

To synod 1971

Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad

April 13, 1971

To: General Synod New Westminster 1971
c/o Canadian Reformed Church
P.O. Box 70
New Westminster, B.C.

Dear Brothers:

General Synod Orangeville 1968 appointed as deputies:
"Mr. C. Ouwersloot, Rev. H. Scholten (convener), Mr. P. VanderSchaaf
Art. 180,g.)."

Due to illness, Rev. H. Scholten could not participate in
preparing this report.

I. DIE VRYE GEREFORMEERDE KERKE IN SUID AFRIKA

Through the then-secretary of the Editorial Committee of the
Canadian Reformed Magazine, the late Rev. F. Kouwenhoven, your Committee
was presented with:

- A. Carbon-copy of the "Acta Kaapstad 1968";
- B. "Protestatie" Rev. W. Boessenkool, c.s., January 30, 1969;
- C. "Akte van Voortsetting" of Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk, Pretoria
(clerk H.J. Nauta), February 15, 1969;
- D. "Kemptonpark 1968-1969", an article in the Dutch language for the
Reformed press, March 3, 1969.

The receiver of these documents proposed to his co-deputies
to contact their colleagues in South Africa and to present them with a
photo-copy of that article, requesting them to verify it and at the same
time offering our willingness to advise if possible and if desired. This
proposal was met unfavourably. As reason was given: We only have a task
when the official acts have been received (letter Rev. H. Scholten, April
4, 1969).

More materials followed. At present we have:

- E. (Official) Acta Kaapstad 1968;
- F. Grievance br. H.J. Nauta to the "Smalle Kerkeraad van die Vrye
Gereformeerde Kerk te Pretoria (hereafter called VGK Pretoria, clerk
VanRenssen or Boersema), February 2, 1969;
- G. Protest brs. K. Miske and M. DeJong to VGK Pretoria (clerk Van
Renssen), February 9, 1969;
- H. Grievance br. H.J. Nauta to VGK Pretoria (clerk VanRenssen),
February 9, 1969;
- J. Statement brs. H.J. Nauta, c.s. to VGK Pretoria (clerk VanRenssen),
February 15, 1969;
- K. Letter br. H.J. Nauta to VGK Pretoria (clerk VanRenssen), March 1,
1969;
- L. Reply VGK Pretoria (clerk VanRenssen) to br. H.J. Nauta, April 1,
1969;
- M. Letter VGK Pretoria (clerk VanRenssen) to VGK Kaapstad, April 23,
1969;

- N. "Verantwoording" van de 'Akte van Voortsetting' uitgave van die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk te Pretoria (hereafter called VGK Pretoria, clerk Nauta), May, 1969;
- O. Reply VGK Kaapstad to VGK Pretoria (clerk VanRenssen), June 2, 1969;
- P. Letter VGK Pretoria (clerk VanRenssen) to VGK Kaapstad, June 25, 1969;
- Q. Letter VGK Kaapstad to VGK Pretoria (clerk VanRenssen), August 14, 1969;
- R. Letter VGK Pretoria (clerk Boersema) to br. H.J. Nauta, October 21, 1969.

How did all these documents come into the possession of deputies? Partly because they were sent by the VGK Pretoria (clerk Boersema) to the Canadian deputies, though c/o Rev. G. VanDooren, who passed the envelope on (unopened) to the convener, and partly because Rev. H. Scholten wrote a letter to "Mr. M.J. Boersema" and one to "de Kerkeraad te Pretoria (scriba H.J. Nauta)", both dated October 19, 1970. T.U.

The writer of this report became aware of these letters not earlier than March 22, 1971, though he had written on May 6, 1969 that "no communications on behalf of deputies can be sent out before all of them have approved of them." April 16, 1970 he wrote a.o. as "agreed over the phone last Monday, I am to receive a carbon copy of all outgoing correspondence." V.D.
N.2

The next question is: what should be distilled from these materials? And then it is important to realize that this Committee filtered, not funnelled.

Synod Kaapstad, convened at December 18 and 19, 1968, could not be constituted due to lack of brotherly trust (VGK Pretoria (clerk Van Renssen) as quoted in N, page 37). The chairman of that meeting is reported to have voiced accusations against two Churches in his word of welcome (A, art 3; E, art.3).

This, of course, did not just fall out of the blue sky. Other things had happened before. The marriage of one of the office bearers of the Church of Pretoria left much to be desired, which culminated in the mysterious departure of his wife to the Netherlands on December 3, 1968 (C, a). This had created great unrest in the congregation (C, a).

Closely related to this situation, or maybe we should say because of this fact, views were held and also voiced, including from the pulpit (N, page 22), which boiled down to the following. If the marriage partners cannot get along at all any more and the one is hindering the other in the service of the LORD, then the best solution is to break up that marriage, to separate, or even, to divorce. The application of Matthew 18.9,10 then could be:

"And if your husband or your wife causes you to sin, cut him/her off and throw him/her from you; it is better for you to enter life separated or divorced than as husband and wife to be thrown into the hell of fire."

That is the evangel of the new dispensation. For the Son, Who created everything because of Him and to Him, does not squeeze life in such a manner, that no restoration of human life, when distorted by sin and hardness of heart, is possible 1).

1) "Anderzijds kunnen we zien, dat juist de Zoon, die alles om Hemzelf en tot Hemzelf geschapen heeft, het leven niet zo knelt, dat er geen herstel van door de zonde en hardnekkigheid der harten ontworichte mensenlevens kan zijn(L, page 7*)." N.2

*) This letter withdrawn October 21, 1969 (R.). The reason for this withdrawal, however, was not its contents (a discussion on the basis of the Word of God), but its character (personal (R.)).

These views when held, how the more when even propagated, must have a disastrous influence and a ruinous effect. For it breaks the sting to repentance and reconciliation.

Objections were brought forward from within the Consistory; questions raised by members of the congregation. Office bearers were suspended. From G.) and H) we understand that the Consistory calls this "desertion of the office", and from H, c) that preceding sentence of the nearest Church, as required in Art. 79 C.O., was not obtained.

It should be noted, however, that due to lack of information from the VGK Pretoria (clerk VanRenssen or later Boersema) not could be quoted from that source. O.) and Q.), communications from VGK Kaapstad, respectively five and two pages legal size, have impressed this Committee by their straightforwardness.

Therefore, basing our opinion on the material on hand, we have come to the conclusion that:

1. the views pertaining to the dissolving of the bond of marriage, as held and propagated by the VGK Pretoria (clerk Boersema), are to be rejected, since they are contrary to the Word of God and, consequently, bring disaster over the family and ruin over the Church;
2. the VGK Pretoria (clerk Boersema) by her unchurchly actions has done great damage to the congregation at Pretoria and to the sister churches at Kemptonpark and Kaapstad;
3. the VGK Pretoria (clerk Boersema) should be called to repent from the sins mentioned above and to reconcile with the VGK Pretoria (clerk Nauta);
4. the VGK Pretoria, reconciled in brotherly love, should be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, foremost in her own midst and also with the sister churches at Kemptonpark and Kaapstad.

We request Synod:

1. to adopt above conclusions 1-4 as its own, and
2. to instruct this Committee to notify the first forthcoming Synod of "Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika" of this.

Finally, we received:

- S. "Voorlopige agenda vir die Sinode van 'Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke' in Suid-Afrika, wat D.V. sal vergader op 4, 5 en 6 Februarie 1971 te Pretoria."

On behalf of the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches, br. C. Ouwensloot sent a telegram, wishing "the delegates at synod meetings the wisdom of God's Word in all their deliberations and decisions."*)

II. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA

On April 16, 1970 the Reverend S. Huh of the Presbyterian Koryo-Pa**) in Korea met informally with two deputies of this Committee. A report of this meeting was published in the Canadian Reformed Magazine. A condensation follows:

Financial difficulties very pressing, especially regarding their training for the ministry. Attitude towards the R.E.S., I.C.C.C. and

**) We have also seen it spelled "Kory-pha" or "Koryu-Pha".

*) translated by reporter.

O.P.C. Support from O.P.C. ministers meant very much. An historical outline is given. They desire fellowship with other Reformed Churches, since they are surrounded by enemies. This fellowship could be scholarly manifested e.g. by giving guest lectures in Korea. Financial support very welcome. Closer contact with our Churches would be greatly appreciated.

The following letter was received:

"The General Council
The General Assembly of the
Presbyterian Church in Korea
P.O. Box 190, Pusan, Korea
February 5, 1971

"Rev. H. Scholten
Box 76, Smithville,
Ont. Canada.

"Dear Rev. Mr. Scholten:

"Greetings in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ, It is our pleasure to hear about your churches through Rev. SunGil Huh who visited you last summer on the way to the Netherlands. We were very pleased to hear that you would like to have a fellowship with us in the Lord."

"Permit us to introduce ourselves to you. The Presbyterian Church in Korea consists of over 530 local congregations."

"Our doctrinal standards are the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and the Shorter Catechisms, while our church order is the Westminster Form of Government which is little amended for Korean situation. We have a correspondent relationship between De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland."

"After hearing from Rev. Huh the General Council recommended to the General Assembly that it would be good to have a correspondent relationship with you. The General Assembly decided so and turn over the necessary steps to the General Council. Since we have a correspondent relationship with De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland we would like to have the same relationship with you. Are there any specific differences between your churches and De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland?"

"May the Head and King of the Church bless your faithful labors in the Gospel."

"Sincerely yours in Christ *g*

Ki Jin Lee
Secretary
Box 190
Pusan, Korea.**)

DR.
SANG DON HAN
% KOREA THEOL.
SEM.

It should be noted that the sentence in the first paragraph could create some misunderstanding: "We were pleased to hear that you would like to have a fellowship with us in the Lord." Such a misinterpretation would arise if this line were to read as "that you would like to enter into church correspondence". For the first can be exercised without the latter, is there already, as a matter of fact. At the meeting of April 16, 1970 with the Reverend Huh, neither Rev. H. Scholten nor the

*) Copied from a type-written copy, not from the original letter.

writer expressed themselves; and if they did, it was more negatively than positively, especially pertaining to the guest lectures at their seminary.

A prerequisite for a full-fledged twosided correspondence, in our opinion, is that deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad have a thorough knowledge of the Korean language; they themselves should be able to read the acts of the general assemblies in the original language of publication, otherwise this correspondence is nothing else but a nice gesture and a mere formality.

Furthermore, gaining a deeper understanding of the Korean situation seems to be desirable. Helpful in this case might be the article by Harvey M. Conn

"Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church, An Historical Outline", in The Westminster Theological Journal, Volume XXIX, number 1 and 2, Volume XXX, number 1 and 2 (November, 1966, May 1967, November 1967 and May 1968), published by Westminster Theological Seminary, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19118. 92

The Seminary is completely out of the November 1967 issue; it is possible to obtain (the article in) this missing volume by writing to University Microfilms, Inc., 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. 93

Last year July Dr. Edmund P. Clowney, president of the Westminster Theological Seminary, mentioned to the writer the name of the O.P.C. Korean missionary: Theodore Hard, then c/o Westminster Theological Seminary. This is passed on for your information. 94

One of our Churches ^B and its minister ^E contacted this Committee, submitting and requesting information in the matter of correspondence and an intended trip to Canada. We wrote them what we knew. **C. F. H.**

The letter from the General Council of the General Assembly, dated February 5, 1971, does not deal with an intended trip. Your committee learned about this through correspondence received from the Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton and its minister, Rev. D. DeJong. The superintendent of the orphanage which is supported by the Edmonton congregation, wrote in a letter, dated October 17, 1970:

". . . Dr. Kun San Lee wanted that he would like to make observation tour to your church if you only extend your invitation to him, too . . . (cited from letter Consistory Edmonton, December 21, 1970)." In a letter, dated February 3, 1971, this superintendent of the Hapchon Orphanage, Mr. Suh Young Tae, writes:

". . . our desired intention that Rev. Kun Sam Lee of our theological seminary and myself desire to visit your church and denomination if possible. . . . However, it seems that we are impossible to take charge of expenses in visiting there due to the difficult situation of our personal circumstances and our denomination, it makes me and Dr. Lee hesitating on this matter of visit. I am sorry to bother you with my enquiries but would like to know if it is possible for your denomination to cover up all our expenses and inviting us if possible, and in fact I and him want to be present at your general meeting. . . . If the general synod accepts our invitation I would like to write again (cited from letter Rev. D. DeJong, February 25, 1971)."

Summarizing the above, we conclude that:

1. there is a request from the General Council of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea. asking for
 - a. "correspondent relationship" with our Churches;
 - b. the Standards of our Churches;
2. the question "Are there any Specific differences between your churches and De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland?" could be read as phrased by us under 1,b., but also differently. In the

- latter case it might be advisable to point out that the Canadian Reformed Churches are to be judged by their adherence to their own Standards and synodical decisions;
3. a. ~~deputies~~ have not been contacted directly about financial matters;
 - b. General Synod New Westminster 1971 can only deal with this matter if one or more of our own Churches have requested Synod to do so;
 - c. the financial support to Korean causes from among our circles merits continuation;
 4. a. unity in the Lord is not a result from church correspondence, but may (not necessarily has to) lead to it;
 - b. the language barrier might render a two sided church correspondence impossible;
 - c. broader and deeper insight in the Korean situation seems advisable,

Deputies recommend:

1. Synod appoint Deputies and include in their mandate:
 - a. to study the entire Korean situation and serve next General Synod with a special report on this matter;
 - b. to reply to the communication received from the Church in Korea along guidelines devised by General Synod 1971.

III. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA *)

WHOLE III
AMONG MY DRAFTS.

The Free Reformed Churches of Australia held their Eighth Synod ^{PT.} in Launceston, Tasmania, from May 18 to May 22, 1970.

The "Acts of the Synod 1970" were received, and from these Acts we could learn that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia as a whole may be considered to be our sister churches in the full sense of the word.

For your information we quote from the Acts the following:

A. Re Canada

"Synod decides, at the request of the Canadian Reformed Churches, to adopt the 'Forms for Public Announcement regarding members who, not yet having made Profession of Faith, are living in disobedience' as accepted by these Churches, and to recommend them for use in our Churches (art. 27)."

B. Re The Netherlands

"The Synod gratefully ascertains the fact that the correspondence with De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland can be continued, because it has been proved - among other things from the course of things around the 'Open Brief' - that the said Churches desire to remain faithful to the Reformed confession and Church Order; and judges that, according to the ecclesiastical rule, no attestations can be accepted as legal but those that were issued by the Churches with which the Free Reformed Churches of Australia are officially corresponding;

and further judges that, as long as the ecclesiastical proceedings cannot be considered as definitely completed, members of churches from outside the confederation who arrive here, cannot be accepted but after a conversation on the Reformed doctrine and Church government, and their ecclesiastical position;

on the ground that Synod ascertains that from the quarters of the churches outside the confederation sounds are heard that clearly deviate from the Reformed doctrine and Church government (art. 26)."

Reporter Mr. C. Ouwensloot.

C.O. KEPT THE ACTS.

ACTS NOT SEEN BY PV.

C. Re South Africa

"Synod is of the opinion that - during its sessions - it will be impossible to arrive at a right and definite judgment of the schism that has taken place in the Church of Pretoria, because some official documents, which are to be considered, were not received in time or are lacking;

and consequently decides to appoint a committee which has to report to the Churches and advise them regarding the conflict at Pretoria within six months (art. 24)."

D. Re Korea

"Synod decides to instruct the deputies to be appointed to continue the efforts to enter into a relation of correspondence with 'The Presbyterian Church in Korea' (art. 35)."

E. Rules for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches

- 1*) To take care for each other that the doctrine, church services, church government and discipline do not deviate from the reformed confession;
2. to send each other the Agendum and decisions (Acts) of the General Synods and the receiving of subsequent delegates from these other churches as advisors;
3. to consult each other previous to making any amendments or additions to confessional standards, church orders or liturgical forms;
4. to accept each other's attestations and admitting each other's ministers of the Word to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, applying what was determined at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1893, in article 165, which was further detailed at the Synod of Groningen in 1927 in article 161 (which includes the closer definition made in Amsterdam in 1936, article 122, decision I, 4);
5. to be responsible to each other concerning correspondence with third parties (Appendix II)."

F. Re Contact with 'The Presbyterian Reformed Churches'

"The deputy-church to be re-appointed will be instructed to continue keeping contact with these churches and inform our own Churches (art. 36)."

G. Re Bachelors of Divinity

"The following rules for the eligibility for call in our Churches of Bachelors of Divinity are adopted:

- 1.*) Regarding Bachelors of Divinity who have been trained at the Theologische Hoogeschool at Kampen or the Theological College at Hamilton, Canada, it is ruled that they will be preparatorily examined by an ecclesiastical meeting of our Churches. If there is a real possibility that the candidate concerned will be called by one of our Churches this examination will have the standards and validity of the peremptoir exam. In this case the praeparat-oir exam will also include the subjects of the peremptoir exam. The examination will be conducted by the examiners in a meeting in which two Churches are proportionally represented by at least four delegated, while the third Church Council, after having received a written report, has to give approval.
2. Regarding Bachelors of Divinity who have not studied at the Theological Colleges of our sister-Churches the following rules are adopted:
 - a. the value of their theological education and scientific ability will be examined by the Senate of one of the colleges of the sister-Churches;

*) To keep the references uniform, E.a,b,c,d,e. and G.I,II,III changed into 1,2,3,4,5.)

- b. the candidate shall contact the Council of the Church of which he is a member, which Council informs the deputies-examiners, who make the necessary arrangements with the said Senate in Canada or The Netherlands for the examination;
 - c. after the examiners have favourably reported the candidate is made eligible for call in our Churches in accordance with the above mentioned rules.
3. As for Bachelors of Divinity who have been made eligible for call by the foreign sister-Churches after their preparatory examination, it is ruled that they, if called by one of our Australian Churches, will as yet be peremptorily examined by our Churches in an ecclesiastical meeting (art. 47)."

IV. GEREFORMEERDE KERK MONTE ALLEGRE (BRASIL)

No voice, no one answered, and no one heeded. Deputies regret that they cannot report on the situation in Brasil.

See acts Reg. 59. 282. 283

V. DE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN IN NEDERLAND

A. Intention to enter into correspondence with Korea

General Synod Orangeville 1968 decided:

". . . to charge Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Churches to inform 'De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland' that the Canadian Reformed Churches regret that they have not been satisfactorily informed about the intention of the Dutch sisterchurches to start correspondence with a Presbyterian Church in Korea according to the same rules that have been agreed upon between them and us, and to request 'De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland' to provide as yet full information about the relationship with this Korean Church (art. 79, 5)."

Our Dutch colleagues reacted as follows:

"I regret that at present I am not in the possession of the exchange of correspondence. But I remember distinctly that before Synod Orangeville you as deputies have been informed about the development in the relations with the Churches in Korea. Later, in reply to a question on your part which kind of Presbyterian Churches these could be, an extensive summary was sent of the Presbyterian Church in Korea. Apparently our Synod overlooked that this reproach was not justified - though it was in possession of the exchange of correspondence - (letter Dutch Deputies, Rev. P. Van Gulp, secretary, June 25, 1970 *)."

We on our part responded to this reaction. Rev. H. Scholten wrote September 12, 1970:

"Please advise us which information you have in mind referred to in your letter of June 25, 1970, in order to enable us to verify your letter. We are not referring to the (extensive) summary which you sent us on our request. That summary dealt with the situation ('verhoudingen') in the Presbyterian Church in Korea, and not with the development of your relationship with the Church you are corresponding with now *)."

No sooner than April 1971 br. C. Ouwensloot and this writer learned from a letter, dated March 31, 1971, written by Rev. P. VanGulp, secretary Dutch deputies, that he had replied to Rev. H. Scholten's letter of September 12, 1970, namely on October 20, 1970:

"Your committee has indeed ('wel') been informed in time about the progress of the contacts with Korea. . . . We are still in the dark where there was a lack in communication. Maybe you could give

*) translated by reporter.

clarification? However, as far as we are concerned, it does not weigh too heavily on us, and the matter may be considered as terminated *)."

Due to the illness of Rev. H. Scholten, br. C. Ouwersloot was supplied with the materials regarding our committee; this letter of October 20, 1970 does not appear on the list he made up.

A study of the Acts Hoogeveen gave us occasion to write again. On page 467 f. appears the report of our Dutch colleagues. It is dated Spakenburg, February 1969. We wrote, March 17, 1971:

"In 'Acta . . . Hoogeveen' we read: 'page 467, paragraph preceding b. To the churches mentioned we also gave an account of the correspondence which Synod Amersfoort-West decided to offer to the Presbyterian Church in Korea;'

Since Rev. H. Scholten got a stroke, and visits and conversations are extremely tiresome to him and consequently cannot be bothered, please submit by return of airmail photocopies of the exchange of correspondence. c.c. Mr. C. Ouwersloot *)."

Per letter dated March 31, 1971, Rev. P. VanGurp answered: "the correspondence preceding Synod Hoogeveen is not in my possession anymore; it was transferred to the archive of General Synods. . . . Maybe you can find this correspondence in the archive of Rev. Scholten *)."

Since we did not find this correspondence in the archive received from Rev. H. Scholten, this matter was pursued by requesting Archivaris General Synods, c/o Columnakerk, Paulus Potterstraat 2-4, Groningen, the Netherlands, to provide us with the materials needed. Letter dated April 5, 1971.

Everybody will agree that this is not a matter of life and death, of to be or not to be. Why then all this mentioned? Because "Somewhere somebody did something wrong, and I think for records' sake this should be put straight. We therefore do need the exchange of correspondence pertaining (to) the churches in Korea. Even if Rev. Van Gurp is temporarily not in possession of these, for a good secretary it causes no problems to lay his hands on them. Then we can establish what happened. If it appears that the blame is on this side of the ocean, then Synod New Westminster better offer excuses (should have been 'apologies') for the unjustified statements (which) Orangeville 1968 made; if the business was screwed up in Holland, then it is their baby. In short: all we need are copies of the letters exchanged. Let the documents verify the facts (Quoted from a - rather informal - letter P.VdS to Rev. H. Scholten, September 3, 1970, as an answer to a request from the latter for critical remarks on Rev. P. VanGurp's letter, dated June 25, 1970.)."

Conclusion:

In its efforts to fulfill the char put on this Committee by Synod Orangeville, it is as yet not in a position to verify the statements made by our Dutch colleagues.

B. General Synod Hoogeveen

1. This Synod was preceded by the General Synods Rotterdam-Delfshaven 1964 and Amersfoort-West 1967.

In dealing with a report, Committee III of General Synod Orangeville 1968 stated among others:

"Your committee has to admit that the difference in interpreting and applying Art. 79 C.O. between Synod Homewood-Carman 1958 and the Dutch Synoden 1964 and 1967 is obvious.

"At both sides of the ocean a noodsituatie was acknowledged. At the Canadian side, however, this situation was not accepted as an

*) translated by reporter.

preceding sentence of the nearest church; such a procedure was called a violation of Art. 79 C.O.; at the Dutch side the nood situatie was accepted as an 'excuse'.

". . . We do realize that the Dutch procedure might become a precedent and so create a practice which, in fact, might cause conflict with the Church Order. . . . (page 100)."

We can only be grateful for this admittance and for this realization.

That same Committee III came also with a recommendation. And as ground for that recommendation was given:

"Even if the application of Art. 79 C.O. by Synoden 1964 and 1967 in the Netherlands differ from what Synod Homewood-Carman decided in 1958, . . . this does not give legitimate ground for the conclusion that the Dutch sisterchurches do no longer abide by the accepted Creeds and Church Order, or that a new binding interpretation of them has been adopted and imposed upon the Churches (page 101)."

Here we will summarize the above.

- a. There is an obvious difference in interpreting and applying Art. 79 C.O. between Canada 1958 and Holland 1964, 1967;
- b. the Dutch procedure might become a precedent;
- c. this precedent might create a practice which conflicts with the Church Order.

Furthermore, it should be kept in mind, that deputies, and consequently also Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad, are only errand boys. Servants in the fourth degree. But they have to be faithful servants. First and foremost to their Lord and Master in heaven. And therefore also to one another, also across oceans.

It is "obvious" that (one of) the ministers of resp. Groningen-Zuid, Beverwijk and Breca have been suspended with suppression of Art. 79 C.O.

This article states:

"When Ministers of the Divine Word, . . . , have committed any public, gross sin, which is a disgrace to the Church, . . . the Ministers shall . . . be suspended by preceding sentence of their Consistory and that of the nearest Church, . . . (structure of sentence, not its meaning, changed)"

Which are the principal gross sins?

false doctrine or heresy, public schism, . . . (Art. 80 C.O.)"

Whether the action of suspension was phrased as emergency situation, 'doleantie', maintaining the true doctrine, calling the true believers away from behind the unfaithful office bearers, in all these cases it was squarely against the voluntarily accepted rules of behaviour. For these are our words of honour. The Lord is pleased when we remind Him of His Word of Honour. He will judge us according to our faithfulness to curs, Rev. 22.12.

Does this mean or imply that everything which has happened in Holland or is going on over there should be the topic of discussion here? And that we should have groups of pro's and cons on this side of the ocean? This reasoning is not followed pertaining to South America, or to Australia, or to South Africa. Therefore, consistency only demands already to apply the same rule to the Netherlands. And that rule is well defined: to see to it that not

is deviated from the Reformed confession in doctrine, service, church-polity and discipline (see Acts Hamilton 1962, art. 139).

"Acta van de Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland gehouden te Hoogeveen van 15 April 1969 tot 25 Februari 1970" is a volume of 670 pages; our copies were cleared through Canadian customs January 18, 1971.

Synod was in session for 29 weeks (Appendix I, pages 439-449), while each session-week lasted 35 hours (art. 8), in total 1,015 hours. (We read: "en Vrijdagmorgen zal zij - de zitting - om 17.00 uur worden gesloten (art. 8)."

The decisions taken by Synods 1964 and 1967 and the matters resulting from them cover 330 of the 438 pages (articles 1-311), and kept Synod occupied for more than 21 session-weeks, 750 hours. There were 36 admitted delegates (art. 2, 29). In other words, Synod took 36,000 man-hours, or 1,500 24-hour man-days.

These statistics may serve as proof that this report cannot possibly present a "complete picture" and a justified evaluation of the articles 1-311.

One thing, however, can be stated with certainty:
Synod Hoogeveen affirmed Synods 1964 and 1967.

We conclude:

- 1a. that there is an obvious difference in interpreting and applying Art. 79 C.O. between Canada 1958 and Holland 1964, 1967;
- b. that the Dutch interpretation and application of Art. 79 C.O. has been affirmed by Synod Hoogeveen;
2. that it is a matter of interpretation whether herewith
 - a. the Dutch procedure has become a precedent,
 - b. and has created a practice which conflicts with the Church Order.

We recommend

that Synod New Westminster 1971 decide on the question whether, by the Hoogeveen-affirmation of Rotterdam-Delfshaven 1964 and Amersfoort-West 1967, deviation from Art. 79 C.O. has become a precedent and has created a practice which conflicts with the Church Order, and whether this has greatly contributed to the highly regrettable ~~estrangement~~ among brothers.

2. Should legally adopted children be baptized?

Synod decided: No (art. 376). Its considerations were *):

- a. Gen 17.10, Ex. 12.43-49, Acts 2.39 do not speak of adoption as ('zoals deze') regulated in the 'Burgerlijk Wetboek art. 344 onder 1', so that these passages from Scripture as such ('zonder meer') cannot be ground for the administration of Holy Baptism to them which are not born within the covenant;
- b. the appeal to Gen. 17.10-14 in favour of the administration of Holy Baptism to adopted children does not hold ('niet opgaat'), because the slaves which indeed ('wel') were included in the household of Abraham but excluded from the heritage by Scripture are emphatically distinguished from Isaac, Abraham's son after the flesh as his heir - Gen. 15.4, 17.7 and 8.
- c. Acts 2.38 and 39 teaches, that the promise of the covenant,

*) translated by reporter.

signified and sealed in Holy Baptism, is to ('toekomst') the believers and their children and to those that are afar⁴ off, as many as the Lord shall call; as e.g. Onisemus, though being a slave of the believing Philemon, is only called a brother after the Lord through the service of Paul ('eerst nadat de Here . . . hem er toe geroepen had, broeder wordt genaamd') had called him to it - Philemon 10,16a., compare also Gal. 3.28;

- d. appeal to the confession of the church regarding the office of the magistrates -art. 36 B.C., compare Rom. 13.1-7- does not hold, because the lawful magistrate can indeed declare that children to be adopted are children of the adoption-parents ('adoptiefouders'), but cannot make them their posterity, so that
- aa*) these children are and remain the posterity of the parents who generated them, to whom - if these did not belong to the covenant - no promises were given for them and their posterity;
- bb. these children and their parents - if the possibility of restoration is present - remain bound to the calling the Lord extends to them in the fifth commandment;"

Synod further considered:

- e.*the decision of Synod Dordrecht 1618/19 is to be considered settled and binding (Art. 31 C.O.) . . . and is consequently an hindrance to the baptismal of children born without the covenant;
- f. the creeds of the church (e.g. Q.74 H.C., B.C.art.34) and the form of baptism for children teach on the basis of the Word of God that 'baptism is in ordinance of God to seal unto us and to our seed his covenant', and that others may be baptized only after preceding profession of faith (compare Mark 16.16, Acts 2.38,39, Acts 8.36f., Acts 11.14, Acts 16.34, Acts 18.8);
- g. Art. 36 C.O. states that the covenant of God shall be sealed unto the children of the Christians by baptism."

Appendix 18 (pages 652*) presents the Majority Report of the Committee 'Ad Hoc'. It quotes 'het Burgerlijk Wetboek, art. 344 j, 1 en n.'

Point n reads:

"De adoptie kan door een uitspraak van de rechtbank op verzoek van de geadopteerde kinderen worden herroepen.
Het verzoek kan alleen worden toegewezen, indien de herroeping in het kennelijk belang van het kind is, de rechter van de redelijkheid der herroeping in gemoede overtuigd is, en het verzoek is ingediend niet eerder dan twee jaren en niet later dan drie jaren na de dag, waarop de geadopteerde meerderjarig is geworden."

The conclusion of this Committee is, that, on the basis of the existing rules for correspondence ('het plegen van voorafgaand overleg inzake eventuele wijzigingen of aanvullingen van belijdenisgeschriften, kerkenordening en lithurgische formulieren -Synod Amersfoort-West 1967, art.176. A.c.-')

it could have been expected that the sister churches abroad had been contacted before such a far reaching decision was taken.

This Committee recommends, that Synod New Westminster 1971 decide accordingly and instruct Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad to inform the sister churches in the Netherlands of its decision.

*) d,aa and bb;e,f,g. for reference sake changed from d,1,2 and 1,2,3.

3. From the Report of our Dutch colleagues, dated Spakenburg, February 1969 and appearing as Appendix 4 in Acts Hoogeveen we quote:

"1. The Canadian Reformed Churches
We did not receive as yet the official decisions of this Synod (Orangeville 1968), nor the Acts of this Synod.

"Prior to that there has been correspondence with the deputies of these churches for correspondence with churches abroad. That dealt among others with the correct meaning of the rules for correspondence regarding permission to officiating one another's ministers ('het laten voorgaan van elkaars predikanten') as well with the decision of Synod Amersfoort-West pertaining to the 'Open Brief'- see also under V - (page 465*)." 97#
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The same procedure as mentioned in this report under V,A. was followed here also:

Since this exchange of correspondence was not found among the materials received from Rev. H. Scholten, we wrote March 17, 1971, received a reply March 31, 1971 ("not in my possession any more") which made this Committee to write to the Archivaris of General Synods in Groningen, on April 5, 1971. **K**

Our conclusion:

This committee is as yet not in a position to verify the statements made by our Dutch colleagues.

Respectfully submitted

The Committee

C. Cuwersloot

P. VanderSchaaf

*) translated by reporter.