the commencement of the academic year; and,
  - d. a Corresponding Secretary who is elected in the same manner as the Secretary.

All officers hold their executive positions for a term of one (1) academic year.

#### **2. MEETINGS**

- 2.1 Meetings of the Senate shall be held at the offices of the College, or if the Senate so determines, at any place elsewhere in Canada.
- 2.2 Meetings of the Senate shall be held from time to time at such time and on such day as the Principal, or any two (2) other members may determine. Notice of the time and place of every meeting so called shall be given in writing by ordinary mail or in person to each member, not less than seven (7) days before the time when the meeting is to be held. No notice of a meeting shall be necessary if all the members of the Senate in office are present or if those absent waive notice of or otherwise consent to such meeting being held.

- 2.3 The Senate shall meet at least once a month during the period from September 1st to May 31st of each academic year.
- 2.4 The Principal, or in his absence, the Vice-Principal, shall be chairman of any meeting of the Senate. If no such officer is present, the Senators present shall choose one of their number to be chairman.
- 2.5 In Addition to the provisions in the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981, all votes at all meetings of the Senate shall be taken by ballot if so demanded by any Senator present, but if no demand be made, the vote shall be taken in the usual way by show of hands.

A declaration by the Chairman that a resolution has been carried and an entry to that effect in the minutes, shall be admissible in evidence as prima facie proof of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour or against such resolution. A resolution will be deemed to be passed when it achieves a simple majority.
- 2.6 A simple majority of the Senators then comprising the Senate, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and questions arising at any meeting of the Senate shall be decided by a majority of the votes and, in the case of an equality of votes, the question shall be deemed to be defeated.

### **3. POWERS OF THE SENATE**

- 3.1 In addition to the powers set out in section 10(3) of the Act, the Senate shall have the following powers:
  - a. To make recommendations to the Board concerning any appointment to the Faculty and regarding the filling of vacancies in the Faculty between Synods;
  - b. To issue diplomas in Theological Studies and diplomas in Missiology;
  - c. To do all things necessary for carrying out the powers and duties as set out in clauses (a) and (b).

### **4. DUTIES OF THE SENATE**

- 4.1 The Senate shall have the following duties:
  - a. To make recommendations to the Board of Governors to establish and terminate programs and courses of study and concerning all matters of an academic nature, particularly in regard to the filling of vacancies in the Faculty between Synods, and concerning any appointment by Synod to the Faculty;
  - b. To determine the curricula of all programs and courses of study, and enforce standards of admission to the College and continued registration therein, and determine the qualifications for graduation; all of the aforesaid to be in consultation with the Academic Committee of the Board of Governors and in accordance with the approval of the Board of Governors;
  - c. To conduct examinations, appoint examiners and decide all matters relating to examinations and the appointment of examiners;
  - d. To grant degrees for certain programs and courses of study approved by the Board of Governors; and,
  - e. To enact by-laws for the conduct of its affairs, provided such by-laws are approved by the Board of Governors and in particular, to enact by-laws with respect to disciplinary action against or dismissal of students at the College.

### **5. STANDARDS OF ADMISSION**

- 5.1 The Senate shall enforce the standards of admission as set out in section 10 of By-law Number 1 of the College (as amended from time to time). For this purpose the Senate shall each year, at the beginning of the academic year, appoint a Registrar who shall act as the representative for Senate in these matters. The Registrar shall report to Senate with respect to all applications for ad-

mission and Senate shall direct the Registrar accordingly. No application for admission shall be refused without the prior approval of Senate.

## **5.2 Appeal**

Any person being refused admission, may appeal such refusal to the Board of Governors, and the Board shall hear such appeal at its next meeting scheduled for any purpose, provided it has at least thirty (30) days' notice of such an appeal and the appeal is made in writing, setting out grounds therefor, together with a concise written argument and documentary proof (if required) in support of the appeal. The decision of the Board will be final.

## **6. DUTIES OF THE PRINCIPAL**

6.1 The Principal of the Senate shall have the following duties:

- a. To execute general supervision of the daily affairs of the College, including without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the administration, the Faculty, and the students;
- b. To act as Chancellor of the College and as Chancellor to confer all degrees;
- c. To convene and act as Chairman of all meetings of the Senate;
- d. To be an *ex officio* advisory member of all Board and Faculty committees, excepting the Executive Committee;
- e. To act as the Academic Dean; and,
- f. To report to the Board with respect to all afore-mentioned duties.

## **7. DUTIES OF THE VICE-PRINCIPAL**

7.1 The Vice-Principal shall have the following duties:

- a. To assist the Principal in his duties;
- b. To act as Acting Principal in the absence of the Principal;
- c. To act as Chairman of the Senate in the absence of the Principal; and,
- d. To act as Acting Chancellor of the College in the absence of the Principal.

## **8. DUTIES OF THE ACADEMIC DEAN**

8.1 The Academic Dean shall have the following duties:

- a. To exercise administrative supervision over the Dean of Students, Registrar and Librarian in order to implement the policies established by the Senate;
- b. To coordinate all departments and academic programs in consultation with the Faculty;
- c. To edit the Handbook of the Theological College and submit it to the Senate for final approval;
- d. To be responsible for the preparation of the Series Lectionum; and,
- e. To report to the Senate with respect to all afore-mentioned duties.

## **9. DUTIES OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS**

9.1 The Dean of Students shall have the following duties:

- a. To promote good relations between the Faculty and student body, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, in particular:
  - i To counsel students;
  - ii To entertain and resolve student complaints;
  - iii To resolve any problems between Faculty and any members of the student body; and,
  - iv To consider the needs of the families of each student in any matter respecting student concerns;

- b. To act as the Registrar; and,
- c. To report to the Senate with respect to all afore-mentioned duties.

**10. DUTIES OF THE REGISTRAR**

10.1 The Registrar shall have the following duties:

- a. To receive applications for admission;
- b. To organize interviews with prospective students in accordance with Section 10.03 of By-law 1 to the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981;
- c. To record marks awarded and to issue the same to the students;
- d. To prepare and issue transcripts;
- e. To contact the Ministry of Colleges and Universities with respect to student loans and grants; and,
- f. To report to the Board with respect to all afore-mentioned duties.

**11. LIBRARY COMMITTEE**

11.1 There shall be a Library Committee composed of the following officers:

- a. The Principal of the Senate;
- b. one (1) member of the Senate appointed by the Senate;
- c. a Librarian appointed by the Senate;
- d. one (1) member of the Women's Savings Action appointed by the Board; and,
- e. one (1) Governor of the College appointed by the Board.

11.2 The Library Committee shall:

- a. after consultation with the Faculty, make recommendations to the Senate as to the requirements and demands of a library needed for the special training offered at the College; and,
- b. explore all possible avenues of expanding and improving the library in any manner whatsoever.

**12. DUTIES OF THE LIBRARIAN**

12.1 The Librarian shall have the following duties:

- a. To operate the Library;
- b. To consult the members of the Faculty, in building the Library's collection and obtaining or purchasing books, periodicals, documents, microfilms or other appropriate materials;
- c. In consultation with the Library Committee, to maintain contact with the Women's Savings Action and to advise it concerning budgetary requirements for the operation of the Library;
- d. To maintain the archives of the Theological College; and,
- e. To report to the Board with respect to the afore-mentioned duties.

Passed at Hamilton, Ontario by the Senate at a meeting held for that purpose on the 23rd day of January, 1986.

J. Faber  
Chairman

L. Selles  
Secretary

Passed by the Board of Governors at a meeting held at Hamilton on the 24th day of January, 1986.

J. Mulder  
Chairman

M. van Beveren  
Secretary

## BY-LAW NUMBER FIVE (5)

### A BY-LAW RELATING TO ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

BE IT ENACTED as a by-law of the THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES, as follows:

#### 1. ACADEMIC YEAR

- 1.1 The academic year of the Theological College shall commence on September 1st of each calendar year and end on August 31st of each calendar year, comprising a full twelve (12) months.
- 1.2 The teaching term commences the Monday after Labour Day each September and is made up of two (2) semesters consisting of three (3) terms:
  - a. Semester I commences on the first day of the teaching term and ends on the 31st day of December, inclusive of appropriate examination periods;
  - b. Semester IIA commences on the 1st day of January and ends on the 14th day of March; and,
  - c. Semester IIB commences on the 15th day of March and ends on the 31st day of May.

#### 2. COURSE WORK

- 2.1 Subject to any restrictions imposed by Synod, the Board of Governors or the Senate, each professor shall determine the format of his respective course.
- 2.2 On the day that a course commences, or so soon as possible thereafter, the students shall be informed of the nature of the term work, the requirements of the course and how the final grade will be determined, including the weight given to the various term projects and examinations, and deadlines of term papers.
- 2.3 Assigned papers in each course are to be written and styled according to a prescribed manual and are to be delivered to the appropriate professor on or before the prescribed deadline.
- 2.4 If a student fails to submit a paper by the prescribed deadline, and in the absence of alternative and confirmed arrangements made with the course professor or an extension granted, the student is deemed to have failed the course and a grade of F will be awarded.

#### 3. EXAMINATIONS

- 3.1 Unless otherwise stipulated by the Senate, each course will include a final examination in addition to any term work or paper prescribed.
- 3.2 The nature of the examination and the length of the examination is in the discretion of the professor, so long as the examination does not exceed three (3) hours.
- 3.3 If a student anticipates being absent from any examination, an explanation or excuse must be presented to the Academic Dean prior to the examination. After a consultation with the professor involved, the Academic Dean shall forthwith advise the student whether he is excused.
- 3.4 If a student is not excused pursuant to section 3.3, failure on the part of the student to write the examination in question shall result in a failing grade and a grade of F shall be assigned.
- 3.5 If a student is excused, a deferred examination is to be written at a time determined in consultation with the Academic Dean.

#### 4. GRADING

- 4.1 The grading system will be as follows:

Percentages	Equivalent to
90 — 100	A +
85 — 89	A

80 — 84	A —	
77 — 79	B +	
73 — 76	B	
70 — 72	B —	
67 — 69	C +	
63 — 66	C	
60 — 62	C —	
57 — 59	D +	
53 — 56	D	
50 — 52	D —	
40 — 49	F	(conditional failure)
0 — 39	F —	(outright failure)

- 4.2 A passing grade for a course is fifty percent (50%). If a student receives a failing grade, he may request the opportunity to write a supplementary examination. It is within the discretion of the professor involved whether to grant a supplementary examination.
- 4.3 If a student fails a supplementary examination, but achieves a grade of F (conditional failure), a further supplementary examination may be written upon application to and approval by the professor involved. If a student fails the second supplementary examination, whether as a conditional failure or outright failure, the student will be subject to dismissal.
- 4.4 A student will be permitted to advance to the following year upon attaining a weighted average of sixty-five percent (65%) or greater.  
 "Weighted Average" means the average that is calculated by multiplying each course mark by the number of units for that course and then dividing the aggregate total by the total number of units.
- 4.5 In no circumstances will a student advance to the following year without achieving at least a passing grade of fifty percent (50%) in all his courses and obtaining a weighted average of sixty-five percent (65%) or greater.
- 4.6 Credits obtained in any course leading to a diploma or a degree should only remain valid for a period of five (5) years unless the diploma or degree is obtained or an extension has been granted by the Senate.

## 5. APPEAL FROM PROFESSOR'S DECISION

- 5.1 Any decision made by a professor or the Academic Dean under sections 2.4, 3.3, 3.5, 4.2, or 4.3 set out above is subject to an appeal to the Senate.
- 5.2 The Senate shall be notified in writing of an appeal pursuant to section 5.1 within ten (10) days from the date of the decision of either the professor or the Academic Dean.
- 5.3 The notice in writing shall contain a brief statement as to the grounds of the appeal.
- 5.4 The professor involved in the decision appeal from, and the Academic Dean, if also involved in the decision appealed from, shall be disqualified from hearing the appeal. The hearing shall be held forthwith.
- 5.5 The Senate shall deliver their decision in writing to the student and shall provide reasons in writing if so requested.
- 5.6 A decision of the Senate under this provision is appealable to the Board of Governors pursuant to section 10.

## 6. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

- 6.1 Where a student:
- fails to achieve a weighted average of sixty-five percent (65%) for any one (1) academic year;

- b. fails to pass all required courses for each academic year as set out in the College's calendar, with appropriate opportunity for supplementary examinations;
- c. uses or possesses an unauthorized aid or aids or obtains unauthorized assistance, or personates another person at any academic examination or term test, or in connection with any form of academic work;
- d. represents in any academic work submitted for credit in or admission to a course or program of study or to fulfill a requirement for any course or degree, any idea or expression of an idea or work of another without giving credit to the source and holding it out as his own;
- e. submits for credit in any course, without the knowledge and approval of the professor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for credit that has been previously obtained or is being sought in another course in the College or elsewhere;
- f. submits for credit in any course, any academic work containing a purported statement of fact or reference to a source which has been concocted;
- g. conducts his life in such a manner that it is incompatible with aspiring to the office of Minister of the Word as described in the Holy Scripture, and the Forms and the Church Order of the Canadian Reformed Churches; and,
- h. has clearly shown that he is not suited for the Ministry of the Word as described in the Holy Scripture, he will be subject to dismissal.

## **7. NOTICE OF PENDING DISMISSAL**

- 7.1 Upon determining that a student has failed to meet one of the conditions or has committed one of the offences under section 6, the Senate shall issue and deliver to the student in person or by registered mail, a written notice of hearing of the pending dismissal, which notice shall include:
- a. a statement of the time, place, and purpose of the hearing;
  - b. that the hearing is being conducted pursuant to these by-laws and section 10(3)(g) of the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981; and,
  - c. that if the student fails to attend the hearing, the hearing will proceed in his absence, and that the student will not be entitled to any further notice in the proceedings.
- 7.2 At least ten (10) days prior to the hearing, the student shall be supplied on request with reasonable information with respect to the alleged offences under section 6.

## **8. HEARINGS**

- 8.1 All hearings shall be open to the public except where the Senate is of the opinion that intimate financial or personal matters or other matters may be disclosed, so that the desirability of avoiding disclosure thereof in the interest of the person affected or in public interest, outweighs the desirability of adhering to the principle that hearings be open to the public, in which case the Senate may hold the hearing in camera.
- 8.2 A party to a hearing is entitled to be represented by counsel or an agent, call and examine witnesses, present arguments and submissions and conduct cross-examinations of witnesses in accordance with the provisions of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act, (Ontario).

## **9. DECISION**

- 9.1 The Senate shall give its final decision in writing and shall give reasons in writing if requested by a party to the hearing.
- 9.2 Notice of the decision together with reasons if any, shall be sent to all the par-

ties who took part in the hearing by registered mail within ten (10) days of the Senate reaching its decision.

#### **10. APPEAL**

- 10.1 Should a student wish to appeal a decision of the Senate, an appeal may be made to the Board of Governors of the College (the "Board").
- 10.2 The student shall have thirty (30) days from the date the decision is received pursuant to section 9.2 to deliver a notice of appeal to the Board stating the grounds of appeal in a concise manner, without argument.
- 10.3 The Board shall set a date for the hearing of the appeal which shall occur not later than twelve (12) months after notice of the appeal is delivered and no earlier than thirty (30) days therefrom.
- 10.4 At least thirty (30) days prior to the hearing of the appeal, the student shall deliver a concise statement elaborating on the grounds of appeal, including a copy of any documents being relied upon, and setting out in an organized fashion the arguments in support of his appeal.
- 10.5 The Board's decision shall be given in writing, and reasons in writing shall be given if requested.
- 10.6 The decision of the Board is final.

#### **11. READMISSION**

- 11.1 Readmission will be considered by the Senate only if there are bona fide grounds which clearly demonstrate that the cause for dismissal has been removed.
- 11.2 Readmission is solely within the discretion of the Senate after consultation with the Board of Governors and any request for readmission shall be submitted no earlier than one (1) year following the date when dismissal has become final.

#### **12. CERTIFICATES**

- 12.1 Students are not eligible to apply to a Classis for a certificate to speak an edifying word to churches of the Canadian Reformed Church confederation until completion of their third year.

#### **13. DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS**

- 13.1 The Master of Divinity degree is granted to those who have successfully completed the four (4) years of study for this degree.
- 13.2 The Diploma of Theological Studies is granted to those who have successfully completed the two (2) years of study for this diploma.
- 13.3 The Diploma of Missiology is granted to those who have successfully completed the one (1) year of study for this diploma.

#### **14. PROCEDURE ON HEARINGS**

- 14.1 Notwithstanding any of the provisions contained herein, all hearings by either the Senate or the Board of Governors shall be conducted in accordance with the Statutory Powers Procedure Act (Ontario).  
Passed at Hamilton, Ontario, by the Senate at a meeting held for that purpose on the 23rd day of January, 1986.

J. Faber  
Chairman

L. Selles  
Secretary

Passed by the Board of Governors at a meeting held at Hamilton on the 24th day of January, 1986.

J. Mulder  
Chairman

M. van Beveren  
Secretary

**APPENDIX IV D**  
**SECOND ANNUAL REPORT**  
**(for the period June 1983 to May 1984)**  
**by the FINANCE AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE to the BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**of the THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE of the CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**  
**Hamilton, Ontario, Canada**  
**August 13, 1984**

The Board of Governors of the  
Theological College of the  
Canadian Reformed Churches

Esteemed Brothers:

The Finance and Property Committee is pleased to submit the Annual Report for the year 1983/1984.

**1. ACTIVITIES GENERALLY**

We are thankful to report that with the cooperation of the churches, Board of Governors, Faculty, and Students, we have been able once again to perform the task assigned to us in brotherly harmony and good health.

At Synod Cloverdale 1983 the brs. J. Medemblik and H. Dantuma were honourably discharged of their duties, and instead the brs. H. Kampen and A.L. VanderHout were appointed. Br. A.J. Hordyk became the treasurer of the Board of Governor and br. A.L. VanderHout became secretary of the committee.

The committee held six meetings during the past year. Almost all members were present at these meetings as well as Prof. Faber and our very capable administrative assistant, Miss Teresa Bouwman. In addition, the Board of Governors and the Faculty held one joint meeting. Details of decisions and actions can be found in the minutes of the meetings, approved copies of which were sent to the Board of Governors. All major decisions and actions, including the implementation thereof, are summarized in this report. Much time was devoted to the purchase and construction of the new building facilities.

The committee delegated br. M. VanGrootheest to attend the tri-annual Membership Meeting of the Foundation for Superannuation at Cloverdale on November 12, 1983.

**2. PHYSICAL PLANT**

**2.1 Maintenance**

During the past year the building has been maintained in good order. No special projects of repairs and/or alterations were undertaken.

Br. G. Meyer continued to perform the necessary janitorial duties as per contract. The students continued to perform minor maintenance duties such as the gardening, lawn mowing, and snow shovelling. They keep their rooms clean and orderly.

**2.2 General Insurance Coverage**

In consultation with our insurance broker the fire and liability insurance coverages were again reviewed and adjustments made where necessary to maintain proper protection at replacement values.

**2.3 Student Accommodation**

Two students occupied the facilities provided for that purpose on the third floor during the past year. For this period \$50 per month was charged and received from each student. The end of the 1984/85 school year will also mark the end of student accommodation on the premises since there are no such facilities available in the new building.

## **2.4 New Facilities**

After due consideration an offer to purchase was given on November 29, 1983, to purchase 21 Rosedene, Hamilton, Ontario. Although the offer was accepted, the purchase could not be completed as another conditional offer existed and the purchaser removed the condition. On February 21, 1984, an offer to purchase was given on a property on Mount Hamilton at 110 West 27th Street. We may thankfully report that this offer was accepted on March 3, 1984, with a closing date of December 21, 1984, for a total of \$275,000. All the churches were properly informed of the purchase as well as sister churches abroad.

Immediately we proceeded with plans to construct an addition for faculty offices and to renovate the building. The services of br. Leonard Lodder of the architectural firm of Wm. R. Jarrett of Guelph, Ontario were obtained in designing the addition and planning the alterations. The estimated cost of the reconstruction, relocation and refurbishing of the building amounts to \$180,000. Combined with the purchase price, the total cost will amount to \$455,000. Thankfully we may report that the Women's Savings Action pledged no less than \$110,000 towards the new building. After the sale of the present building and allowing for accumulated funds available to us, we will still require an amount of \$100,000. It was decided to go to the church membership for a fund drive for this amount, which averages at \$20 per communicant member. This fund drive is to be held before the September 7, 1984, Convocation and Anniversary Meeting.

## **3. FACULTY**

### **3.1 Faculty**

On April 26 Dr. Deddens and his family arrived in Canada with a landed immigrant status. On May 1, 1984, Dr. Deddens became our fourth full time faculty member. Already in November, 1983, the committee met with Dr. Deddens to plan for his relocation. The Deddens family is residing in Burlington, Ontario.

Because of the fact that Dr. Deddens was appointed until June 1990, and at that time will have reached retirement age, an agreement was entered into with the Stichting Emeritering of our Dutch sister churches. By this agreement, the College pays for the yearly contributions. Upon retirement, Dr. Deddens will become the full financial responsibility of the Stichting Emeritering. An agreement to this effect was also entered into with Dr. Deddens. No contributions will be made to the Foundation for Superannuation of the Canadian Reformed Churches on behalf of Dr. Deddens.

### **3.2 Salaries**

The Board decided to increase the salaries for 1984/85 by 5.5%. The Principal's stipend was increased by \$1,000. At the same time it was agreed to conduct a study of the salaries and do a survey of salaries paid to our ministers, taking into consideration the special allowances and other benefits.

## **4. ORGANIZATIONAL**

### **4.1 Administrative Assistant**

The duties and performance of our administrative assistant were reviewed. As a result, her salary was increased by 9.6% for 1984/85.

### **4.2 Caretaker**

The caretaker was remunerated \$180 per month according to contract. This is an increase of \$28 monthly.

## **5. FINANCIAL**

### **5.1 Contributions**

A condensed statement of contributions received till May 1984 and of arrears accrued during that period will appear as an appendix to the Financial Statements

to be sent to the Board of Governors and to others entitled thereto.

We take this opportunity to thank those churches which have cooperated by promptly paying their contributions during 1983/84 and express our hope that all churches will do so in 1984/85.

#### **5.2 Tuition Fees**

The tuition fee of \$200 per semester was charged to and received from each of the students. For students who are not members of one of the churches or a sister church, a fee of \$600 per semester was charged and received. For the upcoming year these fees will remain unchanged.

#### **5.3 Audited Financial Statements**

The audited Financial Statements (including a Balance Sheet, and statements of Designated Equity, General Equity, Revenue and Expenditure, and Expenditure Detail) as approved by the Finance and Property Committee for the year ending May 31, 1983, have been sent directly to the convening church, to the Board of Governors, to the churches, and others entitled thereto. These statements, being self-explanatory, need no further comment. The Financial Statements for 1983/84 will be attached as an appendix to this report. Pursuant to our Act, the Women's Savings Action Fund is included as a designated fund in our Financial Statements. A comprehensive statement for the years 1980 through 1982 was also sent to the convening church.

#### **5.4 Investments**

Again, no changes of significance were made in the investment policy during the year. All interest earned on the General Fund investments was added thereto, while the yield on the Pension Fund was added to that Fund.

#### **5.5 Budget 1984/85**

The Budget contained an increase in expenditures. Considering the fact that the College now employs four full time professors, the contributions will only increase by \$3 per communicant member effective January 1, 1985. Copies of the Budget, including a Schedule of Estimated Income for 1984/85, will be sent to all the churches when approved by the Board of Governors.

### **6. CONCLUSION**

The foregoing represents a report of the major activities of the Committee for the year 1983/84.

We recommend that this report be included in your report sent to all the churches pursuant to Section 7.2 of Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

With brotherly greetings,  
Yours in Christ,

The Finance and Property Committee  
of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Per:  
M. VanGrootheest, Chairman  
A.L. VanderHout, Secretary  
A.J. Hordyk, Treasurer  
H. Kampen  
C.M. Loopstra

**THIRD ANNUAL REPORT (for the period June 1984 to May 1985)  
by the FINANCE AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE to the BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
of the THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE of the CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
August 1, 1985**

The Board of Governors of the  
Theological College of the  
Canadian Reformed Churches

Esteemed Brothers:

The Finance and Property Committee is pleased to submit the Annual Report for the year 1984/85.

**1. ACTIVITIES GENERALLY**

During this past year the committee met eight times under the chairmanship of br. M. VanGrootheest and once together with the full Board of Governors. The functions within your committee are occupied by br. A.J. Hordyk as treasurer and br. A.L. VanderHout as secretary.

In addition, the brs. C.M. Loopstra and H. Kampen serve our committee and have been alternating as acting chairman.

Needless to say that a large amount of work was caused by the purchase of the new premises and planning the addition and renovations. With gratitude we state that your committee did its work in brotherly harmony and we were blessed with good health. At all meetings Dr. J. Faber attended as representative from the faculty. Our administrative assistant recorded all decisions and in a very capable way prepared the minutes and agenda for all meetings. Miss Bouwman's salary will be increased by 3.7% effective June 1, 1985. D.V. August 1985 she will become the wife of br. J. Jongsma of Smithville, Ontario. Mrs. Jongsma will continue to serve as administrative assistant at the College. She has been granted a four week holiday during the month of August by way of exception to the rule.

**2. PHYSICAL PLANT**

**2.1 Building**

The Queen Street property was sold for \$165,000 cash in November, 1984, with a closing date of June 1, 1985. This transaction was completed on the closing date. Prior to the sale we offered the building for sale to the board of the Teacher's College. However, it was not suitable for their purposes.

On December 21, 1984, possession was taken of 110 West 27th Street.

This purchase was well advertised in the churches by means of a brochure and an accompanying letter which was sent to all churches to be distributed among the membership.

Construction of the addition and renovations commenced in January 1985 and were scheduled for completion on June 15, 1985, at a total cost of \$193,705.37. During construction it was discovered that the roof of the new library needed to be replaced and the library walls insulated. The additional cost is included in the afore-mentioned sum.

We express our appreciation to the contractor, M-G Construction Ltd. of Fergus, Ontario, his employees and subcontractors, for the splendid cooperation which we had during construction. As well our br. L. Lodder, architect, has served us with expert advice.

The faculty and students have not been inconvenienced too seriously by the relocation during construction and renovations, as the official academic year had ended. The move to the new premises was arranged with students and other members of our churches rather than by professional movers. Needless to say that the saving was very significant.

In as far as this is permitted our church membership may be proud of the new facilities which will, no doubt, serve the well-being of the training of the ministry with a much more orderly library and better study facilities. An "open house" is planned for September 27, 1985, and will be advertised in *Clarion* and the local church bulletins.

During the period of time that the College was owner of both properties, proper insurance coverage was carried and the necessary changes made for construction and occupancy of the new premises.

Detailed reports were received from our solicitors on the purchase and sale of properties and mortgage arrangements.

## **2.2 Student Accommodation**

While at Queen Street South we provided accommodation for one student to live on the third floor for which he paid \$50 per month. The new facilities do not have accommodation available.

## **2.3 Maintenance**

Regular weekly maintenance of the premises at Queen Street was carried out by br. G. Meyer at \$180 per month. For the new premises a complete review of the janitorial services is being undertaken.

## **2.4 Fund Drive**

A building fund drive was conducted in the Canadian and American Reformed Churches and somewhat advertised abroad. Thus far the net results are \$79,773.28. Indeed we are very thankful for the generous support we have received from the church membership. We make special mention of the Australian sister churches which contributed \$6,335.45. A rather detailed account of donations was published in *Clarion* in May, 1985. Our fund drive caused some reaction in the churches and we received a few suggestions to finance the addition and renovations by means of a mortgage. These comments were considered and the churches in question received an answer in appreciation of their comments.

Where required and necessary an explanation of facts was provided.

From the Women's Savings Action we received an extra \$15,000, to a total amount of \$125,000 towards the new building. Indeed we are very thankful for their generosity and intend to recognize this by placing a plaque in the new building.

## **3. STAFF**

Also as a result of a salary study among Canadian Reformed ministers, it was decided to increase the salaries of the professors effective January 1, 1985. Future salary changes will be effective on the first of each year.

Effective August 31, 1985, our lecturer, the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, will have retired. Because of his part-time position, no arrangements for retirement benefits are necessary.

Mrs. M.K. Marren will be employed during the summer months to assist in organizing and, where necessary, reorganizing of the library, also with a view to computerization in the future.

## **4. FINANCIAL**

### **4.1 Assessments**

An unaudited statement of assessments received till May 31, 1985, is attached. Regretfully, you will note that this statement shows a considerable amount of arrears, especially by one of the churches. We are very grateful for the good cooperation and prompt payment from almost all the churches and have received

some assurance from the one church which is quite far behind that they expect to be able to pay at some future date.

#### **4.2 Financing of New Facilities**

To finance the purchase and construction of an addition and renovations, an interim agreement was entered with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. As well, our mortgage with Prof. C. VanDam will be fully redeemed on or before December 1, 1985. It is expected that an amount of approximately \$60,000 will remain outstanding upon completion of the construction. This will be paid over a period of fifteen years.

#### **4.3 Revenue Canada**

The College as an organization remains in good standing with Revenue Canada as a non-profit charitable organization under the Income Tax Act.

#### **4.4 Audited Financial Statements**

The audited financial statements for the year ending May 31, 1985, will be sent to the Board of Governors when completed. Once they have been approved the statement will be distributed to the churches and others entitled thereto.

#### **4.5 Tuition Fees**

Also as a result of comments received during the fund drive the tuition fee structure is under review. Some churches have indicated that a much higher fee should be charged, especially for non-Canadian Reformed students.

#### **4.6 Budget 1985/86**

Thus far we have dealt with a proposed budget. Once it has been finalized it will be forwarded to you for final approval before being distributed to the churches. It is expected that no increase per communicant member will be necessary.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The foregoing represents a report of the major activities of the committee for the year 1984/85.

We recommend that this report be included in your report sent to all churches pursuant to Section 7.2 of the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

With brotherly greetings,

Yours in Christ

The Finance and Property Committee of  
the Board of Governors of the  
Theological College of the Canadian  
Reformed Churches

Per:

M. VanGrootheest, Chairman

A.L. VanderHout, Secretary

A.J. Hordyk, Treasurer

H. Kampen

C.M. Loopstra

**APPENDIX IV E**

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEARS  
ENDED MAY 31, 1984 AND MAY 31, 1985**

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AUDITOR'S REPORT

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STATEMENT 2 — Balance Sheet (1985)

STATEMENT 3 — Statement of Equity (1984)

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STATEMENT 6 — Statement of Revenue and Expenditures (1985)

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STATEMENT 8 — Expenditure Detail (1985)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Governors  
Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches  
Hamilton, Ontario

We have examined the balance sheet of Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches as at May 31, 1985 and the statements of equity and revenue and expenditure for the year then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and accordingly included such tests and procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances, except as referred to in the following paragraph.

Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches derives part of its income from gifts and collections which are not susceptible to complete audit examination. Accordingly, our verification of this revenue was limited to accounting for the amounts recorded in the books. The College does not record depreciation for the buildings, driveway, or library books as disclosed in note 1.

In our opinion, except for the effect of the adjustments, if any, which we might have determined to be necessary had we been able to verify income referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly the financial position of the College as at May 31, 1985 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Robinson, Lott and Brohman  
Chartered Accountants  
Guelph, Ontario  
July 4, 1985

## STATEMENT 1

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
as at MAY 31, 1984

	<b>ASSETS</b>
<b>Current</b>	<b>1984</b>
Petty Cash	\$ 100
Cash in bank — current accounts	12,848
Cash in bank — savings accounts	21,919
Allotments receivable	7,920
Balance re sale of Queen Street Property	0
Prepaid expenses	3,043
Deposit on building and plans for renovations	<u>31,421</u>
	<b>\$ 77,251</b>
<b>Investments (at cost)</b>	
Term deposit 8-1/4% due July 27, 1984	\$ 8,896
Loan receivable 8% interest only payable monthly secured by real estate mortgage	65,000
Loan receivable 8-1/2% interest only payable monthly secured by real estate mortgage due Dec. 1, 1985	0
Loan receivable — no interest, payable \$60 monthly	1,280
Savings account and guaranteed investment certificates re Women's Savings Action — note 2	143,527
Accrued interest — term deposit	<u>127</u>
	<b>\$ 218,830</b>
<b>Fixed (at cost)</b>	
Equipment, furniture and fixtures	25,631
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>16,672</u>
	8,959
Real estate	77,157
Library books	<u>88,924</u>
	<b>\$ 175,040</b>
	<b>\$ 471,121</b>

**LIABILITIES**

**Current**

Bank loan payable	\$	0
Accounts payable — relocation of professor		1,000
Accounts payable — renovations to new building		0
Employees' payroll deductions payable		2,852
Accommodations paid in advance		100
Allotments received in advance		<u>12,732</u>
	\$	<u>16,684</u>

**EQUITY**

**Designated**

Future building	\$	114,240
Pension fund		35,141
Salary fund		15,100
Women's Savings Action — note 3		<u>143,527</u>

**GENERAL**

	\$	308,008
		<u>146,429</u>
	\$	454,437
	\$	<u>471,121</u>

## STATEMENT 2

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
as at MAY 31, 1985

<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current</b>	<b>1985</b>
Petty Cash	\$ 100
Cash in bank — current accounts	4,299
Cash in bank — savings accounts	0
Allotments receivable	27,487
Balance re sale of Queen Street Property	154,727
Prepaid expenses	3,009
Deposit on building and plans for renovations	0
	<u>\$ 189,622</u>
<b>Investments (at cost)</b>	
Term deposit 8-1/4% due July 27, 1984	\$ 0
Loan receivable 8% interest only payable monthly secured by real estate mortgage	0
Loan receivable 8-1/2% interest only payable monthly secured by real estate mortgage due Dec. 1, 1985	17,191
Loan receivable — no interest, payable \$60 monthly	560
Savings account and guaranteed investment certificates re Women's Savings Action — note 2	69,834
Accrued interest — term deposit	0
	<u>\$ 87,585</u>
<b>Fixed (at cost)</b>	
Equipment, furniture and fixtures	38,323
Less accumulated depreciation	19,430
	<u>18,893</u>
Real estate	459,837
Library books	98,240
	<u>\$ 576,970</u>
	<u>\$ 854,177</u>

**LIABILITIES**

**Current**

Bank loan payable	\$ 145,000
Accounts payable — relocation of professor	0
Accounts payable — renovations to new building	58,352
Employees' payroll deductions payable	3,353
Accommodations paid in advance	0
Allotments received in advance	<u>7,795</u>
	<u>\$ 214,500</u>

**EQUITY**

**Designated**

Future building	\$ 0
Pension fund	38,567
Salary fund	0
Women's Savings Action — note 3	<u>69,834</u>

**GENERAL**

	\$ 108,401
	<u>531,276</u>
	<u>\$ 639,677</u>
	<u>\$ 854,177</u>

## STATEMENT 3

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**  
**STATEMENT OF EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1984**  
**DESIGNATED EQUITY**

<b>Library</b>	<b>1984</b>
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 0
Add — Appropriation from budget	<u>2,500</u>
	2,500
Deduct — Transfer to general equity towards cost of books	<u>2,500</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 0</u>
<b>Future Building</b>	
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 89,240
Add — Appropriation from budget	25,000
— Gain on sale of Queen Street property — note 4	0
— Transfer from Women's Savings Action	0
— Donations	0
Deduct — Cost of drive for donations	0
— Transfer to general equity towards cost of new building	<u>0</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 114,240</u>
<b>Pension Fund</b>	
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 32,073
Add — Appropriation from budget	500
— Interest allocation	<u>2,568</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 35,141</u>
<b>Salary Fund</b>	
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 17,600
Deduct — Transfer re unbudgeted salary to new professor	<u>2,500</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 15,100</u>
<b>Women's Savings Action</b>	
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 115,123
Add — Contributions received	7,463
— Interest earned	23,214
— U.S. exchange	<u>38</u>
	145,839
Deduct — Gifts to College	( 2,282)
— Administration	( 30)
— Transfer to future building fund	<u>0</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 143,527</u>
<b>GENERAL EQUITY</b>	
Balance — at beginning of year	\$ 153,387
Add — Transfer from library fund	2,500
— Transfer from future building fund	0
— Excess of revenue over expenditure	<u>0</u>
	155,887
Deduct — Deficiency of revenue over expenditure	<u>9,458</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 146,429</u>

## STATEMENT 4

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**  
**STATEMENT OF EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1985**  
**DESIGNATED EQUITY**

	1985
<b>Library</b>	
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 0
Add — Appropriation from budget	<u>2,500</u>
	2,500
Deduct — Transfer to general equity towards cost of books	<u>2,500</u>
Balance at end of year	<u><u>\$ 0</u></u>
<b>Future Building</b>	
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 114,240
Add — Appropriation from budget	18,000
— Gain on sale of Queen Street property — note 4	77,570
— Transfer from Women's Savings Action	93,000
— Donations	<u>75,181</u>
Deduct — Cost of drive for donations	( 1,378)
— Transfer to general equity towards cost of new building	<u>( 376,613)</u>
Balance at end of year	<u><u>\$ 0</u></u>
<b>Pension Fund</b>	
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 35,141
Add — Appropriation from budget	500
— Interest allocation	<u>2,926</u>
Balance at end of year	<u><u>\$ 38,567</u></u>
<b>Salary Fund</b>	
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 15,100
Deduct — Transfer re unbudgeted salary to new professor	<u>15,100</u>
Balance at end of year	<u><u>\$ 0</u></u>
<b>Women's Savings Action</b>	
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 143,527
Add — Contributions received	7,419
— Interest earned	13,000
— U.S. exchange	<u>34</u>
	163,980
Deduct — Gifts to College	( 1,122)
— Administration	( 24)
— Transfer to future building fund	<u>( 93,000)</u>
Balance at end of year	<u><u>\$ 69,834</u></u>
<b>GENERAL EQUITY</b>	
Balance — at beginning of year	\$ 146,429
Add — Transfer from library fund	2,500
— Transfer from future building fund	376,613
— Excess of revenue over expenditure	<u>5,734</u>
	531,276
Deduct — Deficiency of revenue over expenditure	<u>0</u>
Balance — at end of year	<u><u>\$ 531,276</u></u>

## STATEMENT 5

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**  
**STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1984**

	1985	1984	
	Budget	Budget	Actual
<b>Revenue</b>			
Allotments from churches	\$ 188,156	\$ 162,100	\$ 162,554
Gifts and collections	9,000	8,000	10,955
Students fees	5,200	6,800	6,500
Student Accommodation	1,050	1,000	1,000
Investment income	6,594	10,000	6,452
	<u>\$ 210,000</u>	<u>\$ 187,900</u>	<u>\$ 187,361</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Faculty	\$ 143,136	\$ 115,774	\$ 114,858
Property	11,160	13,010	13,087
Administration	24,230	22,785	23,273
Library	6,000	6,200	3,472
Appropriations	21,000	28,000	28,000
Unforeseen	4,474	2,131	14,129
	<u>\$ 210,000</u>	<u>\$ 187,900</u>	<u>\$ 196,819</u>
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue</b> over Expenditure	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>(\$ 9,458)</u>

## STATEMENT 6

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**  
**STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1985**

	1986	1985	
	Budget	Budget	Actual
<b>Revenue</b>			
Allotments from churches	\$ 214,500	\$ 188,156	\$ 188,507
Gifts and collections	9,000	9,000	13,410
Students fees	12,800	5,200	7,940
Student Accommodation	0	1,050	700
Investment income	700	6,594	4,452
	<u>\$ 237,000</u>	<u>\$ 210,000</u>	<u>\$ 215,009</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Faculty	\$ 161,432	\$ 143,136	\$ 143,906
Property	34,000	11,160	12,234
Administration	25,045	24,230	22,839
Library	6,000	6,000	4,763
Appropriations	6,000	21,000	21,000
Unforeseen	4,523	4,474	4,533
	<u>\$ 237,000</u>	<u>\$ 210,000</u>	<u>\$ 209,275</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expenditure	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 5,734</u>

## STATEMENT 7

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**  
**EXPENDITURE DETAIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1984**

	1985 Budget	1984 Budget	1984 Actual
<b>Faculty</b>			
Salaries — professors	\$ 118,016	\$ 91,500	\$ 91,500
Salaries — lecturers	5,000	10,000	10,000
Superannuation	11,110	7,344	7,604
Social insurances	3,150	1,890	2,095
Other personnel insurances	2,860	2,040	2,147
Travelling — faculty	3,000	3,000	1,512
	<u>\$ 143,136</u>	<u>\$ 115,774</u>	<u>\$ 114,858</u>
<b>Property</b>			
Property improvements and maintenance	\$ 2,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,327
Caretaking	2,300	2,000	2,020
Hydro and water	800	750	873
Fuel	3,500	3,000	2,894
Insurance	2,500	2,200	2,444
Local improvements	60	60	0
Depreciation of equipment	0	0	1,529
Building improvements	0	0	0
Interest and principal on loan	0	0	0
	<u>\$ 11,160</u>	<u>\$ 13,010</u>	<u>\$ 13,087</u>
<b>Administration</b>			
Travelling and meetings — Board of Governors & committees	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,100	\$ 4,423
Administration and office supplies	1,500	1,800	1,578
Salary — administrator	15,000	13,685	13,685
Social insurances — administrator	740	690	653
Other personnel insurances — administrator	440	410	416
Legal and audit	850	600	850
Telephone	1,200	1,000	1,247
General	500	500	421
	<u>\$ 24,230</u>	<u>\$ 22,785</u>	<u>\$ 23,273</u>
<b>Library</b>			
Supplies	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 979
Wages — Librarian including social insurances	5,000	5,200	2,493
	<u>\$ 6,000</u>	<u>\$ 6,200</u>	<u>\$ 3,472</u>
<b>Appropriations</b>			
Pension fund	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
Building fund	18,000	25,000	25,000
Library fund	2,500	2,500	2,500
	<u>\$ 21,000</u>	<u>\$ 28,000</u>	<u>\$ 28,000</u>

**Unforeseen**

Faculty appointment — relocation of Dr. Deddens	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 14,129
Utilities and insurance — new property	4,000	0	0
Moving to new property	474	2,131	0
Unforeseen	0	0	0
	<u>\$ 4,474</u>	<u>\$ 2,131</u>	<u>\$ 14,129</u>
	<u>\$ 210,000</u>	<u>\$ 187,900</u>	<u>\$ 196,819</u>

## STATEMENT 8

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES  
EXPENDITURE DETAIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1985**

	1986 Budget	1985 Budget	1985 Actual
<b>Faculty</b>			
Salaries — professors	\$ 140,597	\$ 118,016	\$ 117,917
Salaries — lecturers	1,250	5,000	5,000
Superannuation	11,974	11,110	11,446
Social insurances	3,500	3,150	3,673
Other personnel insurances	3,111	2,860	3,237
Travelling — faculty	1,000	3,000	2,633
	<u>\$ 161,432</u>	<u>\$ 143,136</u>	<u>\$ 143,907</u>
<b>Property</b>			
Property improvements and maintenance	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,130
Caretaking	5,000	2,300	2,340
Hydro and water	1,500	800	1,024
Fuel	8,000	3,500	2,493
Insurance	3,500	2,500	2,489
Local improvements	0	60	0
Depreciation of equipment	0	0	2,758
Building improvements	5,000	0	0
Interest and principal on loan	8,500	0	0
	<u>\$ 34,000</u>	<u>\$ 11,160</u>	<u>\$ 12,234</u>
<b>Administration</b>			
Travelling and meetings — Board of Governors & committees	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,472
Administration and office supplies	1,500	1,500	1,110
Salary — administrator	15,555	15,000	15,000
Social insurances — administrator	740	740	580
Other personnel insurances — administrator	350	440	447
Legal and audit	900	850	630
Telephone	1,500	1,200	1,165
General	500	500	435
	<u>\$ 25,045</u>	<u>\$ 24,230</u>	<u>\$ 22,839</u>
<b>Library</b>			
Supplies	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 942
Wages — Librarian including social insurances	5,000	5,000	3,821
	<u>\$ 6,000</u>	<u>\$ 6,000</u>	<u>\$ 4,763</u>
<b>Appropriations</b>			
Pension fund	\$ 3,500	\$ 500	\$ 500
Building fund	0	18,000	18,000
Library fund	2,500	2,500	2,500
	<u>\$ 6,000</u>	<u>\$ 21,000</u>	<u>\$ 21,000</u>

**Unforeseen**

Faculty appointment — relocation of Dr. Deddens	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Utilities and insurance — new property	0	4,000	4,058
Moving to new property	0	474	475
Unforeseen	<u>4,523</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>\$ 4,523</u>	<u>\$ 4,474</u>	<u>\$ 4,533</u>
	<u>\$ 237,000</u>	<u>\$ 210,000</u>	<u>\$ 209,275</u>

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1984**

**1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**(a) Fixed Assets**

The College does not record depreciation on the building, driveway and library books as these assets are considered not to physically depreciate.

Depreciation is recorded on the equipment, furniture and fixtures on the straight line basis over their estimated life expectancy of ten years.

**2. INVESTMENTS — WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION**

The transfer of funds held by Women's Savings Action for the benefit of the College was completed during the year. All disbursement of funds from these investments are determined by a committee made up of representative of Women's Savings Action and the College. Investment income was recorded by Women's Savings Action upon the cash basis prior to the transfer of funds. In order to conform to the policy of the College the investment income for 1984 has been adjusted for interest accrued to May 31, 1984 in the amount of \$7,573. The 1983 comparative figures have been taken from the records of Women's Savings Action. The breakdown of the funds held is as follows:

	<b>1984</b>	<b>1983</b>
Cash in bank	\$ 5,054	\$ 5,123
Guaranteed investment certificates	130,900	110,000
Accrued interest	<u>7,573</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>\$ 143,527</u>	<u>\$ 115,123</u>

**3. INCORPORATION**

The College is incorporated by a special act of the Ontario legislature.

**4. COMPARATIVE FIGURES**

Certain comparative figures have been restated to conform with financial statement presentation adapted for the current year.

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1985**

**1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**(a) Fixed Assets**

The College does not record depreciation on the building and library books as these assets are considered not to physically depreciate.

Depreciation is recorded on the equipment, furniture and fixtures on the straight line basis over their estimated life expectancy of ten years.

**2. INVESTMENTS — WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION**

The breakdown of the funds held is as follows:

	<b>1985</b>	<b>1984</b>
Cash in bank	\$ 5,928	\$ 5,054
Guaranteed investment certificates	62,000	130,900
Accrued interest	<u>1,906</u>	<u>7,573</u>
	<u>\$ 69,834</u>	<u>\$ 143,527</u>

**3. DESIGNATED EQUITY — WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION**

A further \$32,000 has been allocated to the building fund and will be transferred as guaranteed investment certificates mature.

**4. SALE OF QUEEN STREET PROPERTY**

The particulars of the sale are as follows:

Selling price		\$ 165,000
Less — Original cost of property	\$ 77,157	
— Selling costs	<u>10,273</u>	<u>87,430</u>
Gain on sale		<u>\$ 77,570</u>

The gain on the sale of this property was added to the building fund and was applied against the acquisition cost of new premises.

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