

Winnipeg June 10th 1968

(H.A. Stel 85 Elmwood Rd.
Winnipeg 5, Man.)

Esteemed Brethren:

The General Synod of Edmonton - 1965 appointed us - i.e. Rev. Wm. W. J. Van Oene, Rev. J. T. Van Popta and Rev. H. A. Stel (S.) with the instruction to submit to you an English translation of the Church Order as far as possible.

The fact that Synod 1965 added the words as far as possible is a good enough indication of the difficulties which would be encountered, also in the opinion of this Synod.

We do not have to elaborate and give in detail the many difficulties which showed up in preparing an as far as possible exact translation of the Dutch text of the Church Order.

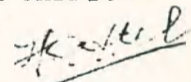
To say the least : it has its full bearing upon the language, the wording and the phraseology of the English text as put before you. Only, we as deputies were bound and restricted to our commission and therefore did abide by it to the best of our ability.

We submit to you the result of our work like we have sent also copies to the Churches in accordance with our instruction.

We have been enabled to present to you this translation thanks to the help of people who may be considered to know more about the English language than we do.

May the result of this our work as Synodical deputies for translation of the Church Order be that our Canadian Reformed Churches possess in the near future, and further maintain faithfully their Christian Order, worded in the language of our Country to the glory of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On behalf of deputies,
respectfully yours in Christ:



H.A. Stel

Translation Church Order

Art. 1 To maintain good order in the Church of Christ it is necessary that there be: offices, assemblies, supervision of doctrine, sacraments and ceremonies, and Christian discipline; of which matters the following articles treat in due order.

OF THE OFFICES

Art. 2 The offices are of four kinds:

of the Ministers of the Word, of the Doctors, of the Elders, and of the Deacons.

Art. 3 No one though he be a Doctor, Elder or Deacon, shall be permitted to enter upon the Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments without having been lawfully called thereunto.

And when anyone acts contrary thereto, and after being frequently admonished does not desist, the Classis shall judge whether he is to be declared a schismatic or is to be punished in some other way.

Art. 4 The lawful calling of those who have not previously been in office (both in the cities and in rural districts) consists :

First in the election by the Consistory and the Deacons, after preceding prayers, with due observance of the regulations locally in use or established by the Consistory for this purpose,

and of the ecclesiastical ordinances, that only those can for the first time be called to the Ministry of the Word who by the Classis in which they live have been examined in a preparatory examination;

and furthermore in Churches with no more than one Minister also with the advice of Classis or of the counselor appointed for this purpose by the Classis, where such practice has been in use up till now;

Secondly, in the examination both of doctrine and life, which shall be conducted by the Classis, to which the call must be submitted for approval, and which shall take place in the presense of the Deputies of the Particular Synod or of some of them;

Thirdly, in the approbation by the members of the local Church, when, the name of the Minister having been announced in the Church for two successive Sundays, no lawful objection arises;

Finally, in the public ordination before the Congregation, which shall take place with appropriate stipulations and interrogations, admonitions and prayers and by the imposition of hands by the officiating Minister (and by other

Ministers who are present) agreeably to the Form in use for that purpose.

Art. 5 Ministers who are already in the Ministry of the Word, who are called to another Congregation (both in the cities and in the rural districts) shall likewise be called in the aforesaid manner by the Consistory and the Deacons, with due observance of the regulations being locally in use or established by the Consistory for this purpose, and of the general ecclesiastical ordinances for the eligibility of those who have served outside the Canadian Reformed Churches and for the repeated calling of the same Minister during the same vacancy; in Churches with no more than one Minister also with the advice of Classis or of the counselor appointed for this purpose by Classis, where such practice has been in use up till now; and further in all Churches with the approval of the Classis, to which the aforesaid Ministers called shall show good ecclesiastical testimonials of doctrine and life, and with the approval of the members of the local Church, when, the name of the Minister having been announced for two successive Sundays, no lawful objection arises; whereupon the Ministers called shall be installed with preceding stipulations and prayers, agreeably to the Form in use for this purpose.

Art. 6 No Minister shall be at liberty to serve in any private manor, institutions of mercy or otherwise, unless he be previously admitted in accordance with the preceding articles, and he shall, no less than others, be subject to the Church Order.

Art. 7 No one shall be called to the Ministry of the Word, without being stationed in a particular place, except he be sent to organize the Church in a certain place.

Art. 8 Teachers, artisans or others who have not pursued the regular course of study, shall not be admitted to the Ministry unless there is assurance of their exceptional gifts, godliness, humility, modesty, good intellect and discretion, as also gifts of public address.

When such persons present themselves for the Ministry, the Classis (if the Particular Synod approve) shall first examine them, and in accordance with the results of the examination let them privately speak a word of edification for some time, and further deal with them as it shall deem edifying, according to the general regulations adopted by the Churches for this purpose.

Art. 9 Novices, priests, monks, and others who have left some sect, shall not be admitted to the Ministry except with great caution and carefulness, and also after having been well tested for some time.

Art. 10 A Minister, once lawfully called, may not leave the Congregation with which

he is connected, to accept a call elsewhere, without the consent of the Consistory, together with the Deacons, and knowledge on the part of the Classis; likewise no other Church may receive him until he has presented a proper certificate of dismissal from the Church and the Classis where he served.

Art. 11 On the other hand, the Consistory, representing the Congregation, shall also be bound to provide for the proper support of its Ministers, and shall not dismiss them without the knowledge and approbation of the Classis and of the deputies of the Particular Synod.

Art. 12 Inasmuch as a Minister of the Word, once lawfully called as described above, is bound to the service of the Church for life, he is not allowed to enter upon an other vocation, except for great and weighty reasons, which the Classis shall note and judge; which judgment the Classis shall not pass without the knowledge and approbation of the Deputies of the Particular Synod.

Art. 13 Ministers, who by reason of age, sickness, or otherwise, are rendered incapable of performing the duties of their office, shall nevertheless retain the honour and title of a Minister, and the Church which they have served shall provide honourably for them (likewise also for the widows and orphans of Ministers in general).

Art. 14 If any Minister, for the aforesaid or any other reason, is compelled to discontinue his service for a time, which shall not take place without the advice of the Consistory, he shall nevertheless at all times be and remain subject to the call of the Congregation.

Art. 15 No one, neglecting the Ministry of his Church or being without a fixed charge, shall be permitted to preach indiscriminately without the consent and authorization of Synod or Classis. Likewise, no one shall be permitted to preach or administer the Sacraments in another Church without the consent of the Consistory of that Church.

Art. 16 The office of the Ministers is to continue in prayer and in the ministry of the Word, to dispense the Sacraments, to watch over their brethren, the Elders and Deacons, as well as over the Congregation, and finally, with the Elders, to exercise Church discipline and to see to it that everything is done honourably and in good order.

Art. 17 Among the Ministers of the Word equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of their office and also in other matters as far as possible according to the judgment of the Consistory, and if necessary, of the Classis; which equality shall also be maintained among the Elders and the Deacons.

Art. 18 The office of the Doctors or Professors of Theology is to expound the Holy Scripture and to vindicate the sound doctrine against heresies and errors.

Art. 19 The Churches shall exert themselves, as far as necessary, that there be students of theology who are supported by them.

Art. 20 In the Churches where there are persons who according to Article 8 have been judged competent to be prepared for the Ministry of the Word, it may be arranged that for their training they speak an edifying word.

Art. 21 The Consistories everywhere shall see to it that there are good teachers who shall not only teach the children reading, writing, languages, and arts, but also instruct them in godliness and the Catechism.

Art. 22 The Elders shall be chosen by the judgment of the Consistory and the Deacons according to the regulations that are in use locally or that are for that purpose established by the Consistory. In pursuance of these regulations every Church shall be at liberty, according to its circumstances, to give the members of the Congregation an opportunity to direct attention to suitable persons; and further to present to the Congregation for election as many Elders as are needed, in order that they, after being approved and agreed upon by the Congregation (and unless any obstacle arise) be installed with public prayers and stipulations; or present a double number to the Congregation and thereupon install the one-half chosen by it, in the aforesaid manner, agreeably to the Form in use for this purpose.

Art. 23 The office of the Elders, in addition to what was said above in Article 16 to be their duty in common with the Ministers of the Word, is to take heed that the Ministers, together with their fellow-Elders and Deacons, faithfully discharge their office, and do the work of visiting as time and circumstances may demand for the edification of the Congregation both before and after the Lord's Supper, in order particularly to comfort and instruct the members of the Congregation, and also to exhort others in respect to the Christian Religion.

Art. 24 In the election, approbation, and ordination of the Deacons the same manner shall be followed as was stated concerning the Elders.

Art. 25 The office peculiar to the Deacons is diligently to collect alms and other contributions of charity, and after mutual counsel, faithfully and diligently to distribute the same to the poor, not only to those who belong to the Congregation but also to strangers, as their needs may require it; to visit and comfort the distressed and to exercise care that the alms are not misused; of which they shall render an account in the Consistory, and also (if anyone desires to be present) before the Congregation, at such a time as the Consistory may see fit.

Art. 26 In places where others are devoting themselves to the care of the poor, the Deacons shall endeavour to maintain good relations with them to the end that the alms may all the better be distributed among those who have greatest need.

Art. 27 The Elders and Deacons shall serve two or more years according to local regulations, and a proportionate number shall retire each year. The retiring office-bearers shall be succeeded by others unless the circumstances and the well-being of any Church, in the execution of Articles 22 and 24, render a re-election advisable.

Art. 28 As the office of Christian Secular Authorities is to promote in every way the Holy Ministry, to commend the same to their subjects by their own example, and whenever need arises to lend a helping hand to the Ministers, Elders, and Deacons, and to protect them in the maintenance of their good order, so all Ministers, Elders, and Deacons are in duty bound diligently and sincerely to impress upon the whole Congregation the obedience, love, and respect which is due to Secular Authorities; and all office-bearers of the Church shall set a good example in this respect for the Congregation, and endeavour by due respect and communication to secure and retain the favour of the Secular Authorities towards the Church, in order that, each doing his duty in the fear of the Lord, all suspicion and distrust may be prevented, and good harmony may be maintained for the welfare of the Churches.

OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

Art. 29 Four kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained: the Consistory, the Classis, the Particular Synod, and the General Synod.

Art. 30 In these assemblies no other than ecclesiastical matters shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner. In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the Churches of the major assembly in common.

Art. 31 If anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of the minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the articles decided upon in this General Synod, as long as they are not changed by another General Synod.

Art. 32 The proceedings of all assemblies shall begin by calling upon the Name of God and be closed with thanksgiving.

Art. 33 Those who are delegated to the assemblies shall bring with them their credentials

and instructions, signed by those sending them, and they shall have a vote in all matters, except such as particularly concern their persons or Churches.

Art. 34 In all assemblies there shall be not only a president, but also a clerk to keep a faithful record of all things worthy to be recorded.

Art. 35 The office of the president is to state and explain the business to be transacted, to see to it that everyone observe due order in speaking, to silence the captious and those who are vehement in speaking; and to properly discipline them if they refuse to listen. Furthermore his office shall cease when the assembly has been ended.

Art. 36 The Classis has the same jurisdiction over the Consistory as the Particular Synod has over the Classis and the General Synod over the Particular.

Art. 37 In all Churches there shall be a Consistory composed of the Ministers of the Word and the Elders, who, at least in larger Congregations, shall as a rule meet once a week. The Minister of the Word (or the Ministers, if there be more than one, in turn) shall preside and regulate the proceedings.

Art. 38 In places where the Consistory is to be constituted for the first time or anew, this shall not take place except with the advice of the Classis. And wherever the number of Elders is small the Deacons may be added to the Consistory by local regulation; this shall invariably be done where the number is less than three.

Art. 39 Places where as yet no Consistory can be constituted shall be placed by the Classis under the care of a neighbouring Consistory.

Art. 40 Likewise the Deacons shall meet, wherever necessary, every week to transact the business pertaining to their office, calling upon the Name of God; whereunto the Ministers shall take good heed and if necessary they shall be present.

Art. 41 The classical meetings shall consist of neighbouring Churches that respectively delegate, with proper credentials, a Minister and an Elder to meet at such time and place as was determined by the previous classical meeting. Such meetings shall be held at least once in three months, unless great distances render this inadvisable. In these meetings the Ministers shall preside in rotation, or one shall be chosen to preside; however, the same Minister shall not be chosen twice in succession.

Furthermore the president shall, among other things, present the following questions to all delegates: whether in their Churches the Consistory meets regularly; whether the Church discipline is exercised; whether the poor and schools are cared for; and lastly, whether there is any matter in which they need the judgment and help of the Classis for the proper government of their Church.

And finally, at the last meeting before the Particular Synod, delegates shall be chosen to attend said Synod.

Art. 42 Where there are more than one Minister in a Church, also those not delegated according to the foregoing article shall have the right to attend Classis with advisory vote.

Art. 43 At the close of the classical and other major assemblies, censure shall be exercised over those who in the meeting have done something worthy of punishment, or who have scorned the admonition of the minor assemblies.

Art. 44 The Classis shall also authorize at least two of her oldest, most experienced and competent Ministers to visit all the Churches in the cities as well as in rural districts once a year, unless the great distances render this inadvisable, and to take heed whether the Ministers, Consistories, and schoolteachers faithfully perform the duties of their office, adhere to the sound doctrine, observe in all things the adopted order, and properly promote as much as lies in them, through word and deed, the upbuilding of the Congregation, and also of the youth, to the end that they may in good time fraternally admonish those who are found to be negligent in anything, and may by their advice and assistance help direct all things unto the peace, upbuilding, and greatest profit of the Churches and Schools. And each Classis may continue these visitors in service as long as it sees fit, except when the visitors themselves request to be released for reasons about which the Classis shall judge.

Art. 45 It shall be the duty of the Church in which the Classis and likewise the Particular or General Synod meets to furnish the following meeting with the Acts of the preceding one.

Art. 46 Instructions concerning matters to be considered in major assemblies shall not be written until the decisions of previous Synods touching these matters have been read, in order that what was once decided be not again proposed, unless a revision be deemed necessary.

Art. 47 Every year (or if need be more often) some neighbouring Classes, as much as possible belonging to the same Province, shall meet, to which Particular Synod each Classis shall delegate two Ministers and two Elders, which number may be set at three by a Synod which consists of only three or four Classes. If the region of the Particular Synod consists of two classical districts the number of delegates shall be at least three Ministers and three Elders. At the close of both the Particular and the General Synod some Church shall be empowered to determine with the advice of Classis the time and place of the next Synod.

Art. 48 Each Synod shall be at liberty to solicit and maintain contact with its neighbouring Synod or Synods in such manner as they shall judge most conducive to general edification.

Art. 49 Each Synod shall also delegate some to execute everything ordained by Synod and in case of difficulties to extend help to the Classes. This should be done in such a manner that as far as possible for the various matters different groups of deputies are appointed. At least two or three of these deputies shall also supervise all peremptory examinations of future Ministers. And all those deputies shall keep proper record of all their actions to report thereof to Synod, and if demanded, to give account of these actions. Furthermore, they shall not be discharged from their service before and until Synod itself discharges them.

Art. 50 The National Synod shall ordinarily be held once every three years (unless there is an urgent reason to convene one sooner). Each Particular Synod shall delegate four Ministers and four Elders. Further, the Church which is charged with setting the time and place of the General Synod shall decide about the time and place with the advice or approval of its Particular Synod if according to the judgment of a Particular Synod the General Synod is to be convened within the space of three years.

(The articles 51 and 52 have been deleted. For convenience's sake we retain the original numbering of the articles.)

OF THE DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS AND OTHER CEREMONIES.

Art. 53 The Ministers of the Word of God and likewise the Professors of Theology (and this also behooves the other Professors and Schoolteachers) shall subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and the Ministers of the Word who refuse to do so shall de facto be suspended from their office by the Consistory or Classis until they shall have given a full statement of their reasons, and if they obstinately persist in refusing, they shall be deposed from their office.

Art. 54 Likewise the Elders and Deacons, and those who by a Classis are admitted as a Candidate for the Ministry, shall subscribe to the aforesaid Forms of Unity.

Art. 55 To ward off false doctrines and errors that multiply exceedingly through heretical writings, the Ministers and Elders shall use the means of teaching, of refutation, of warning, and of admonition, as well in the Ministry of the Word as in Christian teaching and in family-visiting.

Art. 56 The Covenant of God shall be sealed unto the children of the Christians by Baptism, as soon as the administration thereof is feasible, and such in the public assembly when the Word of God is preached.

Art. 57 The Ministers shall do their best and work to the end that the father present his child for Baptism. And in the Congregations where besides the fathers also god-fathers or witnesses are taken at Baptism (which custom, being in itself permissible, shall not be changed lightly) it is proper that such be taken who adhere to the pure doctrine and are of a pious conduct.

Art. 58 In the ceremony of Baptism, both of children and of adults, the Minister shall use the Forms of the Institution and the Use of Baptism respectively drawn up for that purpose.

Art. 59 Adults are through Baptism incorporated into the Christian Church and accepted as members of the Church, and are therefore obliged also to partake in the Lord's Supper, which they shall promise to do at their Baptism.

Art. 60 The names of those baptized, together with those of the parents and witnesses, and likewise the date of Baptism, shall be recorded.

Art. 61 None shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper except those who, according to the usage of the Church with which they unite themselves, have made a profession of the Reformed Religion, besides being reputed to be of a godly conduct, without which also those who come from other Churches shall not be admitted.

Art. 62 Every Church shall administer the Lord's Supper in such a manner as it shall judge most conducive to edification; provided however, that the outward ceremonies as prescribed in God's Word be not changed and that all superstition be avoided, and that at the conclusion of the sermon and the usual prayers, the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper with the prayer for that purpose, shall be read.

Art. 63 The Lord's Supper shall be administered at least every two or three months.

Art. 64 The administration of the Lord's Supper shall take place only where there is supervision of Elders, according to the ecclesiastical order and in a public gathering of the Congregation.

Art. 65 Funeral sermons or funeral services shall not be instituted.

Art. 66 In time of war, pestilence, general calamities, and other great afflictions, the pressure of which is felt throughout the Churches, a day of prayer shall be proclaimed by the Churches appointed for that purpose by the latest General Synod.

Art. 67 The Churches shall observe, in addition to the Sunday, also Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The observance of second feast-days and of Ascension Day is left in the freedom of the Churches.

Art. 68 The Ministers everywhere shall on Sunday, ordinarily in the afternoon service, briefly explain the sum of the Christian Doctrine, comprehended in the Catechism,

which at the present time is accepted in the Canadian Reformed Churches, so that as much as possible the explanation shall be annually completed, according to the division of the Catechism itself.

Art. 69 In the Churches the 150 Psalms shall be sung, and the Hymns, maintained and adopted for ecclesiastical use by the Synod of Middelburg in 1933.

Art. 70 Since it is proper that the matrimonial state be confirmed before Christ's Church, according to the Form in use for that purpose, the Consistories shall attend to it. 1)

1) the observance of this article is left in the freedom of the Churches
(National Synod of Homewood, 1954, Art.74)

OF THE CENSURE AND ECCLESIASTICAL ADMONITION

Art. 71 As Christian discipline is of a spiritual nature, and exempts no one from civil trial or punishment by the secular authorities, so besides civil punishment there is also need of ecclesiastical censure, to reconcile the sinner with the Church and his neighbour, and to remove the offense out of the Church of Christ.

Art. 72 In case anyone sins against the purity of doctrine or piety of conduct, as long as the sin is of a private character, not giving public offense, the rule clearly prescribed by Christ in Matthew 18 shall be followed.

Art. 73 The secret sins of which the sinner repents, after being admonished by one person in private or in the presence of two or three witnesses, shall not be laid before the Consistory.

Art. 74 If anyone, having been admonished in love concerning a secret sin by two or three persons, does not give heed, or otherwise has committed a public sin, the matter shall be reported to the Consistory.

Art. 75 The reconciliation of all such sins as are by nature of a public character, or have become public because the admonitions of the Church were despised, shall take place (upon sufficient evidence of repentance) in such form and manner as the Consistory shall deem conducive to the edification of each Church. Whether in particular cases this shall take place in public, shall in Churches where there is only one Minister, and when there is a difference of opinion about it in the Consistory, be considered with the advice of two neighbouring Churches.

Art. 76 Whosoever obstinately rejects the admonition of the Consistory, and likewise he who has committed a public or otherwise gross sin, shall be suspended from the Lord's Supper. And if he, having been suspended, after repeated admonitions, shows no sign of repentance, the Consistory shall at last proceed to the extreme remedy, namely, excommunication, agreeably to the Form adopted for that purpose according to the Word of God. But no one shall be excommunicated except with preceding

advice of Classis.

Art. 77 After the suspension from the Lord's Supper and subsequent frequent admonitions, and before proceeding to excommunication, the obstinacy of the sinner shall be publicly made known to the Congregation, the offense explained together with the care bestowed upon him, in reproof, suspension from the Lord's Supper, and repeated admonition, and the Congregation shall be exhorted to speak to him and to pray for him. There shall be three such admonitions. In the first the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned that he be somewhat spared. In the second, with the advice of Classis, his name shall be mentioned. In the third the Congregation shall be informed that (unless he repent) he will be excluded from the fellowship of the Church, so that his excommunication, in case he remains obstinate, may take place with the tacit approbation of the Church. The interval between the admonitions shall be left to the discretion of the Consistory.

Art. 78 Whenever anyone who has been excommunicated desires to become reconciled to the Church in the way of penitence, it shall first be announced to the Congregation, either before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or at some other opportune time, in order that (provided no one can mention anything against him to the contrary) he may with profession of his conversion be publicly reinstated, according to the Form in use for that purpose.

Art. 79 When Ministers of the Divine Word, Elders or Deacons, have committed any public, gross sin, which is a disgrace to the Church, or worthy of punishment by the Secular Authorities, the Elders and Deacons shall immediately by proceeding sentence of their Consistory and that of the nearest Church, be suspended or expelled from their office, but the Ministers shall only be suspended. Whether these shall be entirely deposed from office, shall be subject to the judgment of the Classis, with the advice of the Deputies of the Particular Synod mentioned in Article 11.

Art. 80 Furthermore among the gross sins, which are worthy of being punished with suspension or deposition from office, these are the principal ones: false doctrine or heresy, public schism, public blasphemy, simony, faithless desertion of office or intrusion upon that of another, perjury, adultery, fornication, theft, acts of violence, habitual drunkenness, brawling, filthy lucre; in short, all sins and gross offenses, which render the perpetrators infamous before the world, and which in any private member of the Church would be considered worthy of excommunication.

Art. 81 The Ministers of the Word, Elders and Deacons, shall exercise Christian censure among themselves and in a friendly spirit admonish one another with regard to the discharge of their office.

Art. 82 To those who depart from the Congregation, an attestation or testimony concerning their profession and conduct shall be given by the Consistory, signed by two, or in the case of attestations given under the seal of the Church, signed by one.

Art. 83 Furthermore, to the poor, departing for sufficient reasons, so much money for traveling shall be given by the Deacons as they deem adequate. The Consistory and the Deacons shall, however, see to it that they be not too much inclined to relieve their Churches of the poor with whom they would without necessity burden other Churches.

Art. 84 No Church shall in any way lord it over other Churches, no Minister over other Ministers, no Elder or Deacon over other Elders or Deacons.

Art. 85 Foreign Churches whose usages differ from ours in non-essentials shall not be rejected.

Art. 86 These Articles, relating to the lawful order of the Church, have been so drafted and adopted by common assent, that they may and ought to be altered, augmented or diminished, if the profit of the Churches demand it. However, no particular Congregation, Classis, or Synod shall be at liberty to do so, but they shall show all diligence in observing them, until it be otherwise ordained by the General or National Synod.



p.s.

The Synod of Middelburg 1933 added to the Church Order of Dort an article that in the newer editions of the Dutch Church Order has been inserted as art.84 whereafter the numbering of the last articles follows as 85,86 and 87. Our Canadian Reformed Churches have adopted as ecclesiastical order the Church Order of Dort and never felt themselves bound by synodical decisions of our Sisterchurches since Dort. The article of Middelburg 1933 has been left out, but here follows its translation in the English language:

The Churches, meeting in Classes, Particular Synods, and General Synods, form together as many corporate bodies with respect to what belongs to the Churches respectively of that Classis, Particular Synod or General Synod in common. As such they are legally represented both by the respective Classes, Particular Synods, and General Synods, and by the Deputies who are appointed, instructed, and dismissed by those assemblies, and are in all their actions bound by their instruction.