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Esteemed Brethren,

Synod of New Westminster, 1971, appointed two deputies with the mandate

1. to revise the text of the Heidelberg Catechism

a. by replacing difficult and anachronistic words and expressions as far as proper equivalents can be derived from today's English;

b. by recasting sentences, which are too complicated, into positive and independent sentences, which form a direct answer to the question, in close adherence to the original German text;

2. to report to the next Synod, and to send copies of a draft text of the Heidelberg Catechism to the Churches: at such a time, that it can be examined and judged by the Churches before Synod convenes. (Acts, art. 83)

When one of these deputies, the rev. H.A. Stel, passed away before the work had been completed, the remaining deputy asked and received the cooperation of two other ministers, nl. prof. dr. J. Faber, and the rev. J. Geertsema.

It should be pointed out, however, that the rev. Geertsema reviewed only the first draft of the revision. Distance prevented regular discussion between him and the other committee members, and in order to expediate matters as much as possible it was decided to leave the final decision to the other two members.

In preparing this revision we made use of the original German and Latin texts of the Heidelberg Catechism as printed by J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, De Nederlandsche Belijdenisgeschriften; Vergelijkende Teksten. Amsterdam: Uitgeversmaatschappij Holland, 1940, and of the following new translations:

1. <u>De Heidelbergse Catechismus en de Liturgische Formulieren in hedendaags Nederlands,</u> zoals vastgesteld door de Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland te Hattem, 1972. Groningen: De Vuurbaak.

2. The Heidelberg Catechism, A New Provisional Translation, prepared by a Committee of The Christian Reformed Church. Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, 1973.

3. The Heidelberg Catechism, 400th Anniversary Edition, translated by Allen O. Miller and M. Eugene Osterhaven. Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1962.

4. The School of Faith; The Catechisms of the Reformed Church, translated and edited by Thomas F. Torrance. London: James Clarke, 1959.

Recommendations:

Although we sincerely hope that the churches will be able to study this draft-revision and submit their comments, we realize that there may not be sufficient time for a thorough examination before Synod convenes.

We therefore wish to recommend to Synod that

- 1. Synod appoint a committee to evaluate this draft-revision.
- 2. Synod do not, however, devote a detailed discussion to the matter, but send this proof, after it has evaluated and, where necessary, revised it, to the churches for further examination and comment,
- 3. Synod recommend that this revision be tested in Catechism classes.
- 4. If Synod should make this recommendation, it decide that the draft be printed in the Acts, preferably in a form that makes it easier for the students to memorize the questions and answers. We are thinking of a set-up comparable to that used in the rev, Scholten's The Heidelberg Catechism with explanatory questions and answers.

The undersigned are willing to prepare the draft for publication along these lines.

They suggest that, for the time being, the prooftexts given in our present version be used.

The printer of the Acts might be asked to publish this part of the Acts in a separate edition, possibly with the full wording of one or two of the prooftexts of each answer printed on the left page.

- 5. Synod appoint new deputies to whom the churches can send their comments.
- 6. These deputies receive the mandate to present the next Synod with a revised draft of the new translation, to draw up a proposal about the prooftexts to be used in the definitive edition, and to send copies of their draft and proposal to the churches at such a time that it can be examined by the churches before Synod convenes.

March, 1974.

Respectfully submitted,
J. Faber

J. Geertsema

Oosterhoff, convener.