

Addition under H. RECOMMENDATIONS

We maintain the original recommendation on the basis of the grounds mentioned and request you to read it as Recommendation 1.

On the basis of additional information and the evaluation thereof we recommend:

2. That Synod Toronto 1974 decide that the Committee for Contact with the Christian Reformed Church shall execute the mandate as given by Synod Orangeville 1968, Acts Art. 134 sub VIII, sub 2, 3, and 4, mutatis mutandis, that means in the now changed situation:
 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; even more so because the Contact Committee has never brought these questions before their Synod nor answered them themselves.
 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 then send an urgent, Christian Appeal to the Christian Reformed community in the same vein as (the first part of) the "Appeal 1962".

N.B.

It may be stated here that the Committee could have decided to act in accordance with this mandate in the course of time, either before or after Synod Toronto 1974. The Acts of Synod 1974 of the Christian Reformed Church, however, have only recently been published and have not officially been received as yet by your Committee.

We therefore deem it proper that General Synod 1974 consider the matters as they are laid down in this Additional Report and decide as recommended above.

Respectfully submitted
on behalf of the Committee,
D. VANDERBOOM, convener

APPENDIX V

DEPUTIES FOR CONTACT WITH THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
c/o Mr. W. Wildeboer, 296 Gardenview Dr., BURLINGTON, Ontario

To:

The General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, meeting in TORONTO, Ontario, November 4, 1974.

Hamilton June 25, 1974

Esteemed Brethren,

The General Synod of New Westminster, 1971, appointed new deputies for contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the mandate:

1. To prepare and forward a letter, as outlined in the Synod's decision, to the forthcoming General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church;
2. To serve as contact - address and to remain diligent in the matter of contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church;

3. To report to the next General Synod and to keep the churches informed about the development of this contact.

Complying with the first part of mandate sub 3, deputies submit to you the following report:

Ad mandate sub 1: Deputies prepared a letter, dated March, 1972, in agreement with directives of Synod 1971 (Acts, page 44, sub 1) and sent the letter to the 39th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. (Appendix I)

Ad mandate sub 2: A: Deputies received a letter from the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, dated May 24, 1972. (Appendix II)

Summary:

The Committee asked our opinion in this letter on the matter of exchange of fraternal delegates, which was under consideration.

B: Deputies sent a reply to the letter mentioned sub A, dated Nov. 18, 1972. (Appendix III)

Summary:

Deputies answered that the decision of Synod 1971 gave reason to conclude that Synod did not favour and exchange of fraternal delegates but that only the following Synod, i.e. the Synod of Toronto could give a definite answer to the question.

C: Deputies received a letter of the 40th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, dated August 10, 1973. (Appendix IV)

Summary:

This letter which contained the answer of the 40th Assembly to the communication of deputies, dated March 1972, to the 39th Assembly (See ad mandate sub 1) expressed the belief of the 40th Assembly "that there is sufficient evidence to warrant our recognizing each other as churches which are committed to the Scriptures . . .", "and that such a recognition calls for a fraternal relationship through which further progress may be made toward full acceptance of each other."

The letter states, without giving grounds for it, that the Assembly is not prepared to accept the rules of correspondence of the Canadian Reformed Churches and prefers at this time fraternal relationship.

Report Deputies to Synod of Toronto. 2.

D: Deputies sent a letter to the 41st Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in reply to the letter received from the 40th Assembly, mentioned sub C. (Appendix V)

Summary:

- This letter put three requests before the 41st Assembly regarding
- a. the doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences;
 - b. the rules of correspondence;
 - c. fraternal relationship.

Copies of all these letters have been forwarded to the churches respectively in March 1972, on November 21, 1972 and on June 25, 1974.

Deputies had hoped to be able to supply you with the answer of the 41st Assembly, held in May 1974, and with a recommendation concerning this answer. When nothing was heard on June 12, 1974 deputies called the chairman of the Committee. He informed the secretary of deputies of the decision of the Assembly to refer the letter of deputies, mentioned sub D, to the Committee. Since for the time being matters regarding the proposed Union of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Evangelical Synod) demanded the full attention of the Committee, no immediate reply to the letter of deputies could be prepared. He promised however that the Committee would try to send an answer before the beginning of Synod in November. You may rest assured that deputies will pass on to you such an answer if it is received in time.

Ad mandate sub 3: The following developments may be reported:

- a. On recommendation of the Committee on Ecumenicity, supported by the Advisory Committee, the 40th Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church decided "to terminate our sister-relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland on the ground of serious doctrinal deviations that are tolerated in that church and on the ground that it is not possible to exercise the full ecclesiastical discipline that this relationship involves under the present circumstances." (Minutes 40th Ass. pp. 141/6 sub VIII)
- b. The Assembly adopted a recommendation to appoint the delegates to the 1972 Reformed Ecumenical Synod as a special committee "to prepare position-papers for our General Assembly to submit to the 1976 RES and the member-churches on the following theses:
 1. That membership in the World Council of Christian Churches is unbiblical and incompatible with membership in the RES, and
 2. That the failure of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland to maintain the Reformed Confession disqualifies them from membership in the RES." (Minutes 40th Ass. p. 171.)
- c. On amended motion the 40th Assembly decided "to instruct the delegates to the RES 1972 to prepare, for presentation to the 41st General Assembly a recommendation with regard to whether the Orthodox Presbyterian Church should continue membership in the RES or should withdraw, and include specific grounds in support of the recommendations . . ." (Idem. p. 171)

No action was taken by the 41st Assembly concerning the motion mentioned under c. Deputies **recommend** that Synod takes a decision on the question whether or not Synod is prepared to exchange fraternal delegates. (See ad mandate 2, sub B) Deputies request that this report with Appendices be inserted in the Acts of Synod of Toronto.

With brotherly greetings,
MR. J. BOOT,
REV. P. KINGMA,
REV. W. LOOPSTRA,
REV. L. SELLES,
MR. W. WILDEBOER.

APPENDIX I
COMMITTEE FOR
CONTACT WITH THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
c/o Mr. W. Wildeboer, 296 Gardenview Drive, BURLINGTON, Ontario
The Thirty-ninth General Assembly of the
Orthodox Presbyterian Church

c/o The Rev. Mr. Leroy B. Oliver
7401 Old York Road
Philadelphia, Pa. 19126

Hamilton, March 1972

Esteemed Brethren,

The General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches held in May 1971 at New Westminster, B.C. appointed the undersigned as members of a committee, which received the mandate:

1. to prepare and forward a letter as outlined in the Synod's decision to the forthcoming General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
2. to serve as contact address and to remain diligent in the matter of contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
3. to report to the next General Synod and to keep the Churches informed about the developments of this contact.

We do not deem it possible to write on behalf of Synod without having

received synodical approval of the contents of our letter. We therefore decided to inform you on behalf of Synod of the decision regarding contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. At the same time we add a letter written in agreement with the directives of Synod but forwarded on behalf of the Committee.

The observations, considerations, conclusions and decision adopted by Synod in response to the report and recommendations of deputies of the previous Synod, and in response to letters and overtures presented to Synod read as follows:

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Synod Edmonton 1965 decided:
 - a. to request the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to appoint Deputies to establish contact with Deputies of the Canadian Reformed Churches;
 - b. to inform the Orthodox Presbyterian Church about our Confession and Church government;
 - c. to discuss frankly with the Deputies the differences in Confession and Church-polity and to compare these differences with the Word of God.
2. Synod 1968 gratefully acknowledged the facts:
 - a. that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church can accept the Canadian Reformed Churches on the basis of the Creeds and Church Government;
 - b. that, in many respects, the good fight of the faith is being fought in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
3. Deputies, appointed by Synod 1968, have examined the differences in Confession, Church Polity and Church Correspondence. They have evaluated them to see whether these differences are of such a nature that they would prevent the Canadian Reformed Churches from recognizing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church and from entering into correspondence with this Church. (Mandate General Synod 1968, Acts, Art. 154.)

CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church "is of the conviction" that the correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands "requires termination". (Minutes of the 37th General Assembly, 1970, p. 105.)
2. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church still maintains "fraternal relationship" with Churches that have correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands.
3. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is still a member of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.
4. The discussion and talks of the Deputies of both Churches, which have lasted almost six years, have not resulted in a recommendation to, gladly and without reservation, enter into correspondence with these Churches.
5. Deputies of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church have expressed the stand of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, namely a preference for "fraternal relationship" instead of "rules for sister-church relationship".
6. The time has come that the Canadian Reformed Churches state clearly their position toward the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the matter of entering into correspondence.

Synod CONCLUDES

To acknowledge gratefully,

1. 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;
2. that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church desires to regulate and order the government of the Church in accordance with the Scriptural confession, namely that "all its decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God". (Form of Government, Chapter 1, 7);

3. that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church "is of the conviction" that the correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands "requires termination". (Minutes of the 37th General Assembly, 1970, p. 105)
4. that the relation with Churches, that maintain a correspondence with these Churches is still existing;
5. that this fact and the membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, are impediments to enter into correspondence;
6. that the preference for "fraternal relationship" prevents the use of the rules for correspondence as a condition for entering into correspondence;
7. that divergencies in confession and in Church polity are serious enough to remain the subject of further and frank discussions.

Synod DECIDES

to forward a letter directly to the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

- a. informing this Assembly of the foregoing observations, considerations and conclusions;
- b. requesting it brotherly and urgently;
 1. to regulate, order and maintain church government wholly in accordance with the Scriptures;
 2. to also terminate their relationship with Churches, that maintain correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands, as well as membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod;
 3. to consider to adopt the rules for correspondence of the Canadian Reformed Churches."

Acts Gen. Synod N.W. 1971, Art. 92.

So far the Synod of New Westminster.

As a committee we are afraid that point 5 of the above-mentioned CONSIDERATIONS and point 6 of the CONCLUSIONS may puzzle you.

Apparently Synod received the impression from the report of the deputies of the previous Synod that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church prefers fraternal relationship between your Churches and our Churches in place of correspondence under a set of rules adopted for that purpose.

The point is that in the course of the discussions between members of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations and deputies of our Churches the difficulty of removing all obstacles in achieving full correspondence as Churches became evident. It made one of the members of the Committee wonder if the Churches should not restrict themselves for the time being to the establishment of fraternal relations. Contact could be maintained that way without the necessity of complete agreement in matters of doctrine and church-polity.

As to the point of rules for correspondence, the Committee did not state that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church prefers fraternal relations to correspondence governed by a number of rules, but that the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches never adopted rules for correspondence and that the Committee was not in favour of some of the rules of the Canadian Reformed Churches fearing that the implementation of such might result in a domination of the one Church over the other.

We offer our apologies for the misunderstandings which arose.

Proceeding now to the heart of the matter, Synod stated in point 7 of its conclusions "that divergencies in confession and in Church-polity are serious enough to remain the subject of further and frank discussion".

The doctrinal divergencies are mainly based on the following passages of the Westminster Confession of Faith and of the Larger Catechism.

A.1. Westminster Confession Ch. 25, par. I, II IV; Larger Catechism Question and Answer 64 - 66, re: The Church.

Studying these paragraphs and answers we realize that we should not read them in the light of the downhill-trend which Reformed Theology showed in the

post-Reformation era. On the other hand we live in a time in which the visible Church, as manifested in its institutional form is set in sharp contrast to the invisible Church, as represented by all the elect of past, present and future, a Church which is not institutionalized, but which is gathered together out of all institutes.

The result of this polarization of the visible and invisible Church has been a low esteem for what is called the visible Church, a weakening of church-consciousness, a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the calling "to separate from the false Church and to join the true Church" (The Belgic Confession of Faith Art. 28) and the rise of the "theologoumenon" of the pluriformity of the Church which is neither taught by the Scriptures nor by the Reformed Confessions and which proved to be an undermining factor in the fight against the sins of the Church and for the reformation of the Church.

The question arose in Synod what, according to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the "particular Churches" are of which Ch. 25, IV of the Westminster Confession states that they are members of the catholic Church. The question was brought up because the Westminster Confession, although mentioning "the teaching and the embracing of the gospel, the administration of ordinances and the performance of public worship" in Ch. 25, IV does not clearly mention the marks of the true and of the false Church, as found in the Belgic Confession, Art. 29 and The Scottish Confession of Faith Ch. XVIII. The absence of a separate confession concerning the marks of the Church makes it hard to determine the borderline between the true and the false Church and can easily lead to the acceptance of the theory of the pluriformity of the Church.

- A.2. Westminster Conf. Ch. 18, III and Larger Cat. Question and Answer 81, re: the assurance of faith.

We understand that whereas Westminster Confession Ch. 14, II gives a description of faith, W.C. Ch. 18, III and L.C. Answ. 81 deal with the personal assurance of grace and salvation of the believers.

However the last two passages are worded in such a way that the conclusion may be drawn from them that assurance is not an essential part of faith, but a grace which is **added** to faith.

In the history of the Reformed Churches we have noticed that the separation of faith and assurance drew many children of God away from the solid ground of the promises of God and from the obedience of faith, Psalm 105; Psalm 111; Galatians 5, Romans 15, as revealed in His Word.

It made them fall into the pit of a bottomless subjectivism and mysticism which proved to be disastrous for spiritual health and growth, the peace with and the joy and hope in God.

- A.3. Larger Catechism Question and Answer 31, re: the covenant of grace.

This answer confesses that the covenant of grace was made with Christ and in Him with the elect. We realize that Answer 166 of the Larger Catechism states that children of parents who professed their faith "are in that respect within the covenant" and that therefore Answer 31 may be interpreted as speaking of them who become partakers of the blessings promised in the covenant, that is, if we are allowed to understand the word "within" in Answer 166 in the sense of "in" and do not in the sense of "within the covenant-sphere". However that does not alter the fact that Answer 31 of the Larger Catechism is worded in such a way that the conclusion may be drawn from it that the LORD made His covenant with the elect alone as represented by Christ.

When the Synod Sneek - Utrecht 1942 of the 'Gereformeerde Kerken' placed pastors and elders under the obligation to exclusively teach the related doctrine of a presumptive regeneration of the children of the covenant, we refused to do so because we believed that this doctrine was in conflict with the Scriptural teaching of the establishment of the covenant of grace by the LORD with the believers and with their seed, Gen. 17:7, Acts 2:39.

The whole struggle in the "Gereformeerde Kerken" in the forties has convinced us even more of the essential importance that this scriptural doctrine is maintained with a view to the administration of the keys of the kingdom entrusted to the Church and with a view to all pastoral care with its two sides of comforting and admonishing, encouraging and exhorting.

A.4. Larger Catechism Question and Answer 50 re: the descent into hell.

This answer interprets the article of the descent into hell as Jesus' stay "in the state of death and under the power of death".

The Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 44 explains the descent into hell as Jesus' suffering of the hellish agony and pain "during all His sufferings but especially on the cross".

We are aware that both interpretations have had a place in the teachings of the Churches of the Reformation.

A.5. Larger Catechism Question and Answer 99; 102 - 148 re: the law of God.

We are not too happy with the introduction to the explanation of the ten commandments as presented in Answer 99. We feel that such an introduction cannot be brought under the act of "believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth" (Belgic Confession Art. 1).

As to the explanation of the commandments themselves, as given in Answer 102 - 148 we place question marks behind words and expressions in this very detailed exposition and we wonder whether full justice is done to the progress in the history of salvation in the explanation of the fourth commandment.

In view of what was mentioned under A, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, we would like to ask you to consider these points, which in our opinion imply the confessing of two Churches, a visible Church and an invisible Church, two covenants, one with the elect and one with the believers and their children; and two kinds of faith, one, including the assurance of faith and the other not including this assurance.

Further we would like to hear that the interpretation of the article of the descent into hell, as given in Answer 50 of the Larger Catechism, does not mark as unscriptural the explanation which is presented in Answer 44 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Finally we would like to be informed about the binding character of the details of the interpretation of the commandments as presented in Answer 102 - 148 of the Larger Catechism.

B.1. As to the divergencies in Church-polity, referred to in point 7 of the conclusions of Synod, the differences in church-government as reflected in your Form of Government and our Church Order are ultimately based on a difference in understanding of the relation between the local Churches and the Church universal.

The Church Order proceeds from the principle of the completeness and "autonomy" of the local Churches, which in the unity of faith voluntarily enter into a federation of Churches.

The F.O.G. is based on the principle that the Church universal has precedence over the local Churches, which are actually parts of it. F.O.G. Ch. II 2, 3.

From the discussions which deputies had with your Committee we learned that you base this view on the passages in the New Testament where the singular noun 'ecclesia' is used for all the Churches of the Lord.

We are convinced with you that these passages, Matthew 16:18 and Acts 9:31 speak of the universal Church, or as in the case of Acts 9:31 of the Palestine church composed of the various local churches.

You in turn will agree with us that in addition to this use of the word ecclesia, it is used over and over for local Churches, Matthew 18:17 a.o. The use of exactly the same word for the Church universal and for the local church indicates that the local church is not just a part or a branch or a department of the church universal, but that both the local church and the church universal are in their own right: Church of God, body of Christ.

This is confirmed by the epistles which are addressed for the greater part to local Churches and speak of these congregations as "the Church of God which is at Corinth", 1 Cor. 1:2 a.o. Cp. also Galatians 1:22.

Another confirmation is found in Revelation 1 which pictures the Lord Jesus in the midst of the lampstands which are, according to vs. 20, the seven Churches addressed by the Lord in Revelation 2 and 3 by their particular names. The same book speaks however of "the holy city Jerusalem" as "the bride, the wife of the Lamb" 21:9, 10. So here we have both again: the local Churches and the Church universal standing not under or above but beside one another.

This implies that we cannot accept the view that the broader assemblies of the Churches are higher judicatories Ch. IX, 6, XI, 1 which as such have supervision over the lower judicatories Ch. X, 7, XI, 4.

We cannot find this principle either in Acts 15, since the meeting of which this chapter speaks is not a meeting of the 'presbytery' of Jerusalem with representatives of the 'session' of Antioch, but as it reads in vs. 4 a meeting of the apostles and of elders of the congregation of Jerusalem with delegates of the congregation of Antioch.

- B.2. The New Testament also teaches that whereas the apostles had authority over all the Churches, the authority of the elders was restricted to the flocks over which they were set as overseers, Acts. 20:28.

This principle does not allow us to see the broader assemblies as meetings of officebearers Ch. X, 2, who in this capacity rule the Church in these assemblies, Ch. VIII, 2.

We consider it further in conflict with the principle expressed in Acts 20:28 a.o. that ministers belong to the presbyteries instead of to the local Churches, Ch. X, 9, and that the presbytery instead of the session "ordains, installs, removes and judges ministers", Ch. X, 7.

This special treatment of ministers may have contributed to the consideration of the office of minister as "the first in the Church, both for dignity and usefulness", Ch. IV. The apostle Paul exhorts Timothy "to consider the elders who rule well worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching". 1 Tim. 5:17, but he does not teach that the office of the preaching and teaching elder is in any respect superior to that of the fellow-officebearers. The fact that teaching-elders and ruling-elders are both called "elders" does not leave room for any priority of the teaching-elder over the ruling-elder.

One other chapter which troubles us in this context is Chapter XIX. The Lord Jesus gave His great commission and He granted in addition to apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers, also evangelists to His Church, Eph. 4:11. But we cannot find any indication that ministers of the Church should be allowed to labour in Churches which do not belong to the Church wherein the minister is an officebearer. We are afraid that this practice easily promotes the idea of the pluriformity of the Church.

- B.3. We are grateful to learn from Ch. I, 7, that "the church power is only ministerial and declarative, i.e. that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners".

However we read in Ch. XI, 6, that "deliverances, resolutions, overtures and other actions which are additional to the specific provisions of the constitution shall not be regarded binding unless they have been approved by the General Assembly and Presbyteries" . . .

This rule which makes the binding character of decisions depending on the approval of the majority is, in our opinion, not in agreement with the statement that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners. The history of the Church has shown that the broadest assembly and the majority of broader assemblies may give approval of resolutions etc. which are not in agreement with Holy Writ but are in conflict with it.

We prefer therefore art. 31 of the Church Order of Dort to the rule of Ch. XI, 6

of the Form of Government. This article 31 prescribes that "whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote (in the broader assemblies) shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the articles of this General Synod" i.e. with the Synod which adopted the Church Order, and thus with the articles of this Order.

In view of the objections mentioned under B 1, 2, 3 and of the fact that you are in the process of revising your Form of Government we request that you will be so kind as to give serious consideration to the arguments advanced against some provisions of the Form of Government and the underlying idea. If you deem it profitable, we are prepared to discuss them with you in order that mutual agreement may be reached and the Churches may regulate their government in full agreement with the instruction given by the Scriptures.

- C.1. Synod instructed us to also make the brotherly and urgent request to terminate your relationship with Churches that maintain correspondence with the (Synodical) 'Gereformeerde Kerken' in the Netherlands as well as your membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. (Decision I, 2.) Synod did mention your sister-relationship to the (Synodical) 'Gereformeerde Kerken' since she was informed of your decision to break off this relationship.

As a committee we realize that the request which we make on behalf of Synod may strengthen your apprehension of a lording it over one another as Churches. We can assure you that not the least desire to do so lives in our Churches. To enter into a correspondence-relationship means however to accept each other as sister-churches. We are of the opinion that such a relationship cannot function properly if no agreement exists about the fellowship which the Churches entertain with other denominations. The apostle Paul instructs in Romans 16:17 "to take note of them who create dissension and difficulties in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught" and he exhorts "to avoid them". The (synodical) 'Gereformeerde Kerken' show more and more the marks of the false church. Churches which nevertheless maintain a sister-relationship with these churches, act against the apostolic admonition and endanger their very existence as true Churches of the Lord.

- C.2. As to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod we are aware that the decisions taken by this Synod bear the character of recommendations for the member-churches and need the approval of these churches to make them settled and binding for the churches.

However we also know that membership of a body which calls itself Synod and presents itself as Reformed-Ecumenical implies an entering into fellowship with the other members, an acceptance of these members as of Reformed-Ecumenical tradition and a responsibility for the way this Synod conducts itself. As to this conduct one of the first decisions of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod 1946 was to attach its approval to the superscriptural decisions of the Synod Sneek-Utrecht 1942 - 1944 of the 'Gereformeerde Kerken'.

Churches which are members of the World Council of Christian Churches are up till now allowed fullledged members of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Despite all decisions taken by the (Synodical) 'Gereformeerde Kerken' the Reformed Ecumenical Synod did not yet exclude these churches from its membership. We are of the opinion that this conduct is neither reformed nor ecumenical but the very opposite.

So it is not for our sake but "for the sake of the house of the Lord, our God" Psalm 122:9, that the above mentioned request are made.

- D. Another request which we make on behalf of Synod is that you consider to adopt the rules of correspondence of the Canadian Reformed Churches as your rules for correspondence. (Decision I, 3.)

These rules, adopted by the General Synod of Hamilton 1962 are:

1. To take mutual heed that the corresponding Churches do not deviate from the Reformed confession in doctrine, liturgy, church-polity and discipline.

2. To forward to each other the agenda and decisions of the broadest assemblies and to admit each other's delegates to these assemblies.
3. To keep each other informed concerning changes in - or additions to the Confession, Church Order and Liturgical Forms.
The corresponding churches also pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable.
4. To accept each other's attestations and to permit each other's ministers to preach the Word and to administer the sacraments.
5. To give account to each other regarding correspondence with third parties.
The Canadian Reformed Churches have correspondence with:
The Free Reformed Churches of Australia,
The Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland,
Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika.

The request to adopt these rules is not made because we are of the opinion that they are beyond criticism. It is made because we feel that these rules are basically in agreement with the conditions which make for a beneficial relationship between sister-churches.

Such a relationship depends on a unity of the faith which now exists but which also should be maintained in the future by showing mutual care for one another. For this reason rule 1 was adopted.

Such a relationship makes itself felt in the acceptance of one another whenever and wherever fellowship may be enjoyed. For this reason the rules 2 - 4 were adopted.

Such a relationship remains good and sound, if there is full understanding concerning the reasons why each Church wants to include third parties into its fellowship. For this reason rule 5 was adopted.

We submit this letter to you in humility on account of the inadequacy of our faith and our obedience, but we do so too with boldness because of our desire to be wholly true to the LORD our God and to seek the good for the Jerusalem of God.

As we are convinced that this is also your desire we do not doubt that you are prepared to consider the requests which we hereby made on behalf of Synod 1971 and the points which this committee submitted to you.

We commend you to God and the Word of His grace and we pray that His Spirit may guide you in your deliberations and decisions.

With brotherly Greetings,
Yours in His service,

J. BOOT,
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