

ACTS

General Synod 1977

OF THE
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
COALDALE, ALBERTA



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THE MEMBERS OF GENERAL SYNOD COALDALE 1977

Front row: Rev. J. Geertsema (2nd clerk), Rev. M. van Beveren (assessor), Rev. W.W.J. VanOene (chairman), Rev. J. Mulder (1st clerk).
Middle row: Elder J.G. Feenstra, Elder C. Walinga, Rev. W. Huizinga, Elder H.A. Berends, Elder C. VanSeters, Rev. S. DeBruin, Rev. C. Olij.
Back row: Elder B.J. Harsevoort, Elder W.H. Bredenhof, Elder J. DeVos, Rev. D. DeJong, Rev. J. Visscher (advisor), Elder J. Bol.

ACTS

GENERAL SYNOD of the CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES held at COALDALE, ALBERTA

MORNING SESSION — TUESDAY NOVEMBER 8, 1977

ARTICLE 1

Opening

On behalf of the convening Church at Coaldale, Alberta the Rev. J. Visscher calls the assembly to order. He requests to sing from the Book of Praise Psalm 84:1, 6, reads Ephesians Chapter 1, and leads in prayer.

He addresses the delegates as follows:

“Esteemed Brothers,

On behalf of the convening Church, the Church at Coaldale, I would like to welcome all of you to Southern Alberta, to the first Canadian Reformed Church instituted in this land 27½ years ago, and to the General Synod 1977.

We are grateful that you have all arrived safely and we pray that the Lord will bless the work that you have been called upon to do here. You will have to deal with a number of matters, very few of which are new, but all of which are relevant to the life of the Churches. Matters pertaining to the Theological College, to relations with other Churches, to the Book of Praise, to the Heidelberg Catechism, to Bible Translations, to the revision of the Church Order, to women's voting rights and so on, all of these subjects will have to be handled in a wise, discerning and up-building way.

And that is not an easy task. Therefore we pray, brothers, and the entire fellowship of the Canadian Reformed Churches prays, that the Lord will give you, to use the words of the apostle Paul, ‘a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him’ (verse 17). May you labour in the awareness that you are here to serve only one Person, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. It was He whom God the Father raised from the dead and placed at ‘his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come, and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all!’ It is this Lord and Head who has made you office-bearers in His Church and delegates to this Synod.

Be faithful to Him.

Be dependent on His Spirit.

Be mindful of His Word.

Do everything to ‘the praise of His glory.’

The Lord bless you and make you a blessing to the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches and so to the Church of all ages.”

ARTICLE 2

Credentials

After Hymn 1:1 and 2 has been sung the Chairman pro tempore calls upon Elder J. DeVos and Rev. J. Geertsema to examine the credentials.

They report that the following delegates are present with proper credentials:

From the Regional Synod, East, held September 21, 1977:

Ministers: J. Geertsema, W. Huizinga, C. Olij, W.W.J. VanOene;

Elders: J. Bol, J.G. Feenstra, B.J. Harsevoort, C. Walinga.

From the Regional Synod, West, held May 11, 1977:

Ministers: S. DeBruin, D. DeJong, J. Mulder, M. van Beveren;

Elders: H.A. Berends, W.H. Bredenhof, J. DeVos, C. Van Seters.

Since both Regional Synods are duly represented by the first delegates, General Synod can be constituted.

ARTICLE 3

Moderamen and Constitution

The following officers are elected:
Chairman: Rev. W.W.J. VanOene
First Clerk: Rev. J. Mulder
Second Clerk: Rev. J. Geertsema
Assessor: Rev. M. van Beveren
Synod is declared constituted.

ARTICLE 4

Time-schedule; Procedure

The Chairman addresses Synod, thanking the brethren for the confidence placed in the officers. He also expresses the gratitude of Synod for the way the convening Church of Coaldale has prepared this Synod: it was evident that Coaldale fulfilled its task with joy and dedication!

Synod is adjourned to give the moderamen the opportunity to arrange a time-schedule and to set rules of procedure.

After re-opening the following arrangements are adopted:

- a. Morning sessions 9:00 - 12:30, Monday 10:00 - 12:30;
Afternoon sessions 2:00 - 5:00;
Evening sessions 7:00 - 9:30;
Saturday session(s) 9:00 - 12:30.
This schedule applies also to meetings of Advisory Committees.
If possible, the evening sessions will be used for plenary sessions.
- b. Mail received after 12:00 noon, Monday, November 14, 1977, will not be dealt with by Synod.
- c. The Press Release will not be published until after Synod has adjourned.
- d. Motions and amendments shall be submitted in writing.
- e. The Advisory Committee shall provide each member with a copy of their reports prior to the session in which the matter will be dealt with.
- f. Also when the Advisory Committees meet, the meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer and thanksgiving in plenary session.
- g. There will be no smoking during the sessions and during the intermissions in the meeting room.
- h. Copies of the respective documents will be available for members of Synod, and for visitors at special request.

ARTICLE 5

Adoption Agenda

After some communications are added to the third Provisional Agenda, it is adopted as follows:

1. Opening on behalf of the convening Church.
2. Examination of the Credentials.
3. Election of the Officers.
4. Constitution of the Synod.
5. Information from the convening Church.
6. Adoption of the Agenda.
7. Arrangement of Procedure and Time Schedule.
8. Incoming Mail:
 - A. Theological College
 1. Sixth Annual Report (for the year 1974) by the Board of Trustees to the General Synod and the Board of Governors.
 2. Seventh Annual Report (for the year 1975) by the Board of Trustees to the General Synod and the Board of Governors.
 3. Eighth Annual Report (for the year 1976) by the Board of Trustees to the General Synod and the Board of Governors.

4. Comprehensive Financial Statements for the years 1974, 1975, 1976.
 5. Financial Statement for the year 1976.
 6. The Church at Smithers, B.C., re: standards of admission.
 7. The Church at Burlington (Ebenezer), Ontario, re: information flow.
 8. The Board of Governors, re: Tri-Annual Report to General Synod.
 9. Trustee — A.J. Hordijk, re: salary levels for the Faculty.
 10. Proposal Board of Trustees, re: salary of the Faculty and statement of contributions by the Churches.
 11. The Church at Hamilton, Ontario, re: standards of admission.
- B. Correspondence with Churches Abroad**
1. Report of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad, and Addition.
 2. The Church at Edmonton, Alberta, re: Contact with Other Churches, Letter of protest re: Article 20 and 64 of the Synod Toronto 1974.
- C. Book of Praise**
1. Psalm and Hymn Section:
 - a. Committee on the Church Book (Psalm and Hymn Section) — Report of activities during the last three years.
 - b. The Church at Brampton, Ontario, re: **Book of Praise**.
 2. Forms Section:
 - a. Report of the Committee for Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms appointed by the General Synod of Toronto 1974.
 - b. The Church at Burlington, (Ebenezer), Ontario, re: Form for the Ordination of Missionaries.
 - c. The Classis Alberta - Manitoba, re: Form for the Excommunication of Members who, having not yet made Profession of Faith, are Living in Disobedience (Text for the First Public Admonition).
 - d. The Church at Barrhead, Alberta, re: use of the R.S.V. in the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort.
 - e. The Church at Winnipeg, Manitoba, re: adoption draft translation.
- D. Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism**
1. Report of the Committee appointed by the Synod of Toronto 1974.
 2. The Church at Barrhead, Alberta, re: recommendations.
 3. The Church at Brampton, Ontario, re: recommendations.
- E. Bible Translations**
1. Report of the Committee on the Revised Standard Version, appointed by Synod Toronto 1974.
 - a. Appendix A — Suggested Improvements.
 - b. Appendix B — Synod Decisions from 1954-1974.
 2. The Church at Winnipeg, Manitoba, re: Study Committee on the N.I.V. and N.A.S.B.
 3. The Church at London, Ontario, re: Study Committee on the N.A.S.B.
 4. The Church at Hamilton, Ontario, re: Study Committee on the N.I.V. and N.A.S.B.
 5. The Church at London, Ontario, re: not to acquiesce in the recommendation of the R.S.V. Committee.
 6. The Church at Smithers, B.C., re: support for the overture of the Church at Winnipeg, and a request not to use the R.S.V. in the Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms.
 7. The Church at New Westminster, B.C., re: R.S.V.
- F. Revision Church Order**
1. Report of the Committee on the Revision of the Church Order appointed by the Synod of Toronto 1974.
 2. The Church at Barrhead, Alberta, re: recommendations.

- G. Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
 - 1. Report of the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and Addition.
 - 2. The Church at Brampton, Ontario, re: recognition of the O.P.C. and the establishment of Fraternal Relations.
 - 3. The Church at Barrhead, Alberta, re: support for the overture of the Church at Brampton.
 - 4. The Church at New Westminster, B.C., re: contact with O.P.C.
 - H. Contact with the Christian Reformed Church
 - 1. The Church at Edmonton, Alberta, re: Termination of the Contact Committee.
Letter of Protest re: Article 146, No. 2, of the Acts of the Synod of Toronto 1974.
 - 2. Appeal to Christian Reformed Church.
 - I. Women's Voting Rights
 - 1. The Church at Edmonton, Alberta, re: appointment of a Study Committee.
 - 2. Letter A. Van Raalte, Fergus, Ontario.
 - J. Solemnization of Marriage
 - 1. The Church at Edmonton, Alberta, re: Article 70, Church Order.
 - K. Protests and Appeals
 - 1. The Church at Edmonton, Alberta, re: appeal against Article 89 of the Acts of the General Synod of Toronto 1974.
 - 2. The Church at Smithville, Ontario, re: appeal against Article 6 of the Acts of the Classis Ontario South, held on June 8, 1977.
 - L. Request from the Foundation for Superannuation to hold a meeting on Friday, November 11, 1977.
 - M. Information from Address Church, Burlington-East, Ontario.
 - 1. Airlines Clergy Bureau.
 - 2. Reformed Ecumenical Synod.
 - 3. Presbyterian Church in America.
- 9. Appointments.
 - 10. Question Period ad Article 43, Church Order.
 - 11. Publication of the Acts of Synod.
 - 12. Financial Matters of General Synod.
 - 13. Preparation for the next General Synod.
 - 14. Adoption of the Acts of General Synod.
 - 15. Approval of the Press Release.
 - 16. Closing.

ARTICLE 6

Advisory Committees

The following Advisory Committees are appointed:

- COMMITTEE I — Rev. M. van Beveren, convener; Rev. C. Olij; Elder H.A. Berends; Elder B.J. Harsevoort.
Material: Agenda 8, B, G.K.1 — Correspondence Churches Abroad; Contact O.P.C.; Appeal Church Edmonton.
- COMMITTEE II — Rev. D. DeJong, convener; Rev. J. Geertsema; Elder W.H. Bredenhof; Elder C. Walinga.
Material: Agenda 8, A, E, K2 — Theological College; Bible Translations; Appeal Church Smithville, Ontario.
- COMMITTEE III — Rev. W. Huizinga, convener; Rev. S. DeBruin; Elder J. Bol; Elder J. DeVos.
Material: Agenda 8, D, F, I, J — Heidelberg Catechism;

Revision Church Order; Women's Voting Rights; Solemnization of Marriage.

COMMITTEE IV — Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, convener; Rev. J. Mulder; Elder C. VanSeters; Elder J.G. Feenstra.

Material: Agenda 8, C, H, M — **Book of Praise**; contact Christian Reformed Church; Information Address Church.

It is proposed that the Rev. J. Visscher, chairman of the convening Church, is invited by Synod to serve Synod in an advisory capacity.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 7

Foundation for Superannuation

The Foundation requests Synod not to meet the afternoon of Friday, November 11, 1977, in order that members of Synod can attend the Members meeting scheduled for that date.

This request is granted.

ARTICLE 8

Greetings Sister Churches

The Free Reformed Churches of Australia and De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland wish Synod the blessing of the LORD and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE 9

Adjournment

The Chairman adjourns the meeting. The Advisory Committees meet.

EVENING SESSION — TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1977

ARTICLE 10

Re-opening

The Chairman requests Synod to sing Psalm 93:1, 4.

ARTICLE 11

Airlines Clergy Bureau

Committee IV presents:

Material — Agenda 8, M, 1 — Letter from Airlines Clergy Bureau, 3030 Mayhew Road, Sacramento, California 95826, U.S.A.

Observations

1. This bureau lists a number of Airlines which give a 50% discount on airfares to be paid by ministers, including missionaries, and by religious workers.
2. An application form shows that for each and every application a \$20.00 annual membership fee is to be paid.
3. From the application form it is also clear that this is not a matter which cannot be dealt with by each Church on its own.

Conclusion

This is a matter which is not in the province of Synod.

Recommendation

General Synod confine itself to taking note of this letter.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 12

Reformed Ecumenical Synod

Committee IV presents:

Material — Agenda 8, M, 2

1. Letter sent by the Rev. M. van Beveren to Dr. Paul G. Schrotenboer, d.d. November 1974, containing the text of Acts Synod Toronto 1974, Article 37.
2. Letter from Dr. Paul G. Schrotenboer to the Rev. M. van Beveren, January 21, 1975.
3. Letter from Dr. Paul G. Schrotenboer to the Rev. M. van Beveren, October 3, 1975.

Observations

1. No request to Synod is contained in the letters sent by Dr. P.G. Schrotenboer;
2. No arguments are given in those letters why Synod should reverse the decision of General Synod Toronto 1974 regarding the Reformed Ecumenical Synod;
3. No Church has sent any proposal to Synod to change the position taken by General Synod Toronto 1974.

Recommendation

Synod take note of this correspondence.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 13

Presbyterian Church in America

Committee IV presents:

Material — Agenda 8, M, 3

1. Letter sent by the Rev. M. van Beveren d.d. February 18, 1975, to the Presbyterian Church in America (formerly: The National Presbyterian Church).
2. Letter from Mr. Erskine L. Jackson, Moderator, d.d. April 17, 1975, informing Mr. van Beveren that he had passed on the letter received from the latter to the Stated Clerk for reference to the Committee on Interchurch Relations.

Observations

1. The letter from the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in America does not contain any further information or any requests.
2. No further communication has been received from the Presbyterian Church in America.

Recommendation

Synod take note of this correspondence and forward a copy of this decision to the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in America.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 14

Adjournment

After Psalm 116:1, 10 has been sung, Br. H.A. Berends leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The meeting is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1977

ARTICLE 15

Re-opening

The Chairman requests Synod to sing Psalm 119:1, 2.

The Scripture reading is Psalm 119:1-16 whereafter the LORD is asked for His blessing over the work to be done.

ARTICLE 16

Acts

The Acts, Articles 1-15, are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 17

Study Committee Women's Voting Rights

Committee III presents a preliminary report on the request of the Church at Edmonton, Alberta, to appoint a committee to study the matter of Women's Voting Rights.

This report is discussed in several rounds (See Article 23).

ARTICLE 18

Agenda

The following communications have been received and are added to the Agenda:

- a. Letter of the Church at Toronto, re: Admission Requirements Theological College
(Agenda 8, A 12)
- b. Letter of the Church at Toronto, re: Liturgical Forms
(Agenda 8, C 2 f)
- e. Letter of the Church at Toronto, re: Translation Heidelberg Catechism
(Agenda 8, D 4)
- d. Letter of the Church at Toronto, re: Women's Voting Rights
(Agenda 8, I 3)

ARTICLE 19

Adjournment

The meeting adjourns. The Advisory Committees meet for the remainder of the day.

At 9:20 p.m. Synod meets again in plenary session. Br. J. Bol requests the singing of Psalm 57:5 and closes with thanksgiving. The meeting is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION — THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1977

ARTICLE 20

Re-opening

The Chairman requests to sing Psalm 86:3, 4. He reads from the Scriptures, Ephesians 2:1-10, after which he leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 21

Acts — Adjournment

The Acts, Articles 16-20, are read and adopted.

The Chairman adjourns the meeting. The Advisory Committees meet.

EVENING SESSION — THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1977

ARTICLE 22

Re-opening — Agenda

The Chairman requests to sing Psalm 108:1.

The following communications have been received and are added to the Agenda:

- a. Letter of the Church at Coaldale, re: Contact Orthodox Presbyterian Church
(Agenda 8, G 5)
- b. Additional report of Committee on Translation Heidelberg Catechism
(Agenda 8, D 1, Addition)

ARTICLE 23

Women's Voting Rights

Committee III presents a majority and minority report. These reports are discussed in several rounds. Committee III requests time to reconsider some parts of their report. (See Article 27.)

ARTICLE 24

Adjournment

Br. W. H. Bredenhof requests Synod to sing Psalm 122:1, 3 and leads in thanksgiving.

MORNING SESSION — FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1977

ARTICLE 25

Re-opening — Remembrance Day

The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 76:1, 4, 5; reads from Holy Scripture Revelation 5 and leads in prayer.

On this Remembrance Day 1977 he addresses the meeting as follows:

“On this eleventh day of November it is fitting that we, too, remember those who gave their lives in the struggles which are known as the First and Second World War.

Generally these struggles are considered to have been fights for freedom and battles against oppression, against the desire to dominate and to subdue nations.

That, of course, is extremely doubtful. We know that for many nations the outcome of the Second World War was not a regained or continued freedom but an extended or new slavery. Who among those living after the Second World War remembers the independent Baltic States? Who of the younger ones knows of the great past of Hungary and of many other countries which at present are held in the grip of communism?

That those who fell in the two World Wars gave their life for freedom applies only to the soldiers of relatively few nations.

If there is one nation of which it can be said that its sons gave themselves to fight and, if necessary, to give their lives for freedom, it is the Canadian nation. Loyalty to the British Commonwealth may have been the main reason for Canada's participation in the struggles which demanded all effort and endeavour that could be produced, it is an undeniable fact that the voluntary nature of Canada's participation shows that the real character of the struggle was understood.

Especially we, whose cradle or, in any case, whose roots are to be found in the Lowlands by the North Sea owe a great debt to those who fell in the battle for the liberation of The Netherlands and of Europe.

It is, therefore, with great gratitude that on this day we remember those who brought that greatest sacrifice which a man or woman can bring: they gave their life!

And it is our heartfelt prayer that we, who benefit from that sacrifice, may so use the freedom which we still enjoy that the Lord's work proceed through us in such a manner that the day of our Saviour may be there soon.”

After the chairman has spoken the National Anthem is sung.

ARTICLE 26

Appeal Smithville

Committee II presents:

Material — Agenda 8, K, 2

Letter of appeal of the Canadian Reformed Church at Smithville against a decision of Classis Ontario South, held on June 8, 1977 (Article 6 of the Acts), concerning the pronouncement of the salutation and the benediction, when an elder conducts the service.

Observation

This letter contains an appeal against a Classis' decision and is not a proposal to General Synod.

Consideration

An appeal against a decision of a Classis ought to be brought not to a General Synod, but to a Regional Synod.

Recommendation

Synod declare this letter of appeal inadmissible.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 27

Women's Voting Rights

Committee III presents a (revised) majority and minority report. (See Acts, Article 23)

A. Majority Report

- Material — Agenda 8, I, 1 — The Church at Edmonton expresses its disappointment with the decision of Synod 1974, Acts, Article 84, and requests that a committee be appointed to study the matter of women's voting rights.
- Agenda 8, I, 3 — The Church at Toronto expresses its agreement with the proposal of Edmonton.

Observations

1. The Church at Edmonton has expressed its disappointment with the decision of Synod 1974 not to grant the request of the Church at Toronto to give women voting rights on the ground that the information supplied was "not sufficient to lead to a responsible, clear decision which takes all biblical (as well as church-political) aspects into account."
2. Article 84 of the Acts of Synod 1974 indicates that the Church at Toronto has submitted considerable material in support of its request.
3. The same article indicates that a study-committee was recommended on the consideration that the material was not sufficient to come to a responsible decision.
4. Synod 1974 rejected the recommendation to appoint a study-committee.
5. The Church at Edmonton states that the Synod of 1974, by rejecting the request on the basis of the insufficiency of the material, established a criterion which an average consistory cannot meet.
6. The Church at Edmonton requests the appointment of a committee as was originally proposed by the advisory committee of Synod 1974.
7. The Church at Toronto expresses its support for the proposal of the Church at Edmonton to appoint a committee.

Considerations

1. Article 22 Church Order does not stipulate anything positive or negative about women's voting rights but refers only to "the congregation."
2. By not ad Article 30 Church Order refusing to deal with women's voting rights, Synod 1974 has in fact admitted that this is a matter of common concern.
3. From the observation of Synod 1974, Article 84, it becomes apparent that the arguments of the Church at Toronto were not considered erroneous, but that their submission did not suffice in view of the complexity of the matter. The use of the words "all aspects" both in the considerations and in the decision underlines this complexity.
4. At Synod 1974 a strong case was made for the appointment of a special committee to study the matter, but then it was decided not to do so. Instead Synod 1974 rejected the request of the Church at Toronto without passing judgment on its validity or on the validity of its supporting material.

Conclusions

1. The question as to whether women may vote involves Biblical and Church-political principles. Since unity of practice is desirable, the introduction of women's voting rights by a particular Church on its own would be regrettable.
2. By declaring the substantial submission of the Church at Toronto insufficient, Synod 1974 has indeed in this case established a criterion which an average consistory can hardly be expected to meet.
3. Synod 1974, by deciding that "no responsible decision can be made" has not properly completed its agenda. After rejecting the recommendation to appoint a committee for further studies, Synod itself had the duty to continue until it could make a "responsible clear decision."

4. The matter of women's voting rights has been left undecided, while some consistories have expressed concern over the matter.
5. Under these circumstances the Church at Edmonton and the Church at Toronto supporting Edmonton have properly requested the establishing of a study committee.

Recommendation

Synod appoint a committee with the mandate:

- a. To make a thorough study of all Biblical and Church-political aspects regarding the question of women's voting rights.
- b. To forward the results of their studies to the Churches one year prior to the next General Synod and to invite comments to be submitted within six months after publication of the study.
- c. To submit their report with recommendations to the next General Synod.

B. Minority Report

Material — same as in Majority Report.

Observations — same as in Majority Report.

Considerations

1. Article 22, Church Order does not stipulate anything positive or negative about women's voting rights but refers only to the "congregation."
2. The question as to whether women can vote involves Biblical and Church-political principles. Since unity of practice is desirable, the introduction of women's voting rights by a particular Church on its own would be regrettable.
3. That Edmonton considers it impossible to present this matter again to a General Synod is incorrect. Synod 1974 did not judge the grounds of the request of Toronto but only stated that the materials were insufficient. In which points the material was insufficient is not stated, nor are the arguments found invalid. Therefore any church could present this matter again even including the same grounds.
4. To justify appointing a committee to study women's voting rights Synod must be convinced that this matter of common concern is too broad or complicated for the local churches. Edmonton is of this opinion. But as Edmonton points out, considerable material is available on this matter. The Church at Edmonton or Toronto could digest this available literature and then present it (again) to a General Synod.

Recommendation

Synod decide not to grant the request of Edmonton and Toronto to appoint a committee to study the matter of women's voting rights, since the churches themselves are competent to study this matter and to bring it to the General Synod.

Both reports are discussed. The recommendations of the Majority Report are
ADOPTED

Consequently the Minority Report is not voted on.

ARTICLE 28

Women's Voting Rights — letter A. Van Raalte

Committee III presents:

Material — Agenda 8, I, 2 — Letter br. A. Van Raalte, Fergus, Ontario.

Observations

Br. A. Van Raalte writes that he has "heard and read that women's voting rights will likely be discussed at Synod."

1. He writes that women's voting rights often accompanies a downhill trend in the Churches.
2. He quotes some Scripture texts which he hopes will cause Synod to give a negative answer to the request of Edmonton.

Consideration

The Church at Edmonton did not request Synod to judge the issue itself (women's voting rights) but only asked that a committee be appointed to study it.

Recommendation

With appreciation for Br. A. Van Raalte's concern, the Synod receive this letter for information and forward it to the Committee which is to be appointed.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 29**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourns and the Advisory Committees meet. At 12:30 p.m. Synod meets again in plenary session. Rev. S. De Bruin requests the singing of Psalm 36:3 and leads in thanksgiving. (See Article 7).

MORNING SESSION — SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1977**ARTICLE 30****Re-opening**

The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 1. From the Epistle to the Ephesians he reads Chapter 2:11-22 and asks the LORD for His blessing.

ARTICLE 31**Acts**

The Acts, Articles 21-30, are read and adopted. The meeting adjourns. The Advisory Committees meet.

ARTICLE 32**Adjournment**

In plenary session Rev. D. DeJong requests the singing of Psalm 4:1, 2, 3 and he leads in thanksgiving.

MORNING SESSION — MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1977**ARTICLE 33****Re-opening**

The Chairman requests Synod to sing Psalm 16:1. The Scripture reading is also taken from the Book of Psalms: Psalm 16. The Chairman leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 34**Agenda — Adjournment**

The following letters have been received and are added to the Agenda:

- a. Letter of the Church at Calgary, re: Women's Voting Rights. (Agenda 8, I 4)
In this letter the Church at Calgary expresses its support for the proposal made by the Church at Edmonton. Since Synod has finalized this matter, there is no need to deal further with this letter (See Article 27).

- b. Letter of the Church at Calgary, re: Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Reformed Presbyterian Church -- Evangelical Synod. (Agenda 8, N 1)
The meeting adjourns and the Advisory Committees meet.

EVENING SESSION — MONDAY NOVEMBER 14, 1977

ARTICLE 35

Re-opening

In the evening, Synod meets in plenary session. The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 135:1, 9.

ARTICLE 36

Telegram — South Africa

The chairman reads a telegram received from Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in South Africa:

“Mag die Here jou arbeid sien tot heil van die broederskap.”

ARTICLE 37

Agenda

A report received from the Church at Carman, appointed by General Synod 1974 for the Administration of a General Fund, is added to the Agenda and passed on to Advisory Committee IV (Agenda 8, O).

ARTICLE 38

Theological College — Memorandum Prof. Dr. J. Faber to Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene

Synod decides not to deal with the report of Advisory Committee II re: “Memorandum Prof. Dr. J. Faber to Rev. W.W.J. VanOene,” since this Memorandum does not belong to the Agenda of Synod.

ARTICLE 39

Theological College — Board of Trustees

Committee II presents a report on the communications received from the Board of Trustees of the Theological College.

This report is discussed and some recommendations are adopted (see Article 44).

ARTICLE 40

Adjournment

Br. J. DeVos leads in thanksgiving, after Hymn 50 has been sung. Synod is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION — TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1977

ARTICLE 41

Re-opening

The Chairman requests Synod to sing Hymn 21:1, 2, he reads from Scripture II Timothy 2:1-9, and leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 42

Acts — Adjournment

The Acts, Articles 31-41, are read and adopted.
The meeting adjourns and the Advisory Committees meet.

AFTERNOON SESSION — TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1977

ARTICLE 43

Re-opening

The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 18:9.

ARTICLE 44

Theological College — Board of Trustees

Committee II presents:

- Material** — Agenda 8, A, 1, 2, 3 — Reports of the Board of Trustees over the years 1974/5/6;
A, 4, 5 — Audited Financial Statements over the years 1974/5/6, plus Budget 1977; (See Appendix I, p. 67).
A, 9, 10 — A Proposal of the Board re: Salaries, of one of the Trustees re: Salaries, and a Statement of Contributions and Arrears over part of 1977.

Observations

1. Trustees Activities Generally

The Cooperation of the Churches, Board of Governors, Faculty and Students, has generally been excellent.

2. Physical Plant

Renovations and Maintenance

No major repairs or renovations were undertaken during these years. Minor repairs and alterations to the main building were made by br. C. Walinga, who with his wife performed their janitorial duties in a commendable manner.

Library Facilities

No major expansion or changes were made in the library facilities, but the matter continues to have the attention of the Board, because the facilities are not ideal.

Insurance

All the insurance coverage has been transferred to a different company, from which increased protection was purchased at a lower relative cost.

Future Expansion

The Board of Trustees together with the Board of Governors requested Synod 1974 to authorize them to use the moneys that were reserved for purchasing property with a view to possible future development.

Student Accommodation

The fee for student accommodation was raised from \$75.00 to \$150.00 per semester (\$300.00 per academic year).

3. Faculty

Salaries

Report on Salaries

The Professors and Lecturers were remunerated in accordance with the Salary Schedule as approved by Synod 1974; their salaries were increased with 11% and 6.2% in accordance with the consumer price index.

Salary Proposal of the Board of Trustees

The Board proposes to Synod to increase the basic annual salary of the full-time professors.

Salary Proposal of br. A.J. Hordijk, member of Board of Trustees

Br. Hordijk presents a minority proposal regarding the annual salary of the full-time professors.

Kouwenhoven Pension

The pension for the Kouwenhoven family was increased according to the Salary Schedule. A deduction of \$1,200.00 per annum made in previous years was eliminated beginning 1974 (compare Financial Statement).

4. Organizational

Constitution

Having received the printed final redaction of the Constitution of the Theological College, all the members of the Board of Trustees signed the "Declaration of the Trustees."

Administrative Assistant

As authorized by Synod 1974 the Board appointed Miss Ann van Sydenborgh Administrative Assistant per March 1976. She also is Assistant Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, Secretary to the Board of Governors and to the Faculty, Library-Assistant and College Receptionist.

Salaries

The associate Librarian's stipend remained \$5.00 per hour. The caretaker's remuneration remained \$4.00 per hour. The salary of the Administrative Assistant was increased by 10% for 1977 (\$8,800.00; compare Financial Statement).

5. Financial

Contributions

Complaint. In each report again the Trustees complain about the tardiness of some Churches with regard to the required contributions.

Request. The Trustees request that the Churches pay their contributions based on the number of their members, as shown in the Yearbook, or, if that information is incorrect to inform the Treasurer.

Other Income and Gifts

Special attention is drawn to the substantial donations received from the Women's Savings Action.

Audited Financial Statements

Audited financial statements were sent to Synod as appendices to the Reports over the years 1974/5/6, together with a budget for the year 1977.

Budget

For the years 1976 and 1977 no raise of contributions was necessary, in spite of increases in salaries and other expenditures.

Recommendations

Synod decide:

1. Gratefully to take note of the good cooperation of the Board of Trustees with the Churches, the Board of Governors, the Faculty and the Students. **ADOPTED**
2. With thankfulness to take note of the commendable manner in which br. and sr. C. Walinga performed their janitorial duties. **ADOPTED**
3. To give into the consideration of the Board of Trustees together with the Board of Governors, to buy property already for a possible future development. **ADOPTED**
4. To increase the basic annual salary of the full-time professors to \$22,500.00 instead of the amounts proposed by the Board of Trustees and by br. Hordijk, effective January 1, 1978. **ADOPTED**

- Further to give an allowance for the principal of \$1,000.00; and to increase the stipend of the lecturers to \$3,000.00. **ADOPTED**
5. To ask the special attention of the Churches concerned for the complaint of the Board of Trustees regarding the tardiness in sending the contributions. **ADOPTED**
 6. To ask also the special attention of the Churches for the request of the Board of Trustees that the Churches be cooperative with the Treasurer of the Board in determining the assessment. **ADOPTED**
 7. Gratefully to acknowledge the substantial donations of the Women's Savings Action. **ADOPTED**
 8. To take note of the Audited Financial Statements over the years 1974/5/6 and of the budget for 1977, and to add them to the Acts as Appendices. **ADOPTED**
 9. To take note of the fact that for 1976 and 1977 no raise in the contributions was necessary; and to express thankfulness to the Lord for the fact that the Churches were able to furnish the necessary funds. **ADOPTED**
 10. Gratefully to acknowledge the work done by the Board of Trustees; and to approve of their actions as mentioned in the reports. **ADOPTED**
 11. To discharge the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees for the three years ended December 31, 1976. **ADOPTED**

ARTICLE 45

Theological College — Salaries

The following motion, duly seconded, is discussed:

Synod decide to give into consideration of the Board of Trustees to increase the remuneration of the caretaker to \$5.00 per hour; further to increase the salary of the Administrative Assistant to \$11,000.00, on the ground that she is a well-qualified and experienced business-secretary, and that her work is so greatly appreciated **REJECTED**

The following motion, duly seconded, is discussed:

Synod expresses its concern over the low level of the salaries of the caretaker and the Administrative Assistant as stated in Observation 4 and encourages the Board of Trustees to review these salaries. **ADOPTED**

ARTICLE 46

Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

EVENING SESSION — TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1977

ARTICLE 47

Re-opening

Synod is re-opened with the singing of Psalm 48:1, 3.

ARTICLE 48

Theological College — Board of Governors

Committee II presents:

Material — Agenda 8, A, 8 — Tri-annual report of the Board of Governors over the years 1974, 1975, 1976. (See Appendix II, p. 72.)

Observations

1. Concerning Board of Trustees

The Board of Governors expresses its great appreciation for the way in which the Board of Trustees has done all its work for the well-being of the College since General Synod 1974.

2. Governors Activities General

The cooperation within the Board of Governors as well as with the Board of Trustees and the Senate was such that the task could be fulfilled in good Christian harmony.

3. The teaching at the College

The visiting of the lectures

The lectures were regularly attended by the governors. The report makes the remark that the governors from the West very seldom have the opportunity to attend the lectures.

The teaching

The Faculty could work without interruption. The professors and lecturers are capable men who do their work with great dedication, in total submission to the Word of our God and in faithful adherence to the Reformed Confessions.

4. Number of students

It is a matter of concern for the Board that the number of students is so small. They once again want to draw the attention of the Churches to this need.

5. Course of study and degrees

Course of study

The course of the studies has now been extended to four years.

Degrees

The Faculty is considering whether the Master of Divinity degree should be conferred instead of the Bachelor of Divinity degree.

Recognition of degrees

The Board decided for the time being not to pursue the matter of obtaining official recognition of degrees by the Provincial Government.

6. Lack of sufficient supply of Reformed textbooks in English

The Board requested the Faculty periodically to issue a written digest of the lectures.

7. Special Courses

Special courses were given for teachers and other interested Church members. The organization of courses other than the above for persons not enrolled in our College who wish to broaden their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and of the Reformed doctrine is considered.

8. Workers at the College beside the Faculty

The Associate Librarian

The Rev. A.B. Roukema was appointed Associate Librarian. Rev. Roukema works at cataloguing the library books.

The Administrative Assistant

Miss Ann van Sydenborgh fulfills the duties of her many-sided position to the full satisfaction of all concerned.

Mrs. J. Faber

Mrs. J. Faber terminated her activities for the library after the Rev. Roukema and Miss van Sydenborgh had begun their work. The work which Mrs. Faber has done for the College is gratefully acknowledged.

9. Conclusion

The Board expresses its great gratitude to the Lord "for His wonderful protection and mercies of which we received such a large share in our College."

Recommendations

Synod decide

1. Gratefully to acknowledge the work done by the Board of Governors. ADOPTED
2. To express as its opinion that the cost-factor should not prevent governors from the West to visit the lectures. ADOPTED
3. Gratefully to acknowledge the work done by the Faculty. ADOPTED
4. To express as its concern that the number of students is so small and to urge the Churches to give continued attention to this need. ADOPTED
5. To give into the consideration of the Board of Governors to seek for ways and to encourage the Faculty in cooperation with the Board of Trustees, to make our College better known also by the publication of solid Reformed material in order that also in this way more students may be attracted. ADOPTED
6. To express agreement with the request of the Governors to the Faculty periodically to issue a written digest of the lectures. ADOPTED
7. Gratefully to acknowledge the work which the Faculty did for the teachers courses. ADOPTED
8. Gratefully to acknowledge the work of the Associate Librarian, the Rev. A.B. Roukema. ADOPTED
9. Gratefully to acknowledge the work of the Administrative Assistant, Miss Ann van Sydenborgh. ADOPTED
10. To concur with the words of the Board of Governors that the work which Mrs. J. Faber has done, is gratefully acknowledged. ADOPTED
11. To add the report of the Board of Governors to the Acts as an Appendix. ADOPTED
12. To concur with the Board's expression of its great gratitude to the Lord for His blessings on the College. ADOPTED

ARTICLE 49

General Fund

Committee IV presents:

Material — Agenda 8, O

— Report of the Church for the Administration of a General Fund, the Church at Carman, Manitoba.

Observations

1. The Church at Carman asked once 50' per member for the expenses of Committees appointed by Synod, Toronto 1974.

2. Total income	\$ 3,571.59
Total expenses	<u>1,279.62</u>
Balance	<u>\$ 2,291.97</u>

3. The consistory of the Church at Carman has audited the books of the treasurer of the Fund and found the books in good order.
4. Some Churches did not pay their share.

Recommendations

Synod decide

1. To express its gratitude to Mr. H. Veldman, treasurer of the Fund, discharging him for the past three years.
2. To thank the Church at Carman for the administration of this Fund and the auditing of the books of the treasurer.
3. To urge those Churches who did not pay their share to do so as yet.
4. To continue the mandate of the Church at Carman to administer this General Fund. ADOPTED

ARTICLE 50

Adjournment

Rev. J. Geertsema requests the singing of Psalm 78:1, 2, 3 and leads in thanksgiving. Synod is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1977

ARTICLE 51

Re-opening — Adjournment

Synod is re-opened with the singing of Psalm 125:1, 4; the chairman reads Isaiah 60:1-14 and leads in prayer.

The meeting is adjourned. The Advisory Committees meet.

AFTERNOON SESSION — WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1977

ARTICLE 52

Re-opening — Acts

Synod is re-opened with the singing of Psalm 75:1, 6.

The Acts, Articles 42-51, are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 53

Visitors

The Chairman welcomes the visitors, especially the many students of the Coaldale Christian School.

ARTICLE 54

Article 70, Church Order

Committee III presents:

Material — Agenda 8, J, 1

— A Letter of the Church at Edmonton, re: Article 70, Church Order.

Observations

1. Edmonton proposes the following formulation for Article 70, Church Order:
“The Ministers are authorized to solemnize marriages according to the Form in use for that purpose, and they shall seek to be registered as such by the Civil Authorities. The solemnization of marriages shall take place in a public gathering for that purpose. Whether this public gathering will be an official worship service is left in the freedom of the Churches.”
2. As reason for this new Article, Edmonton states that churches who do not observe Article 70, Church Order, now cannot give formal authorization for ministers to be registered by the government.
3. Synod 1974 (Acts, Article 49) decided not “to accede to the proposal of the Church at Hamilton” to reinstate the original Article 70, Church Order, and also decided,
“b. to instruct the Committee on the Revision of the Church Order to include in their revision of the Church Order such a draft of Article 70 that therein the main thrust of the proposal of the Church at Hamilton is assimilated, namely, that the members of the Church marry ‘in the Lord’ and that the office-bearers are to see to it that they do so.”

Considerations

1. Articles of the Church Order must be of a general nature and applicable to all the churches. These must be well distinguished from specific ecclesiastical decisions (cf. Korte Verklaring van de Kerkenordening, Joh. Jansen, 1923, Inleiding: Wezen van het Kerkrecht).

2. Edmonton refers to proposals of the Provincial Government to change the Marriage Act of Alberta. Since the solemnization of marriages is regulated provincially, it is difficult to make one common rule which applies to all the churches in the various provinces.
3. The clause, "and they shall seek to be registered as such by the Civil Authorities," should not be included in a church order, since this is up to the consistories, ministers, and governments.
4. There is also no need to incorporate authorization to be registered in an Article of the Church Order. The required authorization by the Church for governmental purposes can be given, e.g., in an official governmental form or a letter from the consistory.
5. The clause, "the Ministers are authorized to solemnize marriages . . .," lies open to two interpretations. It can refer to what Edmonton mentions, namely, that a minister needs ecclesiastical authorization in order to be registered by the government. It can also mean that ministers are the principal persons concerned in the solemnization of marriages. If the former interpretation is meant, then the fact that the consistories authorize the ministers to solemnize marriages in accordance with local regulations receives no attention and the primary position of the consistory does not come to the fore.
6. The phrase, "public gathering," is too general and too vague.
7. The sentence, "Whether this public gathering will be an official worship service is left in the freedom of the Churches," is thus in agreement with a previous decision (see Observation 3).
8. Edmonton's formulation does not incorporate the decision of Synod of 1974 (see Observation 3) "that the members of the Church marry 'in the Lord' and that the office-bearers are to see to it that they do so."
9. Further, the Committee for the Revision of the Church Order should have the opportunity to bring a proposal on this before Synod adopts one, unless urgency forbids this.

Recommendations

Synod decide,

- a. not to adopt Edmonton's proposed text for Article 70, Church Order.
- b. to instruct the Committee on the Revision of the Church Order to take note of this decision. REJECTED

The following motion, duly seconded, is discussed:

Synod having taken note of the letter of the Church at Edmonton, re: Article 70, Church Order, decides to pass this letter on to the Committee on the Revision of the Church Order. ADOPTED

ARTICLE 55

Adjournment — re-opening

After a beginning has been made with the discussion of a report of Committee IV on the **Book of Praise**, the meeting is adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Synod is re-opened at 7:00 p.m. with the singing of Psalm 148:1, 4.

EVENING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1977

ARTICLE 56

Book of Praise

The discussion on the **Book of Praise** is continued. Some of the recommendations of Committee IV are adopted (see Article 60).

ARTICLE 57

Adjournment

Br. B. J. Harsevoort requests Synod to sing Psalm 42:1, 5, and leads in prayer. Synod is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION — THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1977

ARTICLE 58

Re-opening — Adjournment

The Chairman requests Synod to sing Psalm 86:1, 2; he reads Colossians 3:1-17 and leads in prayer.

The meeting adjourns and the Advisory Committees meet.

AFTERNOON SESSION — THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1977

ARTICLE 59

Re-opening — Acts

The Chairman requests the singing of Hymn 42:1, 4.

The Acts, Articles 52-58, are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 60

Book of Praise

Committee IV presented:

Material — Agenda 8, C, 1

- Psalm and Hymn Section:
 - a. Report of the Committee on the Church Book (Psalm and Hymn Section). (See Appendix III, p. 74.)
 - b. Letter Church at Brampton, re: **Book of Praise**.
- 2 — Forms Section:
 - a. Report of the Committee for Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms appointed by the General Synod of Toronto 1974.
 - b. The Church at Burlington (Ebenezer), re: Form for the Ordination of Missionaries.
 - c. Classis Alberta-Manitoba, re: Form for the Excommunication of Members who, having not yet made Profession of Faith, are Living in Disobedience (Text for the First Public Admonition).
 - d. The Church at Barrhead, re: use of the R.S.V. in the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort.
 - e. Church at Winnipeg, re: Adoption Draft Translations.
 - f. Church at Toronto, re: Liturgical Forms.

General Information

In their report, the Committee on the Church Book, Psalm and Hymn section, remark that the examination and revision of the Psalm and Hymn section is a "painstaking and time-consuming work." Your Committee realizes that, but at the same time we are to bear in mind that the work on the **Book of Praise** should be concluded within the

foreseeable future, preferably before the convening of Synod 1980. Your Committee would advise you to instruct all committees which we suggest to appoint or re-appoint to have their complete reports in (with copies to the Churches) at the time set by the General Synod of Orangeville 1968, Acts, Article 41: "copies of reports which are to be sent to the Churches, shall be in nine months before the opening of Synod."

As the moment will be reached when the definite edition of the **Book of Praise** will be issued, it is also advisable to have a coordinating body which can keep track of the progress and, if necessary, can stimulate said progress. The Committee for the Psalm and Hymn section appointed a Publication Committee which took care of the printing of the **Book of Praise**. It is only proper that Synod appoint this Committee on the Psalm and Hymn section as the coordinating committee to ensure that the definite printing of the **Book of Praise** can indeed contain all forms and other writings which Synod may decide to have inserted in it.

From the above-mentioned documents it appears that the following requests, suggestions, proposals have been made to your assembly.

1. To see to it that a harmonization of the hymns become available for use in the services and also in the homes.
2. To appoint the Rev. C. Van Dam instead of the Rev. D. VanderBoom as a member of the Committee on the Psalms and Hymns.
3. "To set a deadline for the reports of all the committees whose work is related to the publication of a definite edition of the **Book of Praise**."
4. "To appoint a committee to deal with the matter of preparing a four-part music edition of the **Book of Praise**."
5. That an effort be made to make sure as much as possible that "no pages need to be turned for the playing of any one song."
6. To appoint a committee "with the mandate to re-translate the Liturgical Forms into present-day English."
7. "That all Scripture-quotations (both direct and indirect) in all the Forms be changed in accordance with the Revised Standard Version."
8. "To add a **Form for the Ordination of Missionaries** to the existing Forms for Ordination/Installation of office-bearers in God's Churches." A translation of the form adopted by our Netherlands sister Churches accompanied this proposal.
9. "To have a 'First Public Admonition' added to the 'Form for the Excommunication of Members who, having not yet made Profession of Faith, are living in Disobedience.'" A proposed text of such admonition was added.
10. That "all quotations from Scripture be taken from the R.S.V.," such quotations, namely, as are found in the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort.
11. Not to "adopt as final at this time any of the draft-translations of our Confessions and Forms, until the Churches (via their Synod) have adopted a definite Bible translation."
12. "Not only to have the Liturgical Forms re-translated into present-day English, but also revised and, where necessary and possible, shortened. In this connection we refer especially to the Form for the Solemnization of Marriage."

Your Committee wishes to make the following general remarks about the above mentioned proposals.

We realize that it is advisable to have the quotations from the Scriptures as found in our Forms taken from the same translation which is used in the services. However, here we are faced with many difficulties.

In the first place — apart from the question whether a General Synod indeed "adopts" a Bible translation or even recommends one — we must keep in mind that waiting for such a moment could mean a delay in the appearing of our definite **Book of Praise** of many years. In any case, we would not have to hope for such a definite edition till after the Synod of 1983, if even then.

Secondly, a decision to take quotations from a specific translation would mean that all such quotations will be inserted, whether they are correct translations or not.

In the third place: The point mentioned in favour of the King James Version was not that its translation is correct for the larger part, but that "the character of this translation as being faithful to the Scriptures has never been disputed" (Acts, Synod Homeward 1954, Article 71). On the other hand, the objections raised against the Revised Standard

Version are that it reveals "unscriptural influences." In other words, since there are among our members who are not convinced that a number of translators submit themselves unconditionally to the Holy Scriptures as the inerrant Word of God and, e.g., are said to deny the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the whole Revised Standard Version as such seemed to be unacceptable to them or in any case suspect.

In order so as not to delay the definite edition of the **Book of Praise** we have to look for a solution which would not bind the Churches to an antiquated translation and which, at the same time, would not bind them to a translation of whose faithfulness to the Scriptures some are not convinced either.

Your Committee sought the solution in this direction: That Synod requests the Faculty of our Theological College to provide the Committee on the **Book of Praise** with a correct and up-to-date translation of all Scripture passages quoted in our Confessional and Liturgical Forms. In this manner the Churches will not be bound indirectly and prematurely to a specific translation of God's Holy Word.

As for the proposals re: the Liturgical Forms, your Committee agrees that it is necessary to update their wording and also to revise them or to shorten them.

More than once the desire has been expressed that a shorter form for the celebration of the Holy Supper be introduced; objections have been raised against insertion of a creed in the prayer before the celebration; criticism has been voiced on various passages in the "Form for the Solemnization of Marriage," e.g., when it is called an "ordinance of God" that the desire of the woman shall be to her husband and that he shall rule over her.

Since we are aiming for a complete edition of the **Book of Praise** immediately after the 1980 General Synod, it is a matter of wisdom to see to it that it can indeed be a definite edition and to prevent as much as possible that changes will have to be made after three years.

For that reason the Committee would recommend that Synod grant the requests related above.

As for the form for the ordination or installation of missionaries, the need for such a form has been evident for many years. Your Committee has checked what was presented as a faithful translation of the form which has been adopted recently by our Netherlands sister Churches, and presents you with a revised version which may become standard among us.

Regarding the proposal re: "adding a 'First Admonition' to the Form for Excommunication of non-communicant members," your Committee is of the opinion that it is advisable to add the above-mentioned "First Admonition," since that would bring this form more in line with the one used for communicant members.

The committee which was to advise re: corrections in the translation of the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort submitted proposals for specific changes. These changes are of a technical nature insofar as knowledge of the Latin language is required. Since one-half of the members of Synod presumably have never studied that language, a decision will have to be made on the ground of the judgment of experts. It appears wise also in this respect to engage the Faculty of our College and to request them to provide the Committee on the Church Book, Psalm and Hymn Section, with a complete text of the Belgic Confession and of the Canons of Dort in which all necessary corrections have been made besides the change of translation of Scripture passages where necessary.

The question of a harmonization or four-part settings of the music in our **Book of Praise** had the attention of your Committee.

On the one hand, it is full-well realized that it is of extreme importance for the singing within the family circle that such harmonizations become available. That applies mainly to the Hymn section. For the Psalm section books are available which not only contain the complete harmonization of the Psalm tunes but also preludes, postludes, and intermezzi. Such books do not exist for the Hymn section of our Church Book, neither can they be compiled or produced until a decision has been made by Synod 1980 concerning the songs which will together form the Hymn section.

On the other hand, providing a four-part setting of the music appears not to be the task of an ecclesiastical assembly, as little as the printing and administration of the **Book of Praise** is an ecclesiastical matter.

It appears, therefore, advisable that Synod confine itself to express and stress the need for such a harmonization and to request the Committee on the Psalm and Hymn

section to look for ways and means that the members may be provided with a book which contains the complete harmonization of all the songs in the definite **Book of Praise**, or even to insert such harmonization in the **Book of Praise** itself. It is very important for the membership that the above Committee look for brothers and sisters able and willing to do that work, that they stimulate that work, so that possibly the appearing of a book with harmonizations coincide with the appearing of the complete **Book of Praise**. Your Committee would even advise Synod to urge the Committee on the Psalm and Hymn section to seriously consider insertion of those harmonizations in the **Book of Praise** itself to facilitate the singing in Church, Home, and School.

After the above general information your Committee comes to your assembly with the following:

A. Considerations

1. It appears advisable to do our utmost endeavour to see to it that the Synod of 1980 can make the final decisions on a complete **Book of Praise** which will contain not only the rhymings of the Psalms and Hymns but also the Confessional and Liturgical Forms and the Church Order.
2. It therefore appears advisable to appoint committees for:
 - a. The Psalm and Hymn Section;
 - b. The Confessional Forms;
 - c. The Liturgical Forms.
3. No General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches has yet declared an English translation of the Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms adopted and the Churches are, according to Synod 1954, bound to the Dutch texts.
It is therefore desirable that a faithful translation be prepared in order that the Churches may be bound to the Forms in the English language.
4. In order that the work may proceed regularly and as speedily as possible, it also appears advisable to have one of the committees charged with the task of coordinating the above-mentioned efforts. Seeing that the printing of the **Book of Praise** takes place under the supervision of the Committee on the Psalm and Hymn Section, it is proper to charge that Committee with the coordination.
5. As the Churches should be provided with a definite edition of the **Book of Praise** as soon as possible, the committees should be charged to have their complete and definite reports ready before January 31, 1980, so that copies of those reports can be sent to the Churches before February 1, 1980, in accordance with the decision of Synod Orangeville 1968, Acts, Article 41.
6. Since the Churches should not be bound indirectly and prematurely to any specific translation of Holy Writ, no decision should be made as to any existing translation from which the quotations of Scripture passages in our Forms should be taken; instead, use should be made of the gifts and talents which the Lord has given in our midst.
7. The need for a Form for the Ordination/Installation of Missionaries has been long realized and adoption of such a form is appropriate. The Form adopted by our Netherlands sister Churches appears to be wholly Scriptural and suitable. There would be no reason why the Canadian Reformed Churches should not take that Form over in an English translation, provided permission to do so is granted by our Netherlands sister Churches.
8. Adding a "First Admonition" to the Form for the excommunication of non-communicant members would bring this form more in line with that used in the case of communicant members, since this step is desirable in the course of the administration of discipline.
9. With a view to the importance of singing within the families in the Church it is advisable that the Committee on the Psalm and Hymn Section look for ways and means to make available to the membership the harmonizations of the Psalms as well as of the Hymns.
10. Taking into account objections voiced within the Churches against some parts of the Liturgical Forms and taking into account the desirability of having an abbreviated version of the Form for the Lord's Supper, there appears to be need for a general checking and revision of those Liturgical Forms.
11. As the changes proposed in the text of the Belgic Confession and of the Canons

of Dort require the knowledge of classical languages, it is advisable to make use of the gifts and talents which the Lord has given in the Faculty of our College.

12. The Committee on the Psalm and Hymn Section informed Synod that it did reply to Mr. D. Westra's accusations and that no reaction has been received, from which the conclusion may be drawn that this matter is finished.

Recommendations

Synod decide,

1. Gratefully to acknowledge the work done on the Church Book (Psalm and Hymn Section) and by the Committee for the Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms. ADOPTED
2. To continue the Committee on the Church Book, Psalm and Hymn Section, and add to its mandate the charge that it coordinates the work of the committees to be appointed and instructed hereafter. ADOPTED
3. To appoint as a Committee the Faculty of our Theological College and others whose task it shall be:
 - a. To submit a text of the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort in which such changes have been made in the text that a faithful rendering of the original is obtained and in which all quotations from Holy Writ are given in a correct and up-to-date translation.
 - b. To submit a correct and up-to-date translation of all quotations from Scripture contained in our Liturgical Forms.
 - c. To examine and to make use of the report of the Committee for Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms which was submitted to General Synod Coaldale 1977. ADOPTED
4. To appoint a committee to revise the Liturgical Forms and to update the language, especially the Form for the Holy Supper and the Form for the Solemnization of Marriage. ADOPTED
5. To adopt provisionally a Form for the Ordination/Installation of Missionaries and adopt as such the English translation of the Form which our Netherlands sister Churches have inserted in their *Gereformeerd Kerkboek*, published by order of Deputies of the General Synod of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands at Kampen, 1975, page 424, as this translation is presented to Synod by its advisory committee, and to instruct the committee mentioned under 4 above to establish the final text. ADOPTED
6. To add to the Form for the Excommunication of non-communicant members a First Admonition as follows:

"The Consistory has the sad duty of informing the Congregation that a brother/sister, by Baptism ingrafted into the Christian Church, is guilty of the sin of _____, and that he/she in spite of many earnest admonitions, did not show evidence of true repentance. Therefore the Consistory, to its great sorrow is obliged to deal further with this brother/sister, and, if he/she persists in his/her sin, to proceed to his/her excommunication. The Consistory is making this known to you for the first time and in all seriousness exhorts you to pray for him/her continually, that it might please the Lord to bring him/her to repentance."

ADOPTED
7. To urge the Committee on the Psalm and Hymn section to seek ways and means to make available to the membership of the Churches the harmonization of the Psalms and Hymns which will be found in the definite edition of the *Book of Praise*, and, if at all possible, to insert those harmonizations in the *Book of Praise*. ADOPTED
8. To charge the committees mentioned above to have their complete and definite reports ready by January 31, 1980, so that copies of these reports can be in the possession of the Churches nine months before the convening of Synod 1980, as provided by the Synod of Orangeville, 1968, Acts, Article 41. ADOPTED

ARTICLE 61

Book of Praise — Hymns

The following motion, duly seconded, is discussed:
“Synod decide not to increase the number of Hymns.”

REJECTED

ARTICLE 62

Adjournment — Re-opening

The meeting is adjourned at 5:00 p.m., and re-opened in the evening with the singing of Psalm 107:1, 17.

EVENING SESSION — THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1977

ARTICLE 63

Contact Christian Reformed Church

Synod deals with a report of Committee IV on the Contact with the Christian Reformed Church.

The discussion will be continued (see Article 67).

ARTICLE 64

Adjournment

Rev. W. Huizinga requests Synod to sing Psalm 72:1, 9, and leads in thanksgiving. The meeting is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION — FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1977

ARTICLE 65

Re-opening — Adjournment

The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 126:1, 2, he reads Ephesians 3 and asks the LORD for His blessing.

The meeting is adjourned and the Advisory Committees meet.

AFTERNOON SESSION — FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1977

ARTICLE 66

Re-opening — Acts

The meeting is re-opened with the singing of Psalm 56:1, 5.

The Acts, Articles 59-65, are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 67

Contact Christian Reformed Church

The discussion on the report of Committee IV re: the contact with the Christian Reformed Church is continued. The Committee will reconsider its report (see Article 77).

ARTICLE 68

Book of Praise — Hymn Section

Committee IV presents:

Material — Agenda 8, C, 1, a, 2 — Report Sub-Committee on the Book of Praise.

Observations

1. The report is only provisional, just to give Synod some idea of what is being done. We learn from this report that some hymns will be deleted and that some rhymings of Scripture passages and some Scriptural songs will be added.
2. The report does not give any guidelines or reasons which brought the Committee to:
 - a. deleting certain hymns;
 - b. retaining other hymns;
 - c. planning on a rhyming of Psalm 103 in the Hymn Section;
 - d. adding a third rhyming of Romans 8;
 - e. adding another rhyming of Revelation 7.
3. A division of the Hymns will be made which shows “the order of redemptive history which finds its climax in the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ.”
4. The Committee estimates the number of Hymns to total approximately eighty, resulting from inclusion of the so-called Canticles of the ancient Church.
5. The Committee expresses its willingness to present the results of their work on the Hymn Section even before the work on the Psalm Section has been completed.

Recommendations

Synod decide

1. Gratefully to acknowledge the work done by the Sub-committee on the Hymn Section. **ADOPTED**
2. To express agreement with the suggested organization of the Hymn Section as proposed on pages 2 and 3 of the above report. **ADOPTED**
3. To request the Committee on the Psalm and Hymn Section of the **Book of Praise** to present the results of their work on the Hymn Section to the Churches as soon as possible. **ADOPTED**

ARTICLE 69

Adjournment — Re-opening

The meeting is adjourned at 5:00 p.m. and re-opened in the evening with the singing of Psalm 87:1, 5.

EVENING SESSION — FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1977

ARTICLE 70

Appeal Edmonton re: Article 89, Acts, Toronto 1974

Committee I presents:

Material — Agenda 8, K, 1 — (First part of) Appeal of the Church at Edmonton, re: Article 89, Acts, General Synod Toronto 1974.

Observations

1. The consistory of the Church at Edmonton complains about the fact that General Synod Toronto 1974 declared the letter of Br. J. Werkman admissible.
2. The grounds on which this letter should have been declared inadmissible as given by the consistory are the following:
 - a. the consistory did not receive a copy of this letter;
 - b. Br. J. Werkman by-passed the consistory, the classis and the Regional Synod in complaining to the General Synod directly;

- c. General Synod Toronto 1974 in dealing with this letter was in conflict with Articles 30 and 31, Church Order;
- d. the grounds adduced by General Synod Toronto 1974 to deal with this letter were invalid, unjust and setting a precedent for others in similar situations.

Considerations

- 1. That Br. J. Werkman did not send a copy of his letter to Synod to his consistory is not decisive in this matter.
- 2. The letter of Br. J. Werkman does not show that he approached the consistory, classis or Regional Synod with his complaints. The information of the Church at Edmonton confirms that he by-passed the minor assemblies.
- 3. It is not according to Articles 30 and 31, Church Order, to appeal to a General Synod while by-passing the minor assemblies.

Recommendation

Synod decide to declare that Synod Toronto 1974 should have declared the letter of Br. J. Werkman inadmissible on the ground of Articles 30 and 31, Church Order.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 71

Revision Church Order

Committee III presents:

- Material — Agenda 8, F, 1 — Report of the Committee on the Revision of the Church Order.
- F, 2 — Letter Church at Barrhead, re: the draft revision submitted by the Committee.

Observations

- 1. The mandate of the Committee for the Revision of the Church Order was formulated by Synod 1971, Article 82 (and continued by Synod 1974, Article 66, 2b) as follows:
 - “a. to undertake a general revision of the presently adopted Church Order, as much as the profit of the Churches demand it (Article 86, Church Order) with the preservation of the Reformed character of this Church Order, paying special attention to suggestions, submitted in the past by churches and major assemblies concerning change, correction, updating and/or deletion of Articles, as well as profitable additions.
 - b. to keep the Churches informed from time to time of provisional results, so that constructive criticism from the Churches may be expected and digested.”
- 2. The Committee has submitted a draft of 33 Articles of the Church Order, stating that considerable work has been done on the remainder, and that criticism brought in against a previous draft was taken into account, and that according to the mandate given good note was taken of the report on the revision of the Church Order which served at the General Synod of Kampen 1975 of our sister Churches in The Netherlands. It is not the intention of the Committee to delete the present Article 21, Church Order; a re-worded version is to be proposed in the part yet to be submitted.
- 3. Language and formulation are not final and the Committee proposes that the Churches express themselves on the proposed draft.
- 4. The Committee provides no commentary for the proposed changes or deletions.
- 5. Synod 1968, Article 179, provisionally adopted the draft translation presently in use.
- 6. The Church at Barrhead proposes certain deletions from Articles 3, 6 and 27 of the proposed draft.
- 7. Synod 1977 Article 60, Consideration A 1, deems it advisable that Synod 1980 can make a final decision on a complete Book of Praise, which will also include the Church Order.

Considerations

1. Since the proposed draft covers only 33 Articles, no final decision of Synod should be made.
2. The general direction of the proposed draft is in accordance with the mandate as stated in Observation 1.
3. The proposed timetable as set out in Observation 7 results in great urgency.
4. It would be beneficial if the Committee on the Revision of the Church Order would provide a brief explanation of the changes proposed.
5. It is desirable with a view to reference to existing commentaries that the corresponding Articles of the present Church Order are mentioned at the foot of each Article.

Recommendations

1. Gratefully to acknowledge the work done thus far by the Committee on the Revision of the Church Order.
2. To continue the Committee on the Revision of the Church Order to complete its mandate.
3. To charge the Committee:
 - a. to forward a complete draft along with brief explanations to the Churches within one year and to invite comments on it.
 - b. to submit a final draft for the General Synod and to the Churches by January 31, 1980.
 - c. to mention at the foot of each Article the corresponding Articles of the present Church Order.
4. To forward to the Committee the material received, including the comments of the Advisory Committee of this Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 72

Adjournment

Rev. J. Mulder requests Synod to sing Psalm 62:4, 5 and leads in thanksgiving. The meeting is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION — SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1977

ARTICLE 73

Re-opening — Acts

The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 147:1, 5, 6. He reads from Holy Scripture Psalm 147 and leads in prayer.

The Acts, Articles 66-72, are read and adopted.

The meeting adjourns; the Advisory Committees meet.

ARTICLE 74

Adjournment

At noon hour Rev. C. Oly reads Isaiah 57:14-21 and leads in thanksgiving. Synod is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION — MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1977

ARTICLE 75

Re-opening — Adjournment

The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 46:1, 2. He reads Ephesians 4:1-16 and leads in prayer.

The meeting adjourns. The Advisory Committees meet.

EVENING SESSION — MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1977

ARTICLE 76

Re-opening

Synod is re-opened with the singing of Psalm 106:1, 23.

ARTICLE 77

Contact Christian Reformed Church

Committee IV presents:

- Material — Agenda 8, H, 1 — Letter Church at Edmonton, re: Article 146, Acts, General Synod Toronto 1974.
- H, 2 — Letter from Committee appointed by Synod Toronto 1974 to send an Appeal to the Christian Reformed Church.
- H, 3 — Copies of the Appeal sent to the Christian Reformed Church. (See Appendix VII, p. 102.)

Information

The Consistory of the Church at Edmonton comes to Synod with three requests:

- A. "To declare that the General Synod Toronto 1974 based its decision 'to discontinue the contact with the Christian Reformed Church as until now was maintained by the Committee on Contact with the Christian Reformed Church' on incomplete grounds."
- B. "To declare that the General Synod 1974 should not have decided 'to discontinue the contact with the Christian Reformed Church as until now was maintained by the Committee on Contact with the Christian Reformed Church.'"
- C. To "seriously consider to again appoint a Committee for Contact with the Christian Reformed Church."

A. Observations

The Church at Edmonton requests your assembly "to declare that the General Synod of Toronto 1974 based its decision 'to discontinue the contact with the Christian Reformed Church' on incomplete grounds."

For this request the Church at Edmonton adduces the following grounds:

1. The Committee on Contact with the Christian Reformed Church recommended "That Synod Toronto 1974 continue the Committee on Contact with the Christian Reformed Church"; Synod Toronto 1974 "decided differently, however, without pointing out where in its judgment the Contact Committee had gone wrong in either stating or considering the facts, or in concluding from these facts."
2. Synod 1974 based its decision to discontinue our Contact Committee on the conclusion that "no fruitful discussion with a view to reaching union with the Christian Reformed Church may be expected." "This assumption is made because of the fact that 'it is evident that the Acts of Synod 1974 of the Christian

Reformed Church show a decisive alteration of the rules, so that a relationship with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland is continued, while judgment on the faithfulness of these churches is suspended."

Although deploring "that the Christian Reformed Church has suspended judgment on the faithfulness of the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland," Edmonton states that Synod Toronto 1974 "did not take into consideration the fact, known to Synod, that implicitly the faithfulness of the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland has been questioned to such an extent that 'on the basis of the now existing rules the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church would have to cut off all relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland completely.'" The interpretation of the decision of the Christian Reformed Synod 1974, Edmonton claims, "did not reckon with all the available information about its meaning."

3. "When the Christian Reformed Synod 1972 decided to discontinue their Committee for Contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches, the reason was that the remaining point for discussion . . . was in the province of another Committee." In the second consideration of Toronto's decision the wrong impression is given "that the Christian Reformed Synod 1972 has discontinued the contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches."
4. Synod Toronto 1974 did not consider that the decision of the Christian Reformed Synod 1974 "to 'pursue appropriate avenues of increased contact' with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" might include "that the Christian Reformed Church wants to check further into the recent theological trends in the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland."

Considerations

1. In their additional report, our Contact Committee referred to the decision of the Synod of Orangeville 1968, and stated that they could have executed Orangeville's decision to the end. Since points 2 and 3 of the decision of Orangeville had already been complied with, only point 4, the "Appeal" was left.

Synod Toronto 1974 thus acted according to the recommendation of the Contact Committee, be it that Synod Toronto 1974 appointed a special committee for that task. The recommendation of the Contact Committee was "sound," as Edmonton states. Synod decided accordingly and did not deviate from the recommendation as Edmonton alleges.

2. Whether one looks at the change of relationship from the angle of suspending judgment officially or from the angle of implicit questioning of the faithfulness of the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, it is clear that the Christian Reformed Church did not wish to break off that relationship itself.

Synod Toronto 1974 did not neglect either aspect of the continued relationship. The Synod 1974 of the Christian Reformed Church saw in the new relationship possibilities for "increased contact" with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

It is neither an assumption nor an interpretation but only a correct conclusion when Synod Toronto 1974 adduced as reason for its decision that "no fruitful discussion with a view to reaching union with the Christian Reformed Church may be expected."

3. Synod 1972 of the Christian Reformed Church decided to discontinue the Contact Committee and assured "the Canadian Reformed Churches of its willingness to continue discussion with them in the future, whenever they feel conditions will be conducive for a fruitful exchange." From this it is clear that the Christian Reformed Church indeed considered discontinuation of the Contact Committee to be a discontinuation of the contact as such, only to be resumed when the Canadian Reformed Churches should feel the conditions to be conducive for fruitful discussions (Acts 1972, Article 46).
4. Edmonton assumes in its interpretation of the decision of the Christian Reformed Synod 1974 that pursuing "appropriate avenues of increased contact" with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland "might include that the Christian Reformed Church wants to check further into the recent theologi-

cal trends in the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland." However, it was clear to Synod Toronto 1974 from the decision of the Christian Reformed Synod 1974 itself that the new relationship and the "appropriate avenues of increased contact . . . can and should be employed to strengthen rather than weaken inter-church bonds whenever this is warranted by Reformed ecumenical principles" (Acts 1974, Article 62).

As for further investigation of "recent theological trends in the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland," the Christian Reformed Synod 1974 stated that the specific mandate of 1970 and 1971, to inquire into recent theological trends in the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland was fulfilled (Acts, Synod 1974, Article 62, C 8).

5. Synod Toronto 1974 based its decision on sound and complete grounds.

Recommendation

Synod decide

not to grant the request of the Church at Edmonton to declare that Synod 1974 based its decision on incomplete grounds. ADOPTED

B. Observations

Edmonton also requests your assembly to declare "that the General Synod Toronto 1974 should not have decided 'to discontinue the contact with the Christian Reformed Church . . .'"

For this request Edmonton adduces the following grounds:

1. Synod "has not made it unquestionably clear that the 'Conclusion' must be drawn that 'the position of the Christian Reformed Church in the matter of Church correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland has now been clearly settled and finalized.'" Since the mandate of our Contact Committee reads "to discuss the matter of Church Correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland until the position of the Christian Reformed Church has become clear," and since Synod Toronto 1974 did not make it clear that that position indeed had become clear, Synod Toronto 1974 "could not adduce as ground that the Contact Committee had fulfilled its mandate."
2. Discontinuation of our Contact Committee "has rendered it impossible to confront the Christian Reformed Inter-Church Relations Committee in face-to-face contact with our objections against their changing of the rules for Correspondence while suspending judgment on the faithfulness of the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, and to call the Christian Reformed Church to account for this."

Considerations

1. Synod Toronto 1974 correctly concluded that the position of the Christian Reformed Church in the matter of correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland had been settled and finalized. The Christian Reformed Contact Committee also concluded the same when it recommended to Synod 1972, "That, in the event that one of our future synods changes the present relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken, Synod officially advise the Canadian Reformed Churches of such action and extend an invitation to them to initiate further discussion on this matter" (Acts, Synod Toronto 1974, p. 97).
2. Discontinuation of a special Contact Committee did indeed render it impossible to "confront the Christian Reformed Inter-Church Relations Committee in face-to-face contact with our objections," but it did not render it impossible to confront the whole Christian Reformed Church as such with our objections. That confronting was done by means of another "Appeal," as recommended by our Contact Committee in their additional report to Synod 1974.

Recommendation

Synod decide

not to grant the request of the Church at Edmonton to declare that Synod 1974 should not have decided to discontinue the contact with the Christian Reformed Church. ADOPTED

C. Observations

Edmonton further requests your assembly seriously to consider "to again appoint a Committee for Contact with the Christian Reformed Church" and that "such a Committee in face-to-face contact with representatives of the Christian Reformed Church

1. apologizes for the fact that the Canadian Reformed Churches without good grounds discontinued the contact by means of a Committee after Synod 1974;
2. speaks about the matter of the relationship with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken 'and in this way tries to remove, and to have removed, any obstacle which prevents union between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Church in the unity of the true faith.' "

Considerations

Edmonton did not prove that appointment of a Committee is necessary now that the whole Christian Reformed Church has been confronted with our objections by means of an "Appeal," in which our objections against the relationship with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have been set forth.

1. Synod Toronto 1974 had good and sufficient grounds for its decision and thus an apology would be wholly out of place.
2. The Canadian Reformed Churches appointed a Committee with the mandate to speak about specific obstacles. The main obstacle left is the correspondence or anyway the relationship which the Christian Reformed Church has with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, and which is an absolute impediment to the Canadian Reformed Churches for coming to a union. The Christian Reformed Synod 1972, Acts, Article 46 B 2, decided to "assure the Canadian Reformed Churches of its willingness to continue discussions with them in the future, whenever they feel conditions will be conducive for fruitful exchange."

Edmonton did not prove that the conditions are indeed conducive for such a fruitful exchange.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ prayed to the Father "that they may be one," which is a unity in obedience and in true faith. Therefore the Churches may only engage in such contacts with others that are directed to and may be expected to result in unity of the true faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.

Recommendation

Synod decide
not to grant the request of the Church at Edmonton to again appoint a Committee for Contact with the Christian Reformed Church. ADOPTED

D. Observation

The Committee appointed by Synod Toronto 1974 to draft and to send a Christian Appeal to the Christian Reformed Community submits a 22 page Appeal.

Recommendation

- Synod decide
1. gratefully to acknowledge the work done by the Committee which sent a Christian Appeal on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches to the Christian Reformed Community;
 2. to have the Appeal added to the Acts as an Appendix. ADOPTED

ARTICLE 78

Information Flow

Committee II presents:

Material — Agenda 8, A, 7 — Letter of the Ebenezer Church, Burlington, Ontario.

Observations

1. This Church has noticed that, when overtures re: the College are made, it sometimes happens that the Board of Governors and the Faculty are not informed.
2. This Church suggests that Synod express itself on this matter, and recommend

“that from now on copies of overtures by Churches re the College also be sent to the Board of Governors and the Faculty (and, if needed, the Board of Trustees).”

Consideration

When overtures are made to Synod that have to do with the Constitution of the College, it is desirable that the Board of Governors in the first place, and, if applicable, the Faculty, respectively the Board of Trustees, receive a copy of such an overture.

Recommendations

Synod decide

1. to concur with the suggestion of the Ebenezer Church at Burlington;
2. and accordingly to request the Churches that, when they send overtures to Synod which have to do with the Constitution of the College, they send a copy of such an overture to the Board of Governors in the first place, and, if applicable, to the Faculty, respectively to the Board of Trustees, for their information.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 79

Appeal Edmonton re: Article 89, Acts, Toronto 1974

Committee I presents:

Material — Agenda 8, K, 1 — (Second part of) Appeal of the Church at Edmonton, Alberta, re: Article 89, Acts, General Synod Toronto 1974.

Observations

1. The consistory of the Church at Edmonton requests Synod to declare that General Synod Toronto 1974 should not have made the words, “Although General Synod unanimously agrees with the brethren on the ‘desirability of Canadian Reformed Schools’ ” part of its decision.
2. The consistory of the Church at Edmonton submits as grounds:
 - a. General Synod Toronto 1974 had only to judge the appeal of the brs. Huizinga, Merkus and Visscher against the decisions of Regional Synod;
 - b. General Synod created a precedent by making a “general statement” which is in conflict with Article 30, Church Order, “In these assemblies no other than ecclesiastical matters shall be transacted.” To substantiate its claim the Church at Edmonton refers to Acts, General Synod 1974, Article 171, p. 73, consideration 2, b.

Considerations

1. The words “unanimously agrees with the brethren on the desirability of Canadian Reformed Schools” is a statement in which Synod 1974 expressed that it did not reject the appeal of the brs. Huizinga et al. because of their desire with respect to the matter of Canadian Reformed Schools but because solution to the problem as set forth by them could not be reached by a synodical decision.
2. The Church at Edmonton did not prove that General Synod 1974 by making such a statement acted in conflict with Article 30, Church Order.
3. The reference of the Church at Edmonton to Article 171, p. 73, consideration 2, b of the Acts of General Synod Toronto is not relevant to the matter, because that consideration speaks about providing Christian education and not about the principles of promoting it.

Recommendation

Synod decide not to grant the request of the Church at Edmonton.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 80

Adjournment

Rev. M. van Beveren requests the singing of Psalm 98:4 and leads in thanksgiving. The meeting adjourns.

MORNING SESSION — TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1977

ARTICLE 81

Re-opening — Acts

The Chairman re-opens the meeting; requests Synod to sing Psalm 133 and reads I John 4:1-12. In prayer he asks the LORD's blessing.
The Acts, Articles 73-80, are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 82

Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned. The Advisory Committees meet.

EVENING SESSION — TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1977

ARTICLE 83

Re-opening

Synod is re-opened with the singing of Psalm 26:2, 5.

ARTICLE 84

Contact Orthodox Presbyterian Church

A beginning is made with the discussion of the report presented by Advisory Committee I on the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (see Article 88).

ARTICLE 85

Adjournment

Br. C. Van Seters requests the singing of Hymn 50:1, 2; he leads in thanksgiving. The meeting is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1977

ARTICLE 86

Re-opening — Adjournment

The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 119:41, 42; from the Holy Scripture he reads Romans 12:1-8 and he asks the LORD for His blessing over the work to be done.
The meeting is adjourned; the Advisory Committees meet until evening.

EVENING SESSION — WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1977

ARTICLE 87

Re-opening

Synod is re-opened with the singing of Hymn 7:1, 2.

ARTICLE 88

Contact Orthodox Presbyterian Church

The discussion of the report of Committee I on contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is continued (see Article 91).

ARTICLE 89

Adjournment

Br. C. Walinga requests the singing of Psalm 108:1, 2 and leads in thanksgiving.

MORNING SESSION — THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1977

ARTICLE 90

Re-opening — Adjournment

The Chairman requests the singing of Hymn 40:1-4 and reads from Holy Scripture I Peter 1:22-2:11. In prayer he asks for the LORD's blessing.

The meeting is adjourned and the Advisory Committees meet. At 11:00 a.m. the meeting is re-opened and the discussion on the report of Committee I is continued.

AFTERNOON SESSION — THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1977

ARTICLE 91

Contact Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Committee I presented:

- Material — Agenda 8, G, 1 — Report of the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. (See Appendix VI, p. 94.)
- G, 2 — Overture Church at Brampton, Ontario.
G, 3 — Overture Church at Barrhead, Alberta.
G, 4 — Overture Church at New Westminster, B.C.
G, 5 — Overture Church at Coaldale, Alberta.

I. Observations

1. The Committee reports that they were unable to complete their mandate due to the departure of the convener and the illness of their vice-chairman.
2. The Committee submits a copy of a letter from the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church dated April 14, 1976, received in answer to a letter of March 6, 1974, which had requested to "complement the answer of the 40th General Assembly with a comment on the doctrinal and church-political points stated in a letter of March 1972" (see Acts, General Synod Toronto 1974, p. 57, 5, 1).
3. The Committee was not able to react to this letter of April 14, 1976 due to the above (sub 1) reasons but submits to Synod a draft reply which deals with part of the letter.
4. The Committee does not submit an evaluation of the letter of April 14, 1976, and does not make a recommendation regarding continuation of the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
5. The Committee asks Synod for directives as to the disposition of the files of this and previous committees.
6. The Committee proposes that Synod send a letter of appreciation to the Rev. G. Van Rongen for the work he did as a member of the Committee till his departure for The Netherlands.

Considerations

- a. It is regrettable that due to unforeseen circumstances the Committee was unable to complete its mandate.
- b. The letter of April 14, 1976 received from the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations contains valuable information on the doctrinal matters and matters of church polity which are under discussion in our contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- c. The draft submitted by the Committee is not to be used as a reply to the letter of April 14, 1976, since it shows too much the marks of a draft.

Recommendations

Synod decide

- a. to discharge the Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with appreciation for the work done, and to request them to pass on their files and those of the previous committees to the Committee-to-be-appointed;
 - b. to send a letter to the Rev. G. Van Rongen expressing Synod's appreciation for the work he did while a member of the Committee.
- ADOPTED

II. Observations

1. The Church at Brampton and the Church at Barrhead request Synod to state that we can recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true church of Jesus Christ.
2. The Church at Coaldale proposes that Synod decide to officially recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, in their letter of April 14, 1976, asked our Committee whether the Canadian Reformed Churches are prepared to say that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shows the marks of the false church as given in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession.

Considerations

- a. Synod Edmonton 1965 stated that "the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (a) als een Presbyteriaanse Kerk vrucht is van de Calvinistische Reformatie; (b) belijdenisgeschriften en een kerkregering heeft, die Calvinistisch van karakter zijn; (c) in deze eeuw beslist gekozen heeft voor de Orthodoxie en tegen het Modernisme" (Acts, Article 141, III, A, 1, a, b, c).
- b. Synod Edmonton 1965 also stated that "er tussen de Orthodox Presbyterian Church en onze kerken verschillen zijn in belijdenis en kerkregering," and, "verschillen zijn ter zake van correspondentie met andere kerkgenootschappen."
- c. From the letter of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of April 14, 1976, it appears that the divergencies in confession and church polity, 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.
- d. The General Synod of our Netherlands sister Churches in 1967 accepted the statement of the Regional Synod of Groningen that the Westminster Confession of Faith is "een voluit Gereformeerd belijdenisgeschrift" (Acta, Artikel 241, D).
- e. No evidence has been brought forward so as to question the above statement of our Netherlands sister Churches.
- f. Synod Orangeville 1968 gratefully acknowledged the fact that "the Orthodox Presbyterian Church can accept the Canadian Reformed Churches as true Churches on the basis of their doctrinal standards and church government (Report Deputies, page 2)," and "to express its gratitude that it is evident that in many respects the good fight of the faith is being fought in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church" (Acts, Article 154, Recommendation B and C).
- g. Synod New Westminster 1971 gratefully acknowledged "that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church 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," and "that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church 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 I,7, "all its decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God" (Acts, Article 92, Conclusion 1 and 2).
- h. The letter of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of April 14, 1976, confirms that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church wholeheartedly adheres to the Westminster Confession of Faith and maintains the rules for church polity as laid down in the Form of Government, and also that the divergencies having been discussed in this letter do not form an impediment to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - i. With regard to the relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with other Churches, it is to be noted that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has repeatedly admonished the (Synodical) Reformed Churches in The Netherlands for not maintaining the Reformed Creeds, thereby honouring the, at the time, existing rules for correspondence, till it was decided in 1973 to terminate the sister Church relationship with the (Synodical) Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. In 1975 an invitation from the same churches to enter into the relationship "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship" was declined by the 42nd General Assembly "in view of the fact that the reasons leading to the decision of 1973 are still valid."
 - j. In a report to the 43rd General Assembly (1976) the Committee on Reformed Ecumenical Synod Matters stated that they were preparing "papers showing that the failure of the (Synodical) Reformed Church in The Netherlands to maintain the Reformed Confessions disqualifies them from membership in the R.E.S., and that denominational membership in the W.C.C. is unbiblical and incompatible with membership in the R.E.S."
 - k. Although the Canadian Reformed Churches deplore the membership of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, it is to be noted that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church uses this membership in a positive way for the maintaining of the Reformed Confessions.
 - l. After 12 years of contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church by means of appointed Committees the Canadian Reformed Churches must be considered able and willing to give a clear answer to the question of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations whether or not the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shows the marks of the true Church as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession.

Recommendation

Synod decide

With thankfulness to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession.

ADOPTED

III. Observations

1. The Churches at Brampton and Barrhead request Synod to establish a fraternal relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
2. The Church at New Westminster proposes that Synod recognize that a fraternal relationship exists between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches, and that Synod request the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to submit a more defined explanation of officially established "fraternal relationship."
3. The Church at Coaldale proposes that Synod offer the Orthodox Presbyterian Church a new relationship called "ecclesiastical contact" of which the contents is defined in three rules.
4. The preference of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for " 'fraternal relationship' prevents the use of the rules for correspondence as a condition for entering into correspondence" (Synod New Westminster 1971, Acts, Article 92, Conclusion 6).
5. Synod Toronto 1974 decided not to take a decision regarding the fraternal relationship since Synod did not know what exactly the contents of such fraternal relationship is and since the Committee for Contact asked for a clarification of this relationship (Acts, Article 149, Recommendation 2).
6. The Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations in their letter of April

- 14, 1976, invites the Canadian Reformed Churches to consider "a fraternal relationship which would begin to realize the goals of negative discipline embraced in Rule 1 of your Rules for Correspondence as well as of positive discipline by means of the kind of activity described in Rule 2," and "if it is not found to be satisfactory to offer an alternative proposal."
7. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church prefers "at this time" a fraternal relationship to ecclesiastical correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches (see Acts, General Synod Toronto 1974, Article 149, p. 58, 2a and 2b). This preference is confirmed in the letter of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations dated April 14, 1976.
 8. The 40th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church stated that if the Canadian Reformed Churches are prepared to accept a fraternal relationship, "then a basis for continued, and potentially fruitful, talks on doctrine and polity may be established" (see their letter dated August 10, 1973).
 9. The Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations in their letter of April 14, 1976, does not give a clear definition of the term "fraternal relations."
 10. The Church at Coaldale informs Synod that according to the Chairman of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations no "quotations from official church documents that explain precisely what the Orthodox Presbyterian Church means by fraternal relations" are available.

Considerations

- a. Whereas our Lord Jesus Christ has prayed to the Father "that they shall be one," therefore His Churches may only entertain contact with others in such a way that it is directed towards and eventually may result in the unity of the true faith.
- b. It is desirable that the fellowship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church finds expression in an officially established contact with rules defined for practical use.
- c. A sister Church relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church according to the adopted rules for correspondence cannot be reached at this time.
- d. The term "fraternal relations" is also used by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for relations with other churches and appears to be too vaguely defined and too broad for use by the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- e. 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 the true faith can be established.

Recommendation

Synod decide

To offer to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church a temporary relationship called "ecclesiastical contact" with the following rules:

- a. to invite delegates to each other's General Assemblies or General Synods 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 issues of mutual concern, and to solicit comments on these documents;
- c. to be diligent by means of continued discussions to use the contact for the purpose of reaching full correspondence.

ADOPTED

IV. Considerations

1. The mandate given by Synod Toronto 1974 should be completed by a Committee to be appointed.
2. Further discussion on divergencies in confession and church polity is desirable.

Recommendations

Synod decide

To continue the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the mandate:

- a. to inform the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the decisions of Synod regarding the Orthodox Presbyterian Church;

- b. to continue the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church while taking into account the rules for "Ecclesiastical Contact";
- c. to respond to the letter of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church dated April 14, 1976;
- d. to discuss and evaluate the relationships of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with other Churches, as the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Christian Reformed Church;
- e. to inform the Churches from time to time about the progress made (e.g., by press releases of combined Committee meetings);
- f. to report on its activities to the next General Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 92

Adjournment

At 5:00 p.m. the meeting is adjourned.

EVENING SESSION — THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1977

ARTICLE 93

Re-opening — Acts

Synod is re-opened with the singing of Psalm 145:1, 2.
The Acts, Articles 81-92, are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 94

Contact Other Churches

Committee I presents:

Material — Agenda 8, B, 2 — Appeal of the Church at Edmonton against decisions of General Synod Toronto 1974, Acts, Articles 20 and 64.

Observations

1. The Church at Edmonton is not satisfied with the decisions of General Synod Toronto 1974, Acts, Articles 20 and 64, regarding contact with other churches. They object for the following reasons:
 - a. Synod placed a burden on a local church by insisting that a local church gather sufficient evidence to prove that a group of churches not only accept the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dort, but that they also maintain the same.
 - b. Synod lacked eagerness and desire to do what is in their province and power.
 - c. It is "too much" for a local church to ascertain whether a group of churches maintain the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order.
 - d. Synod Hamilton 1962 judged incorrectly when it required so much evidence from a local church that by virtue of this evidence to seek contact would be superfluous; the required amount of evidence would be sufficient to seek to establish correspondence (and not just contact).
2. The Church at Edmonton proposes:
 - a. 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."
 - b. to add to the mandate of this Committee or if desirable to another Committee the following:

"To take up contact with the Free Reformed Church of North-America as requested by the Church at Lincoln and to take up contact with the Presbyterian Church in America as requested by the Church at Edmonton" (Acts, Synod 1974, Articles 20 and 64).

Considerations

1. Synod 1974 decided that in the case of Lincoln no evidence was given to substantiate whether the churches in question maintain the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dort and that in the case of Edmonton sufficient information was lacking in order to take up contact with other churches (Acts, Synod 1974, Articles 20 and 64).
2. It is not a lack of eagerness or desire if a Synod does not accede to a request to seek contact, if in their opinion insufficient evidence is provided.
3. The object of all contact with other churches in the first and foremost place must be to establish ecclesiastical correspondence, so that the ecclesiastical unity can be experienced with those who confess the true faith and maintain the same.
4. According to the decision of Synod 1962, (Acts, Article 82), Synod 1965, (Acts, Article 141 sub II) and Synod 1974, (Acts, Articles 20 and 64), sufficient information, such as origin, history, statistical data, etc., should be provided.
5. The Church at Edmonton has not proven that the approach taken by previous Synods is against the Word of God or that Article 30, Church Order, prohibits or prevents a minor assembly to make preparatory investigation in matters of contact with other churches.
6. The Church at Edmonton has not proven that it is undesirable to have sufficient evidence supplied to Synods so that the road to full correspondence can be initiated.
7. A Synod is, according to well established practices (Synod 1962, 1965, 1974), not an institution that can be called upon to investigate all potential church relations without being supplied with such a proof as to warrant the initiation of contact with other churches.
8. The Church at Edmonton does not supply grounds for the proposal to give the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad the mandate "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 the following Synod." They only refer to Acts and decisions of sister Churches abroad.
9. The Church at Edmonton did not advance new evidence to Synod in the matter of initiating contact with the Free Reformed Church of North-America or the Presbyterian Church in America (formerly the National Presbyterian Church).

Recommendation

Synod decide

To reject the appeals of the Church at Edmonton and not to accede to its proposals. ADOPTED

ARTICLE 95

Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod

Committee I presents:

Material — Agenda 8, N, 1 — Proposal Church at Calgary, Alberta.

Observations

- a. The Church at Calgary proposes that the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church receive in addition to their mandate with regard to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the mandate to seek contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, with a view to determining whether church correspondence can be established with this church federation.
- b. The Church at Calgary states that the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, has essentially the same confessional Standards and Form of Government as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and that the two church groups are continuing to have talks with a view to merger.
- c. The Church at Calgary mentions personal contacts on a local level which "have convinced us that the faithfulness of these churches is such that we may expect fruitful contact."

Considerations

- a. Synod Edmonton 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 Confession and church government, but also practically maintain the same (Acts, Article 141, II).
- b. Minor assemblies when making a proposal for taking up contact with other churches should supply Synods with sufficient information as it appears from decisions made by General Synod Hamilton 1962, Acts, Article 82 and General Synod Edmonton 1965, Acts, Article 141, sub II (see General Synod Toronto, Acts, Article 64).
- c. The Church at Calgary does not elaborate on the reported faithfulness of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.
- d. The Church at Calgary should have served Synod by providing further information about these churches re: e.g., confession, government, origin, history, statistical data (compare General Synod Toronto 1974, Acts, Article 20, Consideration 7).

Recommendation

Synod decide
Not to accede to the proposal of the Church at Calgary. ADOPTED

ARTICLE 96

Adjournment

Br. H.A. Berends requests Synod to sing Psalm 111:1, 4 and leads in thanksgiving.

MORNING SESSION — FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1977

ARTICLE 97

Re-opening — Acts

The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 8:1, 2, 3. From Holy Scripture he reads II Peter 1:1-11, and leads in prayer.

The Acts, Articles 93-96, are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 98

Translation Heidelberg Catechism

Committee III presents:

- Material** — Agenda 8, D, 1 — The report of the Committee appointed by Synod Toronto 1974 and an additional covering letter.
- D, 2 — A letter from the Church at Barrhead, re: recommendations.
- D, 3 — A letter from the Church at Brampton, re: recommendations.
- D, 4 — A letter from the Church at Toronto, re: recommendations.

Observations

1. Synod New Westminster 1971, Article 83, formulated the guidelines for the Committee on the Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism in its mandate as follows:

To revise the text of the Heidelberg Catechism

- a. by replacing difficult and archaic words and expressions as far as proper equivalents can be derived from today's English;
- b. by re-casting sentences, which are too complicated into positive and independent sentences, which form a direct answer to the questions, in close adherence to the original German text.

2. Synod Toronto 1974 continued the Committee for the Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism with the following mandate:
 - a. to prepare a second draft with the use of comments, etc., which were received by that Synod;
 - b. to solicit further comments which were to be submitted to the Committee within 6 months after publication of the decision;
 - c. to make this second draft available to the Churches one year after this Synod has come to an end, in order to give the Churches ample time to examine it;
 - d. to study the matter of the proof texts added to the Catechism questions and answers, which study should include:
 1. establishing what the original proof texts are;
 2. whether the selection of Scripture references can be improved by replacing, deleting and/or adding to the original ones.
3. The Committee reports that in the second draft which was submitted for "examination and possible approval" the comments and criticism on the first draft were taken into account and that they have attempted to work within the guidelines mentioned in Observation 1 above. Special mention is made of the changes which were necessary in order to adhere closely to the original German text (third edition, 1563). The Committee included "Historical Notes" and the "Preface" to the original editions of 1563.
4. The Committee reports that they were unable to complete point d (Observation 2) of their mandate with respect to proof texts.
5. The letter from the Church at Barrhead, Alberta, makes a number of comments and recommendations on the second draft and requests that the RSV be used instead of the KJV for the biblical quotations (which should be referenced).
6. The letter from the Church at Brampton urges "that the translation of the Catechism only undergo major change if such change is really necessary (and not just for the sake of sticking to the German text)." They also recommend that the Dutch deputies who worked on their draft translation of the Heidelberg Catechism be consulted in order to avoid too widely divergent renditions.
7. The letter from the Church at Toronto objects to the use of KJV instead of the RSV in the biblical quotations.

Considerations

1. The Committee has indeed adhered closely to the mandate with respect to linguistics and the original German text.
2. In certain instances, such as Question and Answer 44 (Christ suffered in His soul) and Question and Answer 75 (Christ's body broken on the cross), deviation from the German text is desirable. This was not done in the second draft.
3. Much of the detailed criticism submitted to Synod 1977 (Observation 5, 6, 7) results from having compared this draft with the Dutch or Latin texts, which in several instances are different from the original German text.
4. The Committee in its work has consulted and compared eight translations, including the one adopted by our sister Churches in The Netherlands (Hattem, 1972).
5. The second draft has been in the hands of the Churches since September 1976 and the Committee has received no response.
6. The Committee has used the KJV for the biblical quotations on the ground that "all the churches agree on this translation." Synod 1977, Article 60, recommendation 3, decided to appoint a committee with the task to submit a correct and up-to-date translation for all quotations in the doctrinal and liturgical forms. Including the Heidelberg Catechism in this mandate will result in desirable uniformity.
7. In order that this revised draft which will be of major importance to the Churches may be tested in actual practice, it is desirable that a proposed final draft be made available for use in catechism classes as soon as possible.

Recommendations

Synod decide

1. to express its gratitude for the substantial work done by the Committee for the Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism appointed by Synod 1974;
2. to continue the Committee with the following mandate:

- a. to revise the second draft translation, taking into account the comments received, including those of the Advisory Committee for this Synod, and to use the following guidelines:
 - i. adhere closely to the original German text (third edition, 1563);
 - ii. replace difficult and archaic words and expressions if proper equivalents are available in today's English;
 - iii. restructure sentences which are too complicated into positive, separate sentences which directly answer the question;
 - iv. provide reasons when deviation from the German text is necessary on theological grounds.
 - b. to submit this revised draft together with reference notes to the Churches and to invite comments to be submitted to the Committee by January 1980;
 - c. to submit their report with recommendations to the Synod 1980;
 - d. to arrange for publication of this revised draft without comments in booklet form for use in the Churches on a trial basis by November 1978;
 - e. to establish what the original proof texts are and to see whether the selection of Scripture references can be improved by replacing, deleting and/or adding to the original ones and to include them in the publication, if possible;
 - f. to provide an index to cross-reference the Three Forms of Unity.
3. to enlarge the mandate of the Committee for Scripture Quotations in the Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms given by Synod 1977, Article 60, Recommendation 3 by including the quotations in the Heidelberg Catechism. ADOPTED

ARTICLE 99

Admission Requirements — Theological College

Committee II presents:

- Material** — Agenda 8, A, 6 — A letter of the Church at Smithers, B.C., proposing a change in the admission requirements of the College.
- A, 11 — A letter from the Church at Hamilton, Ontario, also proposing to change the admission requirements.
- A, 12 — A letter of the Church at Toronto, Ontario, informing Synod that it is not in favour of the proposal of the Church at Smithers.

Information

1. The Church at Smithers proposes to Synod "to drop the requirements of a B.A. degree and change Article XXIII, sub 1, as follows: 'A person who is a member of one of the Churches, who presents a good attestation of confession and life, and who has a High School diploma plus a Certificate of a two-year course in Philosophy, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, or if he has reached an equivalent level of education, and if he successfully passes an entrance examination. The requirements for such an examination shall be set by the Senate and approved by the Board of Governors' " (the proposed change is in bold print).
2. The first ground for this proposal is that the university education is "totally secular" and "of an extremely poisonous nature."
3. The consistory adds that this situation has become more serious during the 15 years after "the unanimous decision of the Synod of 1962 concerning the Admission to the College upon a B.A. degree."
4. The consistory, therefore, deems this university education "inadequate for the principal preparation for the Ministry." Smithers adds: "The Churches are primarily in need of Reformed ministers," who know the Scriptures and related subjects; and secondarily of ministers who are scientifically educated in the "wisdoms of this world."
5. The second ground for this proposal is that the great need for more ministers of the Word can be more easily filled if the B.A. degree requirement is dropped, since there are parents "who cannot take the responsibility of sending their children to a secular University."

6. The consistory adduces as its third ground that "the present Senate which provides both Scriptural and scientific education . . . is capable of safeguarding the degree of scientific education."
7. The consistory of the Church at Hamilton proposes to Synod to alter Article XXIII, sub 1, through an addition as follows:
 ". . . who has a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree from a recognized University or who successfully followed a three-year course offered at our Theological College, qualifies for admission to the College . . ." (the proposed addition is in bold print).
8. The consistory of the Church at Hamilton expresses its agreement with the proposal of the Church at Smithers, although with an amendment.
9. Hamilton states that Synod 1974, when arguing that parents, not Churches, must acquaint the students with the Holy Scriptures, is not to the point. The point at issue is the teaching of classic languages, philosophy, etc., which teaching cannot be expected from the parents. Hamilton therefore asks whether the College could not provide such training for the time being for those who do not feel free to attend a secular university.
10. a. Over against the statement of Synod 1974 that it is not proven that the B.A. requirement is wrong, Hamilton argues that the B.A. degree is not a necessity required by the Scriptures. Hamilton asks: "Is it then good and right to make (it) an **absolute** requirement?"
 b. Since the B.A. requirement is a barricade for some, and can "cause some to stumble" Hamilton proposes to open two ways for admission: the way of the B.A. degree, and a three-year course to be given at the College.
11. Hamilton adds that some universities do not offer courses in Biblical Hebrew or Greek, which has handicapped some students.
12. The consistory of the Bethel Canadian Reformed Church at Toronto informs Synod that it is not in favour of the proposal of Smithers and states that "no Church should just come up with this matter again, without refuting the arguments of Synod 1974." It adds that acceptance of Smithers's proposal would change the character of the Theological College "into some kind of extended Bible School."

I. ADMISSIBILITY

Observations

1. The proposal of Smithers is basically the same as the one submitted by the Church at Smithville to Synod 1974 (see Acts, Article 171, sub C). It differs in that it does not propose that a two-year preparatory course should be given at our College, but the main point in both proposals is to drop the requirement of a B.A. degree (see Information 1).
2. Smithville gave as grounds that the "Churches need **faithful** men who shall be able to teach others also the pure doctrine of the Scriptures," while the requirement of a B.A. degree will not "contribute to the required faithfulness, nor to the ability to teach others also."
3. The Church at Smithers adduces as ground that the secular university education, today even worse than 15 years ago, is inadequate for the principal preparation for the ministry (see Information 2, 3, 4).

Consideration ad Observations 1-3

When Smithers says that the study at a secular university is "inadequate for the principal preparation for the ministry," it uses in fact the same argument as Smithville, which Church said that the B.A. requirement does not "contribute to the required faithfulness, nor to the required ability to teach others also." So both Churches adduce the same ground for dropping the B.A. requirement.

4. Smithers adds as a second ground that the requirement of a B.A. degree is a hindrance for some parents to let their children study for the ministry. This same ground is adduced by the Church at Hamilton for its proposal, when it says that that requirement can be a barricade and can "cause some to stumble" (see Information 5, 10b).

Consideration ad Observation 4

This ground of both Smithers and Hamilton is a new ground, which was not adduced by Smithville and was not dealt with at Synod 1974.

5. The third ground of Smithers is that the Senate "provides both Scriptural and scientific education," and is "capable of safeguarding the degree of scientific education" (see Information 6).

Consideration ad Observation 5

This is also a new ground.

6. Hamilton argues against consideration 2, b of the Acts, Article 171, sub C, of Synod 1974: "Not the Churches are called to provide training from childhood to become acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, but the parents." Hamilton says that this consideration is not to the point. It argues that the point at issue is an education in classic languages, philosophy, etc., as preparation for the study of Theology (see Information 9, 10a).

Consideration ad Observation 6

Hamilton has the right to introduce this, since Synod 1974 did not clearly express itself on this aspect of the preparatory training necessary for admission to the theological studies at our College, namely, whether providing for this preparatory education is included in the task of the parents.

7. The proposal of the Church at Hamilton is: for the time being to open a way for admission to the College besides the way of the B.A. degree, namely, the way of a preparatory course of three years at the College.

Consideration ad Observation 7

In its proposal to Synod 1974 the Church at Smithville proposed also a two-year or three-year preparatory course at the College to replace the B.A. requirement. The difference between Hamilton and Smithville is, that Hamilton proposes to have that preparatory course as an alternative besides the B.A. requirement. However, there appears to be a similarity in this respect, that no longer the B.A. requirement is the only way for admission to the College.

Consideration ad Information 11

Hamilton's third consideration that "some universities do not offer courses in Biblical Hebrew and Greek" adds a new element to the grounds.

8. The Church at Toronto rightly states that "no Church should just come up with this matter again without refuting the arguments" of the previous Synod (see Information 12).

Consideration ad Observation 8

It can be concluded that the proposals of the Churches at Smithers and Hamilton, though dealing with a matter which has been decided on at General Synod 1974, are admissible insofar as new arguments are adduced.

Recommendation

Synod decide

To declare the proposals of Smithers and Hamilton admissible insofar as new arguments are adduced. ADOPTED

II. THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Observation

The Churches at Smithers and Hamilton propose to change the standards of admission to the College as the Churches in General Synod 1974 have adopted them in Article XXIII, sub 1, of the Constitution: "A person who . . . has a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree from a recognized University, qualifies for admission to the College . . ."

Consideration

The Churches, desiring to have a good scholarly education for the Ministry, have for that reason decided that our Theological College should meet generally accepted scholarly standards, so that the degrees conferred by our College can also be recognized according to generally accepted standards.

Observation

The Churches at Smithers and Hamilton want to change the B.A. requirement as the only way for admission to the College, because:

- A. The requirement of a B.A. degree is a hindrance for some parents to let their children study for the ministry (Smithers), and can be a "barricade (and) can cause some to stumble" (Hamilton).
- B. "Some universities do not offer courses in Biblical Hebrew and Greek, which has handicapped some students" (Hamilton).
- C. The Senate provides and safeguards both Scriptural and scholarly education (Smithers).

Considerations ad A.

1. The proposed change, as is clear from the adduced grounds, will mean for those students who would be admitted without a B.A. degree, that they — even if they would have passed an admission exam — do not meet the generally accepted academic standards, while studying at our College; and consequently will not meet the same standards either when receiving a B.D. or M.Div. degree from our College. This is so in spite of the fact that the theological education at our College in itself would be in accordance with generally accepted scholarly standards.
2. This also applies to those students for whom the proposal of Hamilton creates the alternative of a three-year course at the College, unless this course would be changed into an Arts College which confers a B.A. degree that is according to generally accepted academic standards. However, this would mean that the Churches as Churches start an Arts College which confers B.A. degrees.
3. In accordance with Acts, Synod 1974, Article 171 C. Considerations 2b, "Not the Churches are called to provide training from childhood to become acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, but the parents" (which also applies to the teaching of classic languages, philosophy, etc., for a B.A. degree), it is good to stress the calling of the parents and other Church members that they seek for ways and means to provide for such a Reformed Arts College on the basis of the Scriptures and in accordance with our Reformed Confessions and which meets generally recognized academic standards.
4. The adduced ground that the B.A. requirement is a hindrance and can be a barricade and a stumbling-block for some, does not show that the present requirement is wrong. It means, however, that the Churches will be bound by the consciences of some, if the Churches have to change the requirement for admission on this ground.
5. As to Hamilton's argument that the B.A. requirement is not a necessity required by Scripture and that therefore we must be careful not to put up a barricade for some or cause some to stumble, it should be kept in mind that according to Article 31, Church Order, also the decisions of previous Synods regarding the requirements for admission to the College are to be considered "settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God" Moreover, although the objections against the B.A. requirement, insofar as it brings along the necessity of attending a secular university, are understandable, to follow such a secular university training is as such not a sin against the Word of God, otherwise no Christian should attend any secular university.

Consideration ad B.

The argument of the Church at Hamilton that "some universities do not offer courses on Biblical Hebrew or Greek" is not a valid ground, since it does not take existing alternatives into account, e.g., attending McMaster University at Hamilton with the possibility of the guidance by the professors at our College.

Consideration ad C.

The argument of the Church at Smithers that the Senate provides and safeguards scholarly education is true for the theological studies. However, it cannot make up for the lack of scholarly preparation as offered in the study for a B.A. degree.

Recommendation

Although Synod agrees on the desirability of establishing a Canadian Reformed Arts College, Synod decide

Not to adopt the changes in Article XXIII, sub 1, of the Constitution of the College as proposed by the Churches at Smithers and Hamilton at this time. REJECTED

The following motion, duly seconded, is discussed:

Synod decide

Not to adopt the changes in Article XXIII, sub 1, of the Constitution of the College as proposed by the Churches at Smithers and Hamilton, since it does not belong to the task of the Churches to provide for such instruction as may prepare students so that they can meet the standards of admission set for our Theological College. ADOPTED

ARTICLE 100

Adjournment

At 12:30 p.m. the meeting is adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION — FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1977

ARTICLE 101

Re-opening

The meeting is re-opened with the singing of Hymn 43:1, 2.

ARTICLE 102

Bible Translations

Advisory Committee II presents a report on Bible Translations. This report is discussed and some recommendations are adopted (see Article 104).

The meeting is adjourned.

EVENING SESSION — FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1977

ARTICLE 103

Re-opening — Acts

The Chairman requests the singing of Psalm 127:1, 2.

The Acts, Articles 97-102, are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 104

Bible Translations — Revised Standard Version

Committee II presented:

Material — Agenda 8, E, 1 — Report of the Committee on the Revised Standard Version (R.S.V.) appointed by Synod Toronto 1974. (See Appendix IV, p. 76.)

a. Appendix A — Suggested Improvements.

b. Appendix B — Synod Decisions from 1954-1974.

c. The archives of the Committee on the R.S.V.

E, 2 — The Church at Winnipeg, Manitoba, re: Study Committee on the New International Version (N.I.V.) and New American Standard Bible (N.A.S.B.).

E, 3 — The Church at London, Ontario, re: Study Committee on the N.A.S.B.

- E, 4 — The Church at Hamilton, Ontario, re: Study Committee on the N.I.V. and N.A.S.B.
- E, 5 — The Church at London, Ontario, re: not to acquiesce in the recommendation of the R.S.V. Committee.
- E, 6 — The Church at Smithers, B.C., re: support for the overture of the Church at Winnipeg, and a request not to use the R.S.V. in the Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms.
- E, 7 — The Church at New Westminster, B.C., re: R.S.V. Bible translation.

I. The Revised Standard Version

Observations

1. The Committee on the R.S.V. reports that, according to its mandate, (see Acts, Article 182 D of Synod 1974), it continued the work of checking the R.S.V. and sent:
 - a. a number of (59 - see Appendix A) recommendations for changing the present text of the R.S.V.; and
 - b. a copy of the decision on the R.S.V. of Synod 1974 to the Standard Bible Committee.
 It informed the Churches about the work, when the report to this Synod was ready.
2. The Committee mentioned that it interpreted the mandate "to continue the work of checking the RSV" in the light of the decision of Synod 1968: "to study the RSV as to faithfulness to the original text and 'Schriftgelovig karakter'" (Acts, Article 46, IV); and that it therefore "also sought to evaluate the RSV with a view to the Theological presuppositions that may have entered into the translationwork." (In Appendix B the synodical decisions made from 1954 through 1974 re: the use of an English Bible version are all rendered.)
3. The Committee, then, points at "the background and sponsorship" of the RSV. It was sponsored by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCC). The Committee shows that the NCCC can for the greater part be identified with liberal protestantism.
4. Although the Committee first says that it is "proven that all orthodox doctrines can be accurately formulated on the basis of the RSV," it then indicates that there are unscriptural and evolutionistic influences:
 - a. it mentions 5 texts where the RSV speaks of the "Holy Spirit which" instead of the "Holy Spirit who" (whom): Romans 5:5, 8:11, I Corinthians 2:12, Ephesians 1:14, I John 3:24;
 - b. it points to some texts: Genesis 11:1, Joshua 10:12, and Psalm 51:18, where an evolutionistic view could be suspected;
 - c. it adds as a third indication that in a few cases the RSV has unnecessary contradictions between some texts; and does not give a similar translation when an Old Testament text is quoted in the New Testament, while in the original text there is no real ground for such a difference.
5. The Committee concludes "that it is afraid that the RSV shows evidence of unscriptural influence."
6. The Committee does not want to recommend, on the basis of its fear of unscriptural influence, that Synod reject the RSV; it recommends in spite of that fear that Synod decide: "that the Churches be left the freedom to use the RSV with discretion and care."
7. Grounds for this recommendation are:
 1. All orthodox doctrines can be deduced from it.
 2. Among the different present renditions the RSV "numbers among the more conservative in its basic attempt to translate what is there as precisely as possible. In spite of its deficiencies, the RSV does not add to, nor take away from, the Word of the Bible books in its translation."
 3. "At the moment no other modern translation has been tested for use in our Churches."
 4. "Serious objections, be they of a different nature, can also be brought to bear against the exclusive use of the KJV in our midst."

8. The Committee is of the opinion that the work of testing the RSV has had sufficient attention. It, therefore, recommends in the second place that Synod decide: "not to appoint a new committee for the checking of the RSV."
9. The Committee, however, recommends in a postscriptum that Synod "maintain a study committee on the RSV, which continues to make recommendations for changes to the RSV - Bible Committee; and (which) keeps the Churches posted as to the developments in new editions of the RSV, which strengthen the recommendation to Synod (to leave it in the freedom of the Churches), or which make it imperative to reconsider this recommendation."
10. In connection with this postscriptum the Church at New Westminster proposes to Synod:
 1. to appoint a study-committee on the RSV with the mandate:
 - a. to make recommendations to the RSV Bible Committee for changes considered necessary in the RSV translation:
 - b. to keep the Churches informed as to the developments in the new editions of the RSV;
 - c. to report to the next General Synod;
 2. to invite the cooperation of all the church members to send to the Committee any criticism on the RSV they may have.
11. The Church at London requests Synod not to adopt the recommendation of the Committee on the RSV, "that the Churches be left the freedom to use the RSV with discretion and care," on the following grounds:
 - a. A translation which "shows evidence of unscriptural influence" and can be used "although with care" does not come well recommended.
 - b. The ground of the Committee that "the RSV numbers among the more conservative" is a "faulty argument," because it admits: "... no other modern translation has been tested."
 - c. "There is, ought to be, enough struggle against liberalism, that should prevent Synod from leaving a Bible translation from the 'liberal camp' in the freedom of the Churches."
 - d. The statement of the Committee that "serious objections, be they of a different nature, can also be brought to bear against the exclusive use of the KJV" is not substantiated; the "nature" undefined; "and hence cast aspersions on the KJV."
 - e. The fact that the Committee speaks of the possibility that new editions of the RSV can "make it imperative to reconsider this recommendation" (for careful use) makes the recommendation senseless.
 - f. The statement that "all doctrines can be deduced from it" is used as a criterion for recommendation of the RSV, which criterion "does not agree with the original mandate: 'to study the RSV as to faithfulness to the original text and 'Schriftgelovig karakter.' " Besides, this statement is not proven. Only reference is made to a certain publication.

Considerations

1. The Committee has fulfilled the mandate given by Synod 1974.
2. The fact that of the 59 recommendations for changes many were of the same Bible books (8 in Isaiah 5-16, 15 in Philippians, 19 in Hebrews 1-9), so that more recommendations must be possible; and the fact that "the RSV Bible Committee is receptive to recommendations," warrants the recommendation of our Committee to maintain the Committee on the RSV with the mandate to continue to make recommendations for changes to the Standard Bible Committee.
3. Although the Committee points to the translation of a number of texts as indications of unscriptural influence, and expresses its fear in this respect, yet, because only a few examples have been adduced, they do not constitute sufficient proof of an unscriptural influence in the RSV. (Compare Synod 1974, Acts, Article 182 B, Conclusion.)
There is therefore no reason to continue the Committee on the ground that the work of testing the RSV has had sufficient attention.
4. As for the objections of the Church at London against the recommendation of the Committee the following is to be considered:

- ad a: Over against the “evidence of unscriptural influence” in some texts stands the conclusion of the Committee on the RSV in its report to Synod 1974:
 “1. Goddard’s dissertation shows clearly that there is much to commend about the RSV translation which in some cases is better than the KJV and statistically is more accurate” (Acts 1974, page 111, sub-conclusions). And a use “with care” does not as such speak against a cautious recommendation.
- ad b: The fact that “no other translation has been tested” cannot be considered a denial of the conservative character of the RSV translation. Therefore it does not make this ground of the Committee “a faulty argument.”
- ad c: London did not prove that leaving the RSV in the freedom of the Churches is giving in in the struggle against liberalism.
- ad d: The fact that the Committee states as ground that objections against the KJV can also be brought up, without substantiating this statement, does not render this ground as such invalid. A careful testing of the KJV was not asked for.
- ad e: Possible future reconsideration of the recommendation for a careful use of the RSV because of possible future wrong developments could only be considered a valid ground if the Churches were not yet using the RSV.
- ad f: The statement of the Church at London that the criterion that all doctrines can be deduced from the RSV does not agree with the original mandate, is wrong. This criterion has everything to do with an examination on the point of the “Schriftgelovig karakter.”
 On the basis of the above the objections of London’s Church are not sufficient to warrant a rejection of the recommendation of the Committee.
5. As for the grounds of the Committee for its recommendation, “that the Churches be left the freedom to use the RSV with discretion and care,” the following considerations may serve:
- ad 1: The fact that all orthodox doctrines can be deduced from the RSV speaks in its favour.
- ad 2: That the RSV numbers among the more conservative translations “in its basic attempt to translate what is there as precisely as possible,” and “does not add to nor take away from the words of the Bible books in its translation,” is also in its favour. Besides, this conservative character was one of the grounds for Synod 1968 to appoint a Committee to examine just this translation.
- ad 3: Since no other modern translation has been tested for use in the Churches, the RSV is the only modern alternative besides the KJV.
- ad 4: Not to leave the RSV free for use would make the KJV the only English Bible that the Churches can use. The fact that objections, “although of a different nature,” can be brought in against this translation renders it advisable not to restrict the Churches to the use of the KJV.
 The conclusion can be that the grounds of the Committee for its recommendation re: a careful use of the RSV are valid.
6. Synod 1974 concluded that the Committee on the RSV did not submit conclusive proof of an unscriptural influence in the RSV.
7. In its report to Synod 1977 the Committee on the RSV does not submit sufficient proof of an unscriptural influence in the RSV.

Recommendations

Synod decide

1. Gratefully to acknowledge the work done by the Committee on the Revised Standard Version:
2. To appoint a Committee on the Revised Standard Version with the mandate:
 - a. to continue to make recommendations to the Standard Bible Committee for changes considered necessary in the Revised Standard Version translation;
 - b. to keep the Churches posted as to the developments in new editions of the Revised Standard Version;
 - c. to report to the next Synod.
3. To terminate the mandate of the Committee to examine the Revised Standard Version on its “faithfulness to the original text and its ‘Schriftgelovig karakter.’”

4. Not to grant the request of the Church at London.
5. To leave the use of the Revised Standard Version — though with discretion and care — in the freedom of the Churches.
6. To send the Archives of the Committee to the Committee to be appointed.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 105

Bible Translations — Examination other Bible Translations

Committee II presents the second part of its report on Bible translations.

II. Examination of Other Translations

Observations

1. The Church at Winnipeg requests Synod to appoint a Committee with the mandate to make a comparative study (with the RSV) of two other conservative Bible translations, namely, the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version.
Winnipeg's grounds are:
 - a. The Churches must have the best translations available;
 - b. The RSV shows weaknesses: "evidence of unscriptural influence";
 - c. A responsible decision about "what is the best" can only be made after an investigation of other conservative translations.
2. The Church at London requests Synod to appoint a Committee to test the NASB on basically the same grounds as Winnipeg adduces. In an appendix the Church at London gives 25 cases from the 59 texts listed by the Committee on the RSV for changes, where the NASB has the proposed change, or partly has it.
3. The Church at Smithers endorses the request from the Church at Winnipeg, and in a second part of its letter requests Synod "not to adhere to the recommendation of the Committee for the Doctrinal and the Liturgical Forms: 'that all Scripture quotations in all the Forms be changed in accordance with the RSV.'"
4. The Church at Hamilton proposes that Synod "appoint a Committee which has as its mandate:
 - a. To make a comparative study of the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version with the RSV and the KJV, to determine which one translation can be positively recommended for use by the Churches. The most important criteria in this study will be the faithfulness to the original text and the up-to-date character of the translation.
 - b. To solicit any help it needs from persons who are considered competent in this field;
 - c. To report to the Churches at the proper time so that there is sufficient time to study the results and to make proposals to Synod."
5. The first three grounds of the Church at Hamilton are the same as those of the Church at Winnipeg. The difference is that Hamilton's Church comes with an elaborate indication of the evidence of unscriptural influence taken from the Committee reports on the RSV to Synod 1974 and to Synod 1977.
6. The Church at Hamilton, then, adds that "this repeated and mounting evidence should show the inadequacy of the previous Gen. Synods' consideration for rejecting a similar proposal; nl.: 'The Committee's claim of weaknesses in the RSV has not been proven to be of such a nature that it warrants taking another translation of the Bible under study.' (Acts 1974, Article 182, B II)."
7. To the three grounds, adduced by the Church at Winnipeg, the Church at Hamilton adds a fourth one, in which it attacks the second consideration in the above (sub 6) mentioned proposal at Synod 1974. This second consideration reads: "having more than one modern translation under study with a view to use by the Churches may lead to confusion." Hamilton is of the opinion that this consideration is also inadequate and without sense.
8. Synod 1974, dealing with the same matter (Acts, Article 182 sub B), was first confronted with a proposal of its Advisory Committee, reading: "not to adopt the rec-

ommendation of the Committee (on the RSV),” namely, “to study another (or other) translation(s).”

Synod 1974 rejected this proposal of its Advisory Committee.

After this rejection of the proposal: not to study another translation, Synod 1974 also rejected two (slightly different but basically similar) motions proposing to study the NASB (and the NIV).

9. The Committee on the RSV in its report to this Synod expresses as its fear that there is indication of unscriptural influence in the RSV. It nevertheless recommends to leave the use of the RSV free, also on the ground that no other modern translation has been tested for use by the Churches.

Considerations

1. The proposal of the Churches at Winnipeg, London and Hamilton, endorsed by the Church at Smithers, was rejected at the Synod of Toronto 1974.
2. The first two grounds for the proposal, as submitted by the Churches at Winnipeg and Hamilton, were also given as grounds at Synod 1974. London's Church uses the same three grounds as given for the (rejected) last proposal in this matter at Synod 1974.
3. When the Church at Hamilton comes with indications of the weaknesses and unscriptural influence in the RSV, mentioned under Observation 5, it does not appeal the considerations made on these points by Synod 1974 in Article 182 sub B., nor the conclusion that the Committee on the RSV did not give conclusive proof of unscriptural influence in the RSV.
4. When Hamilton attacks the two considerations of the Advisory Committee to Synod 1974, Hamilton opposes something that is not there, since Synod 1974 rejected that proposal.
5. The new and valid ground of the Churches at Winnipeg and Hamilton, which makes their proposal to Synod admissible is: that a responsible decision in this matter can only be made after, and on the basis of, a comparative study.
6. Synod 1974 made a strange combination of decisions in this matter. It first decided not not to study another translation. As the logical conclusion from this double negative a positive decision could have been expected: namely, to examine other translations. However, twice a proposal in that direction was also rejected.
7. A testing of the NASB and NIV in comparison with the RSV and the KJV will answer the question which of those translations is the best: either the RSV (which, then, can continue to be recommended), or another one (which will replace the RSV in this respect). This will bring the uncertainty to an end, and prevent further requests.
8. With respect to the proposed testing of the NASB and NIV it must be considered that in 1968 the NASB was not well-known yet, and that at this moment only the New Testament of the NIV is ready.
9. The second part of the request of the Church at Smithers deals with the Book of Praise and received already an answer in Article 60 of the Acts of this Synod.

Recommendations

Synod decide

1. To broaden the mandate for the Committee on the RSV, changing its name into “Committee on Bible translations.”
2. To add to its mandate:
 - a. to make a comparative study of the NASB and the NIV with the RSV and the KJV, in order to determine which one translation can be positively recommended for use by the Churches, whereby the criteria are: faithfulness to the original text, and linguistic character of the translation;
 - b. to report to the next Synod on the progress or the result of its work.
3. That pending this study only the use of the KJV and the RSV is in the freedom of the Churches.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 106

Gratitude

The Chairman addresses Mrs. A.H. Lubbers and Mrs. J.W. Van Dieren and expresses the sincere gratitude of Synod for the excellent way in which they and other sisters of the Coaldale congregation have taken care of the members of Synod. He presents to them tokens of appreciation and thankfulness.

ARTICLE 107

Correspondence with Churches Abroad

Committee I presents

Material — Agenda 8, B, 1 — Report Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad. (See Appendix V, p. 80.)

Information

1. The mandate of Synod Toronto 1974 was to maintain correspondence in accordance with the Rules for Correspondence and to do so with:
 - a. De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland;
 - b. Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika;
 - c. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia.
2. **De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.**
 - a. The report of the Committee shows that the correspondence with these Churches has been quite vigorous.
 - b. Dr. J. Faber was appointed a delegate to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at the General Synod Kampen 1975.
 - c. Our Committee has been notified by the Netherlands sister Churches that these Churches have established ecclesiastical correspondence with the "Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost Soemba/Savoe," c/o Rev. L. Kondamara.
 - d. An invitation to attend the forthcoming General Synod at Groningen-Zuid in 1978 has been received.
 - e. A letter signed by 16 persons in The Netherlands was received by our Committee. The authors of this letter make the observation that all the Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands have become false churches. A request is made to terminate correspondence with the Netherlands sister Churches and that instead the 16 persons referred to be considered as "the rest of the covenant people which the LORD has still left in The Netherlands." The authors of this letter do not submit any grounds for their accusations against our sister Churches. The Committee concludes "that it is not their task to formulate accusations against our sister Churches while those that complain neglect to state their case. The Committee recommends to Synod not to grant this request.
 - f. Synod Kampen 1975 decided to continue correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches in accordance with the adopted rules.
 - g. Our Committee perused the Acts of Synod Kampen 1975 and concluded from the Acts and the correspondence that De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland desire to be faithful to God's Word and that they abide by the Reformed creeds and Church Order. The Committee recommends to continue the correspondence with these Churches.
3. **Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika.**
 - a. An appeal has been sent to Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (praeses Dr. C. van der Waal) according to the mandate given to the Committee by Synod Toronto 1974.
 - b. Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika were by letter informed about what is mentioned under a.
 - c. Our Committee informed these Churches that we in our rules for correspondence do not have the stipulation of a consideration **beforehand** of changes or additions of Confessions, Church Order and Liturgical Forms, as adopted by Synod Pretoria 1976. The Committee requested the deputies of the Vrye Gereformeer-

de Kerke in Suid-Afrika to incorporate our rule number 3 into their rules for correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

- d. Synod Pretoria 1976 decided to receive the Church at Johannesburg again into the confederation of Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika. Our Committee expressed their thankfulness that it appears from the Acts of Synod Pretoria 1976 that many of the difficulties within the South African sister Churches were solved.
 - e. Synod 1976 decided to initiate contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea for the purpose of establishing ecclesiastical correspondence.
 - f. The Committee on Correspondence with the Churches Abroad conclude from the correspondence and the Acts that Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika have clearly shown that they desire to be faithful to God's Word and to abide by the Reformed creeds and Church Order and recommend to continue the correspondence with these Churches in accordance with the adopted rules.
- 4. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia**
- a. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia have now full correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea.
 - b. Synod Albany 1975 confirmed the decision of Synod 1972 that Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (praeses Dr. C. van der Waal) cannot be recognized as corresponding sister Church.
 - c. Regarding English Bible translations, the New International Version and the KJV II were rejected; deputies were appointed to study the New American Standard Bible and the Revised Standard Version.
 - d. The report of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad does not mention whether an answer was received from the Australian Committee "to clarify the rules for admission to the ministry of candidates who did not study at the College of our Churches or of our sister Churches, which rules seemed inconsistent to our Committee" (Acts, Synod Toronto 1974, Article 140 A-7). The Acts of Synod Albany read, "The proposal for the rules re: eligibility and examination of candidates is adopted." However, what those rules are is not known to our Committee.
 - e. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad conclude from the correspondence and the Acts of Synod Albany 1975 that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia in doctrine and Church activities do maintain the standards of faith and therefore recommend to continue the correspondence with these Churches.

Considerations

1. The correspondence with our sister Churches is conducted in a very vigorous manner.
2. The Committee has fulfilled the mandate given to them by Synod Toronto 1974.
3. No proof is given for the accusations by the 16 dissenters in The Netherlands.

Recommendations

1. To continue with gratitude the correspondence according to the adopted rules for correspondence with the following sister Churches:
 - a. De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland;
 - b. Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika;
 - c. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia.
2. To have our Churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of sister Churches abroad, if invited, and when desirable and feasible.
3. Not to grant the request of the 16 dissenters in The Netherlands, who approached the Committee.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 108

Correspondence Churches Abroad — Presbyterian Church — Korea
Committee I presents

**Material — Agenda 8,
B, 1**

— **Report Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad.** (See Appendix V, p. 80.)

B, 1 (Addition)

— **Additional Report to Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad** on the discussions held with representatives of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa) and others by Rev. D. DeJong, dated October 21, 1977.

Observations

1. According to Synod Toronto 1974 the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad was charged to continue contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa).
2. The Presbyterian Church in Korea in a letter of January 1976, sent by the Fraternal Relations Committee, expressed again the desire to have correspondence with The Canadian Reformed Churches.
3. A letter, dated September 3, 1977, was received containing an answer to our Committee's request for information about the changes proposed and/or adopted in the Westminster Confession and in the Form of Government.
4. The letter of September 3, 1977, informed the Committee about the changes in the Westminster Confession. The changes made did not meet with any objections by the Committee.
5. No information was given regarding definite proposals to change the Form of Government. "While many proposals have been made nothing concrete has emerged from the discussions" (letter September 1977).
6. Reasons for the delay in giving an answer to our query were "The internal difficulties in Korea." These difficulties were not explained but appear to have been solved.
7. The Committee could not finish its examination and evaluation since
 - a. Pertinent information was not available;
 - b. Report Rev. D. DeJong had not been received.
8. The Committee recommends therefore:
 - a. to refrain at the present time from entering into correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea;
 - b. that in accordance with the decision of General Synod Toronto 1974, Acts, Article 140, D, no financial assistance by the Committee on Correspondence on behalf of the Churches be considered before official ecclesiastical correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea has been established;
 - c. to state that adoption of these recommendations does not imply that local or regional Committees cannot financially support worthy causes within the Presbyterian Church in Korea;
 - d. to charge the new Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to continue the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea and submit a report to the next General Synod.
9. Rev. D. DeJong of Edmonton was authorized by the Committee to gather some information and, if possible, to contact the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Korea.
10. Rev. D. DeJong reports to our Committee the following:
 - A. Regarding proposed changes in the Form of Government
 1. Examinations of Theological students to be done by Seminary rather than by the General Assembly as is done today;
 2. A study Committee has been appointed to attempt to combine the two categories of Pastors;
At the present time a Pulpit Supply Pastor is a one year appointment, a regular pastor is appointed for life.
 3. The Koryu-Pa has elders for life. The question whether the congregation should have the opportunity to reconfirm their appointments once every three years is being discussed.
 4. A decision regarding deaconesses has been made, although the change of wording in the Form of Government has not yet been accepted.
At the present time there is a one year term for deaconesses. The intent of

the change is to appoint the deaconesses for life. Deaconesses are not ruling but serving in work of mercy.

- B. The Koryu-Pa has fraternal relations with the Hap-Dong Churches. The missionaries of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are members of the Hap-Dong Church. They lecture, however, at the Busan (previously Pusan) Seminary of the Koryu-Pa. In the opinion of all those members of the Koryu-Pa, Hap-Dong and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, with whom the Rev. D. DeJong spoke, there are no doctrinal differences between the Koryu-Pa and the Hap-Dong.
11. The meager response of the Korean Church (Koryu-Pa) is ascribed to the language barrier and to the internal difficulties which existed in the Korean Presbyterian Church (Koryu-Pa).

Considerations

1. The Committee has fulfilled its mandate extended to them by Synod Toronto 1974. However, due to insufficient response the Committee was unable to finish the examination and evaluation of the obstacles to ecclesiastical correspondence as it was charged to do by Synod New Westminster 1971.
2. Since Rev. DeJong's trip to Korea was made only a few weeks before Synod convened, the Committee was unable to evaluate his report.
3. The report of Rev. DeJong gives helpful information about the proposed changes in the Form of Government. It also raises questions in regard to the church relations of the Koryu-Pa.
4. Information regarding the changes in the Westminster Confession has been obtained. The changes are considered to be an improvement.
5. The nature of the changes in the Form of Government as reported by Rev. De Jong seem to be an improvement. No official confirmation of the proposed changes has been received by the Committee.
6. The question posed by the Committee whether official ecclesiastical correspondence will be beneficial at this time is to be understood in the light of the meager result due to language barrier and internal difficulties in Korea.
7. With regard to the remark of the Committee whether official ecclesiastical correspondence will be beneficial at this time, it can be stated that, although the response from the Korean Church has been slow for the past six years, the Committee could report on the changes made in the Westminster Confession and did receive information about the proposed changes in the Form of Government.
8. Since the Committee reports that the internal difficulties of the Korean Church have been solved, it may be expected that further investigation will have more fruitful results.

Recommendations

Synod decide

1. to refrain at the present time from entering into correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea;
2. that in accordance with the decision of General Synod Toronto 1974, Acts, Article 140, D, no financial assistance by the Committee on Correspondence on behalf of the Churches be considered before official ecclesiastical correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea has been established;
3. to state that adoption of these recommendations does not imply that local or regional Committees should not financially support worthy causes within the Presbyterian Church in Korea;
4. to charge the new Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to continue and to try to intensify the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea and submit a report to the next General Synod.

ADOPTED

Final Recommendations

1. Synod express its gratitude for the work done by the Committee on Correspondence with the Churches Abroad.
2. Synod decide to continue the Committee with the following mandate:

- a. to maintain correspondence in accordance with the Rules for Correspondence and to do so with:
 - De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland;
 - Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika;
 - The Free Reformed Churches in Australia;
- b. to continue and to try to intensify the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa) and to submit a report on this contact to the next General Synod;
- c. to send an invitation to sister Churches Abroad at least one year prior to the date the next General Synod is to convene;
- d. to have our Churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of sister Churches Abroad, if invited, and when desirable and feasible;
- e. to inform the Churches from time to time about that which is of interest in their correspondence with Churches Abroad.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 109

Appointments

1. **Board of Governors — Theological College**
 - From Eastern Canada: Rev. J. Geertsema, Rev. J. Mulder, Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene.
 - Alternates: Rev. P. Kingma, Rev. W. Huizinga, Rev. Cl. Stam, in that order.
 - From Western Canada: Rev. D. DeJong, Rev. M. van Beveren, Rev. D. Vander Boom.
 - Alternates: Rev. J. Visscher, Rev. M. Vander Wel, Rev. J. Van Riet-schoten, in that order.
2. **Board of Trustees — Theological College**
 - H. Dantuma, A.J. Hordijk, J. Medemblik, A.H. Oosterhoff, M. van Grootheest.
3. **Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad**
 - E.C. Baartman, A.C. Lengkeek, Rev. M. van Beveren (convener), Rev. J. Vis-scher.
4. **Committee on Church Book**
 - M.M. De Groot, Dr. W. Helder, Rev. C. Van Dam, Rev. G. VanDooren (convener), Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene.
5. **Committee on Translation Heidelberg Catechism**
 - Dr. J. Faber (convener), Dr. W. Helder, Rev. W. Huizinga, Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff.
6. **Committee on Women's Voting Rights**
 - J. DeVos, J. Hendricks, Rev. D. VanderBoom (convener), Rev. M. Vander Wel, Rev. J. Visscher.
7. **Committee on Translation and Revision Confessional and Liturgical Forms**
 - Dr. J. Faber, Drs. H.M. Ohmann, Rev. H. Scholten, Prof. L. Selles (convener), Rev. C. Van Dam, Rev. G. VanDooren.
8. **Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church**
 - J. Boot, Dr. J. Faber, Rev. W. Huizinga, Rev. J. Mulder (convener), W. Wildeboer.
9. **Committee on Revision Church Order**
 - Rev. J. Geertsema, Rev. C. Olij, Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene (convener), Rev. H. Scholten (advisor).
10. **Churches for Days of Fasting and Prayer**
 - Rehoboth Church at Burlington and Church at Edmonton.

11. **Church for Administration of General Fund**
Church at Carman, Manitoba
12. **Church for General Archives**
Ebenezer Church at Burlington, Ontario.
13. **Church for Inspection of General Archives**
Rehoboth Church at Burlington, Ontario.
14. **Church to Audit Finances General Synod 1977**
Church at Calgary, Alberta.
15. **Address Church**
Ebenezer Church, at Burlington, Ontario, P.O. Box 124, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3X8.
16. **Committee for Printing of the Acts**
First and Second Clerk.
17. **Committee on Bible Translations**
Dr. J. Faber, Rev. W. Huizinga, Prof. H.M. Ohmann (convener), Prof. L. Selles, Rev. C. Van Dam.
18. **Convening Church next General Synod**
Church at Smithville, Ontario.

Synod decides that the Committees shall have the right, in case a vacancy occurs, in order to fulfill their mandate to bring their membership up to its original strength.

ARTICLE 110

Article 43 — Church Order

Article 43 of the Church Order is read by the Chairman. He thankfully states that no one has to be rebuked for having "done something worthy of punishment."

ARTICLE 111

Publication — Acts of Synod

The first and second Clerk are charged and authorized to have the Acts of Synod published.

Since a Yearbook is being published every year, Synod decides not to have the Statistics of the Churches published as appendix to the Acts because this delays the publication of the Acts.

It is decided that the following material shall be published as an Appendix to the Acts:

1. Three Year Financial Statement of the Board of Trustees of the Theological College.
2. Report to Synod of the Board of Governors of the Theological College.
3. Report to Synod of the Committee on the Church Book (Psalm and Hymn Section).
4. Report to Synod of the Committee on the Revised Standard Version.
5. Report to Synod of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad.
6. Report to Synod of the Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (and letter of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, dated April 14, 1976).
7. Appeal to the Christian Reformed Church.

ARTICLE 112

Financial Matters

Synod decides to request the Church at Toronto to have the books of the finances of General Synod 1974 audited by the Church at Brampton and to forward the balance of the Fund to the Committee of the Church at Coaldale and to send a report to General Synod 1980.

ARTICLE 113

Preparation Next Synod

The convening Church at Smithville shall decide upon the time of the next General Synod with the advice of the Regional Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Eastern Canada.

ARTICLE 114

Acts — Press Release

The Moderamen is charged and authorized to adopt the Acts of the evening session of Friday, November 25, and to approve of the Press Release.

ARTICLE 115

Closing

The chairman speaks as follows:

Beloved Brethren,

The moment has arrived when we may say that we have completed our work.

Whether we have done that in a satisfactory manner — that is something about which the Churches will have to judge; it is something about which, above all, the Lord will judge. And that is our comfort.

We may state that we did our work in submission to our God and to His Word.

We may say this, too: We did our work in good, brotherly harmony. Even though sometimes a decision could not be reached unanimously, the number of times that we all agreed in a matter was surprisingly large. Thus the prayers which were offered up by us and in our behalf by the Churches have borne rich fruit. Is it not a fruit of the Spirit when, at an ecclesiastical assembly, the brethren do their utmost to convince one another instead of outvoting one another? Let us gratefully acknowledge what the Lord our God has done during these almost three weeks of meeting.

What shall we say in evaluation of our work and the result of our labours? By what would we wish to characterize our work?

There was no “outstanding issue” to be dealt with by this Synod. There was nothing “brand-new” to be initiated, no extremely important aspect of the life of the Churches was brought to a conclusion. To a certain extent this Synod was an “interim-Synod,” one which simply decided that work in various areas shall be continued and, perhaps and hopefully, be brought to completion before the next Synod is convened.

We dealt with our **Book of Praise** and its varied contents. The revision of the rhymings of the Psalms and of the Hymns is still incomplete; the definite text of our Confessional and Liturgical Forms has as yet to be fixed; even the text of the quotations from Holy Writ will still have to be determined.

As for the translation of the Holy Scriptures which the Churches will be using, we have not reached a definite conclusion. The revision of our Church Order is far from complete and even the part which is ready, although scrutinized by Synod, is still up in the air as far as the final redaction is concerned.

Hearing those things, one might well ask, “Has this Synod done anything more than just pass on matters to its successor?”

Only in the future it will be possible to correctly evaluate what we did here. There is, however, one thing which we are permitted to mention at this very moment. This Synod

has served to bring us closer together as brothers from the East, as brothers from the West. In this vast country of ours it is a great blessing when we can meet, when we can speak face-to-face, when we can discuss and argue about things and in personal contact can try to come to a common answer and to oneness of conviction and approach.

I am assured that you will agree with me when I say that in this respect this Synod has already borne fruit.

During our discussions the wish was expressed that this Synod might become known as the Synod of Christian unity. I think that, at least partially, as far as we are concerned, this wish has come true.

The true unity has been sought by this Synod also with respect to those who are around us. A large part of the agenda was dedicated to discussions concerning our relationship, attitude, and actions towards the Christian Reformed Church, towards the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, towards the foreign sister Churches, towards the Presbyterian Church of Korea, the Koryu-Pa. And in all discussions concerning those contacts we have endeavoured to seek what would be the way pleasing to the Lord and therein beneficial for the Churches.

Even though in other matters we had to decide that the work is to be continued since it could not be completed, yet we have brought the completion closer by setting a final date at which the reports are to be ready in preparation of a final decision, to be made by General Synod of 1980.

I shall refrain from discussing anew what we have already dealt with. When the Acts appear in print, you all will be able to read it much more accurately and completely than I would be able to relate them in a few minutes.

When you do read the proceedings of this Synod, you will also recall the discussions which we had; at times you will feel excited, at other moments you may chuckle. May you, however, at all times recall the good time we had here together as brothers in the Lord.

That we had a good time here was also the fruit of the preparations which had been made by the convening Church and of the constant and abundant care which has been bestowed upon us by the members of the Church at Coaldale. I shall not mention any names but do wish to single out the two sisters whose shoulders carried the heaviest load, who were here every day, from early morning till evening, and who pleasantly and unobtrusively were there whenever we needed something. Their only vice was that they tempted us into increasing our intake to such a level that it began to constitute a danger to our continued health. There are, however, worse vices, I should say.

On behalf of all of us who have been meeting here for almost three weeks, I say a heartfelt, "Thank You" to the Church in this place, to all and everyone who in any way have contributed towards reaching this moment of closure.

And now, brethren, we part again. Within a few days, the Lord willing, we shall all have been reunited with our families and the Congregations to which we belong. Then the normal work will demand our time, attention, skill, and strength.

Have a good and safe journey, may you all see your dear ones in good health.

And when you bow your knees before your God to thank Him for the blessings bestowed upon you, do not, then, forget the brotherhood, in order that we may remain united as we were united here.

The Synod of Unity?

Be it so; let it remain so.

The LORD be with you.

The assessor, the Rev. M. van Beveren, speaks words of thanks to the chairman for the way in which he has chaired the meetings. After the singing of Psalm 121, Rev. M. van Beveren leads in thanksgiving and prayer.

At 12:15 a.m. Saturday, November 26, 1977, the chairman closes the eighth General Synod of The Canadian Reformed Churches.

On behalf of Synod:
W.W.J. VanOene, chairman
J. Mulder, first clerk
J. Geertsema, second clerk
M. van Beveren, assessor

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APPENDIX I — (ACTS, ARTICLE 44)
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS — THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

STATEMENT 1

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
GENERAL FUND BALANCE SHEET
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1974 - 1975 - 1976

ASSETS

Current	1976	1975	1974
Petty Cash	\$ 51	\$ 65	\$ 387
Cash in bank — current accounts	9,728	6,242	14,280
Cash in bank — savings accounts	4,462	40,503	13,237
Cash in bank — Rotterdam	497	408	383
Allotments receivable — current year	2,530	2,997	5,643
Total current assets	\$ 17,268	\$ 50,215	\$ 33,930
Investments			
Term deposit 8½% due November 1, 1978	25,000	25,000	25,000
Term deposit 9¾% due April 1, 1977	30,000	—	—
Accrued interest	842	355	355
Total investments	55,842	25,355	25,355
Fixed (at cost)			
Equipment, furniture and fixtures	13,329	11,029	10,531
Less accumulated depreciation	8,321	6,988	5,885
	5,008	4,041	4,646
Real estate	65,000	65,000	65,000
Driveway improvements	6,182	6,182	6,182
Library books	33,037	24,260	19,128
Total fixed assets	109,227	99,483	94,956
Trust Funds — pension fund — statement 2	15,457	13,793	12,307
	\$ 197,794	\$ 188,846	\$ 166,548

LIABILITIES

Current			
Accounts payable	\$ —	\$ 200	\$ —
Employees' payroll deductions payable	1,536	1,275	1,929
Allotments received in advance	50	1,138	—
Due to pension fund	498	1,000	500
Total current liabilities	2,084	3,613	2,429
Trust Funds — pension fund — statement 2	15,457	13,793	12,307
Equity — statement 3			
Designated — library	21,661	27,938	30,570
Designated — future building	28,823	23,823	18,823
General	129,769	119,679	102,419
Total equity	180,253	171,440	151,812
	\$ 197,794	\$ 188,846	\$ 166,548

STATEMENT 2

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
PENSION FUND BALANCE SHEET
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1974 - 1975 - 1976

ASSETS

	1976	1975	1974
Current			
Cash in bank	\$ 996	\$ 2,854	\$ 1,868
Due from general fund	498	1,000	500
	<u>1,494</u>	<u>3,854</u>	<u>2,368</u>
Total current assets			
Investments			
Term deposit — 8½% due November 1, 1978	9,800	9,800	9,800
Term deposit — 9½% due August 17, 1977	3,961	—	—
Accrued interest	202	139	139
	<u>13,963</u>	<u>9,939</u>	<u>9,939</u>
Total investments			
	<u>\$ 15,457</u>	<u>\$ 13,793</u>	<u>\$ 12,307</u>

LIABILITIES

Equity			
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 13,793	\$ 12,307	\$ 10,878
Add — Appropriation from budget	500	500	500
— Interest on bank account	183	153	96
— Interest on term deposits	981	833	833
	<u>15,457</u>	<u>13,793</u>	<u>12,307</u>
Balance at end of year			
	<u>\$ 15,457</u>	<u>\$ 13,793</u>	<u>\$ 12,307</u>

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
STATEMENT OF EQUITY
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1974 - 1975 - 1976

	1976	1975	1974
Designated — Library			
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 27,938	\$ 30,570	\$ 29,230
Add — Gifts	—	—	1,200
— Appropriation from budget	2,500	2,500	2,500
	30,438	33,070	32,930
Deduct — Transfer to general equity to cover cost of books purchased	8,777	5,132	2,360
Balance at end of year	\$ 21,661	\$ 27,938	\$ 30,570
Designated — Future Building			
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 23,823	\$ 18,823	\$ 13,823
Add — Appropriation from budget	5,000	5,000	5,000
Balance at end of year	\$ 28,823	\$ 23,823	\$ 18,823
General			
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 119,679	\$ 102,419	\$ 101,085
Add — Transfer from library funds to cover cost of books purchased out of general funds	8,777	5,132	2,360
— Excess of revenue over expenditure	1,313	12,128	—
	129,769	119,679	103,445
Deduct — Excess of expenditure over revenue	—	—	1,026
Balance at end of year	\$ 129,769	\$ 119,679	\$ 102,419

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1974 - 1975 - 1976

	1977 Budget
Revenue	
Allotments from churches	\$ 86,900
Gifts and collections	3,500
Student fees	1,200
Student accommodations	900
Investment income	4,000
Superannuation benefits	3,000
Total revenue	<u>\$ 99,500</u>
Expenditure	
Faculty	
Salaries — professors	\$ 53,547
Salaries — lecturers	3,500
Pension — Mrs. Kouwenhoven	9,568
Superannuation	3,300
Social insurances	1,578
Other personnel insurances	1,182
Total faculty	<u>72,675</u>
Property	
Property improvements and maintenance	560
Caretaking	1,500
Hydro and water	500
Fuel	800
Insurance	889
Depreciation of equipment	—
Total property	<u>4,249</u>
Administration	
Travelling and meetings — Board of Governors	800
Travelling — lecturers	600
Travelling and meetings — trustees	250
Administration and office supplies	750
Salary — administration	8,800
Legal and audit	350
Telephone	400
Total administration	<u>11,950</u>
Library	
Assistant librarian	3,000
Library supplies	500
Total library	<u>3,500</u>
Appropriations	
Pension fund	500
Building fund	5,000
Library fund	2,500
Total appropriation	<u>8,000</u>
Other expenditures — unforeseen	626
Total expenditure	<u>\$ 101,000</u>
Excess of revenue over expenditure	<u>(\$ 1,500)</u>

STATEMENT 4

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1974 - 1975 - 1976

1976		1975		1974	
Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
\$ 82,500	\$ 83,567	\$ 78,100	\$ 80,955	\$ 61,250	\$ 61,813
2,500	3,178	1,000	4,488	700	4,650
700	325	400	675	400	500
600	350	450	625	450	375
3,000	5,749	2,000	3,466	2,500	3,021
3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,700	2,700
<u>\$ 92,300</u>	<u>\$ 96,169</u>	<u>\$ 84,950</u>	<u>\$ 93,209</u>	<u>\$ 68,000</u>	<u>\$ 73,059</u>
\$ 50,450	\$ 50,450	\$ 45,500	\$ 45,500	\$ 38,040	\$ 43,650
3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,000	3,000
8,610	8,610	7,620	7,620	6,555	7,958
3,300	3,300	3,300	3,300	2,550	2,549
1,063	1,505	893	1,072	597	940
905	905	955	955	955	1,058
<u>67,828</u>	<u>68,270</u>	<u>61,768</u>	<u>61,947</u>	<u>51,697</u>	<u>59,155</u>
560	12	585	752	585	173
1,500	1,249	1,000	1,145	500	821
250	483	200	500	200	234
500	926	450	830	450	511
666	889	434	666	434	434
--	1,333	--	1,103	--	1,053
<u>3,476</u>	<u>4,892</u>	<u>2,669</u>	<u>4,996</u>	<u>2,169</u>	<u>3,226</u>
800	1,095	800	717	800	204
450	721	450	675	450	389
250	105	350	192	350	196
750	2,421	750	917	1,500	521
7,500	6,583	5,000	1,180	--	--
350	250	500	250	500	500
350	541	300	344	300	424
<u>10,450</u>	<u>11,716</u>	<u>8,150</u>	<u>4,275</u>	<u>3,900</u>	<u>2,234</u>
2,500	1,708	2,500	1,465	1,300	1,093
500	270	500	398	500	377
<u>3,000</u>	<u>1,978</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>1,863</u>	<u>1,800</u>	<u>1,470</u>
500	500	500	500	500	500
5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>
746	--	1,363	--	434	--
<u>\$ 93,500</u>	<u>\$ 94,856</u>	<u>\$ 84,950</u>	<u>\$ 81,081</u>	<u>\$ 68,000</u>	<u>\$ 74,085</u>
<u>(\$ 1,200)</u>	<u>\$ 1,313</u>	<u>\$ --</u>	<u>\$ 12,128</u>	<u>\$ --</u>	<u>(\$ 1,026)</u>

APPENDIX II — (Acts, Article 48)
REPORT OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OF THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

TO THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

Esteemed Brethren,

Herewith the Board of Governors submit their tri-annual report to your assembly. Since the Board of Trustees report directly to Synod, the Board of Governors shall refrain from going into matters which are specifically in the province of the Board of Trustees. What should not be omitted, however, is a word of great appreciation for all the work which the Board of Trustees have done also during the past three years which elapsed since the General Synod of Toronto 1974. The constant attention which those brethren give to the well-being of the College ensures the smoothness of its operation as far as the material aspects are concerned.

Joint meetings of the Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees were held when this appeared necessary and feasible. It is and remains a handicap that the Board of Governors are unable to meet regularly since the high costs are prohibitive. Decisions are sometimes reached by means of correspondence, which is a time-consuming method and one not free from the danger of misunderstanding. Yet we may say that decisions could almost invariably be reached unanimously and that no difficulties have arisen within the Board of Governors or between the Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees or the Board of Governors and the Senate: the task was fulfilled in good Christian harmony.

The Board of Governors conducted three meetings during the past three years: September 11, 1975, September 13 and 14, 1976, and September 8, 9, and 10, 1977. Joint meetings with the Board of Trustees also took place as well as meetings with the Faculty.

At each yearly meeting officers were chosen as provided in Article VI, sub 5, a, of the Constitution of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Each and every election confirmed the present officers in their position: Rev. D. Vander Boom as President, Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene as Secretary, and Rev. J. Mulder as Vice-President.

The main concern of the Board is, of course, the academic aspect of our College. During the past three years the Faculty could work uninterruptedly: to all its members the Lord gave strength, ability, and a sufficient measure of health to perform the task to which the brethren were appointed. It is and remains a thing to be deplored that the members of the Board are spread over such a wide area, for the board members who live out West very seldom have the opportunity to visit the lectures. The Board did manage to arrange some visits to be brought by those members not residing in Ontario, but for the larger part this burden rests on those members of the Board who are within easy distance of the College.

When saying that the burden of visiting the lectures rests on a few members, we do not wish to imply that it is a bothersome burden. The time-factor is the one aspect which causes difficulties. As for the rest, it is a pleasure every time anew to attend the lectures given at our College. The brethren who teach there are capable men who do their work with great dedication, in total submission to the inerrant Word of our God and in faithful adherence to the Reformed Confessions. The Board is grateful that that can be the brief summary of their report to your assembly.

What causes concern is the number of students. When we consider the number of existing vacancies and add to that the number of vacancies which are to be expected within the next ten years, we can easily see that many young men will be needed to fill those vacancies. Then we do not even take into account the very realistic argument that new institutions, too, can be expected within the next ten years.

We are assured that the Churches, in their prayers and intercessions for our College, also remember the need for students. Yet we deemed it advisable once again to draw the attention especially to this point.

The course of study at the College has been extended to four years. That is the main reason why no one will graduate in 1978.

In connection with the lengthening of the time of study from three to four years, it is under consideration whether not the Master of Divinity degree should be conferred in-

stead of the Bachelor of Divinity degree. No decision has been reached as yet. The Senate is to investigate this whole question further before making such a decision.

As for degrees and their recognition, it was brought to the attention of the Board that a proposed Bible College in London, Ontario, tried to obtain official recognition by the Provincial Government, which recognition would also result in official recognition of the degrees granted. After having discussed this question with the Senate, and in the light of past information and experiences, the Board decided not to pursue this matter for the time being.

The presence of Dr. C. Trimp of the Theologische Hogeschool in Kampen, The Netherlands, was utilized by requesting him to deliver three lectures at our College. The personal contact proved to be very fruitful.

The lack of a sufficient supply of Reformed textbooks in the English language is felt by both the Senate and the Board. For that reason the Board requested "the Faculty, because of a shortage of material and the lack of solidly Reformed text books, to periodically issue a written digest of their lectures." Until now this request has not been followed up although some material has been made available and a hint has been given that more is forthcoming. Governors who visited the lectures have more than once expressed that they deplored it that what they heard during the lectures was not preserved in writing for future generations of students and for ministers who are already serving the Churches in that office.

Most of the work at our College is done without any publicity. Once in a while part of it becomes more public.

Every year a College Evening was organized, combined with a Convocation when there was a graduation. The brotherhood across the country show their love and interest by attending those functions in large numbers.

Most of the Churches are very faithful in remitting their share in the cost of our College. We sincerely wish that it could be said "without exception."

Members of the Faculty visited Churches in the West during their "working holidays," an activity which is highly appreciated by and in those Churches.

Teachers and other interested Church members benefited from special courses given.

It is under consideration to organize courses (other than the above) for persons not enrolled in our College, who wish to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the Holy Scriptures and of the Reformed doctrine in the widest sense.

Among the workers at our College who are to be mentioned in this report is the Rev. A. B. Roukema, who was appointed as Associate Librarian. He has catalogued many of our library books and periodically a list of newly-catalogued books is issued.

No news can be given about the library and its "housing." It is still not possible to utilize the garage building — which is almost a complete house in its own right — for as long as the main building provides student accommodation. We shall have to wait till a proper building can be erected.

Although the Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees have the authorization to purchase property for relocation of our College, no such purchase has as yet been made.

It would amount to gross neglect if we should not mention the name of our "Jack-of-all-trades." Miss Anne Van Sydenborgh who functions as a receptionist, hostess, guide, assistant-treasurer, secretary to the Board of Trustees and, if required, to the Board of Governors, just to mention some aspects of her multi-faceted position. She fulfils the duties of her many-sided position to the full satisfaction of all concerned.

After the Rev. A. B. Roukema had been appointed and after Miss Van Sydenborgh had become acquainted with her work, Mrs. J. Faber terminated her activities in the field of library-work at our College. What she did for the College, especially during those first years of its gradual development and upbuilding, will be held in grateful remembrance.

In conclusion, the Board wishes to express their great gratitude towards the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for His wonderful protection and mercies of which we received such a large share in our College. May He, from Whom all good and perfect gifts come down, with Whom there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning, continue to bestow upon our College and all who labour there in His service, as well as upon the Churches which maintain this institution, His gracious blessing without which neither our care or labour nor His gifts can yield any fruit.

Respectfully submitted, The Board of Governors,
In their name W. W. J. VAN OENE, Secretary

APPENDIX III — (Acts, Article 60)

REPORT COMMITTEE ON THE CHURCH BOOK (PSALM AND HYMN SECTION)

To the General Synod of Coaldale

Esteemed Brethren,

The Committee on the Church Book (Psalm and Hymn Section) herewith submits a report on their activities during the past three years, together with recommendations for the continuation of the endeavours to compile a complete Church book for the Churches.

I. Mandate (Psalm Section)

1. The General Synod of Toronto 1974, continued the Committee and gave it the following mandate:

With the consideration that the Psalm Section was not finalized yet and should be kept open for further improvement, Synod received the Psalm Section and decided to give the Committee the mandate:

- a. to write the Churches again to submit their possible remarks on the Psalm Section;
- b. to remain diligent with respect to a possible improvement of this section.

Your Committee has made a start with going through the Psalm book. At the time of writing this report we have come as far as Psalm 37. It was decided — in view of considerations by the Committee and of remarks received — to replace the versifications of some of the Psalms, e.g., 1, 2, 25, and 49. In an appendix attached to this report we present to Synod a few of these replacements.

It may be stated here that “being diligent with respect to improvements” is a painstaking and time-consuming work. This consideration will be one of the grounds for recommendations by your Committee.

2. Synod Toronto 1974 dealt with a letter of protest and complaint by Mr. D. Westra and charged the Committee to investigate these complaints and, if it appeared that certain terms of the contract had been violated, to find some form of restitution and satisfaction for the injustices incurred.

This matter has been investigated and resolved by correspondence with Mr. Westra. Although the contract was drawn between Mr. Westra and the Publication Committee, this matter should be clarified officially.

- a. the leaving out of initials was done on the basis of synodical decisions;
- b. the Committee has expressed that they “deplore the development and apologize for the fact that because of all the developments, and in the light of Synod decisions we did not and could not fully live up to all the provisions” especially as far as changes in the text were concerned.

II. Mandate (Hymn Section)

Synod Toronto 1974 received the Hymn Section and decided to give the continued Committee the mandate:

- a. to further improve the Hymn Section of the **Book of Praise** and for this purpose evaluate the remarks and criticisms which have been received already and may be received along the lines set out in consideration of the Reports of the Advisory Committees of the General Synods of Edmonton 1965 and Orangeville 1968;
- b. to compile, and make public, a list of Scripture passages suited to be rhymed and tone-set as hymns;
- c. to keep Deputies of the sister Churches abroad informed about the progress of the work.

The remarks which have been submitted to the Committee by General Synod 1974 and the ones which were subsequently received from Churches and individual members have been compiled and digested.

Mr. S. VanderPloeg submitted a "report" on the Hymn Section. This valuable contribution, together with the above-mentioned remarks, will receive due attention and consideration as soon as the work on the Psalms has been finalized.

On the basis of the remarks received it was decided to delete some of the Hymns. We cannot report on this matter since the Hymn Section has not been considered as yet in detail. Your Committee will try to submit to Synod some examples of Hymns to replace the ones that have been deleted.

Communications between the Committee and Deputies of sister Churches abroad have been received and acted upon.

III. General Information

1. In May 1977, the Rev. D. VanderBoom left the Province of Ontario and could no longer take an active part in the work of the Committee. Since the General Synod Coaldale 1977 was forthcoming, the Committee did not consider a replacement.
2. We have been informed that there is a growing interest in the **Book of Praise**. Other Churches seem to have become interested in it.
3. Several requests have been received to print, with the Hymns, the full musical harmonization. The Committee, before submitting a recommendation, will first consider the cost of such an undertaking.
4. We foresee that some more time is needed before a Committee on the Church book can come with a proposal for a Definite Version of the Psalm and Hymn Sections.

In the meantime this Committee expects that other committees which deal with the Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms will be ready within a certain period of time (in or before 1980, the year of the next General Synod) that so the material can be coordinated.

IV. Recommendations

On the basis of the foregoing your Committee **recommends**:

1. That Synod continue the Committee since the mandate has not been completed;
2. That Synod appoint the Rev. C. Van Dam as a member of this Committee;
3. That Synod set a deadline for reports of **all** the Committees whose work is related to the publication of a Definite Edition of the **Book of Praise**.

Respectfully submitted,
w.s. M.M. DeGroot
w.s. W. Helder
w.s. D. VanderBoom, secr. i.t.
w.s. G. VanDooren
w.s. W.W.J. VanOene

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION
FOR GENERAL SYNOD COALDALE 1977

The Mandate

Synod Toronto (1974) decided (Acts, Article 182, D):

to continue the Committee on the R.S.V. with the mandate:

- a. to continue the work of checking the R.S.V. and to pass on their criticism to the R.S.V. Bible Committee;
 - b. to inform the Churches from time to time about the results of their investigations;
 - c. to send a copy of this decision to the R.S.V. Bible Committee.
- ad a. The Committee met nine times during the past three years and came up with some recommendations for consideration by the Standard Bible Committee. These recommendations are taken seriously and are appreciated. This work is therefore of some importance.
- ad b. The instruction to inform the Churches from time to time was not implemented. The reason is that hardly any results of the investigations could be reported until a considerable amount of checking was done and a summary of the accomplished work could be presented. We, therefore, felt that it would be better to wait until we were ready to submit a report.
- ad c. A copy of Synod Toronto's decision re: the report of the previous Committee on the R.S.V. was sent to the Standard Bible Committee on March 20, 1975.

Translation and Presupposition

As has just been noted, Synod Toronto, among other things, charged this Committee with the mandate "to continue the work of checking the R.S.V." Synod New Westminster gave a similar mandate: "to continue with their work of checking the Revised Standard Version" (Article 33), while the Synod Orangeville (1968) made clear what the first point of this checking, which was to be continued through all these years, is. It is "to study the Revised Standard Version as to faithfulness to the original text and 'Schriftgelovig karakter'" (Acts, Article 46, IV).

In view of this mandate, this Committee also sought to evaluate the R.S.V. with a view to the theological presuppositions that may have entered into the translation work as seen in the final product. For, it is clear, that theological presuppositions cannot be divorced from the task of translating.

In view of the importance of theological presuppositions, it is a legitimate question to ask about the background and sponsorship of a translation, also of the R.S.V. In 1937, the International Council of Religious Education voted to proceed with a revision of the American Standard Version of 1901. When the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCC) was formed in 1950, "that body voted its approval of the R.S.V. project, and through its Division of Christian Education (DCE) became the sponsor of the new translation."¹ The Acts of Synod Carman (1954) describes the NCCC as "modernistic" (Acts, Article 71). To our knowledge, the premise that the NCCC is for the greater part identified with liberal Protestantism has never been challenged.

The question must therefore be, does the R.S.V. in any way give evidence of its sponsorship by a modernistic body? Is there any indication of an unscriptural influence?

Attempts have been made to find such indications by trying to prove that the R.S.V. consistently denies certain orthodox Christian doctrines.² It has, however, been amply proven that all orthodox doctrines can be accurately formulated on the basis of the R.S.V.³ Unfortunately, the attempt to find a consistent denial of some doctrine (like the doctrine of the virgin or the resurrection) or to construct a theory of a theological bias which tries to promote or prove a certain erroneous doctrine throughout the translation, has long muddied the waters of this discussion.

All this does not, however, mean that a translation from which all doctrine can be derived is by that fact automatically free from all possibility of unscriptural influence. It is possible that all doctrines can be deduced from a translation and that, nonetheless, there

may be clear instances of mistranslation which can detract from the true doctrine. Such mistranslations may even be technically defensible, but in the context of the Scriptures and its doctrine must be called a wrong translation. As such, such wrong translations could reveal the background of a version and would prevent one from giving it unconditional approval. On the basis of the following, we are afraid this is the case with the R.S.V.

a. Indications of unscriptural influence concerning the translation of texts dealing with the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:5 could technically be translated: "the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (R.S.V.); but, since the clear teaching of the Scripture is that the Holy Spirit is a person, this is a wrong translation. Correct is: "The Holy Spirit who has been given to us," or "whom he has given to us," in agreement with the correct translation of Romans 8:16, 26. (The same mistranslation occurs in Romans 8:11; I Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 1:14; I John 3:2-4.) Now to conclude that there is a mistranslation originating from an unscriptural influence here is not the same as saying that the R.S.V. is trying to introduce a false doctrine, re: the Holy Spirit, here.

A letter on this point was sent (November 29, 1976) to the Standard Bible Committee. No definite answer to our letter was as yet received from them. However, as is clear from the archives of our Committee, the R.S.V. Study Committee of the Christian Reformed Church in 1968 sent the following recommendation (to the Standard Bible Committee) on this point: "Substitute in the text 'who' for 'which' as in the RSV-CE." This would be consistent with the R.S.V.'s "the Spirit himself" in Romans 8:16, 26." The archive material makes it clear that this recommendation was not adopted, although other recommendations dealing with Pauline writings were adopted and later appeared in the new 1971 edition of the R.S.V. New Testament.

b. Indications of the influence of modern critical scholarship in the Old Testament.

Joshua 10:12. See Recommendation re: this passage in Appendix A. The need for clarity on this point becomes all the more important when we recognize that pagan contemporaries did worship the sun, (cf. Joshua 15:7, 10 where reference is made to En-Shemesh — spring of the sun — and Beth-Shemesh — house of the sun), and the moon (cf. Deuteronomy 4:19). Any suggestion that Joshua recognized the sun and moon as deities proceeds not from Scripture, but from critical theories as to the development and state of Israel's religion at this time.

Genesis 11:1. The R.S.V. translates "Now the whole earth had one language and few words." Although the translation "few words" may be technically possible, this translation is very unlikely and makes little sense in the context (cf. Gispén, Genesis, I [COT] ad loc). It should be translated "one speech." The point of the passage is that the earth had one language and thus all used the same words before the confusion of tongues. The present R.S.V. translation is difficult to imagine without the influence of unscriptural evolutionary thinking, which maintains that the language in those days was not yet developed and only had a very limited vocabulary.

Psalms 51:18b (51:20 in the Hebrew). The R.S.V. translates "rebuild the walls of Jerusalem." This should be "build the walls of Jerusalem." The R.S.V. translation intimates that the Psalm is post-exilic (i.e. composed after the Babylonian exile), and therefore sees the necessity to make reference to the rebuilding of the walls. However, neither the Hebrew nor the Psalm's context as indicated by the heading (and there is no objective reason to deny the value of the headings of the Psalms) suggests this. To translate "build" instead of "rebuild" makes perfectly good sense (cf., e.g., Calvin ad loc). The R.S.V. translation appears to be influenced by modern unscriptural theories which place Psalm 51 (along with the great majority of the Psalms) after the exile because of (among other reasons) their evolutionistic understanding of Israel's faith. Verses 5, 16, and 17, for example, are considered too advanced theologically for such an early date as David.

c. Indications of unnecessary contradictions.

The R.S.V. sometimes introduces unnecessary contradictions into the text which can be very confusing in the mind of the average Bible student and raise questions as to the consistency and trustworthiness of Scripture. For example, Genesis 9:20 is translated by the R.S.V. as: "Noah was the first tiller of the soil." This translation, however, contradicts Genesis 4:2 and 5:29. Genesis 9:20 can be translated differently and therefore

should be translated differently in view of what other passages say. Correct is something like: "Noah began to till the soil."

On a larger scale, the unity of the Old and New Testament should be maintained wherever the original clearly calls for it. As the United Bible Societies' booklet, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament*, (p. vii) puts it: "the present check list should help the translator to make the Old and New Testament materials agree in translation wherever they are truly parallel in their respective originals." The R.S.V. does not always do that. For example, the R.S.V. translation of Psalm 45:6 (verse 7 in the Hebrew) makes it needlessly difficult for one who reads Hebrews 1:8 (where this passage is quoted) to find here a reference to Psalm 45:6. The R.S.V. should read: "Thy throne O God," instead of: "your divine throne." There is no reason in the Hebrew original or the ancient versions to tone that down. Hebrews 1:8 confirms that. In view of God's Messianic promises to David and in view of Christ's being the fulfillment of David's royal line, this makes Psalm 45:6 full of meaning, only fully realized in the New Testament. Another example of needlessly different translations of an Old Testament passage and its being quoted in the New Testament is Deuteronomy 6:4 and Mark 12:29.

In view of the considerations above, the Committee arrives at the statement that it is afraid that the R.S.V. shows evidence of unscriptural influence.

Does this mean that we should no longer avail ourselves of this translation? The Committee does not think so. As pointed out, all doctrines can be deduced from it and also of the R.S.V. translation it may be said: This is the Bible. Indeed, in the flood of the many translations and paraphrases of today, it would be fair to say that in the wide perspective of all these different renditions, the R.S.V. numbers among the more conservative in its basic attempt to translate what is there as precisely as possible. For, in its study of the last three years, the Committee found that in spite of its deficiencies, the R.S.V. does not add to nor take away from the words of the Bible books in its translation. That means that, although with care, the R.S.V. can be used. We must also realize that at the moment no other modern translation has been tested for use in our Churches. Furthermore, serious objections, be they of a different nature, can also be brought to bear against the exclusive use of the King James Version in our midst.

This Committee therefore recommends that the Churches be left the freedom to use the R.S.V. with discretion and care.

TO SUMMARIZE:

We recommend:

1. that the Churches be left the freedom to use the R.S.V. with discretion and care (for the grounds, see above).
2. that Synod not appoint a new Committee for the checking of the R.S.V. Ground: the Committee feels that this matter has had sufficient attention.

Postscript:

The recommendation to terminate the existence of a Committee for the checking of the R.S.V. does not exclude the possibility to maintain a study Committee on the R.S.V. which continues to make recommendations for changes to the R.S.V. Bible Committee and keeps the Churches posted as to the developments in new editions of the R.S.V., which strengthen the recommendation of Synod or make it imperative to reconsider this recommendation.

Since the opinion of deputies was not asked on this point, no recommendation is given by them in this respect.

Respectfully submitted by the Committee on the
R.S.V., appointed by Synod Toronto 1974.

L. Selles, convener
H.M. Ohmann
C. Van Dam, secretary

¹ Herbert G. May, "The Revised Standard Version after Twenty Years," *McCormick Quarterly* XIX, 4 (May 1966), p. 301.

² Cf. e.g., the brief survey in G.A. Larue, "Another Chapter in the History of Bible

Translation," **The Journal of Bible and Religion** XXXI, 4 (1963) pp. 301-310.

³ E.g., the dissertation of R.L. Goddard, **An Objective Evaluation of the Accuracy of the R.S.V. in the Translation of the New Testament** (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1955).

⁴ RSV-CE = RSV Catholic Edition (1966).

APPENDIX V — (Acts, Articles 107, 108)

COMMITTEE ON CORRESPONDENCE WITH CHURCHES ABROAD

Report to General Synod, Coaldale, Alberta, 1977

Esteemed Brethren,

We hereby submit to you a report of the activities of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad, appointed by General Synod, Toronto 1974.

1. MANDATE

General Synod, Toronto 1974, gave our Committee the following mandate:

- a. to maintain correspondence in accord with the Rules for Correspondence and to do so with:
 - De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland
 - Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika
 - The Free Reformed Churches of Australia;
- b. to continue the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa), and to submit a report on this contact to the next General Synod;
- c. to send an invitation to sister Churches Abroad at least one year prior to the date the next General Synod is to convene;
- d. to have our Churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of sister Churches Abroad, if invited, and when desirable and feasible;
- e. to execute the decision made by this Synod (Acts, Article 57) to send an "appeal to Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (praeses Dr. C. van der Waal) to rescind their teachings concerning marriage and divorce and to earnestly seek the unity and fellowship of the faith with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika";
- f. to inform the Churches from time to time about that which is of interest in their correspondence with Churches Abroad.

2. 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.
- 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, General Synod Hamilton 1962, Article 139.)

3. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

3.1. Declarations

- 3.1.1. The following ministers of the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches, planning to travel abroad, requested and received a declaration that they are ministers in good standing in the Churches:
 - Rev. D. VanderBoom; Rev. G. Van Rongen (Australia); Drs. H.M. Ohmann;
 - Rev. J. Geertsema; Rev. D. DeJong; Rev. G. VanDooren; Rev. Cl. Stam;
 - Rev. J. Van Rietschoten; Rev. M. van Beveren; Rev. M.C. Werkman; Rev. R.F. Boersema.
- 3.1.2. The following ministers of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland visited Canada:

Rev. J.H. VanderHoeven; Rev. J.A. Boersema; Dr. J.M. Arntzen; Rev. M. Janssens; Dr. C. Trimp; Rev. Joh. Strating; Rev. A. Jagersma; Rev. H.D. VanHerksen.

From the Deputies of the sister Churches in The Netherlands our Committee received for each of them a declaration that they were ministers in good standing in De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

- 3.1.3. Candidate J. DeJong, Hamilton, Ontario, requested — July 6, 1976 — a declaration that he was authorized to speak an edifying word in the worship services of the Canadian Reformed Churches. This request was made because of Candidate DeJong's planned stay and studies in The Netherlands.
Since Classis Ontario South, June 16, 1976, had examined Candidate DeJong and declared him eligible for call, granting him the right to speak an edifying word for the period of one year, we sent him the requested declaration.
- 3.2. **Correspondence Churches in Canada**
- 3.2.1. The Church at Edmonton, Alberta, requested — June 21, 1975 — to have a note published in the "Nederlands Dagblad" to remind visitors from the Churches in The Netherlands to take a travel attestation along.
We complied with this request and such a note has been published.
- 3.2.2. The Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, Burlington, Ontario, requested -- January 5, 1976 — information regarding the progress made in the contact with The Presbyterian Church of Korea.
- 3.2.3. A similar request was received from the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church, Burlington, Ontario, January 6, 1976.
To both Churches a letter has been sent giving them the required information.
- 3.2.4. The Deaconry of the Canadian Reformed Church at Winnipeg, Manitoba, asked — February 9, 1976 — information about the Hapchong Orphanage in Busan, South Korea.
The information asked for could be given.
- 3.2.5. The Church at Toronto, Ontario, sent us — March 17, 1976 — a copy of a letter which they had received from the "Christian Reformation Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pastor: the Rev. Vincent C. Licatesi."
Toronto informed us that they had given this pastor our address. However, our Committee was not approached by this Church. In this letter it reads: "... we would welcome your correspondence in the fielding of fellowship in lectures and discussions on the problems that we face."
We passed a copy of this letter on to the Church at Grand Rapids so that the consistory knew about this request and could take up contact with this Church and if so desired approach General Synod about this matter.
As matters stand our Committee is not charged nor authorized to initiate new contacts with Churches.
- 3.3. **Correspondence — Miscellaneous**
- 3.3.1. From our Dutch Deputies we received a "Rapport inzake de Psalmberijming — aan de Generale Synode, Kampen, 1975." This was passed on to our Committee on the Church book.
- 3.3.2. A "Rapport inzake de herziening van het Kerkboek, aan de Generale Synode, Kampen, 1975" was passed on to our Committee on the Church book — Forms Section.
- 3.3.3. A "Rapport inzake de herziening van enige artikelen van de Kerkorde in opdracht van de Generale Synode van Kampen, 1975" has been passed on to our Committee on Revision of the Church Order.
- 3.3.4. Our Dutch sister Churches asked us a few times for the Appeal Christian Reformed Church since they, finalizing their contact with the Christian Reformed Church, considered to declare themselves in agreement with our appeal.
We approached our Committee on an Appeal Christian Reformed Church to send us copies.
As soon as the appeal was drafted — May 1977 — ten copies have been sent to The Netherlands.
- 3.3.5. From Dr. J. Faber a letter was received — December 12, 1974 — informing us

that he planned to visit relatives in The Netherlands and that he was willing — if so desired — to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at the General Synod Kampen 1975, at no cost for our Churches.

Our Committee appointed Dr. J. Faber as delegate, provided him with a credential and notified our sister Churches and General Synod of this appointment.

(For a report on this representation see under 5.5)

- 3.3.6. Dr. C. Trimp informed us that he had been invited to give guest-lectures at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the spring of 1977. He asked whether acceptance of this invitation would interfere with our policies with regard to the Christian Reformed Church. We answered that we were not aware of any impediments in this respect.
- 3.4. **Acts — Yearbook**
- 3.4.1. As soon as the Acts of General Synod, Toronto 1974, had been published — June 1975 — a sufficient number of copies were sent to the Deputies on Correspondence of our sister Churches in Australia, The Netherlands and South Africa.
- 3.4.2. Also copies of the Yearbook of our Churches have been forwarded to these Deputies, keeping them informed about the general activities and statistics of the Churches.
- 3.5. **Schooldag — Kampen**
On the occasion of the Schooldag-Kampen of the Churches in 'The Netherlands, congratulatory messages have been sent on behalf of our membership.
- 3.6. **Provisional Agenda — Invitations**
The sister Churches in Australia, The Netherlands and South Africa have been invited to send delegates to the General Synod, Coaldale 1977. The First provisional agenda has been forwarded to them.
- 3.7. **Interim Report**
Your Committee did not submit such a report since there were not sufficient matters of interest in the correspondence with Churches abroad to warrant such a report.

4. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

4.1. Correspondence

- 4.1.1. Having received information that the (tenth) Synod of the Free Reformed Churches would meet in Albany, June 1975, we sent Synod our best wishes for a fruitful meeting.
- 4.1.2. The Deputies in Australia were kept informed about our correspondence with Churches abroad, e.g., the decisions taken regarding the Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk, South Africa (Praeses Dr. C. van der Waal). We also asked for a provisional agenda of Synod 1975 which has not been received.
- 4.1.3. We did receive the “Rapport van Deputaten voor Correspondentie met Buitenlandse Kerken” to be submitted to Synod Albany, 1975. From this report we quote:
“De Correspondentie met Canada had een levendig karakter, vooral van de zijde der Canadese Deputaten”
“Uit de correspondentie met Deputaten uit Canada kunnen we concluderen dat deze zusterkerken in hun kerkelijk leven en in contacten naar buiten zich getrouw houden aan de normen van Schrift en Belijdenis”
“Het Yearbook geeft een goede orientatie van het kerkelijk leven. Er is niet veel groei in het ledental der Kerken. Het Theol. College neemt een stevige plaats in in het leven der Kerken. Er is geen apart hoofdstuk gewijd aan de zendings-activiteit”
- 4.1.4. Information was received — March 19, 1977 — that the Australian Churches now have “full correspondence with the Presbyterian Church of Korea” and that they think it worthwhile to consider “a sort of Reformed Oecumenical Synod

with delegates from Africa, Australia, Canada, The Netherlands (and Korea, Indonesia?),” although they realize that it will be difficult to arrange such a meeting.

4.2. Acts of Synod, Albany, 1975

4.2.1. This Synod met from November 1 - November 7, 1975. Some decisions are:

- a. Deputies are appointed to revise the Church Order and to propose a definite text in the English language.
- b. With regard to attestations:
“Synod does not deem it desirable or necessary to give a general decision regulating exceptional cases in which a church council, not without the advice of the neighbouring church, considers that it is proper before the Lord and His congregation to deviate from the general rule that only the members of the congregation or members of the sisterchurches with a valid attestation will be admitted to the Lord’s Supper.
Synod decides that in those situations in which applications to partake of the Lord’s Supper are received from members of churches, which in their own countries in confession, church polity and practice take position opposite to churches corresponding with The Free Reformed Churches of Australia, such applications will not be accepted.”
- c. Regarding English Bible translations, the New International Version and the K.J.V. II are rejected.
Deputies are appointed to study the New American Standard Bible and the Revised Standard Version.
- d. The decision of Synod 1972 that Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk (Praeses Dr. C. van der Waal) cannot be recognized as corresponding sister Church is confirmed.
- e. As to the baptism of adopted children, it was decided that children adopted by believing parents on the ground of Genesis 17 should be baptized.
- f. The discussion of an extensive report on the contact with the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia results in a decision to propose to this Presbyterian Church to agree to a meeting of representatives of both Churches in order to get better acquainted with each other.
- g. Next Synod is scheduled for October 1977. No provisional agenda has been received at this moment.

4.3. Conclusion

From the correspondence and the Acts of Synod, Albany 1975, it appears that the Free Reformed Churches in doctrine and Church activities do maintain the standards of the faith and therefore we recommend to continue the correspondence with these Churches.

5. DE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN IN NEDERLAND

5.1. Correspondence

5.1.1. After Synod Toronto 1974 the Dutch sister Churches were informed about some decisions of special significance to them. Since the Acts of this Synod had not yet been published, a copy of our decision regarding the contact with the Christian Reformed Church was sent to them — March 1975 — also the decision regarding the preaching of guest ministers from Churches abroad.

5.1.2. In our correspondence with the Deputies in The Netherlands we asked them to also approach the Korean Presbyterian Church and to urge them to send us the requested material. Deputies have done so more than once.

They reported to Synod Kampen, 1975:

“Nog steeds is het ons niet gelukt het rapport van de zusterkerken in Korea inzake wijzigingen in de Belijdenis en de Kerkorde vertaald te krijgen, ondanks vele pogingen daartoe.”

(See further under “The Presbyterian Church of Korea . . .”)

5.1.3. The Committee received the provisional agenda of General Synod Kampen 1975,

and we sent Synod our best wishes. (Dr. J. Faber has represented the Churches.)

- 5.1.4. After Synod Kampen 1975, we were informed — February 28, 1976 — that Synod had decided to enter into Church Correspondence with “De Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoë (p.a. Ds. L. Kondamara).”
- 5.1.5. February 7, 1977, we received the Acts of General Synod, Kampen 1975. Deputies apologized for the fact that publication took so long and that we consequently received them that late.
- 5.1.6. Some interim reports, apparently published by our Dutch Deputies for Correspondence in papers in The Netherlands have not been received by this Committee.
- 5.1.7. The Canadian Reformed Churches did receive a cordial invitation to be represented at the General Synod of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, which is scheduled for April 11, 1978 at Groningen-Zuid.

5.2. Request of Sixteen Persons in The Netherlands

5.2.1. Materials

The Committee received:

- a. a letter dated February 25, 1976, signed by H. Elsinga, J.Y. Poortinga, and P. de Vries;
- b. a letter dated August 28, 1976, signed by the same persons;
- c. a letter dated June 4, 1977, signed by 16 persons, namely: H. Elsinga, M. Elsinga-Kuipers, F.S. Elsinga, L.R.G. Elsinga, J.W.J. Elsinga, J.R. Elsinga, J. Hoorn, J.Y. Poortinga, A.J. Poortinga, N. Poortinga-Poortinga, J.E. Poortinga, E.S. Poortinga, R.G.J. Poortinga, M. van der Heide, C. de Vries-van Ekeren, P. de Vries.

Of the enclosures we mention the brochures “Buitenpost,” “Waakt,” “Goud,” “Entscheidung,” “Getuigenis,” “Weerlegging,” received with letter sub a, and “Maranatha” received with letter sub c.

- 5.2.2. From the brochure “Maranatha” it appears that all Canadian Reformed Churches from virtually the same persons received letters dated December 10, 1971 (signed by P. de Vries only), October 31, 1975, and June 4, 1977. Several of the Churches referred the senders to our Committee as the proper address for their correspondence.

5.2.3. Contents of the Letters

The letter of February 25, 1976, does not contain a request, but the hope and expectation is expressed that the Canadian Reformed Churches fulfill their calling with respect to the correspondence with sister Churches abroad.

The letter of August 28, 1976, has no request either, but exhorts the Churches and the Committee to fulfill their calling as mentioned in the previous letter.

The letter of June 4, 1977, states that the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have become false churches according to the marks of Article 29 of the Belgic Confession.

The request is made that the Canadian Reformed Churches terminate their correspondence with their Netherlands sister Churches and that the 16 undersigned persons be accepted as the rest of the covenant people which the LORD has still left in The Netherlands.

5.2.4. Observations

- 5.2.4.1. The Committee calls your attention to the fact that in their letters the authors do not submit grounds for their statement that the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have become false churches except for the information that all those churches have made “the wrong choice.” It is clear that the authors expect that the evidence will be found in the above-mentioned enclosures, especially in the brochure “Maranatha” which is said to have been compiled for the churches abroad and to contain “complete documentation of the decision” in The Netherlands. This “complete documentation,” however, repeatedly refers to all brochures received.
- 5.2.4.2. It is not the task of the Committee to formulate accusations against our sister Churches while those who complain neglect to state their case.

5.2.5. General Synod Hattem 1972/73

5.2.5.1. Since it appears from the enclosures that the authors of the letters have approached General Synod Hattem 1972/73 of our sister Churches, it is necessary to pay attention to what that General Synod decided in their matter. This will do justice to the Churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches have correspondence and will at the same time shed some light on the motive for the statement that the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have become false churches.

5.2.5.2. On behalf of those who signed the above-mentioned letter of June 4, 1977 (5.2.1.c) and of whom apparently no one belonged to our sister Churches anymore, three persons of the group addressed themselves to General Synod Hattem. They stated that in a number of congregations, in a Classis and in a Regional Synod they had found false teaching re: the doctrine of Church and Covenant and exhorted Synod to reject the false doctrines.

However, they emphatically declared that their letters did not constitute a gravamen which could be examined and tested in the light of the Scriptures, but that they approached Synod as witnesses with a testimony ("getuigenis") which was not to be questioned. "We do not address ourselves to you to hear from you whether or not the present false doctrine re: covenant and church is a false doctrine and whether or not we were rightly excluded (from the Church) because of our struggle against that doctrine. For that is not a matter which can be decided by you or by the majority of the church, but by God's Word only" ("Getuigenis," page 202).

Moreover, they beforehand declared every member of Synod individually guilty of the general unfaithfulness and of breaking the covenant, and informed Synod that, in case Synod would reject their testimony, all Reformed Churches that would approve such action would by that very fact become false churches according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession ("Getuigenis," pages 202, 203).

5.2.5.3. General Synod Hattem, Acts, Article 199, rightly rejected the testimony as being not in accordance with the apostolic teaching, I Corinthians 14:29, Romans 12:7, and I Corinthians 14:36, which demands that everyone should be willing to have his words and testimonies examined and tested by the light of the Scriptures. Synod answered the complainants that they by the character of their testimony denied Synod the right to submit their grievances to the scrutiny of God's Word.

5.2.6. Considerations

5.2.6.1. The Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad reported to General Synod Toronto 1974, that "the Committee with thankfulness may conclude from the Acts of General Synod Hoogeveen and of General Synod Hattem that the Netherlands sister Churches have not deviated from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline."

5.2.6.2. The requesters did not give evidence that the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have deviated from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline.

5.2.7. Recommendation

The Committee recommends to Synod not to grant the request.

5.3. Acts of General Synod Kampen 1975

Re: Netherlands National Authorities

It was decided to send a letter to the national authorities to express Synod's concern about the decay of spiritual and moral values in The Netherlands, e.g., with respect to the intended legalization of abortus provocatus. Synod appealed to the authorities to govern in accordance with God's revealed Word.

Re: The Theological College

Synod decided to lengthen the time required for the academic training for the ministry from four to five years and that the course of study is to be completed by a doctoral examination.

Proposals for a thorough renovation and extension of the buildings in use by the College were unanimously adopted.

Rev. D.K. Wielenga, lecturer of missiology since 1946 was most honourably released from his service because he had reached the age of 70 years; this release was to take effect on August 1, 1976.

Re: Voting Privileges for Women

Since a report of Deputies arguing against women's voting privileges was considered not sufficiently founded. Synod appointed again Deputies with the mandate to study the matter and to pay attention to the character of the election of office-bearers in all its aspects.

Re: Evangelizing

Synod replaced the decision of General Synod Utrecht 1923, Article 92, re: evangelizing by a new decision which does more justice to the calling and responsibility of the members of the Churches.

Re: Revision of the Church Order

The majority of the proposed new Articles of the Church Order were provisionally adopted. New deputies were to study the remaining Articles and to report to the next Synod.

Re: Liturgy

One hundred and fifty newly rhymed psalms were accepted to be tested by the Churches for a number of years. Also to be tested by the Churches were several new hymns whereas other hymns were deleted.

Again several liturgical forms were revised and adopted for use in the worship services, such as forms for the ordination/installation of office-bearers and for the solemnization of marriage.

Re: The Canadian Reformed Churches

Prof. Dr. J. Faber was received as the first delegate to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at a Synod of their Netherlands sister Churches.

Synod expressed its thankfulness for the fact that the Canadian Reformed Churches have exerted themselves to guard what has been entrusted to them as was apparent in their contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the termination of the discussion with the Christian Reformed Church and the refusal to establish correspondence with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (praeses Dr. C. van der Waal).

It was decided:

- a. to continue the correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches in accordance with the adopted rules;
- b. to forward a letter to the sister Churches abroad one year before the beginning of a General Synod of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland with the invitation to send a delegation to that Synod;
- c. in response to a similar decision of General Synod Toronto 1974, to request the consistories of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland to ascertain that a minister of one of the Canadian Reformed Churches whom they wish to invite to conduct a worship service, has a written proof given by the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad of the Canadian Reformed Churches that he is a minister in good standing.

Synod charged its deputies to issue a similar written proof to ministers who request such a declaration with a view to conducting worship services in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Synod further charged their deputies to request our Committee:

1. to send them the new concept of the Church Order which is being revised by the Canadian Reformed Churches;
2. to keep their Deputies informed on the progress made with respect to possible correspondence with the Korean Churches.

Re: Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika

Synod decided to continue the correspondence with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika according to the adopted rules.

These Churches were urged to establish contact with The Presbyterian Church in Korea.

Re: The Free Reformed Churches of Australia

Synod decided to continue the correspondence with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

The deputies of those churches would be requested to forward the report on contact with the Presbyterian Church of Australia; also to send the information whether their efforts to establish ecclesiastical correspondence with the Churches in Korea have had results.

The Korean Churches will be urged again to seek contact with the Churches in Australia and to answer the Australian letters.

Re: The Presbyterian Church in Korea

The Korean deputies had sent the information that no changes had been made in the Westminster Confession and the two catechisms and only minor changes in the Church Order; those changes would be translated into the English language and sent to the Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad.

Prof. J. Kamphuis of Kampen gave guest-lectures at the Theological Seminary at Busan during the spring of 1975. It was decided to again grant (one of) the professors of the College at Kampen the possibility to give guest-lectures in Korea, if so requested.

Synod paid much attention to the financial need of the Korean Churches. It was reported that the Netherlands Churches had collected fl. 680,000.00 for the new building of the Seminary at Busan. Having received a request for assistance also for the construction of a dormitory, Synod pledged the additional amount of fl. 320,000.00, being 65% of the estimated cost. Regular assistance was to be continued as follows: \$1,150.00 per month for the Seminary at Busan and \$50.00 per month for its library. It was further decided that, when sufficient additional information would be received, to support the publication of "The Korea Theological Monthly" with the amount of fl. 11,250.00 annually.

Upon a repeated request of the Korean Churches to send two "missionary professors" to teach at the Seminary in Busan, Synod considered that such an endeavour would be a new task which would entail new and also financial responsibilities for many years and decided to appoint deputies to study the matter with all its implications.

Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad were charged:

1. to consider to what extent the sister Churches abroad could be involved in the above-mentioned financial assistance;
2. to urge the Korean Churches to seek contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches, The Free Reformed Churches of Australia, Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika and with the Reformed Church of Japan.

Re: De Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoe

Authorized by General Synod Hattem 1972/73 to travel to Sumba, Indonesia, Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad delegated two of their ministers to visit two groups of churches, namely, "De Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoe" (c/o Rev. L. Kondamara) and "De Vrijgemaakte Kerken van Oost-Soemba c.a." (c/o Rev. K. Tanahomba) which churches are also served by Rev. P.P. Goossens.

Upon a report and recommendation of the Deputies Synod established ecclesiastical correspondence with De Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoe (c/o Rev. L. Kondamara), and decided to send an appeal to De Vrijgemaakte Kerken van Oost-Soemba c.a. (c/o Rev. K. Tanahomba) to terminate the relation with the Netherlands Churches "buiten verband" and to strive for unity with the Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoe. This decision brought to an end years of difficulties and struggle both in Sumba and in The Netherlands.

Re: The Christian Reformed Church

Synod decided not to continue the contact and discussion with the Christian Reformed Church regarding the rules for correspondence since the Christian Reformed Church in 1974, while changing the existing relations into a relationship of "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship" also decided to find ways for closer

contact with the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands and suspended judgment on the faithfulness of those churches.

Synod agreed with the Conclusion of General Synod Toronto 1974 of the Canadian Reformed Churches mentioned in Article 146 of the Acts and decided to instruct their Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad to consult with the Deputies of the Canadian Reformed Churches regarding the forwarding of an appeal to the Christian Reformed Church as was decided by General Synod Toronto 1974.

Re: Other Contacts

Deputies on Correspondence with Churches Abroad of our sister Churches reported on contacts with **Die Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika** (the so-called "Dopperkerken"). Synod was appreciative of the fact that those churches had admonished the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands for their deviations from Scripture and Confession. A letter will be sent to them dealing with some aspects of the rules for ecclesiastical correspondence.

Initial contact with **The Reformed Church of Japan** did not yield further progress. Efforts will be made to renew the contacts.

No progress could be reported on contact with **The Reformed Church of Taiwan**. From **L'Eglise Lumière in Congo** and **The Coptic Church in Egypt** no communications were received anymore.

Contacts with **The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ireland** and **The Free Reformed Church of Scotland** offered more perspective. However, those churches still are members of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Upon their request Synod authorized the Deputies to visit those churches in order to make the present contacts more effective.

Deputies received the broad mandate to seek contact with other churches abroad whenever they would see a possibility for correspondence with those churches in accordance with the adopted rules.

5.4. **Conclusion**

Whereas it should be borne in mind that it is not possible for your Committee to verify every decision in detail, the Committee may with thankfulness conclude from the correspondence and the Acts of General Synod Kampen 1975, that **De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland** desire to be faithful to God's Word and to abide by the Reformed Creeds and Church Order.

On the basis of the above the Committee recommends to Synod to continue the correspondence with **De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland** in accordance with the adopted rules.

5.5. **Report Representation — Dr. J. Faber**

From the Acts of General Synod Kampen 1975, it appears that the Rev. Dr. J. Faber on May 29, 1975, received a cordial welcome as representative of **The Canadian Reformed Churches** with whom **De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland** are one in faith.

Dr. Faber attended some sessions of Synod on May 29 and June 3, 4, and 12, 1975. He could give information regarding the revision of the Church Order in which our Churches are engaged. He also took part in the discussion on the new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism.

On June 12, 1975, Dr. Faber delivered an official address on behalf of the Churches in Canada. The president of Synod, the Rev. P. Lok, expressed the appreciation of Synod to have met the Canadian Reformed Churches in its representative, Dr. J. Faber.

(The address of Dr. J. Faber has been published in "Clarion," Vol. 24, No. 18.)

6. **DIE VRYE GEREFORMEERDE KERKE IN SUID-AFRIKA**

6.1. **Correspondence**

- 6.1.1. After General Synod 1974 we sent a letter to **Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke** — April 10, 1975 — informing them about some decisions taken, especially the one regarding **Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria** (Praeses Dr. C. van der Waal).

- 6.1.2. **Deputies of the Churches in South Africa answered — November 19, 1975 —** that they were thankful for the decision of Synod Toronto 1974 to continue the correspondence with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke.

In the same letter they wrote:

“Met dankbaarheid kan ik U tenslotte melden, dat de broederlijke verhoudingen binnen het kerkverband sinds de wederopneming van de Kerk te Johannesburg, weer functioneren en dat een toenemende activiteit ten goede geconstateerd kan worden.”

- 6.1.3. **An appeal has been sent — March 12, 1976 —** to Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (Praeses Dr. C. van der Waal) together with the decisions taken by Synod Toronto regarding the request of this Church to enter into correspondence with them.

In the appeal we urged the consistory to rescind as yet their teaching concerning marriage and divorce and to seek the unity of the faith with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika. No answer has been received.

- 6.1.4. **After a Synod was held in Pretoria 1976** we received a letter informing us about the decision that Synod adopted an official text of the rules for correspondence in the African language.

Rule 3 reads:

“Om vooraf met elkaar overleg te pleeg insake eventuele wijsgings of aanvulling van belijdenisskrifte, kerkorde en liturgiese formuliere.”

Since we do not have this stipulation in our rules for correspondence (om “vooraf met elkaar overleg te pleeg”) we informed Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke accordingly (see under 6.2.3.).

- 6.1.5. **When we — January 1977 —** received information that the next Synod was scheduled for February 3-5, 1977 at Pretoria, we sent a letter expressing our best wishes for a fruitful meeting and we requested to send us the Acts as soon as possible. (Acts of Synod Pretoria 1976 held in January were received by us in July 1977.)

No report or Acts of Synod 1977 have been received at this time.

6.2. **Acts**

From the Acts received we report the following:

6.2.1. **Acts — Synod Capetown 1974**

Rev. H.J. de Vries of Amsterdam/Zuidwest, The Netherlands, was invited to be a member of Synod in an advisory capacity.

Since Synod consisted of delegates of only two churches, namely of Capetown and Pretoria, Synod declared itself unable to deal with several gravamina mentioned on its agenda.

Synod made decisions regarding the position of the Church at Johannesburg and appointed two brethren to assist the Church at Johannesburg on the way to restoration of the severed relations with the confederation of Churches in accordance with the decision of this Synod.

6.2.2. **Acts — Synod Pretoria 1975**

This Synod was convened for the sole purpose of dealing with a report of the two brethren appointed by Synod Capetown 1974 as mentioned above.

Rev. C.G. Bos of The Netherlands was invited to be a member of Synod in an advisory capacity.

Synod decided to receive the Church at Johannesburg again into the confederation of Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika.

6.2.3. **Acts — Synod Pretoria 1976**

Delegates of the three Churches (of Capetown, Johannesburg and Pretoria) were present.

With thankfulness we may report that it appears from the Acts of this Synod that many of the difficulties with which Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika have been struggling, were solved. A number of decisions of previous Synods were rectified, e.g., a decision of Synod Capetown February 1972 re: the position of the minister of the Church at Johannesburg (see Report to General

Synod Toronto 1974); Synod declared that the Consistory of the Church at Johannesburg has the duty to adopt stipulations for the position of Rev. W. Boessenkool in accordance with Article 11 and Article 13 of the Church Order.

Synod decided to initiate contact with The Presbyterian Church in Korea for the purpose of establishing ecclesiastical correspondence.

Correspondence with De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, with The Free Reformed Churches of Australia and with the Canadian Reformed Churches was continued.

As Rules for Correspondence Synod adopted the rules which were re-worded by De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland in General Synod Amersfoort 1966/67, Acts, Article 176, of which Rule No. 3 stipulates consultation beforehand ("vooraangaand overleg"). The Committee informed the Deputies for Correspondence of Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika that Rule No. 3 of the Canadian Reformed Churches reads as follows:

"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."

We requested the Deputies to propose to their forthcoming Synod to incorporate this, our Rule No. 3, into the Rules for Correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches and to follow thereby General Synod Hooegeven 1969/70 of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Acts, Article 412, which Synod judged that Rule No. 3 of the Canadian Reformed Churches was acceptable for correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

6.3. Conclusion

From the correspondence and the Acts we may conclude:

that the confederation of Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika has been restored and has regained its effectiveness, and that Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika have clearly shown that they desire to be faithful to God's Word and to abide by the Reformed Creeds and Church Order.

On the basis of the above the Committee recommends with thankfulness to continue the correspondence with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.

7. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA

7.1. In our report to Synod 1974 we reported on our letter to the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Korean Presbyterian Church (January 29, 1973). We requested to be further informed about the changes proposed and/or adopted in the Westminster Confession, Ch. 23 (Civil Magistrates), Ch. 25 (Church) and Ch. 31 (Synods and councils) and in the Form of Government.

7.2. Since we received no reply we wrote Dr. Sun Gil Huh on January 15, 1974, asking him to send us the documents needed.

No answer was received.

7.3. December 1974, the Rev. M. van Beveren, 2nd clerk of Synod Toronto 1974 and member of our Committee, received a personal letter from Dr. S.G. Huh with the request to organize with others financial support for the Presbyterian Church in Korea, especially for its work of evangelism.

No mention was made of this Committee's letter to Dr. Huh sent in January 1974. Rev. M. van Beveren answered — March 21, 1975 — that he was a member of this Committee on Correspondence and he referred Dr. Huh to the decision of Toronto 1974 regarding the financial assistance of the Korean Presbyterian Church (Acts, Article 140 D). He also reminded Dr. Huh of the letter sent to him by our Committee on January 15, 1974, regarding the changes in Confession and Form of Government and he urged him to do his part that this matter would be dealt with in Korea.

Our Committee did not receive a reaction from Dr. Huh.

7.4. January 1976, we did receive a letter from the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, signed by its chairman, P.S. Oh, Th.D. We were informed that new members of the Fraternal Relations Committee had

been appointed. They further expressed the desire to have correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches and informed us about their doctrinal standards and Form of Government. This part of the letter was almost similar to the one of December 10, 1971 (see previous report IX, 2).

No mention was made of our communications sent to the Fraternal Relations Committee and/or Dr. Huh. It seemed to us that this Committee made up of new members possibly never received and read our letters.

This impression was strengthened by the fact that Dr. P.S. Oh wrote:

“We had some internal problems in past years, so we were unable to deal with new things such as foreign relations. Now we have solved the difficulties and so try to plan new things.”

- 7.5. Also from another source we were informed about difficulties the Korean Presbyterian Churches had to cope with. Deputies of our Dutch sister Churches wrote us, December 27, 1974, that they had received the following information from the Fraternal Relations Committee in Korea:

“We like contact with the Reformed Churches in Canada and Australia. We are very sorry that so far, through our internal conflicts, somewhat we were disturbed to do things well.”

- 7.6. Since the “internal conflicts” appeared to have been solved we saw no need to ask further information.

We did, however, send a letter to the Fraternal Relations Committee, referring them again to letters sent to them (and Dr. Huh) in the past and enclosing copies of these letters. We repeated our request for more information, especially regarding the changes in Confession and Form of Government and we urged the Committee in Korea to answer as soon as possible also because our Synod would meet in the Fall of 1977.

A copy of this letter had been sent to Dr. Huh, requesting him to do whatever possible to promote this matter in Korea.

- 7.7. That Dr. S.G. Huh became involved was also due to the fact that on September 20, 1976 we had received a letter from him informing us of his forthcoming visit to Canada (via Australia and The Netherlands) and expressing the desire to meet with our Committee.

On September 28, 1976, some members of our Committee met with Dr. Huh in Cloverdale, B.C.

We gave a brief review of the correspondence with the Fraternal Relations Committee and the letter sent to him January 15, 1974 and the one sent to him by Rev. M. van Beveren March 1975.

The contents of these letters were discussed and clarified. That Dr. Huh had never answered any of these letters was according to him due to the busy and difficult time he and the Churches in Korea had encountered. He promised that upon his return to Korea he would urge the Fraternal Relations Committee, of which he was not a member and which is made up of the members of the moderamen of the latest General Assembly, to answer us as soon as possible.

- 7.8.1. On September 15, 1977, an answer was finally received from the Fraternal Relations Committee in Korea. They offer us

“Sincere apologies for confusion and delays in complying with your request for the changes and amendments made in the Westminster Confession and the Form of Government of our constitution.”

- 7.8.2. In this letter of September 15, 1977, the changes in the Westminster Confession of Faith are quoted. They concern:

- a. Chapter 23, section 3. We are informed that this section “has been changed to conform to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (as amended in the years 1805-1922).”

The present wording — which is also held by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church — denies the authority of the civil magistrates to interfere in matters of faith and is as compared to the original (1647) wording a great improvement.

- b. Chapter 25, section 6. (The letter says “section 1,” which must be a printing error).

This section has been amended to read,

“The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. The Roman Pontiff is in no wise the head of the Church. Whoever rivals Christ within the Church, exalts himself and calls himself God is an anti-christ, Son of Sin, and Son of Perdition.”

The version of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is more concise but basically the same. The original (1647) declared the Pope of Rome “that Antichrist, that man of sin,” etc.

- c. Chapter 31. The letter states, “Although Chapter 31 of our Constitution is identical to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (as amended in the years 1805-1922), we have divided section one into two parts, giving us a total of five sections rather than four.”

The new sections one and two have the same wording as the O.P.C. section one. The Korean churches have returned to the original division of five sections but did not follow the 1647 section 2 which considers it lawful that civil magistrates call a synod, etc.

- 7.8.3. We have no objections to the above-mentioned changes made by the Korean churches in the Westminster Confession.

- 7.9. As to the changes in the Form of Government, the Korean Fraternal Relations Committee writes,

“Unfortunately, we are unable to provide you with the changes in our Form of Government at this time because they have not yet been adopted. While many proposals have been made, nothing concrete has emerged from the discussions. You can be sure, however, that we will give you a full report on these changes as soon as they have been adopted.”

- 7.10. On October 3, 1977, our Committee was informed by the Rev. D. DeJong of Edmonton, Alberta, that he in October, D.V., would travel to Korea for the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund and the Edmonton Korea Committee. We were aware of difficulties which the Executive Committee of the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund had with the superintendent of the orphanage in Korea they are supporting. Many letters sent to Korea about this matter by the C.R.W.R.F. remained unanswered. In a report of April 22, 1977, of which a copy was sent to the secretary of our Committee on Correspondence, the Executive Committee writes,

We feel “that communications between Korea and Canada are most inadequate. We are very dissatisfied with the lack of response that we get. It seems that the only way to get answers is to go and get them. And that is precisely what we propose.”

Consequently, Rev. DeJong has been approached to go and “get answers.” He offered his services also to our Committee and we authorized him to contact, if possible, the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Korea and urge them to send more information.

Rev. DeJong will also report to us insofar as it concerns our mandate.

- 7.11. This is how matters stand at the moment.

We have reported rather extensively on these matters, also to show how “correspondence” with Korea, even if it would be warranted in principle, is quite difficult in practice. The great language barrier plays an important role, of course. In our case also the fact that there have been serious internal difficulties in the Korean Churches has delayed the correspondence considerably.

- 7.12. In the light of the above (7.1.-7.11.).

considering that

a. Synod Edmonton 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 Confession and Church Government, but also practically maintain the same, Acts, Article 141, II;

b. since the Committee has had great difficulties to entertain contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea in their preliminary correspondence during the last 6 years, we seriously question whether official ecclesiastical correspondence will be effective and beneficial at this time;

c. our Committee could not finish its examination and evaluation, since

- (i) pertinent information regarding the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in Korea has not yet been received;
- (ii) a report of the Rev. D. DeJong, which may help the Committee in its examination and evaluation has not yet been received,

the Committee recommend to Synod

- a. to refrain at the present time from entering into correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea;
- b. that in accordance with the decision of General Synod Toronto 1974, Acts, Article 140, D, no financial assistance by the Committee on Correspondence on behalf of the Churches be considered before official ecclesiastical correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea has been established;
- c. to state that adoption of these recommendations does not imply that local or regional committees cannot financially support worthy causes within the Presbyterian Church in Korea;
- d. to charge the new Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to continue the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea and submit a report to the next General Synod.

8. **CLOSING DATE**

This report is closed off as per October 17, 1977.

We wish to apologize for the fact that this report reaches you at such a late date. However, it should be stated that this is also due to the fact that some Acts of Synods and important communications, needed for the proper drafting of the report, were received late.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee,
E. C. Baartman
A.C. Lengkeek
J. Mulder
M. van Beveren

APPENDIX VI — (Acts, Article 91)

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTACT WITH THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

I. REPORT

September 6th, 1977

To General Synod, 1977, of the
Canadian Reformed Churches
Coaldale, Alberta

Esteemed Brethren:

The General Synod of Toronto 1974, appointed a new Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the mandate:

- a. to continue the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church;
- b. to study the forthcoming answer on our letter of March 1972, and continue the discussion with the Committee of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on existing divergencies;
- c. to discuss and evaluate the relationships of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with other Churches, as the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Evangelical Synod) and the Christian Reformed Church;
- d. to inform the Churches from time to time about the progress made (e.g., by press releases of combined committee meetings);
- e. to report on all its activities to the next General Synod.

Complying with the mandate, this Committee submits to you the following report.

- sub a.** The secretary contacted the Chairman of the Committee for Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, inquiring about a reply to the letter the previous Committee sent in March 1972.
- sub b.** The Committee met on June 12, 1975 to discuss the mandate, and subsequent meetings were held on September 9, 1976, October 22, 1976, August 18, 1977, and August 23, 1977. In April 1976 the Committee received a letter from the Committee for Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, dated April 14, 1976, being a reply to our letter of March 1972. Copy of this letter is sent herewith.
- sub c.** The Secretary wrote a letter to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church Committee for Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations on July 2, 1975 requesting information concerning the relationship between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Christian Reformed Church.

Due to the departure of the convener, and the illness of the Vice-Chairman, no meetings were held for several months. As a consequence of this situation, the Committee still is in the process of "studying the answer to our letter of March 1972." It must report that it is not able to complete its full mandate in time for the opening of Synod 1977.

The Committee has dealt with certain sections of the submission by the Committee for Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, mainly with the doctrinal contents listed as A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, and A-5, in our letter of March 1972. As the convening of Synod is only a few months away at date of this writing, the Committee decided in its meeting of August 23, 1977, to submit to Synod a draft reply concerning those sections, rather than communicate with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church so short before Synod. These draft replies to sections A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, and A-5, are enclosed herewith.

In as far as the sections B and C are concerned, dealing with Church Government and fraternal relations, the Committee has not been able to study the replies to the remarks made in the letter of March 1972.

In its meeting of August 18, 1977, the Committee instructed the secretary to ask Synod 1977 for directives as to the disposition of the records, minutes, and correspond-

ence, etc. Also the files of the various previous committees appointed for contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church which are in his possession.

Lastly, in its meeting of August 23, 1977, the Committee decided to propose to Synod to send a letter of thanks and appreciation to the Rev. G. Van Rongen in recognition of the thorough and in-depth study he made of these matters and his guidance and inspiration to the members of the Committee in this work. His detailed analysis of the questions and problems had a stimulating effect on the work of the Committee, even after he had left.

With brotherly greetings,
Mr. J. Boot
Rev. P. Kingma
Rev. M. Werkman
Mr. W. Wildeboer

II. ENCLOSURE

Letter dated April 14, 1976, of Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to our Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Committee for Contact with the
Orthodox Presbyterian Church,
c/o Mr. W. Wildeboer,
296 Gardenvue Drive,
Burlington, Ontario

April 14, 1976

Dear Brethren:

The Forty-first General Assembly (1974) of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church referred your letter of March 6, 1974, to this committee for a reply. We hope that this letter will serve to strengthen the existing contact between our denominations.

Your letter of March 6, 1974, asks us to supplement the letter of our Fortieth General Assembly (1973) with comments on the doctrinal matters and matters of church polity raised in your earlier letter of March, 1972. We understand these to be the points A-1 through A-5, and B-1 through B-3 printed on pp. 103-107 of the Acts of the General Synod, Toronto, 1974. The following comments and observations are not intended to be an elaborate defense of the particular formulations of the Westminster standards or those of the other subordinate standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but rather a clarification of the positions stated therein with some indication of points of contact with the Three Forms of Unity maintained by the Canadian Reformed Churches.

A-1 does not question the legitimacy of a distinction between the church visible and the church invisible as such but calls attention to the dangers inherent in the distinction. The Heidelberg Catechism (Qu. and Ans. 54) speaks of "a church chosen to everlasting life," "out of the whole human race," "from the beginning to the end of the world." In terms of Qu. and Ans. 52, this chosen church appears to be composed of chosen individuals. We discern here the beginning of a definition of the church in terms of the doctrine of election. The Canons of Dordt, First Head, Article 7, present, in effect, a more elaborate description of this church, speaking of "a certain number of persons" who were "chosen, from the whole human race." The Westminster Confession in Chapter XXV, written after the Synod of Dordt, reflects the doctrinal development of the Reformed community by defining the church, in part, in terms of election. Since the identity of the elect is known only to God, this church is, to the human eye, invisible.

Although it can be argued that viewing the church from the perspective of election does tend to depreciate the authentic churchly character of the church visible, and may even lead to complacency with the existence of a diversity of geographically overlapping denominations within the one church of Jesus Christ, we would simply point out that the position of the Westminster standards does not differ radically from that of the Forms of Unity. We would respectfully suggest that the covenantal understanding of church with its focus on the church as visible, in the Canadian Reformed Churches today, re-

flects more precisely the perspective of the Heidelberg Catechism than the Canons of Dordt, while the Westminster formulation reflects both Dordt (church as invisible) and the earlier Reformation (church as visible).

We would further point out that the Westminster Confession, Chapter XXV, Sections 4 and 5, does distinguish between the true church and the false church ("no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan"). Two of what the Belgic Confession (Article 29) calls the marks of the church are mentioned in Section 4, but with attention to the need for purity in all phases of public worship; and the third, discipline, receives special attention in that a whole chapter is devoted to it (Chapter XXX, Of Church Censures). The Westminster Confession does differ from the Belgic Confession in that account is taken of degrees of purity within the church as visible. This reflects a more complicated ecclesiastical situation than existed at the time of the writing of the Belgic Confession when the difference between Lutheran and Reformed confessional groupings was barely beginning to receive institutional form. For the Belgic Confession the false church was pre-eminently the Church of Rome and the true church was the Church of the Reformation. Although the Belgic Confession states expressly that the true church and the false church "are easily known and distinguished from each other," your Synod has experienced considerable difficulty in discerning the lines of the true church in the United States. This bafflement arises from an ecclesiastical complexity to which the Westminster Confession addresses itself in terms of degrees of purity without propounding a doctrine of the pluriformity of the church. Neither the Belgic Confession nor the Scottish Confession of 1560 faced this complexity.

Concerning A-2, your letter signalizes a characteristic difference between the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession respecting the definition of saving faith. The Heidelberg Catechism, following Calvin, defines saving faith in terms of assurance and thus makes assurance of the essence of saving faith. Historically this definition set the Reformed position in the clearest way over against the Roman system which could offer its faithful no assurance and even regarded assurance as dangerous to their spiritual health. The Westminster Confession follows a different line, but one which goes back at least as far as Bucer, in terms of which saving faith is defined as entrustment to Christ in order to be saved after the pattern of Acts 16:31 where the faith enjoined could hardly be assurance that one is already saved. This active faith does carry with it, however, a basic element of assurance as a reflex to which the Westminster Confession refers when it says that believers are "never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived, and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair," Chapter XVIII, Section 4. What the Westminster Confession says of the lack of full assurance runs parallel to what is found in the Canons of Dordt, Fifth Head, Article 11, which says "that believers in this life have to struggle with various carnal doubts, and that under grievous temptations they are not always sensible of this full assurance of faith and certainty of persevering." It would appear to us no more difficult to reconcile the teaching of the Westminster Confession with the Heidelberg Catechism than to reconcile the Canons of Dordt with the Heidelberg Catechism.

We recognize, as you have pointed out, the dangers of subjectivism and mysticism; but if a confessional basis for these errors can be found in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, it can also be found in the Canons of Dordt; and as you are aware, this subjectivism and mysticism are found not only among Presbyterians oriented to the Westminster standards, but also among Reformed people in The Netherlands and on the North American continent oriented to the Three Forms of Unity. We appreciate the testimony which the Canadian Reformed Churches have borne 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.

The response to your observations on the covenant of grace under A-3 is analogous to the response to A-1. There is dual emphasis in the Westminster Confession in its preservation of a conception of the covenant as made with believers and their children coupled with a perspective on the covenant, again arising from the impetus given by the forms of the Canons of Dordt on the doctrine of election, which defines the covenant as made with Christ and in him with the elect. Parallel to these conceptions is the distinction between the church as visible and the church as invisible.

We would point out, however, that the first paragraph of A-3 does not contrast the posi-

tion of the Westminster Confession with the language of the Three Forms, and cannot do so because there is no doctrine of the covenant in the Three Forms except by implication. Such a doctrine can be elaborated only in terms of the literature surrounding these documents, but this literature has no confessional standing in your denomination. From our perspective, the failure of the Three Forms to give formal attention to the doctrine of the covenant is a serious deficiency, but one which can be accounted for historically as can the dual emphasis of the Westminster doctrine. We would view as ironic a criticism of the Westminster Confession for its failure to state unambiguously a doctrine which is nevertheless there, while the same doctrine is not at all defined in the Three Forms.

You have rightly pointed to the error of a doctrine of presumptive regeneration of the children of the covenant. In addition we would point to the error of a doctrine of presumptive nonregeneration of the children of the covenant which feeds the subjectivism and mysticism signalized in A-2. 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.

With respect to A-4, we would point out that the Larger Catechism in Answer 50 does not seek to give a confessionally binding interpretation of a clause in the Apostles' Creed, but rather elaborates its understanding of what is involved in Christ's humiliation after his death by reference to this historic document. Apparently you are able to recognize as scriptural what is said of Christ's humiliation in the first part of the answer, and we can only express as the opinion of this committee that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church would not want to label as unscriptural the doctrine that "my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell." We would hope that the interpretation of a disputed clause from an ancient creed which has no confessional standing in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church would not become a significant point of disunity between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

The answer to your question in A-5 concerning the place of Question and Answer 99 of the Larger Catechism is to be found in terms of the dual function of catechetical documents. These documents serve in the first place to give instruction in the Christian faith. The instruction of the Heidelberg Catechism is given in the first and second persons, a factor which accounts, in part, for the personal tone and warmth of the document. For the same reason, the Catechism serves well also as a confession of faith. The Westminster catechisms give instruction in the Christian faith more objectively, and although they supplement the Confession as confessional documents, they are not usually used in the preaching in Presbyterian churches as the Heidelberg Catechism is used in the preaching in Reformed churches. If the Larger Catechism is viewed pre-eminently as instruction rather than as confession, the appropriateness of Question and Answer 99 is more readily apparent. Further study would reveal that the principles stated in Answer 99 are employed without being stated, in the explanation of the commandments in the Heidelberg Catechism.

The vagueness of your difficulties respecting Questions and Answers 102-148 on the law of God makes it impossible for us to respond in detail, but also suggests that you do not find in these answers insuperable differences between our denominations. What we have, rather, are areas for further discussion as together we seek to discuss the will of God and flee the lawlessness which is sin.

We can understand from the perspective of the Heidelberg Catechism the difficulty you would experience with the explanation of the Fourth Commandment in the Westminster standards. From our side it is not readily apparent how the necessity for maintaining schools or for contribution to the relief of the poor can be inferred or deduced from the Fourth Commandment. Nevertheless, the addition in Answer 103 of the phrase "especially on the sabbath" in the Dutch translation of the Heidelberg Catechism prepared from the original German, suggests a movement in the direction of the kind of Sabbath observance practiced among large segments of the Reformed community in The Netherlands and in North America, as well as among Scottish, Irish, and American Presbyterians, and documented in the Westminster catechisms.

From the perspective of the Westminster standards, we 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 a seventh day to a first day Sabbath is accounted for in terms of the progress of the history of redemption.

With respect to the matters of church government referred to in B-1, we do not want to suppress the characteristic differences between the Presbyterian and continental Reformed conceptions nor do we want to absolutize these differences so as to make fraternal relations impossible and virtually eliminate the possibility of a more unified conception. We would offer for your consideration the "Amended Version of the Form of Government" which will be proposed to the forthcoming General Assembly. This version speaks of the local church and its session, the regional church and its presbytery, and the whole church and its general assembly. This language is not intended to say that one expression of the church is more authentically church than some other, but rather seeks to recognize that the church comes to expression on various levels, a conception which you acknowledge in the paragraph B-1 with reference to Matthew 16:18 and Acts 9:31. We would suggest that the local church in your conception corresponds more nearly to the regional church in the proposed Amended Version. This is more readily apparent if the local church in your conception is thought of as rather large, or as a parish (gemeente) which meets in a number of locations (wijkgemeenten). The consistory would then correspond to the presbytery. The local church in our conception would correspond more nearly to a wijkgemeente in your conception.

Through long-established usage, Presbyterians ordinarily employ spacial terminology metaphorically to indicate the relation of the various judicatories to one another. This is customary among your churches as well. Our characteristically vertical dimension in distinction from your characteristically horizontal dimension may unfortunately suggest to you a hierarchical ordering which is, however, foreign to our form of government in the genius of its conception. The kind of supervision authorized does not, in our judgment, differ materially from the kind of supervision exercised by the broader assemblies among your churches. Our denomination owes its origin, in part, to the misuse of power and the unconstitutional assumption of dictatorial power on the part of the higher judicatories of the former Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and has made us especially jealous to guard "the liberties guaranteed to the individual congregations under the constitution" (Form of Government, chapter X, Section 7). For this reason, in part, there is less uniformity in practice across the Orthodox Presbyterian denomination than characterizes the Canadian Reformed Churches.

It is our impression, in fact, that the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church exercises less authority over the affairs of the presbyteries and congregations than is true of the Canadian Reformed synods. The Assembly can govern its own affairs; it can offer advice to the presbyteries and sessions; and it can adjudicate disciplinary cases referred to it by other judicatories or originating in its own midst. The Assembly cannot, however, make decisions which are settled and binding upon the churches (Cf. the Church Order of Dordt, Article 31) unless these decisions are in the form of constitutional amendments and have received the approval of the presbyteries.

With respect to B-2, paragraphs 1 and 2, it is not clear to us that the rule exercised by the elders in our higher judicatories differs in principle from the rule exercised by elders in your classes and synod. The operative principle here is that the elders do not derive their authority from the consent of the governed but from the King and Head of the Church and they exercise this authority in the church at the various levels of its manifestation.

The matter of the membership of pastors in local congregations mentioned in paragraph 3, is under discussion in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The proposed Amended Version of the Form of Government, Chapter VI, Section 4, retains the historic Presbyterian practice while making provision for a pastor's fellowship in a local congregation. The pastor's membership in a presbytery, and the power of the presbytery to ordain, install, remove, and judge ministers can be understood in terms of the analogy between the presbytery in our system and the consistory in your system described above in the discussion of B-1.

The clause in the Form of Government, Chapter IV, respecting the priority of the office of the ministry does not appear in the Amended Version being proposed to the General Assembly.

The rationale for allowing ministers to labor in other than Orthodox Presbyterian

churches can be understood in the light of the Orthodox Presbyterian concept of fraternal relations to be discussed at a later point in this letter.

The concern expressed in B-3 fails to take account of the declaration of the Westminster Confession, Chapter XXXI, Section 2, (Orthodox Presbyterian version) which states that the decrees and determinations of the various judicatories must be "consonant to the Word of God" if they are to be received with reverence and submission. The principle expressed here is identical with that in the quotation from Article 31 of your Church Order.

Question 2 and 3 of your letter of March 6, 1974, together with the concerns of C-1, 2, and D in your letter of March, 1972 can be dealt with for the sake of convenience in terms of a broad perspective on the church and the significance of interchurch relations.

Article 29 of the Belgic Confession analyzes the ecclesiastical situation by means of a simple distinction between the true church and the false church, and concludes by saying that these two churches are easily known and distinguished from each other. The false church is spoken of as one; there is no pluriformity of the false church. Nevertheless, Article 29 speaks of this united false church as expressing itself in a diversity of organizational structures called sects, but structures which appropriate to themselves the name of church. Similarly, there is no pluriformity of the true church taught in Article 29; but it would not seem to be wholly incompatible with the language of the document to envision the unified true church as expressing itself in a diversity of organizational structures, some of which may be geographically overlapping, and all of which could legitimately lay claim to the name of church. Such a conception would amount to a doctrine of pluriformity only if the diversity were absolutized so that the various denominations were seen as so many diverse flowers in the bouquet of the one church. Unity would then be understood as an attribute only of the church as invisible; and visible unity would be viewed as suppression of the richness and beauty of the church.

Without acceding to a doctrine of the pluriformity of the church, and with the organic visible unity of the church as the goal toward which we are striving, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church does acknowledge the existence of geographically overlapping true churches.

The diversity has appeared in some instances through providential circumstances as when, for example, persons of diverse ethnic background come together to live in one country taking their familiar ecclesiastical structures with them. It is perpetuated when no efforts are made in the direction of organizational unity in spite of similarity, if not identity, in matters of doctrine and practice. Lack of unity then becomes an evidence of the impurity in the church visible.

Diversity and disunity appear and are also perpetuated when churches recognize one another as visible manifestations of the body of Christ but are not able to effect union without compromise on substantial matters of principle or without incorporation of error into the organized body. The Westminster Confession, Chapter XXV, Sections 4 and 5, states that "this catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible," and that "the present churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error." What is said of "particular churches" is true not only of local congregations but also of regional and national churches of all denominations within the true church. A denomination may find itself maintaining a separate existence without regarding that separation as ultimately desirable or without consigning other denominations to the false church.

The Westminster Confession acknowledges not simply a true church and a false church, but also degrees of purity within the true church. There are degrees of discipline with respect to members of the church. For example, a member may be suspended from the privilege of the Lord's table without being excommunicated from the body. The Westminster Confession speaks of churches which have degenerated to the point of being no longer churches of Christ. By implication there are other churches that have degenerated but not to that point. There may be other churches, once degenerate, but later experiencing spiritual renewal. Conditions may warrant a separation analogous to suspension from the Lord's table, but with a view to the ultimate restoration of unity. Just as a simple distinction between membership in good standing and excommunication does not adequately meet the needs of judicial discipline, so also a simple distinction between the true church and the false church does not meet the needs of a complex ecclesiastical situation.

From this perspective it becomes clearer why the Orthodox Presbyterian Church prefers "fraternal relations" to "ecclesiastical correspondence." Fraternal relations do

not require us to say as do the implications of the Canadian Reformed Rules for Correspondence, that if the churches were geographically overlapping, they would be one denomination. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church can enter into fraternal relations with geographically overlapping denominations which may be thought of as more or less pure, but nevertheless as true manifestations of the body of Christ. Such relations have to be regarded not as an end in themselves, but as a first step in the direction of organic unity; they enable us to bring to expression in a preliminary but visible way the unity of the body of Christ. Since the Rules for Correspondence imply denominational unity, they have no meaning for churches which overlap geographically; and in our judgment the degree of involvement required in the affairs of churches at a geographical distance from one another is such as to render the Rules impractical. Geographically separate or nationally distinct churches cannot conveniently act as one denomination, nor does the unity of the visible church require this degree of uniformity. (cf. Rules 3 and 5 of the Rules for Correspondence.)

The concept of fraternal relations has enabled the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to engage in a general way in the kind of contact envisioned in Rules 1 and 2 of the Rules for Correspondence (Rule 3 implies a degree of supervision over local congregations which our General Assembly does not have), and has therefore served the interchurch and ecumenical interests of the denomination well. The seriousness with which these relations are regarded is evidenced in the determination to sever fraternal relations with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Synodaal). Geographical and linguistic barriers prevented us from exercising the measure of discipline implied by the fraternal relationship in view of the obvious and widespread doctrinal declension in that denomination, and we could not conscientiously maintain the appearance of doctrinal harmony.

In addition to fraternal relations on a one-to-one basis, avenues for ecumenical contact are open to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church through the newly established North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council as well as through the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Membership in these organizations implies a kind of fellowship which is analogous to that implied by fraternal relationships. For this reason the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as well as other denominations, have raised within the Reformed Ecumenical Synod questions concerning the continued membership of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Synodaal), and questions concerning simultaneous membership in both the World Council and the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. But the visible unity of the church requires not only the negative discipline mentioned in the first of the Rules for Correspondence, but also the positive discipline of strengthening the things that remain and encouraging brothers in the ways of covenant faithfulness.

Respecting the observation in C-2, paragraph 2, we call your attention to an action of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (Sydney, 1972, Acts, Article 123), supported by the delegates of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, rescinding the "Declaration of 1946." This action was requested by the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

We do not presume to have answered all of your questions concerning the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, or to have provided you with answers that are satisfactory in every respect. We would affirm of ourselves as well as of the Canadian Reformed Churches that "the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error." We do not ask you to approve of, or compromise with what you find to be contrary to the Word of God, but to continue to exhort us to be what our Lord would have us be. Our errors and failures may be such as to prevent you from entering into a relation of correspondence with us as you have conceived of this relation traditionally. Yet we would ask whether you are really prepared to say of us, on the other hand, in terms of our witness over nearly forty years and our current testimony in our nation and in the world: that we ascribe more power and authority to ourselves and to our ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit ourselves to the yoke of Christ; that we do not administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in His Word, but add to them and take from them; that we rely more upon men than upon Christ; and that we persecute those who live holily according to the Word of God. Our experience with you in previous discussion leads us to believe that while you are not altogether convinced that we are identical in doctrine and polity, you are much less convinced that we are nothing more than a sect of the false church.

The question therefore becomes: How can we visibly be the one true church that we together are under these circumstances? The answer we suggest is a fraternal relationship which would begin to realize the goals of negative discipline embraced in Rule 1 of

your Rules for Correspondence as well as of positive discipline by means of the kind of activity described in Rule 2. We would invite you to consider a relation of this kind and if it is not found to be satisfactory, to offer an alternative proposal for our consideration.

We continue to rejoice in your loyalty to Christ and in the steadfastness of your testimony to the integrity of the Reformed faith. May the King and Head of the Church continue to bless your labor in his service as you seek to disciple the Canadian nation by baptism in the name of the triune God and instruction in all that Christ has commanded.

Fraternally yours,
The Committee on Ecumenicity and
Interchurch Relations
"LeRoy B. Oliver"
LeRoy B. Oliver
Chairman

APPEAL CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

**To the General Synod of the
Christian Reformed Church
To the Consistories of the
Christian Reformed Church
To the Members of the
Christian Reformed Church**

This letter comes to you on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches. It is a letter which is intended to be an appeal to you to return from the way in which you are going and to remove the leaven which threatens to permeate the whole Christian Reformed Church and can only result in a total loss of the truly Reformed identity.

It is not the first time that we address ourselves to you. Our General Synod of Hamilton, 1962, decided to direct an Appeal to your 1963 Synod and also instructed its committee to send copies of that Appeal to all Consistories of the Christian Reformed Church. As a result of that Appeal, contact was established between a committee of the Christian Reformed Church and a committee appointed by the 1965 General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

When the Synod of Hamilton 1962 decided to send such an Appeal, it fulfilled a pledge made at the first Classis Canada of the Canadian Reformed Churches, held in Lethbridge, Alberta, November 15, 1950. This pledge was to be fulfilled, Classis stated, when the Churches would deem the proper moment for it to have come. It was not until 1962 that the decision of 1950 was executed.

And now the Canadian Reformed Churches address themselves again to the Christian Reformed Church. We can understand it if one asks, "What, then, is going on, and what is the reason why we get these 'Appeals' from the Canadian Reformed Churches?"

In answer to that question we shall relate some of the history.

From the outset strong ties have existed between the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands and the Christian Reformed Church. Does not the latter owe its existence to the faithfulness to the Reformed heritage of members of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands who emigrated to the United States and who were instrumental in the institution of what was then called the **Holland Reformed Church**? Those who were instrumental in instituting the Canadian Reformed Churches came from these same Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, be it that they came some one hundred years after the settlers in the 1800's.

Why did those who arrived in Canada in the 1940's and 1950's not join the Christian Reformed Church, which, by then, had expanded into Canada?

Some did, but came to the conclusion that it was impossible for them to continue as members of the Christian Reformed Church; others, coming from The Netherlands, and being aware of the situation in Canada and the United States, did not take the step of joining the Christian Reformed Church because of the latter's stand regarding the developments in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, for something had happened in The Netherlands during the dark years of the Second World War. And the Christian Reformed Church refused to honour its obligations with regard to the Church correspondence with the Netherlands Churches which it had maintained from its early days on.

What, then, had happened in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands?

In this Appeal we cannot give an extensive description of what led to the events of 1942 and following years or of all the issues involved. May it suffice to state that the General Synod of Sneek-Utrecht of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands adopted some doctrinal pronouncements which imposed a yoke

upon the believers beyond the yoke of Christ, and that a Church polity was introduced and followed which was totally in conflict with the Reformed polity as it was so strongly and ably defended by, among others, Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr., Dr. F.L. Rutgers, and Dr. J. Van Lonkhuyzen, who for many years was a minister in the Christian Reformed Church.

When the Second World War had come to a close, contact between The Netherlands and the United States was again possible. The Christian Reformed Church then found that now there were two federations of Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, each claiming to be the legitimate continuation of the Churches with which the Christian Reformed Church had maintained Church correspondence. The fact that the one group was approximately ten times as large as the other group should not make any difference. Serious students of the history of Christ's Church are aware of it that in most cases by far it was a minority that returned to the path of the old, catholic Church when a choice was to be made. Such was the case with the Church when the Lord Jesus was on earth and when the large majority of the people rejected Him; such was the case when Luther, Calvin, and others called the Church back to the obedience to God's Word in the age of the Great Reformation; such was also the case when Hendrik de Cock and others urged the Church to return to the faithfulness of the Scriptures, and when Dr. Abraham Kuyper and others during the Doleantie showed the way back to the true freedom in Christ and the total submission to Him. And although the truth is not of necessity with the minority, yet the events in The Netherlands, seen in the light of the whole history of the Church, should have rendered the Christian Reformed Church extremely careful. Besides, the rules for Church correspondence obliged it to take serious note of the events in The Netherlands and to come to a conclusion as to whether the accusations brought in were justified or not, for those accusations were very serious and concerned the very character of the Church!

These rules for Church correspondence as they were in force in 1945 and 1946 contain the promise that the corresponding Churches shall "take heed mutually lest there be deviation from the Reformed principles in doctrine, worship, or discipline." This rule can be found on page 15 of the Acts of Synod 1914.

Synod 1944 received an extensive report regarding the Church correspondence in which a historical review was given and in which the principles which should govern such a correspondence were discussed. The committee which submitted this report quoted from the Acts 1898 that such correspondence "ought not to consist merely in an exchange of greetings and courtesy-visits; but also in: . . . b. the exercise of mutual watchfulness against departures from the Reformed principles in doctrine, worship, and discipline;" and that this might also prepare the way for "a General Council of Reformed Churches." When discussing the Scriptural principles governing the relation of the Christian Reformed Church to other Christian Churches, the committee remarked, "The ideal is denominational unity, for apart from adverse circumstances there would be no reason to dwell apart. But seeing the ideal is unattainable, we should contrive the next best. But the next best is more than our present practice presents. We should feel as did the particular Synods of the Dutch church after Dort, that we are virtually one Church and not two or more churches" (Acts 1944, p.345).

When speaking of "the churches of America that are historically and professedly Reformed" but "are in the estimation of the Christian Reformed Church not now actually Reformed," the committee asked, "What, we inquire, should be the attitude of the Christian Reformed Church toward these so-called Reformed churches that have waxed untrue to their glorious past and to their excellent heritage?" The answer given by the committee reads, "To begin with, it can not properly correspond with them in the sense attached to that term in the foregoing. For the implication of correspondence, as used heretofore, is ec-

clesiastical parity and equivalence, and it bases on physical inability to sustain synodical connections" (p. 347).

Suggestions were also made for the immediate future. Although Synod expressed agreement with the substance of the proposals set forth in that report, no change was made either by this Synod or by the ones of 1945 and 1946, so that the 1914 rules still applied when communication with The Netherlands was restored after the war. Yet, when the Christian Reformed Church learned of accusations that the larger part of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands had become untrue to the very nature of Reformed Churches, it acted as if these accusations did not exist, ignoring thereby the warning contained in the above-mentioned report that "the official stand of a church is a far from reliable index of its true condition" (p. 350). And as the Christian Reformed Church ignored that warning in 1945/1946, so it has ignored it in practice until this very day.

When in 1946 an invitation was received to send delegates to an "extraordinary Synod in Utrecht," which invitation was signed by Prof. G.Ch. Aalders, the Synodical Committee appointed Prof. L. Berkhof and Prof. S. Volbeda to represent the Christian Reformed Church there; but when a telegram was received from the (liberated) Reformed Church at Groningen, signed by the Rev. D. Van Dijk, inviting the Christian Reformed Church to send delegates to a Synod to be held in Groningen, the Committee replied, "The Christian Reformed Church does not at the present time maintain Church correspondence with the Reformed Church of The Netherlands maintaining Art. 31 of the Church Order." The Committee informed the Church at Groningen that for that reason it was not authorized to send delegates.

Synod approved of this action by its Committee; it also decided to go ahead and to convene an Ecumenical Synod together with the Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika and the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, the same ones whose invitation to send delegates was accepted. And all this without examining the serious developments and grave accusations of which the Christian Reformed Church as a whole and its Synod in particular were well aware. One has only to browse through the 1945 and 1946 volumes of *The Banner* to see that sufficient attention was paid to the situation in The Netherlands to render it inexcusable to proceed as if nothing serious had occurred and as if the only thing that had happened was that a certain group of people just broke with the Church for trivial and personal reasons.

We shall not describe the history in great detail. In our **Appeal 1963** we related some of the decisions which respective Synods of the Christian Reformed Church made in which the initially chosen course was continued and by which the Christian Reformed Church persevered in its refusal to go into the matter.

Our **Appeal 1963** occasioned the 1963 Synod to refer the matter to "Synod's Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Correspondence, for appropriate reply" (Acts 1963, Article 152I). The 1964 synod appointed a special committee to communicate with the Canadian Reformed Churches "with a view to establishing a closer relationship with these churches." However, this committee could report no more to the 1965 Synod than that they met twice, corresponded with the minister of the convening Church for the 1965 Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and that they were addressing a letter to the latter Synod.

The reason for this delay in establishing contact was that the Canadian Reformed Churches have a General Synod only once every three years, so that no Synod could react before the fall of 1965.

The Synod of Edmonton 1965 of the Canadian Reformed Churches dealt with the letter of the Christian Reformed Committee and also with overtures received. We insert the relevant decision here as it was presented by the Contact Committee to your 1967 Synod (Acts of Synod 1967, pp. 178/179). Synod Edmonton decided to appoint a committee with the mandate:

To examine, together with the Contact Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, how their and our Churches are to enter into and to maintain together the unity of the Church in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God on the foundation of the Apostles of the Lamb, and therefore to examine, together with the said Committee, the concrete situation, as it is also determined by the differences regarding the following points:

a. The Christian Reformed Church and our Churches have adopted the same confessional forms as Forms of Unity: the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort.

b. Besides the Christian Reformed Church has adopted: The Conclusions of Utrecht (1905-1908) and an official interpretation of them (1962); The Three Points of Kalamazoo (1924) and an official interpretation of them (1959-1960).

Our Churches have not adopted any other declarations concerning the doctrine of the Church besides the Three Forms of Unity.

c. The Christian Reformed Church maintains correspondence with the "synodical" Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands. Our Churches maintain correspondence with the "liberated" Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands.

d. The Christian Reformed Church has adopted a new Church Order; our Churches do still abide by the Church Order of Dort (Utrecht 1619-1905).

The Edmonton Synod charged its Committee to examine the concrete situation on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity.

In the course of several years, the above points were dealt with by both committees. The result was that ultimately one point was left which the Christian Reformed Church has not solved until the present day. That is the point mentioned under c., the matter of Church correspondence.

The reason why this was the last point left is that "by mutual consent the order of discussion on the points b,c,d, was changed as follows: b,d, c," as your Committee reported to Synod 1968 (*Agenda for Synod 1968*, p. 244).

We remind you of this to take away any impression as if, the other points having been "solved" to such an extent that no **insurmountable** obstacles remained, the Canadian Reformed Churches all of a sudden brought up the point of Church correspondence as a sort of excuse by which they tried to hide their **unwillingness** to come to closer contact.

As a result of the contact between the two Committees and the discussions held, and in accordance with reports submitted and proposals made, the Synod 1968 declared that the Conclusions of Utrecht, as adopted in 1908, no longer have the status of binding doctrinal deliverances within the Christian Reformed Church. Thereby the first point of "b." was removed as an obstacle.

The same Synod 1968 deleted the regulation that "The consistory shall inform the pastor-elect that acceptance of the call implies his promise to abide by . . . the doctrinal deliverances on common grace of 1924 and 1959-1960." From that Synod on, these doctrinal deliverances were no longer binding on the Christian Reformed Church and thereby the second part of "b." was removed as an obstacle.

As for point "d.," the new Church Order as adopted by the 1965 Synod, the Synod of Orangeville 1968 of the Canadian Reformed Churches stated that this Church Order was not an **insurmountable** obstacle for further and closer contact, and eventual unity of both Churches (Acts, Article 134, IV). The very word "insurmountable" shows that the 1965 Church Order was still considered to be an obstacle but also that, if, so to speak, an eventual unity would depend only on acceptance or rejection of that Church Order, such a unity should not for that reason alone be deemed impossible.

While recognizing with gratitude the progress made by the committee in

their mutual contact and conclusions, Synod Orangeville 1968 charged the committee to continue the contact with the Christian Reformed Church. Synod stated that, especially in the light of recent developments in the Christian Reformed Church, the part of the mandate which had not yet been completed had now become the most important item of that mandate. Synod decided the following:

2. Deputies shall point out that the contact on the part of the Canadian Reformed Churches started with the "Appeal 1962," in which the reasons for our separate existence were given and the Christian Reformed Church was earnestly warned not to proceed with the course of recognizing the Synodical "Gereformeerde Kerken" as faithful Reformed Churches.
3. They shall then inform the Contact Committee that the Canadian Reformed Churches can continue the contact only when this matter of correspondence (with related matters) is put in the centre of the deliberations. They shall, therefore, insist that a clear answer be given by the Christian Reformed Church to the three questions formulated by the previous Deputies
4. Deputies shall then wait till the next Synod of the Christian Reformed Church has expressed its willingness to enter into the discussion on this main obstacle. If the contrary should happen, Deputies shall discontinue the contact with the Contact Committee. Deputies shall then send an urgent, Christian appeal to the Christian Reformed community in the same vein as (the first part of) the "Appeal 1962."
5. If, however, our urgent request is heeded, Deputies shall be diligent in discussing all the matters that are found to be related to this main obstacle to the establishment of unity between the two Churches. Due attention shall be given to "the principles of Church correspondence adopted in 1944" . . . and their implementation, the Reformed Creeds being the Standards for such a discussion. (Acts of Synod Orangeville 1968, Article 134.)

The three questions to which Synod refers are mentioned in the report of the Contact Committee to your Synod 1969, Acts, p. 349:

- a. Did not the decision of 1962 imply the factual condemnation of the acts of the (synodaal) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, which suspended and deposed those who refused to submit to the demand not to teach anything that was not in full agreement with the doctrinal declarations on presupposed regeneration?
- b. How must we see the relation between the decision of 1962 (no test for membership of incoming ministers) with the decision of 1949 (no change in doctrinal position or ecclesiastical conduct which would warrant a change in our relation), on the basis of which the Christian Reformed Church still maintains the relation of sister-churches with the (synodaal) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland?
- c. Is it not true, therefore, that Synod of 1949 gave an unsatisfactory and unjustified answer to Mr. Joh. De Haas by not acceding to his request to appoint, at least, a committee to study the matter?

In this same report to Synod 1969, the Contact Committee quoted extensively from communications received from the Canadian Reformed Committee. We insert the following passage.

And further in their communication they state: "The Christian Reformed Church can no longer stay aloof of the change in her Dutch sister-churches. We mention here only a few instances:

- the decision of Assen 1926 in defence of Scripture is removed;
- decision in principle: no objections against joining W.C.C.;
- women admitted to special offices in church;

- professors in official, ecclesiastical positions who openly attack the doctrine of infallibility of the Bible, are not disciplined;
- the Reformed foundation under the Free University removed.

The Christian Reformed Church, which we assume wants to honour her obligations (rules for correspondence), cannot act as though these things do not exist and happen.

In their recommendations to Synod, the Committee asked “that Synod acknowledge that our church in her decisions of 1946, 1949, and 1950 did make a judgment by implication concerning the actions of its sister-church, the Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands, which actions resulted in a division within those churches, even though it was said that it was “not in our province to sit in judgment over these churches” (Acts Synod 1950, Article 144, III, A).

And from the fact that there have been changes in official decisions, e.g., W.C.C., Women in Office, the Committee drew an argument to recommend to Synod “that synod instruct the Inter-Church Relations Committee to consider whether any changes have occurred in the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical) which could warrant a change in our relationship to these churches.” The committee was convinced that “our present rules for church correspondence require this” (Acts Synod 1969, p. 353).

Synod 1969 did acknowledge that a “judgment-by-implication” was made by the synods of 1946, 1949, and 1950. Synod further instructed its Inter-Church Relations Committee to follow the course recommended by the Contact Committee. However, Synod also adopted the following:

3. Synod take grateful note of the changed attitude of the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical) toward the “Gereformeerde Kerken” (Liberated) by repealing their decisions against them and offering their sincere apologies to them.

4. Synod instruct its Contact Committee with the Canadian Reformed Churches to urge the Canadian Reformed Churches to consider establishing correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical) in the light of the changed attitude of the latter and to verify whether the changes in the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical) represent a deviation from true Reformed faith and polity (Acts of Synod 1969, Article 76, IV).

After the above decision had been discussed at a meeting of the Contact Committee, our Committee wrote, among other things, the following:

We can draw no other conclusion than that Synod 1969 did exactly the opposite of what we see as the only safe course for the Christian Reformed Church. We are convinced that FOR HER OWN SAKE the Christian Reformed Church should discontinue the correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical). But Synod 1969 refused even to discuss that . . . , to put it bluntly, gave us a slap in the face and said, in fact, “You suggest that we break off the correspondence, but due to the changes we have noted with gratitude, you had better establish correspondence.”

As for the changes that were to be examined to see whether those represented a deviation from the true Reformed faith and polity, our committee wrote to your committee:

We also note that there is a strong indication that Synod 1969 did not refer to the changes during the years 1942 and following, but only to more recent changes, which are the fruits of the deviation during those years, namely those mentioned under V, B, 3: Extent of Biblical Authority, Women in Office, Attitude towards World Council of Churches, “Revised Church Order and its Alleged hierarchical character,” Acts 1969, p. 53.

That is not what you recommended by implication in your report to Synod 1969, and it also darkens our joy about the admission of Synod 1969

that previous Synods did make a judgment-by-implication, for now we must come to the conclusion that the judgment-by-implication still stands, that it is not even subject to discussion. What is going to be investigated is whether subsequent changes warrant a change in relationship.

Our Committee also explained that Church correspondence is to us exactly what we, in the beginning of this Appeal, quoted from your Synod 1944. Further, our committee remarked, what we are concerned about is not what happens in the Synodical Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

What we are concerned about is not correspondence which the Christian Reformed Church has with "a Church" somewhere in the world.

But what we are concerned about is: the influences which, via the correspondence with those particular Netherlands Churches, have entered and are entering the Christian Reformed Church.

If we had nothing to do with the Christian Reformed Church, and if we did not care what happens to her and within her, we might never have bothered you.

But the contact which we have sought and the Appeal which we sent you in 1963 and our subsequent actions were the fulfilment of a promise made when the Canadian Reformed Churches were instituted and when their first major assembly was held. Humanly speaking, if the Christian Reformed Church had judged correctly and openly, and not wrongly and by implication, there would have been no Canadian Reformed Churches.

Fulfilling a promise made many years ago, we have contacted you and we ask, "Is there a possibility that the Christian Reformed Church change its attitude? Is there a possibility that the injustice be undone and that at least those obstacles be taken away? Are you willing to reconsider that?"

If the answer should be negative . . . then we have no other course of action left to us but to conclude that the judgment-by-implication has become an express judgment and that we still stand condemned.

We hope that we have succeeded in making clear to you once more why we have to speak about that correspondence: it has occasioned the institution of the Canadian Reformed Churches and it still is the gate through which many impurities enter the Christian Reformed Church. We wish to see that gate closed for your sakes, and also in order that our contact can be continued and — we hope — bear rich fruit.

The committee then stated that there is a growing uneasiness among our membership about the influences and impurities mentioned above:

Although we understand that an applause, given to a speaker, may be no more than an act of politeness and does not necessarily imply approval of what he said, we also wish to state that the reaction to the address by Dr. D. Van Swighem to Synod 1969 was not very helpful in allaying that uneasiness. In his address Dr. Van Swighem promoted the modernistic view of the Holy Scriptures, the inspired Word of God, and undermined their very authority, Acts 1969, p. 478ff.

We have quoted extensively from this communication in order to show that it is not just the point of "formal correspondence" which is brought up time and again, but that it is a whole complex which cannot be "solved" by changing the relationship into a shallower (and much broader!) form of fellowship, as your 1974 Synod did.

It is not our intention to mention all the decisions which your Synod made in the matter of contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches. Just a few more quotations may suffice:

Synod 1970 instructed its Contact Committee to convey to our Deputies

- a. That Synod shares the concern with the Canadian Reformed Churches about certain developments in the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical), which concern has recently been expressed in a letter to that denomination (see Acts, 1970, Article 99, C.2).
- b. That Synod intends to exercise its influence for the good of the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical) as long as possible.
- c. That the decision of the Synod of 1969 (Acts 1969, Article 76, IV, B.4) must be seen in this light, that synod wanted to urge the Canadian Reformed Churches to use their influence for the preservation of the Reformed faith in the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical) even though the Canadian Reformed Churches do not have official correspondence with that denomination (Acts of Synod, 1971, Article 66, V, 3).

At this point we wish to draw your attention to the fact that the Synods of the Christian Reformed Church were still ignoring the very point at issue and refused to deal with it! The Canadian Reformed Churches have claimed from the very beginning that what happened in the Netherlands Churches in 1942 and following years was a deviation from the truly Reformed path; that in those years the switch was thrown which brought the Churches on the wrong track; that the liberated Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland returned to the catholic path; and that the Christian Reformed Church continued its correspondence with those who continued on the wrong track, via which correspondence the evil fruits of the deviation would be introduced into the Christian Reformed Church.

But instead of going into the basic issue of the deviation from the Reformed doctrine and Church polity in 1942 and following years, the Christian Reformed Church dealt only with the effects which were seen in the Netherlands Churches (Synodical) as they appeared some twenty-five to thirty years later, although she admits having made a judgment-by-implication! And thus the Christian Reformed Church acts as a physician who, although he has been told expressly what the cause is, is willing to treat only the symptoms he finds with a person, persistently refusing to look for the cause in order to treat that cause in the first place. And because of his unwillingness to treat the cause and in spite of his declaration that he "intends to exercise his influence for the good of the patient," he becomes infected himself and begins to suffer the very same symptoms because he caught the same illness.

You will understand that some feeling of dissatisfaction became evident in the midst of the Canadian Reformed Churches and that voices were heard advocating a breaking off of the contact, seeing that no progress appeared possible. Yet, the Synod of New Westminster 1971 decided to:

continue the Committee on Contact with the Christian Reformed Church with the mandate to discuss the matter of Church correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, until the position of the Christian Reformed Church has become clear and the mandate, as formulated and given by Synod 1968, Acts Article 134, sub VIII, has been completed.

As a result of the development of the discussions, the Synod 1972 of the Christian Reformed Church decided to discontinue the special Contact Committee with the Canadian Reformed Churches. It reasoned that the main item remaining on the agenda was the correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical), and stated "Our denomination's present relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken is in the province of Synod and its Inter-Church Relations Committee, and the special committee for contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches is not involved in determining that relationship." Communications were, from then on, to be directed either to Synod or to the Inter-Church Relations Committee.

Your Synod 1973 dealt with the Church correspondence and its implications. In Article 53 of the Acts of Synod we read,

In considering this question over the past three years, the committee faced the more fundamental question of the definition of a Sister-Church relationship in general, and whether that relationship as defined by the Synod of 1944 can be applied to any church with which we are in correspondence. That relationship was defined as a unity which, if it were not for the barriers of geography and language, would result in union.

...
The Inter-Church Relations Committee recognizes that, given our present definition, it is likely that the demands of integrity will compel us to discontinue our Sister-Church relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken. Your advisory committee concurs in this. At the same time, however, we believe it is both important and necessary to maintain fruitful contact and correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken (emphasis ours).

What did Synod do? Did Synod, after 27 years, finally fulfill its obligation by examining the decisions and actions of 1942 and following years?

No: upon recommendation by its advisory committee, Synod decided that the matter of correspondence with other Churches should be investigated in order to come to a re-definition. Thus the whole issue was evaded!

The Synod 1974, Acts, Article 62. C., decided:

1. In place of the existing "sister-church" and "corresponding church" relationships in denominational inter-church relations, synod establishes one relationship to be designated "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship."

GROUNDS:

- a. This relationship provides a realistic way of facing the complexities of contemporary inter-church relations.
- b. This relationship can and should be employed to strengthen rather than weaken inter-church bonds wherever this is warranted by Reformed ecumenical principles.
- c. This relationship protects the Church's integrity in inter-church fellowship.
2. Synod declares that the receiving of churches into ecclesiastical fellowship shall imply, and where possible and desirable shall involve:
 - a. exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies,
 - b. occasional pulpit fellowship,
 - c. intercommunion (i. e. fellowship at the table of the Lord),
 - d. joint action in areas of common responsibility,
 - e. communication on major issues of joint concern,
 - f. the exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity.
3. Synod declares that all churches presently recognized as "sister-churches" shall be considered churches in ecclesiastical fellowship.
4. Synod mandates its Inter-Church Relations Committee to recommend which additional churches are to be received into ecclesiastical fellowship.
7. With regard to the GKN, synod encourages its ICRC to pursue appropriate avenues of increased contact.

We hardly know how to express the great disappointment at those decisions of the 1974 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. Is that, then, the end of the long road? Is that the fruit of the efforts made to convince the Christian Reformed Church that she should at least investigate what happened in 1942 and following years; that she should close the door through which errors and heresies enter in; that she should honour her obligations in accordance with the rules for correspondence?

The rules for correspondence have been changed so that the obligation to

make a judgment is eliminated. By abandoning the 1944 principles, the "integrity" is protected, Synod stated. But it is a strange method of protecting integrity, for, in order to achieve that, the circle of "Churches in ecclesiastical fellowship" is made wider than the circle of "sister-churches" or "corresponding churches" (see point 4 above). And instead of heeding the warnings against continuation of the special relationship with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Synod encouraged its Inter-Church Relations Committee to pursue appropriate avenues of increased contact. The wider the circle is made of "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship," the shallower the basis must become. Thus the above change is no improvement and return but a further straying away and a deterioration. The Inter-Church Relations Committee admitted frankly that it was very reluctant to follow its mandate to inquire into and to evaluate "recent theological trends in our sister church in The Netherlands and to advise the next synod whether or not such trends warrant a change in our relationship to these churches," to which was added in 1971 the instruction "to include in its inquiry the letter received from the Gereformeerde Kerken, and official pronouncements and decisions of the Synods of the Gereformeerde Kerken." And from the report which the Committee submitted to the 1974 Synod it became very clear and evident that there was a reluctance to go into the matters which were at stake, for fear that the correspondence with those Netherlands Churches would have to be discontinued. That was to be prevented, and therefore, instead of living up to the rules and the "principles" which had governed the correspondence for all those years and instead of drawing the consequences of that, the Christian Reformed Church had to change the rules and the "principles" so that contact could be continued and even increased.

Here we see a false ecumenism, and an emptying of the meaning of the name "Church." Here we find the enervation of the meaning of true correspondence and a weakening of the confession regarding the nature and character of the Church.

It is difficult to determine whether the apparent unwillingness to face reality and to decide about the real issue is the result of the bonds with those Netherlands Churches, or whether it is the fruit of a general weakening of the awareness of the Reformed and Scriptural heritage, or both.

It is a fact which cannot be denied that the relations with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands did have ruinous influences upon the Christian Reformed Church and its decisions regarding not a few doctrinal points and points of Church Polity.

As for the latter, our General Synod of Orangeville 1968 did declare that "the new Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church as adopted by Synod 1966 is not an insurmountable obstacle for further and closer contact, and eventual unity of both Churches." However, the fact that this new Church Order has been declared to be no "insurmountable" obstacle does not mean that it is no obstacle or that the Canadian Reformed Churches and their membership have no serious objections to it.

Besides, this Church Order should not be judged apart from the whole influence which those (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken have had and still are exercising upon the Christian Reformed Church.

It is about these influences that we wish to write the following part of this appeal and testimony.

First of all, we think of the seven interrelated points concerning the nature and extent of biblical authority adopted by Synod 1972 as pastoral advice to the churches in the light of Report 44. Synod submitted this study report to the churches as providing guidelines for the interpretation and further discussion of the nature and extent of biblical authority, and even instructed the Board of Publications to make available to the denomination, in a popular form, the con-

tents of Report 44, for the purpose of reaching also the general membership of the churches (Acts 1972, Article 52).

The confession of the authority of Holy Scripture is of uttermost importance for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, not in the last place in our day and age. Allow us therefore to elaborate on the pastoral advice of Synod 1972 and the report entitled "The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority."

The title and its history are already significant.

If a Reformed confessor is asked what he believes concerning the authority of the Bible, he would answer that this authority is divine and unlimited. He would even be a little surprised to be asked specifically about the **nature** and **extent** of Biblical authority. The Report itself observes that the terms "nature and extent" are not ordinarily applied to the authority of Scripture (Acts 1972, p. 505).

Where did those terms come from? They were taken from the letter of the Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in 1963, in which letter they judged that the RES declarations of 1958 failed to make sufficient distinctions in dealing with the nature and extent of the authority of Scripture, and in particular failed to discuss the "connection between the content and purpose of Scripture as the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the consequent and deducible authority of Scripture" ("het daarmee gegeven en daaruit af te leiden gezag der Schrift").

The expression "the nature and extent of the authority of Scripture," unknown in the Christian Reformed Church until 1972, was taken up as title of a pastoral recommendation of your Synod and brought under the special attention of the general membership of your churches. But is it not a well-known fact that if in our time someone wants to attack an article of our Christian faith, he often will begin to speak about the **nature** (Dutch: "de aard") or the **mode** or the **extent** of that which we confess in order to relativize our confession? Should Synod 1972 not have been very cautious and should it not have pointed out that it did not want to take over the expression introduced by "De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" (Synodical)? Did it now not follow a wrong Dutch example and is this title as such not already a symptom of the influence of "De Gereformeerde Kerken" (Synodical) on the life of the Christian Reformed Church?

The first point of the pastoral instruction reads as follows: "Synod calls the churches to a wholehearted recognition that **Scripture, which is the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ, addresses us with full divine authority and that this authority applies to Scripture in its total extent and in all its parts.**"

Thankfully we noted that Synod 1972 spoke about "full divine authority" of Holy Writ; but is it Biblical and Reformed to state that Scripture is the **saving** revelation of God in Jesus Christ? The Report states that general revelation is a non-redemptive revelation while Scripture is a redemptive saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ. "All Scripture is redemptive in character; it is addressed to fallen man in order to redeem him totally by redirecting him in faith to God, his Creator-Redeemer." Now, no Reformed confessor shall deny that Scripture reveals what God has done for man's salvation, but is this the complete contents of Scripture and may we express this in the way Synod 1972 did, namely that Scripture is the **saving** revelation of God in Jesus Christ? Do the Scriptures (Moses) also not accuse (John 5:45)? The Lord Jesus Christ warned us: "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings has a judge: the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority . . ." (John 12:48, 49). Should this warning not have been heeded in pastoral instruction about Biblical authority?

The apostle Paul writes about his preaching: "For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (II Corinthians 2:15, 16). Is it then, to say the least, not one-sided to

declare that Scripture is the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ?

If we ask the question where this confessional statement came from, the answer is again: from "De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" (Synodical). They used it in their letter to the RES in 1963 when they spoke about the connection between the content and purpose of "Scripture as the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ" and the concomitant and deducible authority of Scripture. It is another illustration of the influence in doctrine exercised by these Dutch deviating churches upon the Christian Reformed Church. Small wonder then, that an author declared in **The Banner**: "The 1972 Synod's view of the Bible and its message is basically that which has long been advocated by Prof. G.C. Berkouwer and lies at the heart of what has come to be called by those who reject it the 'new theology' of the Gereformeerde Kerken" (**The Banner**, November 10, 1972).

The Report engaged in a critical evaluation of certain methods of interpreting the Bible as presently employed by some Reformed scholars. It remarked: "Most of the views examined in this report have been propounded by scholars from one of our sister churches, the Gereformeerde Kerken of The Netherlands. Because of the close ties between us these views have found their way into our circles" (Acts 1972, p. 534).

Needless to say, the change in the name of the relationship does not prevent these views from finding their way into the Christian Reformed Church. We as Reformed confessors appreciate that your Synod called the churches to maintain the clear witness of the creeds to the authority of Scripture as inseparably bound up with the historical reality of the events recorded in Scripture. But again, we hear non-confessional language when "Synod urges the churches to remember that . . . they should recognize that these events are presented and interpreted in terms of their revelational meaning" (Article 52, C3c.).

Apart from the question whether the general membership of the churches understands this theological language of a pastoral exhortation, the question arises whether the proclamation by the Holy Spirit of God's acts of redemption in Scripture may be described as "interpretation." Does this term, which is also used in reports of "Faith and Order" of the World Council of Churches (e.g. the Leuven report, 1971), do justice to the testimony of the Holy Spirit in Holy Writ? Does it not open the door to faulty dichotomies which the Report itself rightly rejects, among others the dualism of history versus proclamation?

Report 44 declared that it is clear that the denial of the historicity of the fall of our first parents at the beginning of human history cannot be harmonized with the confessions. The advisory committee mentioned the name of Prof. H.M. Kuitert, and said that his position is also rejected where we read, "The contention that these chapters (Genesis 1-11) do not present events that really happened is certainly in conflict with our Reformed Confessions and in conflict with Scripture itself."

Later, in the same year, 1972, however, the Synod of "De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" (Synodical) decided that the views of Prof. H.M. Kuitert do not deviate from the confessions to such a degree that special measures have to be taken. Does the Christian Reformed Church now also follow the example of the Dutch churches by stating that certain contentions are in conflict with our Reformed Confessions and even in conflict with Scripture itself, but that they are to be taken so lightly that no special measures are warranted?

We ask this question because of our fear that the Christian Reformed Church, be it at a slower pace, is taking the same route as her former sister churches in The Netherlands do. We would like to illustrate this by the very important case of Dr. H. Wiersinga who denies that Christ bore the judgment of God in our place.

Your last held Synod 1976 requested the Stated Clerk "to write the Synod of the GKN expressing joy and appreciation for its significant action, upholding

the confession of the churches and the unity of the church in the confession, along the lines of the letter written by our IRC to the IRC of the GKN" (Acts 1976, Article 43, VI,C).

Your Inter-Church Relations Committee had written that the decision in the case-Wiersinga "will have a very positive effect in the relationship of our two churches and of the Reformed churches generally."

Now, from the Dutch decision, to be found in translation in your Acts 1976, pp. 336ff., it is clear that the Synod of Maastricht (1975-1976) made a doctrinal statement which upholds the truth that the Crucified, in the suffering and death which He underwent, bore in our stead the divine judgment on human guilt. This "element of the confession of the church" is "of such an essential nature that a doing injustice to it and a contradiction of it is not admissible for the church, also because in this way the unity of the faith and the oneness of the church is brought into peril." This is a theoretical statement. It remains that because Synod only "expects that the Consistory of Amsterdam will see to it that such 'a doing injustice to it and a contradiction of it' not occur, that it be opposed, in the same way as she expects this of all other church assemblies." When Synod Maastricht uttered this expectation, this assembly and all who followed the development of the case-Wiersinga knew that this expectation would not be fulfilled. The Consistory of Amsterdam refused to take measures against the heresy of Dr. H. Wiersinga. The denial that the Crucified Lord Jesus Christ bore in our stead the divine judgment on human guilt, will remain unchecked as far as church discipline is concerned.

Your Inter-Church Relations Committee wrote to The Netherlands that they did not wish to offer specific comment with respect to the decision itself "since that would be to enter into matters that are not rightfully ours to enter." Your Synod 1976 considered it sufficient to express "joy and appreciation." Have you forgotten your own conviction of 1944 that "the official stand of a church is a far from reliable index of its true condition"? Does the change in official relationship from sister churches to churches in ecclesiastical fellowship mean that in this important case you do not want to urge that church discipline be exercised? If a decision is weak with respect to church discipline in matter of the doctrine of the truth of Christ's suffering and death in our stead, is only a cause of joy and appreciation and is supposed to have a very positive effect in the relationship of your two churches, we fear that there will be a lack of doctrinal church discipline in your own church too. In this context we would wish to remind you of the admission of Dr. A. Verhey into the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

In the Report 1976, your Inter-Church Relations Committee calls the problem of The Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands well-known and difficult to solve. "Living close to and intimately with the schism in its ranks in 1944 (the Schilder controversy) the GKN has become inordinately fearful . . . of schism and the loss of younger members of the church who are largely sympathetic to a freer and more open stance to doctrine and life such as advocated by some of its leaders."

You will understand that it is painful for us that your Committee still speaks about "the Schism in 1944" and "the Schilder controversy," where you never investigated the doctrinal struggle of 1942 and following years.

Because of the fact that the GKN then exercised false church discipline and did so in a hierarchical manner, they are today unable to employ the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And because of the fact that after the Second World War you did not want to investigate the matter, although it was your duty according to your rules for correspondence with sister churches abroad, you have now officially enervated the relationship and you do not want "to enter into matters that are not rightfully ours to enter."

In the meantime, your own church will be infested with the deadly illness of

the relativizing of the authority of God's Word and of the attack on the contents thereof, even on the truth of the gospel, Jesus Christ Crucified.

Brothers, we do not write these things with pleasure. Therefore, we did not try to bring together all things in which we sense in your church a wrong development in doctrinal respect. We restricted ourselves to the basic issue of the authority of Holy Scripture and of the atoning work of Christ our Substitute.

In the report 1976, your Inter-Church Relations Committee mentioned about the contact with the Gereformeerde Kerken of The Netherlands (Vrij-gemaakt): “. . . the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship is an unacceptable category for their church which has only one category, that of ‘correspondence church’ in the sense of near identity in all confessional and church order matters.”

The stance of our sister churches is the same as ours, and is the stance you took for decades in the past. Brothers, return to the Reformed church polity in which the unity of true faith is decisive for the bond between sister churches, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let us no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him Who is the head, into Christ (Ephesians 4).

Yours in Him,
J. FABER
D. VANDERBOOM
W.W.J. VANOENE

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