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THE APOSTLES' CREED
(Revised Report)

Introductory Remarks

1. The Committee took as basis for a new translation the so-called Latin Textus Receptus, published by J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds 2nd ed. 1960, p.369.

We compared the new Dutch texts, the text of the Committee - Dr. W.F. Dankbaar - a committee of "De Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk", "De Gereformeerde Kerken" (Syn) and "De Christelyke Gereformeerde Kerken" - and the text provisionally adopted by the Synod of Groningen-Zuid 1978 of our sister churches in the Netherlands. Both texts are published in the Acts of this Synod, pp.214, 270. Also the very modern translation by Dr. L. Wierenga in De Heidelbergse Katechismus in het Nederlands Van Nu (Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1978) has been taken into consideration.

After we had sent our provisional report to the churches in June 1979, we obtained the text prepared by the International Consultation on English Text' translation of the Apostles' Creed. This text has been recommended by the Synod 1980 of the Reformed Church in America as an alternative text. We give it in an Appendix.

In this revised report we first of all took into consideration the remarks made by Canadian Reformed Churches.

2. The Committee is aware of the value of maintaining the present English text of an ecumenical creed as much as possible and of following the International Consultation' Translation as closely as possible. We also considered the changes in the translation of the Apostles' Creed will cause changes in the text of the Heidelberg Catechism (L.D. 7-22) and of Hymn 45.

We propose the following changes:

- a. "Creator" instead of "Maker" in agreement with the Textus Receptus (TR) and with the International Consultation Text.
- b. "I believe" repeated in the second part in agreement with the International Consultation Text, in order to underline the trinitarian structure of the creed.
- c. "only" instead of "only begotten" according to TR ("unicus", not "unigenitus"). This is also in agreement with newer Bible translations of John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16 a.o. (RSV "only", NIV "one and only"), and with the International Consultation Text.
- d. "descended into Hades". The Committee originally followed the proposal already made by Ph.Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, Vol.II, p.46, and translated by the Committee-Dankbaar by "het rijk van de dood". Some congregations had objections against the Greek word "Hades", although it is used in newer Bible translations of Matth.11:23, 16:18, Acts 2:31, Rev. 1:18. Because of this objection we now changed "Hades" into the English words "the realm of death". This translation is close to the text of the Committee-Dankbaar "het rijk van de dood" and the International Consultation Text ("He descended to the dead", in which translation the reading "ad inferor" must have been followed instead of "ad inferna"). The Committee is convinced that the early Christian Church here thought of Scriptural notions of Sheol or Hades or "the realm of death". The translation "hell" is open for misunderstanding; as explanation of "hell" as "hellish agony" breaks the chronological order in the Apostles' Creed and obscures the connection with the immediately following article

("On the third day He arose from the dead"). The translation "He descended into the realm of death" brings out that the catholic church confesses that the Son of man was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matth.12:40), in the grave, and among the dead, but now has the keys of Death and Hades, and will bring those who are His own out of their graves and into the new earth.

This translation, however, should not be recommended to the churches for tentative use before we have informed the sister churches abroad with whom the Canadian Reformed Churches live in correspondence.

- e. In the clause "I believe the holy catholic church" the Committee maintained the verb "to believe" of the present English text in order to prevent confusion with faith in the Holy Spirit. We trust in the Holy Spirit and we believe that God gathers His church.
- f. The definite article "the" was chosen because it expresses the unicity of the church of Christ. It is in agreement with the International Consultation Text.
- g. In its first proposal the Committee had returned to the translation "flesh" which was used before 1543, in agreement with 1543. Originally the term "flesh" had probably an Anti Gnostic tendency (Heid.Cat. - "ook dit mijn vlees").

In this revised report we propose to return to the term "body" in agreement with the International Consultation on English Text' Translation of the Apostles' Creed.

- h. Other changes are stylistic.

For the Committee,
J. Faber, Reporter.

- Appendices: I. International Consultation on English Text' Translation of the Apostles' Creed.
- II. Revised Committee Proposal.

APPENDIX I: INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION ON ENGLISH TEXT' TRANSLATION OF THE
APOSTLES' CREED

1. I believe in God the Father Almighty,
2. Creator of heaven and earth.
3. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
4. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
5. and born of the virgin Mary.
6. He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
7. was crucified, died and was buried.
8. He descended to the dead.
9. On the third day He arose again.
10. He ascended into heaven,
11. and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
12. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
13. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
14. the holy catholic Church,
15. the communion of saints,
16. the forgiveness of sins,
17. the resurrection of the body,
18. and the life everlasting. Amen.

(This text has been recommended by the Synod of the Reformed Church in America as an alternative text to the churches. If two third of the classes agrees, the text will have been accepted as such.) Courtesy Rev. Peter J. Yff, Hamilton.

APPENDIX II: REVISED COMMITTEE PROPOSAL

Apostles' Creed

- I. I believe in God the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

- II. I believe in Jesus Christ,
His only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended into the realm of death.
On the third day He arose from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

- III. I believe in the Holy Spirit;
I believe the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Apostles' Creed

I. I believe in God the Father almighty,

creator of heaven and earth;

II. I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

and born of the virgin Mary,

who suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended into the realm of the dead,

on the third day he rose from the dead,

he ascended into heaven,

and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty;

from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

III. I believe in the Holy Spirit,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son together

is worshipped and glorified,

who speaks through the prophets,

and the life everlasting.