

Report of the CRCA Sub Committee Netherlands to Synod Carman 2013 regarding relations with the Reformed Churches - Restored

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This report will include the following abbreviations:

RCR – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (restored)
RCN – Reformed Churches Netherlands (liberated)
GKNvv – Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland (voorlopig verband) [temporary federation]
GKD – Gereformeerde Kerk Dalfsen (dolerend)
FRCA – Free Reformed Church Australia
OPC – Orthodox Presbyterian Church
LRCA - Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford
BBK - Betrekking Buitenlandse Kerken (Relations Churches Abroad)

A. Mandate from Synod Burlington 2010

The sub-committee, appointed by Synod Burlington 2010, received the following mandate regarding the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (restored) (RCR) (*Acts of General Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 155, p. 246):

4.1 To give the matter of contact with the RCR to the responsibility of the temporary sub-committee of the CRCA to deal with the RCN.

4.2 To mandate this sub-committee of the CRCA:

4.2.1 To dialogue with the RCR in order to come to a comprehensive understanding of their concerns and actions.

4.2.2 To continue to seek ways to facilitate reconciliation between the RCR and RCN.

4.2.3 To do all this in close contact with the FRCA and the OPC.

4.2.4 To submit a comprehensive report of its activities to the churches six months prior to the next general synod.

B. The Committee and its activities

The sub-committee members are Rev. J. De Gelder, Rev. J. Moesker (convener), Mr. Gerard J. Nordeman, and Dr. C. Van Dam.

Since Synod Burlington 2010 the committee met fourteen times in Burlington to deal with this mandate as well as the other mandate the sub-committee had received from GS Burlington 2010, (Acts Art. 86, p. 131). It also met once with the deputies BBK of the RCR in Hasselt, the Netherlands. These deputies are Dr. P. van Gorp, Rev. S. de Marie (advisor), Br. A. van der Net. Another deputy, br. J. Houweling, was unable to attend.

Regular correspondence was maintained via official letters and email.

Copies of this correspondence will be made available to Synod.

C. Mandate 4.2.1 - To dialogue with the RCR in order to come to a comprehensive understanding of their concerns and actions.

1. Introduction

The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (restored) came into being as a result of concerns in the RCN. In several communities concerned members and consistories had appealed decisions to broader assemblies, but were repeatedly denied these appeals. They saw no other way out but to separate from those who maintained and held all synod decisions as settled and binding. This was done after repeated warnings and appeals to each consistory in the federation.

At present the RCR consists of 11 congregations divided over two classes. It numbers approximately 1200 members.

Although much of the documents and information to be worked through are in the Dutch language, the committee is grateful for the many papers the RCR has translated into English. The RCR has also initiated an English language publication called Reformed Continua and can be found on the Web at www.reformedcontinua.nl with the aim “to inform people about the Reformed Churches of The Netherlands (restored), events leading to the Liberation of 2003 as well as providing background information concerning related issues.”

2. Correspondence

The sub-committee commenced its work soon after having been appointed. One of its first tasks was to introduce itself to the RCR in a letter dated September 15, 2010, and to inform them of the mandate the sub-committee had received from Synod Burlington. In the same letter the sub-committee requested an opportunity to meet with representatives of the RCR in order to discuss the specific points in the mandate and to come to a comprehensive understanding of the concerns and actions of the RCR. It was further suggested that such a meeting could take place while deputies of the sub-committee were to be in the Netherlands attending Synod Harderwijk of the RCN in April, 2011.

In a letter dated January 25, 2011 deputies BBK of the RCR responded that although they considered it a “good thing to renew the dialogue”, they determined it more appropriate to first resolve a number of matters via correspondence before meeting face-to-face. They presented the sub-committee with the following:

- a. *The pronouncement and judgment regarding the content by synod Smithers and the reconfirmation by synod Burlington concerning the unlawful secession of the DGK.*
- b. *The influence of articles such as an article by Rev. K. Stam recently published in the Clarion.*
- c. *A judgment by deputies [CanRC] regarding the content of the correspondence between the GKV and DGK over the past years.*
- d. *In what manner the deputies judge the situation in the GKV, regarding de content, during the last three years. (With content we understand the doctrine according to Scripture and confessions and the application of the CO)*
- e. *The recognition of the Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford by DGK, whereby these brothers should also be involved in the discussion.*

In a letter dated March 16, 2011 the committee responded that, for the sake of opening a dialogue, we could proceed with such exchange of correspondence, but to do so after deputies had the benefit of attending synod Harderwijk of the RCN.

In the meantime the sub-committee heard about a possible visit by Rev. de Marie to Ontario scheduled for some time early November 2010. It therefore requested a meeting with him to be arranged at his convenience. The RCR in a letter dated October 18, 2010 declined the request on the grounds that: Rev. de Marie is not a deputy BBK; Rev. de Marie does not have sufficient time while in Canada; any meeting with the CanRC should be held by at least two representatives of the RCR; others issues should be resolved before any meeting can take place. In a letter dated October 26, 2011 the sub-committee once again approached the deputies of the RCR with the request for a meeting. The sub-committee planned to be in the Netherlands during the month of April 2012 in connection with meetings with deputies BBK of the RCN and GKNvv. It was suggested to the deputies of the RCR that rather than a slow, time-consuming and possibly confusing exchange of letters, a face-to-face meeting would be a better venue to discuss a number of matters, including the matters raised by the RCR above as well as a number of issues of concern to the sub-committee and the Canadian Reformed Churches. These are:

- a. *The grounds for your indirect declaration of the CanRC being false churches, as also verbalized specifically by Rev. de Marie in a public meeting in Ontario on November 3, 2010.*
- b. *The reasons for the act of liberation by the RCR.*

- c. *The timing of this liberation.*
- d. *Reasons for disunity between the RCR and the GKN(vv)*
- e. *Developments in the RCN.*
- f. *Possibilities in assisting one another in working towards church unity.*

The deputies of the RCR responded positively to the request and agreed that “*the correspondence between the CanRC deputies and ourselves has not always been flawless*”.

3. Meeting with Deputies BBK of the RCR

This meeting took place on April 20, 2012 in Hasselt, the Netherlands, and was attended by the brothers mentioned under B above. The discussions were conducted in a frank, but brotherly manner. Most of the proposed agenda items outlined in the correspondence above could be dealt with to some degree. At the close of the meeting thankfulness was expressed for the opportunity to meet.

An extensive report of this meeting is attached as *appendix A* on page 12.

The sub-committee in its contact with the RCR was immediately confronted with the decision of Smithers 2007. This Synod had agreed with the CRCA calling the separation that had taken place a “schism”, and to admonish the RCR for its unlawful separation.

Synod Smithers made these pronouncements based on information and recommendations provided by the CRCA in its report to the churches and Synod. The report relied heavily on the information received from the RCN and the brochure ‘Not beyond what is written’. This brochure was prepared by deputies BBK of the RCN for the benefit of the sister churches. In a supplement to their report, deputies CRCA acknowledged receipt of the brochure ‘Do not take words away from this book of prophecy’ an official response from the RCR to the BBK brochure. The deputies CRCA closed their observations regarding the RCR response with the words “*In other words, we readily admit that we have not investigated some of the matters which the GKH [RCR] raises as grounds for their so-called liberation, for the reason that no such specific mandate was given to the CRCA.*” (p. 95). This is unfortunate because the brochure does spell out in more detail where, in their opinion, the RCN has started to deviate from Scripture and the confessions. The brochure further outlines the concerns regarding the path of inter-church relations the RCN is taking in regards to the discussions with the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken. These are the same concerns we, the newly-appointed sub-committee, have addressed in our interim report in 2011 and in this report to Synod Carman.

4. Regarding the Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford

In 2007 a small number of ex-Canadian Reformed church members organized themselves as a congregation under the name *Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford*.

Synod Zwolle 2007-2008 of the RCR received a letter from the LRCA requesting closer contact. Deputies BBK were charged to investigate this request and report to the next synod.

In a letter dated June 3, 2010 the LRCA officially requested to enter into a sister church relationship with the RCR.

Synod Emmen 2009-2010 dealt with a report from the deputies BBK. In this report deputies declared that they needed more study to determine the lawfulness of the liberation in Abbotsford. More study was needed of the Westminster Confession, and to judge how the confessions function regarding more or less pure churches in the Presbyterian churches, in particular the OPC. They had no clear understanding yet of the influence of ecumenical [interkerkelijk] thinking and practices in the OPC on the spirit in the CanRC, of how far reformed doctrine was being relativized in the CanRC, and in how far the Canadian churches had been corrupted [verbasterd].

Synod Emmen considered that deputies BBK have a task to gather sufficient and relevant information regarding the LRCA in order for Synod to come to a responsible decision to enter into sister church relations with the LRCA. The lawfulness of the local liberation is of decisive importance. Synod Emmen also considered that the latest synods of the CanRC had expressed themselves negatively regarding the RCR by declaring them schismatic. And, as a third point, Synod Emmen took note that individual members in the CanRC since 2004 can no longer appeal synod decisions directly. This limits the office of all believers, which is unscriptural, they say.

Synod Emmen decided that deputies BBK, with advice from Rev. de Marie, would put together a list of questions regarding the basis on which the LRCA had liberated itself from the CanRC; to send this list to the LRCA in order for deputies to still receive answers during this synod; and for deputies by means of attending worship services and conversations with members of the congregation to become informed about the Reformed character of the congregation in Abbotsford. (*Acta van de Generale Synode van De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland Emmen 2009-2010*, Artikel 97, p.117)

Synod Emmen received a supplementary report from deputies BBK in which they recommended that synod decide to enter into a sister church relationship with the LRCA. They offered the following 4 considerations:

- The LRCA desires to live in accordance with the Word of God and uses the NKJ contrary to the CanRC use of the NIV;
- The LRCA has as basis the Three Forms of Unity, like the RCR;
- The LRCA uses the Church Order of Dort in its English version;
- The LRCA uses the Book of Praise.

Synod Emmen decided to recognize the LRCA as a true church and to enter into a sister church relationship with her.

It is important to take note of the grounds Synod Emmen used for this decision:

- The LRCA is faithful to our God in doctrine, service and discipline;
- The entering into sister church relations of the CanRC with the OPC and with the URC has caused errors (church, covenant, preaching) to enter the church which office bearers failed to notice or did not want to notice;
- Members of the CanRC did submit their concerns, appeals and requests for revision in a lawful way. The possibility to proceed with objections in an ecclesiastical way has been

taken away from them by a new synod decision within the CanRC regarding the lodging of appeals to synod by church members;

- By not honouring the submitted concerns the CanRC have placed peace in the church above the justice of Christ;
- These errors touch the heart of the Gospel and all of life of the church communion.

The Acts of Synod Emmen, Art. 98 show that two men, br. P. Drijfhout and br. A. van der Net had traveled to Abbotsford where they visited with church members, attended the church services on two Sundays, and sat in on a meeting of the Men's Society. These deputies reported that they gained insight in the developments in the CanRC, the OPC, and the URC. They learned that in the OPC a Baptist may preach as long as long as he does not teach adult baptism. Also discipline is rarely used in the OPC.

In connection with the lawfulness of the liberation in Abbotsford the Westminster Confession, used by sister churches of the CanRC, came into discussion. In particular the practice of an open Lord's Supper Table in the OPC, but also inside the CanRC itself, proved to have been an important ground for the liberation of the concerned. Another important factor was the blocking of church members to appeal synod decisions directly to synod. Effective 2004 one can only appeal decisions via one's own consistory. In this way the ecclesiastical route was closed for the concerned.

The deputies further reported that it had become clear to them that the brothers and sisters in Abbotsford tried everything possible to live according to Scripture and the Confessions.

In October 2010 Rev. de Marie and br. Joh. Houweling brought another visit to the LRCA. During the two weeks they were there Rev. de Marie officiated at a number of baptisms and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Also a consistory meeting was attended.

At the meeting in Hasselt the CanRC deputies questioned the manner in which the lawfulness of the liberation of the LRCA was confirmed.

Observations reported by deputies as recorded in the Acts of Synod Emmen are questionable at best and lacking substantiation. Never during any of the visits was a CanRC church or deputy of the CRCA contacted, not even the CanRC of Abbotsford. Also when an opportunity presented itself for the two RCR men in 2010 to meet with us, there was no interest in doing so.

The deputies of the RCR only relied on information provided by the LRCA and selected Acts of recent CanRC synods. The fact that disagreements with the CanRC and local consistories about totally different matters existed well before 2001 by some now within the LRCA is not evident the RCR reports.

Mandate 4.2.2 - To continue to seek ways to facilitate reconciliation between the RCR and RCN.

The committee, in its discussions with the deputies BBK of the RCN and RCR, made an attempt to find ways for reconciliation. It soon became evident that in spite of initiatives from both sides the divisions have only grown wider. While the RCR are still trying to keep communications open between the two churches, the RCN has with its decision of Synod Harderwijk decided to acquiesce in the status quo, and discontinued further contact.

The following is a summary of the correspondence between synods of the RCN and the RCR:

2003 – RCR Declaration of Liberation or Return

When in 2003 over 1000 brothers and sisters separated themselves from the RCN and formed the RCR they issued a “Declaration of Liberation or Return” (*Akte van Vrijmaking of Wederkeer*). In it they listed the various reasons for this separation and their concerns about the unreformed direction the RCN is going.

2005 – Call for Return by Synod Amersfoort-Centrum

Synod Amersfoort-Centrum 2005 of the RCN decided to issue to the RCR a call to return. In an extensive letter with several appendices they urged the brothers and sisters to reconsider their actions. The letter, written out of sincere concern and pastoral in tone, urged the members that had left to return considering the desire of our Saviour that all be one (John 17:21). In the unity of the catholic, undoubted Christian faith the broken relationship must be restored.

They further attempted to respond in detail to the concerns raised in the Declaration of Liberation, urging that within the church room must be given to different understandings and interpretations of Scripture. The departing of the concerned was considered unlawful since no one was forced to adhere to unscriptural doctrines and no office bearer was suspended or deposed for such. The letter asked that the deputies for church-unity of the RCR carefully take note of what is written and submit proposals to the next synod of the RCR to reconsider their separation. Synod authorized their deputies for church-unity, assisted by the moderamen of Synod 2005, to further explain and clarify this communication face to face in a meeting with the RCR should they agree to such a dialogue.

It is clear from the discussion that took place prior to approving the letter, that Synod Amersfoort-Centrum also had in mind the concerned brothers and sisters still in the RCN. The letter was primarily a declaration of what the churches stand for. This was done in seven considerations. Therefore the appeal is not just an invitation for a talk. It clearly is a statement of “this is how we want to be Reformed” with a call for the RCR to show where they think it deviates from Scripture and the Confessions.

2006 – Response RCR to Call for Return

In a letter dated April 15, 2006 General Synod Mariënberg 2006 of the RCR responded extensively to the Call for Return by Synod Amersfoort of the RCN.

The hope for reconciliation was well received, however Synod Mariënberg did conclude that the concerns expressed now are in shrill contrast to the way synod and the churches had in the past ignored the cries for understanding and consideration of the concerned in the RCN.

While agreeing that what is taught and maintained in the churches must be based on Scripture and the Confessions, the desire to allow room for matters that are not clear in Scripture or that need to be evaluated in the context of time and culture, leads to confusion and varying interpretations. It is necessary to be obedient to Scripture, not only with words but especially in deeds.

The argument that no one was forced to adhere or subscribe to unscriptural doctrines and no office bearers were suspended or deposed is flawed. Synod Mariënberg holds that within the plurality of the RCN, different views can stand beside each other with impunity.

The seven considerations and other points of Amersfoort were critically considered and responded to. In general, Synod Mariënberg found the request from the RCN unacceptable. They sensed that it was an attempt to convince them to return without anything having changed in the RCN.

Mariënberg found it particularly offensive that they now received a request for dialogue while in 2003, after all previous synod decisions were accepted for firm and binding, not a single consistory responded to their call for dialogue in the *Call for Liberation or Return*.

Since matters continue to deteriorate in the RCN and also Synod Amersfoort-Centrum upheld decisions of previous synods, the RCR saw no use in talks. The RCR no longer saw it as their task to work towards unity as long as there is no change or repentance in the RCN.

The call for reformation has gone out but has been rejected by every consistory within the federation of the RCN.

2008 – RCN response to letter Synod Mariënberg of the RCR

Artikel 117 12-09-2008 (Akta 2008 Zwolle Zuid)

General Synod Zwolle Zuid dealt with the letter of Mariënberg and decided to take note with sadness the decision of the RCR to dismiss the call for return. Synod also declared that the love of the RCN continues to go out to the brothers and sisters in the RCR.

They further decided to maintain the call for brotherly unity, but to acquiesce in the unwillingness of the RCR, as no other option appeared to be possible.

Zwolle Zuid maintained the willingness for talks and authorized the deputies accordingly.

This was conveyed to the RCR in a letter dated October 14, 2008.

2010 – RCR response to letter Synod Zwolle Zuid of the RCN

In a letter dated May 21, 2010 General Synod Emmen of the RCR responded to the communication from Synod Zwolle Zuid of the RCN.

In it they conveyed thankfulness for the expression of love and the need for continued striving for unity on the basis of God's Word and the Reformed Confessions.

However, they also noted that the letter of Zwolle Zuid did not react to the content and substance of the letter of RCR Synod Mariënberg. The RCR letter was a well-meant, heartfelt call for repentance and a return to the true basis of God's Word and its authority.

Out of love and compassion, and to assist in the dialogue, Synod Emmen restated the areas of concern:

1. Longing for unity in the true faith.
2. Scripture criticism removes the foundation from under the church.
3. The New Bible Translation leads astray.
4. The fourth commandment of our God: Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. The seventh commandment of our God: you shall not commit adultery.
6. The Lord's Supper is for members of the church.
7. Church unity at the expense of God's Word is wrong.
8. Appeal: Return to faithfulness to the Almighty
9. Wish: Together in unity of the true faith serving our God and Father.

The letter then continued with a very extensive and detailed elaboration of the points mentioned in which they tried to show where the RCN had deviated.

It closed with a prayer and the hope for repentance to be able to serve the Lord together.

2011 – RCN response to letter Synod Emmen of the RCR

In a letter dated June 30, 2011 Synod Harderwijk responded briefly that the letter of Synod Emmen had been dealt with and that a decision was made.

As an attachment Synod Harderwijk included the extract of the *Acts* dealing with this matter. Decision:

- a. To take note of the letter of the General Synod of the RCR dated 21 May 2010.
- b. To acquiesce with sadness in the dismissive attitude of the RCR, and no longer to react to this correspondence with respect to its content.

2012 – RCR response to letter Synod Harderwijk of the RCN

In a letter dated April 14, 2012 Synod Hasselt of the RCR responded that the latest letter from the RCN had caused sadness; especially since the letter from Synod Emmen of the RCR had been written in an extensive way out of love and concern. To then characterise this correspondence as being dismissive is hurtful. Synod Hasselt repeated the call for the RCN to return to Scriptural ways of the past.

Summary

It is clear from the above that the RCR are genuinely concerned about the direction the RCN have taken and continue to maintain. They have declared that the current state in the RCN compromises the consciences of the concerned members and they believe the RCN to be on a path of deformation.

At the same time, the RCN firmly believe that the RCR overstate the issues. They point to decisions of synods denying appeals either as being unsubstantiated, or on procedural grounds. They further point to the fact that no one is forced to adopt a doctrine they may struggle with, and that no office bearers have been suspended or deposed.

The call for return as issued by Synod Amersfoort was in fact a declaration: “this is who we are and this is what we stand for; you show us where we are wrong”.

When subsequent synods of the RCR attempt to show in detail where the concerns lie, the RCN did not respond in any substantive way. This has now been confirmed by Synod Harderwijk in its latest response.

In view of the above, humanly speaking, the committee sees no way to facilitate reconciliation between the RCN and the RCR. It is important therefore, that the Canadian Churches remember the Dutch churches in their prayers.

Mandate 4.2.3 - To do all this in close contact with the FRCA and the OPC.

Since its appointment the sub-committee has been in regular contact with the FRCA and OPC as well as other sister churches regarding the developments in the Netherlands.

Br Nordeman met with delegations of the sister churches at the 2010 meeting of NAPARC. Rev. De Gelder and Br. Nordeman met with deputies of the FRCA, FRCSA, RCUS, and the URCNA while in the Netherlands during Synod Harderwijk of the RCN.

Contact was also maintained through regular exchanges of emails in which reports, decisions, and recommendations regarding the Dutch churches were shared.

D. Contact with other church groups

Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland (voorlopig verband)

In its contact with the RCN and RCR to committee became aware that another church group had established itself in the Netherlands. This is a second group made up of concerned members that had left the RCN and small numbers of people that had separated themselves from the RCR. These churches especially grew out of the decision of Synod Zwolle 2008/09 not to accede to the appeal of the Ichthus congregation concerning the split of the church in Kampen and the deposition of Rev. Hoogendoorn. Subsequent to that decision, in 2009, the Ichthus congregation found itself excluded from the federation of the RCN. In November of that year two other churches which had separated from the RCR joined the Ichthus congregation to form a provisional church federation. Other churches and groups have joined subsequent to 2009. The committee deemed it wise to also take up contact with these churches in order to come to a better understanding of the decisions to leave the RCN and why part of some congregations had left the RCR.

In a letter dated February 3, 2011 the committee introduced itself to the GKNvv and shared with them the decisions of Synod Burlington regarding the RCN and RCR. We further inquired if there would be an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting.

Via an exchange of emails a meeting was agreed to and suggested agenda items were established. This meeting was arranged to take place on Friday afternoon April 1, 2011 while the brothers DeGelder and Nordeman were in the Netherlands attending the Synod Harderwijk of the RCN. Rev. E. Hoogendoorn, elder J. Odding, elder E. Vogel, and Rev. R. van der Wolf attended on behalf of the GKNvv.

We discussed the reasons why members of the GKNvv left the RCN, and why many did not do so in the first wave in 2003. We also discussed the brokenness between the GKNvv and the RCR, and if there are ways in which we could assist in restoration of unity in the faith. A full report on this meeting is attached as *Appendix B* on page 18.

In a letter October 26, 2011 we again contacted the GKNvv expressing appreciation for the above visit. A copy of our report was attached for their information.

In view of the committee's visit to the Netherlands for meetings with the BBK of the RCN we also suggested the possibility of a follow-up visit of the full committee with them.

In a letter dated January 20, 2012 the GKNvv brothers responded positively to this suggestion and expressed their delight in the prospect.

Again, via an exchange of emails and a letter dated March 29, 2012, a Saturday April 21, 2012 date was set for our meeting in the manse of Rev. Hoogendoorn in Kampen.

The distance between the two countries and the rapid developments in the various Reformed churches make it very difficult for the committee to follow exactly what is happening and the

specific issues that are at stake; in particular in the relationship between the GKNvv and the RCR. The meeting proved very beneficial to gain a greater understanding in these matters. In reply to the question of how the unity of believers could be best served, the deputies of the GKN stated that at this time they felt that such unity was best served by simply maintaining a principled Reformed course, and by staying close to the Word and confessions in the preaching and worship.

This was a very relaxed and informative meeting. We received a good impression about the GKNvv and its desire to stay close to Scripture and confessions whereas at the same time being open to discussions and contacts with other churches.

A concern we have is the ease with which churches are accepted in the federation. It is indeed a fact that part of two congregations left the RCR without following a church-orderly process.

We advise maintaining some form of contact with these churches to see how they develop and how they reach out to others who love the Word and the Reformed faith.

For a full report on this meeting see *Appendix C* on page 21.

Gereformeerde Kerk Dalfsen (dolerend)

A third group that separated itself from the RCN was part of the Reformed Church (liberated) in Dalfsen. It consisted of about 125 members including Rev. E. Heres and two deacons. They continued under the name *Gereformeerde Kerk Dalfsen (dolerend)* (Reformed Church of Dalfsen) After some internal differences which saw 25 members join the GKNvv, the congregation approached the RCR to for a possible joining that federation.

In the evening of April 19, 2012 the committee met with two representatives of the church at Dalfsen (GKD), Rev. E. Heres and elder Bas Lourens, at the home of Rev. Heres.

After we asked the Lord for His blessing on the evening, Rev. Heres provided a bit of the history that led up to the current situation in Dalfsen.

While the talks with the RCR are ongoing the GKD has decided to stay independent for the time being. It is agreed to continue in a relationship with the RCR for a period of one year during which they will seek to resolve differences and to become one.

It was good to meet with the two brothers. One thing that became clear is that they are grieved by the brokenness among those who have left the RCN. Their purpose has been and continues to be to promote the unity of faith among the concerned in the Reformed churches.

A full report and specific details please see *Appendix D* on page 23.

E. Conclusion

The committee thanks the Lord for the work that could be done in an ongoing spirit of brotherly harmony.

Our investigation has shown that there is a growing concern among the brothers and sisters in the RCN about the direction these churches are taking. This concern is not only fuelled by decisions made by recent Synods, but also by a growing sense of freedom and independentism. Some local churches have gone much further in their ecclesiastical relationships and liturgical decisions than what had been agreed on in major assemblies. There are basically two reactions to this somewhat confusing situation. On the one hand, many say the time has not come yet to separate; we need to work change into a more biblical direction from within. On the other hand more and more brothers and sisters feel conscience bound and say they can no longer accept the decisions that have been made, the direction the churches are going, and the more and more man-centered focus of the worship services. They leave for their own peace of mind and for the sake of the children growing up in this environment.

We appreciate that the BBK of the RCR was willing to meet with us and this has led to a better understanding of their situation.

We regret that the RCR has entered into a sister relationship with the LRCA and does not recognize us as true churches.

F. Recommendations

The committee recommends that:

1. Synod receive the committee report and thank the committee for the work done;
2. Synod ask the churches to pray that a true unity in the faith may develop within the fragmented ecclesiastical situation with the RCN and those who have left;
3. Synod note with regret that the RCR has entered into a sister relationship with the LRCA (June 10, 2010) and that the RCR does not recognize us as true churches;
4. Synod nevertheless charge the committee that is to be appointed to deal with our relationship with the RCN to continue the contact with the RCR and other groups that have left.
5. Synod charge the committee to maintain some form of contact with the GKNvv to see how they develop and how they reach out to others who love the Word and the Reformed faith.
6. Synod charge the committee to monitor further developments with the GKD.
7. Synod charge the committee to submit a comprehensive report of its activities to the churches six months prior to the next general synod.

G. Appendices

- A. Report on meeting with the RCR in Hasselt April 20, 2012
- B. Report on meeting with the GKNvv in Kampen April 1, 2011
- C. Report on meeting with the GKNvv in Kampen April 21, 2012
- D. Report on meeting with the GKD (dolerend) in Dalfsen April 19, 2012

Respectfully submitted,

J. De Gelder, J. Moesker (convener), G. J. Nordeman, C. Van Dam

APPENDIX A

Report of the meeting of the Canadian Reformed Subcommittee of the CRCA for Contact with the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, with representatives of the Reformed Churches Restored (RCR), held on April 20, 2012 in Hasselt

1. Br. A. van der Net opened the meeting and read Ephesians 4. We sang Ps.19:1, 3 after which he led in prayer. He then welcomed everyone present.
2. Roll call: the RCR was represented by 2 deputies BBK: br. A. van der Net and dr. P. van Gulp; dr. S. de Marie was present as advisor and br. L. Menninga to make the minutes.

From the CanRC were present: Rev. J. Moesker, dr. C. Van Dam, br. G. Nordeman and Rev. J. DeGelder.

3. In his opening words br. Van der Net stressed the importance of this meeting and the need to remain faithful to the Bible and the confessions in a time of increasing apostasy. He expressed the hope that we could have a fruitful discussion so that the Canadian brothers would come to understand and appreciate the position of the RCR.
4. The agenda was adopted as agreed upon in previous correspondence.
5. First item of discussion was point 1 as suggested by the CanRC committee: *The grounds for your indirect declaration of the Canadian Reformed Churches being false churches, as also verbalized specifically by Rev. De Marie in a public meeting in Ontario on Nov.3, 2010.*

De Marie denied that he used the expression ‘false church’ in his speech in Attercliffe at that time. Nordeman referred to the discussion in Attercliffe, as well as articles written in *De Bazuin*. He also pointed out that the RCR has accepted the Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford as a “true church”, which has implications for how one looks at the CanRC.

De Marie stated that according to Art. 29 BC, it is wrong to say that a church is a “true church” if you cannot call it a false church. Art. 29 BC does not say either that a church is automatically a ‘false church’ when the marks of the ‘true church’ are lacking. In other words: the fact that De Marie did not call the CanRC ‘false churches, does not imply that they can be considered ‘true churches’. Art.29 gives a separate list of marks of the false church.

When the RCR left the RCN they never called those churches ‘false churches’. But they have no longer the right to call themselves ‘true churches’.

De Marie stated that in its Synod Smithers 2007 the CanRC did characterize the RCR as a ‘false church’ by calling them ‘schismatic’. This statement was based on insufficient information.

The Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford did not declare the CanRC to be ‘false churches’, but has stated that not all churches in the CanRC are false churches.

6. De Marie then turned to the CanRC, by questioning whether the developments in the CanRC are in accordance with the Reformed confession. He first referred to the relationship of the CanRC with the OPC (recognized as true church in 1977 and sister churches in 2001). His claim was that the divergences, that were brought up in many reports and appeals to synods between 1977 and 2001 (like confessional membership, open Lord’s Supper, invisible church, theological views in the WCF, etc.) have never been properly dealt with.

To refute this accusation, Van Dam confronted De Marie with the fact that they have been members of the RCN for many years, without any protest, when those churches established relationships with Presbyterian churches (Korea, Scotland). De Marie admitted that in hindsight this may have been wrong.

De Marie then referred to further developments in Canada, and asked: ‘how can you reconcile your relationships with the RCUS, the URCNA and the ERQ with art.28 BC? He pointed at issues like: open Lord’s Supper, open pulpit, role of the confession, inward and outward covenant, invisible church, more than one true church at one location, membership of NAPARC, etc. He also asked: ‘Did the URCNA ever reject or distance itself from the doctrinal decisions of 1943?’ De Marie concluded this part by accusing the CanRC of embracing and working with the false doctrinal concept of the pluriformity of the church.

7. The next discussion was about the timing of and the reasons for the liberation of 2003. This was presented by dr. Van Gulp.
 - a. Timing – The concerns go back many years, and many matters have been appealed a number of times. But several synods before the year 2003 had consistently rejected all appeals and all requests for revision, which was the end of the ecclesiastical road according to the C.O. After that, all the local churches have been approached with a letter, an urgent call to repent and reject the decisions of the major assemblies. Not one consistory responded to this. Only then and not earlier local groups proceeded with liberation. This was not initiated by the Reformanda Society, and was not centrally organized or coordinated. Local churches were established and found each other. Unfortunately there are today still many concerned members in the RCN that feel they should stay in the RCN, especially when locally the situation is still relatively good. But you become responsible for the decisions of the federation. We could no longer do that. Before 2003 there were already people that would no longer worship in the RCN.
 - b. Reasons – The background of the changes and developments is a shift towards modern hermeneutics. The liberalism that was expressed already before 2003 has

become much clearer today. Examples are, according to Van Gulp: The decisions with regard to the 4th commandment. The changes in liturgy and worship, including the preaching. The introduction of new hymns. It was clear that also at the Theological University in Kampen this new hermeneutics became more and more dominant. Today the new hermeneutical approach works through and has its impact everywhere. There are local churches that admit to the Lord's Supper members that openly practice the homosexual lifestyle. The Classis was ok with this and no one seems to have objections. There is complete independentism in liturgical matters. Local churches ignore decisions of synods, as can be seen in the contacts with the NRC.

- c. Other comments – Van Gulp concluded that the judgement of Synod Smithers 2007 about the liberation of 2003 being “schismatic” was not correct and came too quickly. Was the liberation of 2003 perhaps too early? According to Van Gulp it came probably too late!

He also urged the CanRC not to maintain the sister church relationship with the RCN. To illustrate the danger of the relationship, he pointed at the slow developments that led to deformation in the CRCNA (in the 60s and 70s), as result of the fact that the CRCNA maintained its relationship with the Synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. He claimed that in the same way an ongoing relationship with the RCN will have a detrimental effect on the CanRC.

De Marie highlighted another aspect. According to him one of the backgrounds is also a new and different way of looking at other Christians, a more ecumenical mind-set, which led to the recent RCN participation in the “National Synod of Dordrecht”.

Nordeman inquired about the attitude towards others who did not leave the RCN right away with them in 2003, but who came later – are they condemned as disobedient? The RCR representatives deny this as false rumours. For instance: about the secession in Dalfsen the synod of the RCR has expressed thankfulness for God's work in 2010.

The brothers emphasized that the RCR simply wants to maintain God's Word in preaching and teaching, to be nothing else but ‘church according to Scripture and the confession’.

8. Moesker addressed the matter of the confusing fragmentation among those that have seceded from the RCN. What is the situation?
 - a. De Marie explained that as they were working on establishing a new church federation, independentism, unwillingness to adhere to the C.O., and internal problems have led a number of groups to split off from the RCR (Zwijndrecht, Bergentheim, Zwolle). Later on Kampen (Rev. Hoogendoorn) and a group in Dalfsen (separated from the congregation that had followed Rev. Heres in his secession),

- joined those groups and they have established the 'provisional federation' (voorlopig verband) of the GKNvv.
- b. When asked why they don't seek to cooperate, instead of fighting and criticizing each other, the response was: these are not true churches, but schismatic groups, dominated by independentism. It's not simply a matter of fighting. There are serious theological differences, because people have liberated themselves for different reasons. They have to repent.
 - c. With regard to Dalfsen (Rev. Heres) the situation is different. The seceded church of Dalfsen has indicated that they would like to join the RCR, and had developed a plan to do so in steps. Dalfsen suggested a 'trial' stage in which Dalfsen and the RCR would operate as "sister-churches", before they would merge. The RCR Synod has rejected this, and proposed to discuss matters, have Dalfsen answer a list of questions and then become one immediately. It has now been agreed to live side by side for a year in close contact with the ultimate objective to become one at that time
 - d. Sometime ago the RCR did send a letter to the GKNvv, indicating the need to discuss matters on the basis of God's Word as a way to find each other. The schismatic actions of the past are still a problem, as well as the perceived position of the GKNvv that the RCR does not stand on the basis of God's Word and the confessions.
 - e. Nordeman inquired about the role of the Synod in the RCR, suggesting that there could be a danger of hierarchy. As example he referred to the action of Synod to issue a list of sermons of ministers that are approved for use in reading-services. The response was that this is more a matter of giving advice, intended to help those looking for sermons.
9. Moesker asked if the RCR still see a task for themselves toward concerned members that are still in the RCN. The response was: 'Not in official contacts. That's no longer possible. But there are still some contacts with individuals here and there. The RCR has deputies for this. Dr. Douma and Dr. Wilschut are still seen as concerned leaders, but they deny the need for secession, which is counterproductive and does not help anybody. Today a man like Douma is standing on the sideline and no one is listening to him. On top of that: Douma is at least partly responsible for the current developments, but he sees now that it cannot be stopped anymore'.
10. How can we from Canada help the situation in The Netherlands? Prayer is important. And make sure that your information is accurate. In connection with this De Marie brought the situation around the Liberated Reformed Church in Abbotsford up again. He stated that it would be very important to respond to the critical questions from Abbotsford.

Nordeman pointed at the history that preceded the institution of this church in Abbotsford. The people that have formed this group come from different backgrounds, some were excommunicated and they have joined for a variety of reasons.

De Marie stressed that it's not about people. The question is: was the secession from the CanRC a legitimate secession, based on God's Word and the confessions, and in accordance with the church order.

The CanRC delegates made very clear that it would be wrong for the RCR to look at the CanRC and their ecclesiastical contacts through the eyes of Abbotsford. And there should be no misunderstanding: If the RCR wants the CanRC to break the relationships with the OPC, RCUS, URCNA, etc., in line with the demands of the LRC of Abbotsford, they should know that these things will not change in the CanRC.

To support his criticism of more openness for ecumenical contacts and interchurch relationships in the CanRC, De Marie pointed at an occasion that a Baptist speaker spoke in a Canadian Reformed Church (Joe Boot from Toronto), as well as articles written in Reformed Perspective by non-Canadian Reformed authors.

11. At the end of the meeting both delegations agreed to conclude that it had been good and helpful to meet each other face to face. We have learned much about each other. And via the report of the CanRC there will be more attention for the RCR at the next Canadian Reformed Synod.
12. The CanRC delegates expressed appreciation for the hospitality experienced, and for the opportunity to meet. The chairman, br. Van der Net expressed his thankfulness, also on behalf of the other RCR brothers, for the discussion with the CanRC deputation.
13. Dr. C. Van Dam closed with prayer.

C. van Dam

J. de Gelder

J. Moesker

G. J. Nordeman

APPENDIX B

Report of Meeting with Deputies Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland (voorlopig verband) on Apr. 1, 2011 Kampen, the Netherlands

On Friday afternoon April 1, 2011, brs. DeGelder and Nordeman met with representatives from the Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland voorlopig verband (GKNvv). Below are a compilation of notes taken during this meeting.

Present were Ds. E. Hoogendoorn, ds. R. van der Wolf, br. Jan Odding, and br. Ernst Vogel.

The meeting was opened by Ds. Hoogendoorn with the reading Isaiah 42:1-7 and prayer.

We informed the brothers of our desire to become better informed about the following:

- The reasons for leaving the RCN
- Reasons for not leaving in 2003
- Why not joined with the RCR
- What can we do to assist in reconciling?

The GKNvv currently consist of 9 congregations in Kampen, Hardenberg, Zwolle, Zwijndrecht, Nijkerk, Venendaal, Goes, Assen and Dalfsen

The reasons for leaving the RCN vary from congregation to congregation, but all were convinced they could no longer remain with a clear conscience in the RCN. Some, Zwijndrecht, Hardenberg, and Zwolle had left earlier with the RCR, but were for various reasons uncomfortable within this federation. GKNvv felt they had to extend assistance to them.

Main issues:

- RCN feel they have to change in order to accommodate change in culture and postmodernism. The 'spirit of the times' has influenced the churches to a large extent.
- Over-emphasis on being missionary congregations. Evangelizing is OK, but bringing the world into the church demands changes: the Bible needs to be explained differently, the respect for God in the worship services is lost. Touch on as few sore-spots or unpleasant topics as possible; it makes the worship service more friendly and acceptable.
- The approach that the church is for the people instead of for the Lord.
- Over the last number of years much has changed in Kampen (TUK). Students come in orthodox and leave liberal (vrijzinnig).

- Discussions for church unity with the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk. Compromises made in this process.

See also the various brochures written by di. Hoogendoorn and van der Wolf.¹

The reasons for not leaving in 2003 also vary from congregation. However, even though many had concerns about the developments in the RCN, for them it was too soon to take the step. They could still ratify synod decisions. They also still saw room, opportunity, and especially the duty to appeal various decisions from within the church. They considered the arguments brought forward by the RCR too narrow a basis on which to say: we can no longer in good conscience before the Lord justify our staying. The developments since 2003 have continued rapidly in the RCN. Repeatedly the broader assemblies confirmed and maintained the chosen direction, specifically decisions regarding Lord's Supper and divorce.

Why have you not joined the RCR? There is a sense that this "too early / too narrow" is evident in of a form of radicalism that minimizes the breadth of the foundation of the Reformed churches. And this radicalism has further become evident in the friction and unrest in various congregations.

The RCR goes back to 1944, but can you find answers there for 2010? The RCR goes only by the Church Order. They seek security/safety (veiligheid) behind the church order. It speaks volumes that no minister went with them. Also articles 27-29 B.C. play a leading role.

There is no ds. Hoorn spirit, but they strongly hold to - there is only one address. The GKNvv understands the RCR to say: "do you recognize 2003 as legitimate (a work of Christ), then you belong; do you not recognize 2003 as legitimate, then you don't belong.

There could also be a difference in the understanding of covenant and election. (They did not elaborate further on this.) They (the GKNvv) also observe a stiffening (verstarren) and persisting (volharden) in the RCR which causes them concern. Consistories are lording.

As already mentioned, some congregations did leave in 2003 but differences about the basis for instituting a church/congregation and synod decisions caused a rift. They found a home within the GKNvv later.

What can we do to assist in reconciling?

They see no opportunity for reconciliation with the RCN. Consecutive synods have confirmed the direction the churches have taken. They do not expect this to change.

¹ Om de ware oecumene; De kerk: forum of temple?; Schriftgezag maakt het leven gezond; De dwaasheid van het kruis. We were given copies of these and other booklets.

They have no contact with the RCR. The GKNvv are considered schismatic (scheurkerken) and are expected to join the RCR. GKNvv also accuse ds. Heres of considering them “scheurkerken”.

“He acts as if we belong together, but goes his own way.”

The GKNvv try to be a place of refuge for the concerned in the Reformed churches. There is no country-wide attempt for liberation. They want to be true to the Lord and hold on to Scripture.

After some closing comments by ds van der Wolf, Rev de Gelder closed with prayer.

J. de Gelder

G. J. Nordeman

APPENDIC C

Report of Meeting with Deputies Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland (voorlopig verband) on Sat. Apr. 21, 2012 Kampen, the Netherlands

Present

From Can. Ref. Churches: Rev. J. DeGelder, Rev. J. Moesker, br. G. Nordeman, Dr. C. VanDam
From Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland: br. J. DeBruijne, Rev. E. Hoogendoorn, Rev. R. Van der Wolf.

The meeting was opened in a Christian manner. The brothers were introduced. A young man, br. Hendrik Bezemer, studying at the Theological College of the Apeldoorn was introduced as brother to take minutes of the meeting on behalf of the GKN. There are presently two men who are in the process of studies for the ministry of the Word in these churches.

Rev. van der Wolf introduced these churches. He noted that the name of these churches was now Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland. There are churches in Kampen, Hardenberg, Zwolle, Zwijndrecht, Assen and Dalfsen with a number of other smaller groups throughout the Netherlands. Total membership is around 800 members. They are working at organizing church life according to Scripture and, as much as possible for a small number of churches, along the lines the Church Order of Dort. The aim is to try to prevent the scenario that some individuals or groups might end up directing the churches. The greatest concern at this time is to work on unity among the church members, as not all have left the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated) for exactly the same reason, and not all have exactly the same idea which direction the GKN ought to be going.

Rev. van der Wolf explained some of the origins of the GKN. These churches especially grew out of the decision of Synod Zwolle 2008/09 not to accede to the appeal of the Ichthus congregation concerning the split of the church in Kampen and the deposition of Rev. Hoogendoorn. Subsequent to that decision, in 2009, the Ichthus congregation found itself excluded from the federation of the RCN. In November of that year two other churches which had separated from the RCR joined the Ichthus congregation to form a provisional church federation. The other churches and groups have joined subsequent to 2009.

In response to a question concerning his way to the GKN, Rev. van der Wolf explained how he as minister of the RCN in URK was also appointed member of the committee struck by classis to deal with the issue of Rev. Hoogendoorn and the Ichthus congregation. Due to the stress of congregational work and committee conflict, Rev. van der Wolf became ill and was granted leave. His involvement in a couple of groups of concerned members and ministers in the RCN and their websites brought him into some conflict in his congregation and he realized, that a return to his congregation after his leave would be difficult, and so when he was approached and called in 2010 by an independent church in Hardenberg which had separated from the RCR, he accepted that call. This church later joined the GKN.

The concerns regarding the direction RCN were discussed. A major concern at this time was the preaching of the Word and the acceptance of more and more Scripture critical ideas in the RCN

and at the Theological University in Kampen. The interpretation of the Word has been the main topic of discussion of a number of websites to such as “Gereformeerde Kerk Blijven” and a group of concerned ministers called “De Vijfhoek.” Another concern addressed in the meeting was the “kleine oecumene” (local cooperation) which is taking place locally in Kampen and in other places between the RCN and the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken (NRC) as well as the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (CRCN). The NRC, for instance, has decided in its national assembly to admit women to all offices in the church, and though the official stand of the RCN is not to work together locally if there are female office bearers, it would seem that that ruling does not always function in certain local cooperation congregations. Related to this phenomenon is the concern that church agreements in the Church Order and at Synods are ignored at the local level. Those agreements function more in a facilitator role than a prescriptive role.

Inquiry was made as to the efforts to seek unity with the RCN. No energy is being spent on this at this time. We also remarked that the fragmentation of those who have separated from the RCN does not offer an appealing picture for those who are concerned in those churches. Are there any attempts to come to unity with the RCR or with Rev. E. Heres and the remaining separated group in Dalfsen? It was stated that there is no real interest from the RCR for any discussion. It seems to the GKN deputies that the RCR is basically controlled by a small group who wish to set the course of everything. This is why a number of groups have broken away from the RCR, such as in Veenendaal and Zwolle. This is also why they have had problems accepting Rev. Heres’ group after they applied to join the RCR and why that group has now also split. The GKN people would therefore rather wait to see how things develop in the RCR at this time and try to stay out of the internal struggles in that group. They see a certain radicalization in the RCR in certain areas, for instance in the how doctrine of the church as confessed in the Belgic Confession is applied. They are also concerned that in spite of the fact that the RCR have tried to organize in a church-orderly way, it seems as if control is being exercised over those via the broader assemblies.

In reply to the question of how the unity of believers could be best served, the deputies of the GKN stated that at this time they felt that such unity was best served by simply maintaining a principled Reformed course, and by staying close to the Word and confessions in the preaching and worship. However, some contact is maintained with concerned members in the RCN and speeches were planned and conferences being considered. The GKN also disseminate information online via video speeches and courses, for instance at domineeonline.org.

A concern we have is the ease with which churches are accepted in the federation. It is indeed a fact that Bruchterveld/Bergentheim and later Zwolle left the RCR without following a church-orderly process.

This was a very relaxed and informative meeting. We received a good impression about the GKN and its desire to stay close to Scripture and confessions whereas at the same time being open to discussions and contacts with other churches. We advise maintaining some form of contact with these churches to see how they develop and how they reach out to others who love the Word and the Reformed faith.

APPENDIX D

Report on Meeting Reformed Church (dolerend) in Dalfsen) 2012-04-19

In the evening of April 19, 2012 the committee met with two representatives of the church at Dalfsen (GKD), Rev. E. Heres and elder Bas Lourens, at the home of Rev. Heres.

After we asked the Lord for His blessing on the evening, Rev. Heres provided a bit of the history that lead up to the current situation in Dalfsen.

The RCN in Dalfsen consisted of 1350 members with 3 ministers serving two congregations. For some time a number of members expressed concerns about the direction the churches in the RCN and in Dalfsen were going.

Expressions of Scripture criticism are not dealt with in the churches; the celebration of the Lord's Supper is open to individuals not members of sister churches (Synod 2005 – Amersfoort); the liturgy is losing its Reformed character, etc.

The introduction of a liturgical play in which a young man played the role of the Lord Jesus was the last straw. In March 2010 about 125 members led by Rev. Heres and two deacons decided to leave the RCN.

This was done after numerous appeals to the consistory were denied, and the consistory had ratified all the decisions of GS Zwolle-Zuid 2008. This included decisions against which serious objections had been raised. The specifics of the decision to break with the RCN in Dalfsen can be found in a declaration signed by Rev Heres and the two deacons titled *Verklaring van Kerkelijke stappen om gereformeerd te blijven*. See the church's web site at <http://www.gereformeerde-kerk-dalfsen.nl/>

As congregation it had been decided not to join an existing church federation but to wait and enter into dialogue with the two groups that had recently left the RCN for similar reasons: De Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland (hersteld)(RCR) and the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (voorlopig verband) (GKNvv). The reason for this was a desire to bring these two federations together.

In January of 2011 a group of about 25 members led by 2 elders decided to leave the GKD in Dalfsen because they desired to join the GKNvv as soon as possible; they were uncomfortable with the RCR.

This decision was contrary to the agreement made as a congregation in March 2010. They were received on April 9, 2011 by the GKNvv as an independent congregation. The remaining members were grieved by this and also with the haste in which the GKNvv embraced those that had left.

In June 2011 the GKNvv decided to terminate the dialogue with the GKD Dalfsen as long as they continue talks with the RCR.

The GKD continued contact with the RCR and in October 2011 both groups recognized each other as church of Christ. The GKD requested GS Hasselt of the RCR to collectively find a way to church unity.

The GKD proposed an interim relationship along the way of Art. 47 of the (Dutch) Church Order, "Relations with Foreign Churches", including accepting each other's attestations and

opening the pulpit to each other's ministers. GS Hasselt denied this request. It submitted several questions to the GKD regarding a number of issues including, according to the representatives of the GKD, whether the GKD can recognize the liberation of 2003 as a work of the Lord. Generally, the GKD finds 2003 too early and not broadly based. However they can agree that for those, who left in 2003 based on their conscience, it cannot be condemned as long as they in turn will not be judged when based on their conscience they felt it to have been too early.

It is agreed to continue in a relationship for a period of one year during which they will seek to resolve differences and to become one.

C. van Dam

J. de Gelder

J. Moesker

G. J. Nordeman