

APPENDIX V — (Acts, Articles 107, 108)

COMMITTEE ON CORRESPONDENCE WITH CHURCHES ABROAD

Report to General Synod, Coaldale, Alberta, 1977

Esteemed Brethren,

We hereby submit to you a report of the activities of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad, appointed by General Synod, Toronto 1974.

1. MANDATE

General Synod, Toronto 1974, gave our Committee the following mandate:

- a. to maintain correspondence in accord with the Rules for Correspondence and to do so with:
 - De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland
 - Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika
 - The Free Reformed Churches of Australia;
- b. to continue the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa), and to submit a report on this contact to the next General Synod;
- c. to send an invitation to sister Churches Abroad at least one year prior to the date the next General Synod is to convene;
- d. to have our Churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of sister Churches Abroad, if invited, and when desirable and feasible;
- e. to execute the decision made by this Synod (Acts, Article 57) to send an "appeal to Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (praeses Dr. C. van der Waal) to rescind their teachings concerning marriage and divorce and to earnestly seek the unity and fellowship of the faith with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika";
- f. to inform the Churches from time to time about that which is of interest in their correspondence with Churches Abroad.

2. RULES FOR CORRESPONDENCE

The rules for correspondence referred to in our mandate are:

- a. To take mutual heed that the corresponding Churches do not deviate from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline.
- b. To forward to each other the agenda and decisions of the broader assemblies and to admit each other's delegates to these assemblies as advisors.
- c. To inform each other concerning changes of/or additions to the Confession, Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while the corresponding Churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable.
- d. To accept each other's attestations and to permit each other's ministers to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments.
- e. To give account to each other regarding correspondence with third parties.
(Acts, General Synod Hamilton 1962, Article 139.)

3. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

3.1. Declarations

- 3.1.1. The following ministers of the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches, planning to travel abroad, requested and received a declaration that they are ministers in good standing in the Churches:

Rev. D. VanderBoom; Rev. G. Van Rongen (Australia); Drs. H.M. Ohmann;
Rev. J. Geertsema; Rev. D. DeJong; Rev. G. VanDooren; Rev. Cl. Stam;
Rev. J. Van Rietschoten; Rev. M. van Beveren; Rev. M.C. Werkman; Rev.
R.F. Boersema.

- 3.1.2. The following ministers of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland visited Canada:

Rev. J.H. VanderHoeven; Rev. J.A. Boersema; Dr. J.M. Arntzen; Rev. M. Janssens; Dr. C. Trimp; Rev. Joh. Strating; Rev. A. Jagersma; Rev. H.D. VanHerksen.

From the Deputies of the sister Churches in The Netherlands our Committee received for each of them a declaration that they were ministers in good standing in De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

- 3.1.3. Candidate J. DeJong, Hamilton, Ontario, requested — July 6, 1976 — a declaration that he was authorized to speak an edifying word in the worship services of the Canadian Reformed Churches. This request was made because of Candidate DeJong's planned stay and studies in The Netherlands.
Since Classis Ontario South, June 16, 1976, had examined Candidate DeJong and declared him eligible for call, granting him the right to speak an edifying word for the period of one year, we sent him the requested declaration.
- 3.2. **Correspondence Churches in Canada**
- 3.2.1. The Church at Edmonton, Alberta, requested — June 21, 1975 — to have a note published in the "Nederlands Dagblad" to remind visitors from the Churches in The Netherlands to take a travel attestation along.
We complied with this request and such a note has been published.
- 3.2.2. The Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, Burlington, Ontario, requested — January 5, 1976 — information regarding the progress made in the contact with The Presbyterian Church of Korea.
- 3.2.3. A similar request was received from the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church, Burlington, Ontario, January 6, 1976.
To both Churches a letter has been sent giving them the required information.
- 3.2.4. The Deaconry of the Canadian Reformed Church at Winnipeg, Manitoba, asked — February 9, 1976 — information about the Hapchong Orphanage in Busan, South Korea.
The information asked for could be given.
- 3.2.5. The Church at Toronto, Ontario, sent us — March 17, 1976 — a copy of a letter which they had received from the "Christian Reformation Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pastor: the Rev. Vincent C. Licatesi."
Toronto informed us that they had given this pastor our address. However, our Committee was not approached by this Church. In this letter it reads: "... we would welcome your correspondence in the fielding of fellowship in lectures and discussions on the problems that we face."
We passed a copy of this letter on to the Church at Grand Rapids so that the consistory knew about this request and could take up contact with this Church and if so desired approach General Synod about this matter.
As matters stand our Committee is not charged nor authorized to initiate new contacts with Churches.
- 3.3. **Correspondence — Miscellaneous**
- 3.3.1. From our Dutch Deputies we received a "Rapport inzake de Psalmberijming — aan de Generale Synode, Kampen, 1975." This was passed on to our Committee on the Church book.
- 3.3.2. A "Rapport inzake de herziening van het Kerkboek, aan de Generale Synode, Kampen, 1975" was passed on to our Committee on the Church book — Forms Section.
- 3.3.3. A "Rapport inzake de herziening van enige artikelen van de Kerkerde in opdracht van de Generale Synode van Kampen, 1975" has been passed on to our Committee on Revision of the Church Order.
- 3.3.4. Our Dutch sister Churches asked us a few times for the Appeal Christian Reformed Church since they, finalizing their contact with the Christian Reformed Church, considered to declare themselves in agreement with our appeal.
We approached our Committee on an Appeal Christian Reformed Church to send us copies.
As soon as the appeal was drafted — May 1977 — ten copies have been sent to The Netherlands.
- 3.3.5. From Dr. J. Faber a letter was received — December 12, 1974 — informing us

that he planned to visit relatives in The Netherlands and that he was willing — if so desired — to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at the General Synod Kampen 1975, at no cost for our Churches.

Our Committee appointed Dr. J. Faber as delegate, provided him with a credential and notified our sister Churches and General Synod of this appointment.

(For a report on this representation see under 5.5)

- 3.3.6. Dr. C. Trimp informed us that he had been invited to give guest-lectures at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the spring of 1977. He asked whether acceptance of this invitation would interfere with our policies with regard to the Christian Reformed Church. We answered that we were not aware of any impediments in this respect.
- 3.4. **Acts — Yearbook**
- 3.4.1. As soon as the Acts of General Synod, Toronto 1974, had been published — June 1975 — a sufficient number of copies were sent to the Deputies on Correspondence of our sister Churches in Australia, The Netherlands and South Africa.
- 3.4.2. Also copies of the Yearbook of our Churches have been forwarded to these Deputies, keeping them informed about the general activities and statistics of the Churches.
- 3.5. **Schooldag — Kampen**
On the occasion of the Schooldag Kampen of the Churches in The Netherlands, congratulatory messages have been sent on behalf of our membership.
- 3.6. **Provisional Agenda — Invitations**
The sister Churches in Australia, The Netherlands and South Africa have been invited to send delegates to the General Synod, Coaldale 1977. The First provisional agenda has been forwarded to them.
- 3.7. **Interim Report**
Your Committee did not submit such a report since there were not sufficient matters of interest in the correspondence with Churches abroad to warrant such a report.

4. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

- 4.1. **Correspondence**
- 4.1.1. Having received information that the (tenth) Synod of the Free Reformed Churches would meet in Albany, June 1975, we sent Synod our best wishes for a fruitful meeting.
- 4.1.2. The Deputies in Australia were kept informed about our correspondence with Churches abroad, e.g., the decisions taken regarding the Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk, South Africa (Praeses Dr. C. van der Waal). We also asked for a provisional agenda of Synod 1975 which has not been received.
- 4.1.3. We did receive the "Rapport van Deputaten voor Correspondentie met Buitenlandse Kerken" to be submitted to Synod Albany, 1975. From this report we quote:
"De Correspondentie met Canada had een levendig karakter, vooral van de zijde der Canadese Deputaten . . ."
"Uit de correspondentie met Deputaten uit Canada kunnen we concluderen dat deze zusterkerken in hun kerkelijk leven en in contacten naar buiten zich getrouw houden aan de normen van Schrift en Belijdenis . . ."
"Het Yearbook geeft een goede orientatie van het kerkelijk leven. Er is niet veel groei in het ledental der Kerken. Het Theol. College neemt een stevige plaats in in het leven der Kerken. Er is geen apart hoofdstuk gewijd aan de zendings-activiteit . . ."
- 4.1.4. Information was received — March 19, 1977 — that the Australian Churches now have "full correspondence with the Presbyterian Church of Korea" and that they think it worthwhile to consider "a sort of Reformed Oecumenical Synod

with delegates from Africa, Australia, Canada, The Netherlands (and Korea, Indonesia?),” although they realize that it will be difficult to arrange such a meeting.

4.2. Acts of Synod, Albany, 1975

4.2.1. This Synod met from November 1 - November 7, 1975. Some decisions are:

a. Deputies are appointed to revise the Church Order and to propose a definite text in the English language.

b. With regard to attestations:

“Synod does not deem it desirable or necessary to give a general decision regulating exceptional cases in which a church council, not without the advice of the neighbouring church, considers that it is proper before the Lord and His congregation to deviate from the general rule that only the members of the congregation or members of the sisterchurches with a valid attestation will be admitted to the Lord’s Supper.

Synod decides that in those situations in which applications to partake of the Lord’s Supper are received from members of churches, which in their own countries in confession, church polity and practice take position opposite to churches corresponding with The Free Reformed Churches of Australia, such applications will not be accepted.”

c. Regarding English Bible translations, the New International Version and the K.J.V. II are rejected.

Deputies are appointed to study the New American Standard Bible and the Revised Standard Version.

d. The decision of Synod 1972 that Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk (Praeses Dr. C. van der Waal) cannot be recognized as corresponding sister Church is confirmed.

e. As to the baptism of adopted children, it was decided that children adopted by believing parents on the ground of Genesis 17 should be baptized.

f. The discussion of an extensive report on the contact with the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia results in a decision to propose to this Presbyterian Church to agree to a meeting of representatives of both Churches in order to get better acquainted with each other.

g. Next Synod is scheduled for October 1977. No provisional agenda has been received at this moment.

4.3. Conclusion

From the correspondence and the Acts of Synod, Albany 1975, it appears that the Free Reformed Churches in doctrine and Church activities do maintain the standards of the faith and therefore we recommend to continue the correspondence with these Churches.

5. DE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN IN NEDERLAND

5.1. Correspondence

5.1.1. After Synod Toronto 1974 the Dutch sister Churches were informed about some decisions of special significance to them. Since the Acts of this Synod had not yet been published, a copy of our decision regarding the contact with the Christian Reformed Church was sent to them — March 1975 — also the decision regarding the preaching of guest ministers from Churches abroad.

5.1.2. In our correspondence with the Deputies in The Netherlands we asked them to also approach the Korean Presbyterian Church and to urge them to send us the requested material. Deputies have done so more than once.

They reported to Synod Kampen, 1975:

“Nog steeds is het ons niet gelukt het rapport van de zusterkerken in Korea inzake wijzigingen in de Belijdenis en de Kerkorde vertaald te krijgen, ondanks vele pogingen daartoe.”

(See further under “The Presbyterian Church of Korea . . .”)

5.1.3. The Committee received the provisional agenda of General Synod Kampen 1975,

and we sent Synod our best wishes. (Dr. J. Faber has represented the Churches.)

- 5.1.4. After Synod Kampen 1975, we were informed — February 28, 1976 — that Synod had decided to enter into Church Correspondence with “De Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoë (p.a. Ds. L. Kondamara).”
- 5.1.5. February 7, 1977, we received the Acts of General Synod, Kampen 1975. Deputies apologized for the fact that publication took so long and that we consequently received them that late.
- 5.1.6. Some interim reports, apparently published by our Dutch Deputies for Correspondence in papers in The Netherlands have not been received by this Committee.
- 5.1.7. The Canadian Reformed Churches did receive a cordial invitation to be represented at the General Synod of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, which is scheduled for April 11, 1978 at Groningen-Zuid.
- 5.2. **Request of Sixteen Persons in The Netherlands**
- 5.2.1. **Materials**

The Committee received:

 - a. a letter dated February 25, 1976, signed by H. Elsinga, J.Y. Poortinga, and P. de Vries;
 - b. a letter dated August 28, 1976, signed by the same persons;
 - c. a letter dated June 4, 1977, signed by 16 persons, namely: H. Elsinga, M. Elsinga-Kuipers, F.S. Elsinga, L.R.G. Elsinga, J.W.J. Elsinga, J.R. Elsinga, J. Hoorn, J.Y. Poortinga, A.J. Poortinga, N. Poortinga-Poortinga, J.E. Poortinga, E.S. Poortinga, R.G.J. Poortinga, M. van der Heide, C. de Vries-van Ekeren, P. de Vries.

Of the enclosures we mention the brochures “Buitenpost,” “Waakt,” “Goud,” “Entscheidung,” “Getuigenis,” “Weerlegging,” received with letter sub a, and “Maranatha” received with letter sub c.
- 5.2.2. From the brochure “Maranatha” it appears that all Canadian Reformed Churches from virtually the same persons received letters dated December 10, 1971 (signed by P. de Vries only), October 31, 1975, and June 4, 1977. Several of the Churches referred the senders to our Committee as the proper address for their correspondence.
- 5.2.3. **Contents of the Letters**

The letter of February 25, 1976, does not contain a request, but the hope and expectation is expressed that the Canadian Reformed Churches fulfill their calling with respect to the correspondence with sister Churches abroad.

The letter of August 28, 1976, has no request either, but exhorts the Churches and the Committee to fulfill their calling as mentioned in the previous letter.

The letter of June 4, 1977, states that the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have become false churches according to the marks of Article 29 of the Belgic Confession.

The request is made that the Canadian Reformed Churches terminate their correspondence with their Netherlands sister Churches and that the 16 undersigned persons be accepted as the rest of the covenant people which the LORD has still left in The Netherlands.
- 5.2.4. **Observations**
- 5.2.4.1. The Committee calls your attention to the fact that in their letters the authors do not submit grounds for their statement that the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have become false churches except for the information that all those churches have made “the wrong choice.” It is clear that the authors expect that the evidence will be found in the above-mentioned enclosures, especially in the brochure “Maranatha” which is said to have been compiled for the churches abroad and to contain “complete documentation of the decision” in The Netherlands. This “complete documentation,” however, repeatedly refers to all brochures received.
- 5.2.4.2. It is not the task of the Committee to formulate accusations against our sister Churches while those who complain neglect to state their case.

5.2.5. General Synod Hattem 1972/73

5.2.5.1. Since it appears from the enclosures that the authors of the letters have approached General Synod Hattem 1972/73 of our sister Churches, it is necessary to pay attention to what that General Synod decided in their matter. This will do justice to the Churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches have correspondence and will at the same time shed some light on the motive for the statement that the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have become false churches.

5.2.5.2. On behalf of those who signed the above-mentioned letter of June 4, 1977 (5.2.1.c) and of whom apparently no one belonged to our sister Churches anymore, three persons of the group addressed themselves to General Synod Hattem. They stated that in a number of congregations, in a Classis and in a Regional Synod they had found false teaching re: the doctrine of Church and Covenant and exhorted Synod to reject the false doctrines.

However, they emphatically declared that their letters did not constitute a gravamen which could be examined and tested in the light of the Scriptures, but that they approached Synod as witnesses with a testimony ("getuigenis") which was not to be questioned. "We do not address ourselves to you to hear from you whether or not the present false doctrine re: covenant and church is a false doctrine and whether or not we were rightly excluded (from the Church) because of our struggle against that doctrine. For that is not a matter which can be decided by you or by the majority of the church, but by God's Word only" ("Getuigenis," page 202).

Moreover, they beforehand declared every member of Synod individually guilty of the general unfaithfulness and of breaking the covenant, and informed Synod that, in case Synod would reject their testimony, all Reformed Churches that would approve such action would by that very fact become false churches according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession ("Getuigenis," pages 202, 203).

5.2.5.3. General Synod Hattem, Acts, Article 199, rightly rejected the testimony as being not in accordance with the apostolic teaching, I Corinthians 14:29, Romans 12:7, and I Corinthians 14:36, which demands that everyone should be willing to have his words and testimonies examined and tested by the light of the Scriptures. Synod answered the complainants that they by the character of their testimony denied Synod the right to submit their grievances to the scrutiny of God's Word.

5.2.6. Considerations

5.2.6.1. The Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad reported to General Synod Toronto 1974, that "the Committee with thankfulness may conclude from the Acts of General Synod Hoogeveen and of General Synod Hattem that the Netherlands sister Churches have not deviated from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline."

5.2.6.2. The requesters did not give evidence that the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have deviated from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline.

5.2.7. Recommendation

The Committee recommends to Synod not to grant the request.

5.3. Acts of General Synod Kampen 1975

Re: Netherlands National Authorities

It was decided to send a letter to the national authorities to express Synod's concern about the decay of spiritual and moral values in The Netherlands, e.g., with respect to the intended legalization of abortus provocatus. Synod appealed to the authorities to govern in accordance with God's revealed Word.

Re: The Theological College

Synod decided to lengthen the time required for the academic training for the ministry from four to five years and that the course of study is to be completed by a doctoral examination.

Proposals for a thorough renovation and extension of the buildings in use by the College were unanimously adopted.

Rev. D.K. Wielenga, lecturer of missiology since 1946 was most honourably released from his service because he had reached the age of 70 years; this release was to take effect on August 1, 1976.

Re: Voting Privileges for Women

Since a report of Deputies arguing against women's voting privileges was considered not sufficiently founded, Synod appointed again Deputies with the mandate to study the matter and to pay attention to the character of the election of office-bearers in all its aspects.

Re: Evangelizing

Synod replaced the decision of General Synod Utrecht 1923, Article 92, re: evangelizing by a new decision which does more justice to the calling and responsibility of the members of the Churches.

Re: Revision of the Church Order

The majority of the proposed new Articles of the Church Order were provisionally adopted. New deputies were to study the remaining Articles and to report to the next Synod.

Re: Liturgy

One hundred and fifty newly rhymed psalms were accepted to be tested by the Churches for a number of years. Also to be tested by the Churches were several new hymns whereas other hymns were deleted.

Again several liturgical forms were revised and adopted for use in the worship services, such as forms for the ordination/installation of office-bearers and for the solemnization of marriage.

Re: The Canadian Reformed Churches

Prof. Dr. J. Faber was received as the first delegate to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at a Synod of their Netherlands sister Churches.

Synod expressed its thankfulness for the fact that the Canadian Reformed Churches have exerted themselves to guard what has been entrusted to them as was apparent in their contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the termination of the discussion with the Christian Reformed Church and the refusal to establish correspondence with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (praeses Dr. C. van der Waal).

It was decided:

- a. to continue the correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches in accordance with the adopted rules;
- b. to forward a letter to the sister Churches abroad one year before the beginning of a General Synod of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland with the invitation to send a delegation to that Synod;
- c. in response to a similar decision of General Synod Toronto 1974, to request the consistories of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland to ascertain that a minister of one of the Canadian Reformed Churches whom they wish to invite to conduct a worship service, has a written proof given by the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad of the Canadian Reformed Churches that he is a minister in good standing.

Synod charged its deputies to issue a similar written proof to ministers who request such a declaration with a view to conducting worship services in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Synod further charged their deputies to request our Committee:

1. to send them the new concept of the Church Order which is being revised by the Canadian Reformed Churches;
2. to keep their Deputies informed on the progress made with respect to possible correspondence with the Korean Churches.

Re: Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika

Synod decided to continue the correspondence with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika according to the adopted rules.

These Churches were urged to establish contact with The Presbyterian Church in Korea.

Re: The Free Reformed Churches of Australia

Synod decided to continue the correspondence with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

The deputies of those churches would be requested to forward the report on contact with the Presbyterian Church of Australia; also to send the information whether their efforts to establish ecclesiastical correspondence with the Churches in Korea have had results.

The Korean Churches will be urged again to seek contact with the Churches in Australia and to answer the Australian letters.

Re: The Presbyterian Church in Korea

The Korean deputies had sent the information that no changes had been made in the Westminster Confession and the two catechisms and only minor changes in the Church Order; those changes would be translated into the English language and sent to the Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad.

Prof. J. Kamphuis of Kampen gave guest-lectures at the Theological Seminary at Busan during the spring of 1975. It was decided to again grant (one of) the professors of the College at Kampen the possibility to give guest-lectures in Korea, if so requested.

Synod paid much attention to the financial need of the Korean Churches. It was reported that the Netherlands Churches had collected fl. 680,000.00 for the new building of the Seminary at Busan. Having received a request for assistance also for the construction of a dormitory, Synod pledged the additional amount of fl. 320,000.00, being 65% of the estimated cost. Regular assistance was to be continued as follows: \$1,150.00 per month for the Seminary at Busan and \$50.00 per month for its library. It was further decided that, when sufficient additional information would be received, to support the publication of "The Korea Theological Monthly" with the amount of fl. 11,250.00 annually.

Upon a repeated request of the Korean Churches to send two "missionary professors" to teach at the Seminary in Busan, Synod considered that such an endeavour would be a new task which would entail new and also financial responsibilities for many years and decided to appoint deputies to study the matter with all its implications.

Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad were charged:

1. to consider to what extent the sister Churches abroad could be involved in the above-mentioned financial assistance;
2. to urge the Korean Churches to seek contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches, The Free Reformed Churches of Australia, Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika and with the Reformed Church of Japan.

Re: De Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoe

Authorized by General Synod Haltem 1972/73 to travel to Sumba, Indonesia, Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad delegated two of their ministers to visit two groups of churches, namely, "De Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoe" (c/o Rev. L. Kondamara) and "De Vrijgemaakte Kerken van Oost-Soemba c.a." (c/o Rev. K. Tanahomba) which churches are also served by Rev. P.P. Goossens.

Upon a report and recommendation of the Deputies Synod established ecclesiastical correspondence with De Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoe (c/o Rev. L. Kondamara), and decided to send an appeal to De Vrijgemaakte Kerken van Oost-Soemba c.a. (c/o Rev. K. Tanahomba) to terminate the relation with the Netherlands Churches "buiten verband" and to strive for unity with the Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoe. This decision brought to an end years of difficulties and struggle both in Sumba and in The Netherlands.

Re: The Christian Reformed Church

Synod decided not to continue the contact and discussion with the Christian Reformed Church regarding the rules for correspondence since the Christian Reformed Church in 1974, while changing the existing relations into a relationship of "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship" also decided to find ways for closer

contact with the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands and suspended judgment on the faithfulness of those churches.

Synod agreed with the Conclusion of General Synod Toronto 1974 of the Canadian Reformed Churches mentioned in Article 146 of the Acts and decided to instruct their Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad to consult with the Deputies of the Canadian Reformed Churches regarding the forwarding of an appeal to the Christian Reformed Church as was decided by General Synod Toronto 1974.

Re: Other Contacts

Deputies on Correspondence with Churches Abroad of our sister Churches reported on contacts with **Die Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika** (the so-called "Dopperkerken"). Synod was appreciative of the fact that those churches had admonished the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands for their deviations from Scripture and Confession. A letter will be sent to them dealing with some aspects of the rules for ecclesiastical correspondence.

Initial contact with **The Reformed Church of Japan** did not yield further progress. Efforts will be made to renew the contacts.

No progress could be reported on contact with **The Reformed Church of Taiwan**. From **L'Eglise Lumière in Congo** and **The Coptic Church in Egypt** no communications were received anymore.

Contacts with **The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ireland** and **The Free Reformed Church of Scotland** offered more perspective. However, those churches still are members of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Upon their request Synod authorized the Deputies to visit those churches in order to make the present contacts more effective.

Deputies received the broad mandate to seek contact with other churches abroad whenever they would see a possibility for correspondence with those churches in accordance with the adopted rules.

5.4. **Conclusion**

Whereas it should be borne in mind that it is not possible for your Committee to verify every decision in detail, the Committee may with thankfulness conclude from the correspondence and the Acts of General Synod Kampen 1975, that **De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland** desire to be faithful to God's Word and to abide by the Reformed Creeds and Church Order.

On the basis of the above the Committee recommends to Synod to continue the correspondence with **De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland** in accordance with the adopted rules.

5.5. **Report Representation — Dr. J. Faber**

From the Acts of General Synod Kampen 1975, it appears that the Rev. Dr. J. Faber on May 29, 1975, received a cordial welcome as representative of **The Canadian Reformed Churches** with whom **De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland** are one in faith.

Dr. Faber attended some sessions of Synod on May 29 and June 3, 4, and 12, 1975. He could give information regarding the revision of the Church Order in which our Churches are engaged. He also took part in the discussion on the new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism.

On June 12, 1975, Dr. Faber delivered an official address on behalf of the Churches in Canada. The president of Synod, the Rev. P. Lok, expressed the appreciation of Synod to have met the Canadian Reformed Churches in its representative, Dr. J. Faber.

(The address of Dr. J. Faber has been published in "Clarion," Vol. 24, No. 18.)

6. **DIE VRYE GEREFORMEERDE KERKE IN SUID-AFRIKA**

6.1. **Correspondence**

- 6.1.1. After General Synod 1974 we sent a letter to **Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke** — April 10, 1975 — informing them about some decisions taken, especially the one regarding **Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria** (Praeses Dr. C. van der Waal).

- 6.1.2. **Deputies of the Churches in South Africa answered — November 19, 1975 —** that they were thankful for the decision of Synod Toronto 1974 to continue the correspondence with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke.

In the same letter they wrote:

“Met dankbaarheid kan ik U tenslotte melden, dat de broederlijke verhoudingen binnen het kerkverband sinds de wederopneming van de Kerk te Johannesburg, weer functioneren en dat een toenemende activiteit ten goede geconstateerd kan worden.”

- 6.1.3. **An appeal has been sent — March 12, 1976 —** to Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (Praeses Dr. C. van der Waal) together with the decisions taken by Synod Toronto regarding the request of this Church to enter into correspondence with them.

In the appeal we urged the consistory to rescind as yet their teaching concerning marriage and divorce and to seek the unity of the faith with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika. No answer has been received.

- 6.1.4. **After a Synod was held in Pretoria 1976** we received a letter informing us about the decision that Synod adopted an official text of the rules for correspondence in the African language.

Rule 3 reads:

“Om vooraf met elkaar overleg te pleeg insake eventuele wijsigings of aanvulling van belijdenisskrifte, kerkorde en liturgiese formuliere.”

Since we do not have this stipulation in our rules for correspondence (om “vooraf met elkaar overleg te pleeg”) we informed Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke accordingly (see under 6.2.3.).

- 6.1.5. **When we — January 1977 —** received information that the next Synod was scheduled for February 3-5, 1977 at Pretoria, we sent a letter expressing our best wishes for a fruitful meeting and we requested to send us the Acts as soon as possible. (Acts of Synod Pretoria 1976 held in January were received by us in July 1977.)

No report or Acts of Synod 1977 have been received at this time.

6.2. Acts

From the Acts received we report the following:

6.2.1. Acts — Synod Capetown 1974

Rev. H.J. de Vries of Amsterdam/Zuidwest, The Netherlands, was invited to be a member of Synod in an advisory capacity.

Since Synod consisted of delegates of only two churches, namely of Capetown and Pretoria, Synod declared itself unable to deal with several gravamina mentioned on its agenda.

Synod made decisions regarding the position of the Church at Johannesburg and appointed two brethren to assist the Church at Johannesburg on the way to restoration of the severed relations with the confederation of Churches in accordance with the decision of this Synod.

6.2.2. Acts — Synod Pretoria 1975

This Synod was convened for the sole purpose of dealing with a report of the two brethren appointed by Synod Capetown 1974 as mentioned above.

Rev. C.G. Bos of The Netherlands was invited to be a member of Synod in an advisory capacity.

Synod decided to receive the Church at Johannesburg again into the confederation of Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika.

6.2.3. Acts — Synod Pretoria 1976

Delegates of the three Churches (of Capetown, Johannesburg and Pretoria) were present.

With thankfulness we may report that it appears from the Acts of this Synod that many of the difficulties with which Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika have been struggling, were solved. A number of decisions of previous Synods were rectified, e.g., a decision of Synod Capetown February 1972 re: the position of the minister of the Church at Johannesburg (see Report to General

Synod Toronto 1974); Synod declared that the Consistory of the Church at Johannesburg has the duty to adopt stipulations for the position of Rev. W. Boessenkool in accordance with Article 11 and Article 13 of the Church Order.

Synod decided to initiate contact with The Presbyterian Church in Korea for the purpose of establishing ecclesiastical correspondence.

Correspondence with De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, with The Free Reformed Churches of Australia and with the Canadian Reformed Churches was continued.

As Rules for Correspondence Synod adopted the rules which were re-worded by De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland in General Synod Amersfoort 1966/67, Acts, Article 176, of which Rule No. 3 stipulates consultation beforehand ("vooraangaand overleg"). The Committee informed the Deputies for Correspondence of Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika that Rule No. 3 of the Canadian Reformed Churches reads as follows:

"To inform each other concerning changes of/or additions to the Confession, Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while the corresponding Churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable."

We requested the Deputies to propose to their forthcoming Synod to incorporate this, our Rule No. 3, into the Rules for Correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches and to follow thereby General Synod Hoogeveen 1969/70 of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Acts, Article 412, which Synod judged that Rule No. 3 of the Canadian Reformed Churches was acceptable for correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

6.3. Conclusion

From the correspondence and the Acts we may conclude:

that the confederation of Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika has been restored and has regained its effectiveness, and that Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika have clearly shown that they desire to be faithful to God's Word and to abide by the Reformed Creeds and Church Order.

On the basis of the above the Committee recommends with thankfulness to continue the correspondence with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.

7. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA

7.1. In our report to Synod 1974 we reported on our letter to the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Korean Presbyterian Church (January 29, 1973). We requested to be further informed about the changes proposed and/or adopted in the Westminster Confession, Ch. 23 (Civil Magistrates), Ch. 25 (Church) and Ch. 31 (Synods and councils) and in the Form of Government.

7.2. Since we received no reply we wrote Dr. Sun Gil Huh on January 15, 1974, asking him to send us the documents needed.

No answer was received.

7.3. December 1974, the Rev. M. van Beveren, 2nd clerk of Synod Toronto 1974 and member of our Committee, received a personal letter from Dr. S.G. Huh with the request to organize with others financial support for the Presbyterian Church in Korea, especially for its work of evangelism.

No mention was made of this Committee's letter to Dr. Huh sent in January 1974. Rev. M. van Beveren answered — March 21, 1975 — that he was a member of this Committee on Correspondence and he referred Dr. Huh to the decision of Toronto 1974 regarding the financial assistance of the Korean Presbyterian Church (Acts, Article 140 D). He also reminded Dr. Huh of the letter sent to him by our Committee on January 15, 1974, regarding the changes in Confession and Form of Government and he urged him to do his part that this matter would be dealt with in Korea.

Our Committee did not receive a reaction from Dr. Huh.

7.4. January 1976, we did receive a letter from the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, signed by its chairman, P.S. Oh, Th.D. We were informed that new members of the Fraternal Relations Committee had

- been appointed. They further expressed the desire to have correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches and informed us about their doctrinal standards and Form of Government. This part of the letter was almost similar to the one of December 10, 1971 (see previous report IX, 2).
- No mention was made of our communications sent to the Fraternal Relations Committee and/or Dr. Huh. It seemed to us that this Committee made up of new members possibly never received and read our letters.
- This impression was strengthened by the fact that Dr. P.S. Oh wrote:
- “We had some internal problems in past years, so we were unable to deal with new things such as foreign relations. Now we have solved the difficulties and so try to plan new things.”
- 7.5. Also from another source we were informed about difficulties the Korean Presbyterian Churches had to cope with. Deputies of our Dutch sister Churches wrote us, December 27, 1974, that they had received the following information from the Fraternal Relations Committee in Korea:
- “We like contact with the Reformed Churches in Canada and Australia. We are very sorry that so far, through our internal conflicts, somewhat we were disturbed to do things well.”
- 7.6. Since the “internal conflicts” appeared to have been solved we saw no need to ask further information.
- We did, however, send a letter to the Fraternal Relations Committee, referring them again to letters sent to them (and Dr. Huh) in the past and enclosing copies of these letters. We repeated our request for more information, especially regarding the changes in Confession and Form of Government and we urged the Committee in Korea to answer as soon as possible also because our Synod would meet in the Fall of 1977.
- A copy of this letter had been sent to Dr. Huh, requesting him to do whatever possible to promote this matter in Korea.
- 7.7. That Dr. S.G. Huh became involved was also due to the fact that on September 20, 1976 we had received a letter from him informing us of his forthcoming visit to Canada (via Australia and The Netherlands) and expressing the desire to meet with our Committee.
- On September 28, 1976, some members of our Committee met with Dr. Huh in Cloverdale, B.C.
- We gave a brief review of the correspondence with the Fraternal Relations Committee and the letter sent to him January 15, 1974 and the one sent to him by Rev. M. van Beveren March 1975.
- The contents of these letters were discussed and clarified. That Dr. Huh had never answered any of these letters was according to him due to the busy and difficult time he and the Churches in Korea had encountered. He promised that upon his return to Korea he would urge the Fraternal Relations Committee, of which he was not a member and which is made up of the members of the moderamen of the latest General Assembly, to answer us as soon as possible.
- 7.8.1. On September 15, 1977, an answer was finally received from the Fraternal Relations Committee in Korea. They offer us
- “Sincere apologies for confusion and delays in complying with your request for the changes and amendments made in the Westminster Confession and the Form of Government of our constitution.”
- 7.8.2. In this letter of September 15, 1977, the changes in the Westminster Confession of Faith are quoted. They concern:
- a. Chapter 23, section 3. We are informed that this section “has been changed to conform to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (as amended in the years 1805-1922).”
- The present wording — which is also held by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church — denies the authority of the civil magistrates to interfere in matters of faith and is as compared to the original (1647) wording a great improvement.
- b. Chapter 25, section 6. (The letter says “section 1,” which must be a printing error).
- This section has been amended to read,

“The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. The Roman Pontiff is in no wise the head of the Church. Whoever rivals Christ within the Church, exalts himself and calls himself God is an anti-christ, Son of Sin, and Son of Perdition.”

The version of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is more concise but basically the same. The original (1647) declared the Pope of Rome “that Antichrist, that man of sin,” etc.

- c. Chapter 31. The letter states, “Although Chapter 31 of our Constitution is identical to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (as amended in the years 1805-1922), we have divided section one into two parts, giving us a total of five sections rather than four.”

The new sections one and two have the same wording as the O.P.C. section one. The Korean churches have returned to the original division of five sections but did not follow the 1647 section 2 which considers it lawful that civil magistrates call a synod, etc.

- 7.8.3. We have no objections to the above-mentioned changes made by the Korean churches in the Westminster Confession.

- 7.9. As to the changes in the Form of Government, the Korean Fraternal Relations Committee writes,

“Unfortunately, we are unable to provide you with the changes in our Form of Government at this time because they have not yet been adopted. While many proposals have been made, nothing concrete has emerged from the discussions. You can be sure, however, that we will give you a full report on these changes as soon as they have been adopted.”

- 7.10. On October 3, 1977, our Committee was informed by the Rev. D. DeJong of Edmonton, Alberta, that he in October, D.V., would travel to Korea for the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund and the Edmonton Korea Committee. We were aware of difficulties which the Executive Committee of the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund had with the superintendent of the orphanage in Korea they are supporting. Many letters sent to Korea about this matter by the C.R.W.R.F. remained unanswered. In a report of April 22, 1977, of which a copy was sent to the secretary of our Committee on Correspondence, the Executive Committee writes,

We feel “that communications between Korea and Canada are most inadequate. We are very dissatisfied with the lack of response that we get. It seems that the only way to get answers is to go and get them. And that is precisely what we propose.”

Consequently, Rev. DeJong has been approached to go and “get answers.” He offered his services also to our Committee and we authorized him to contact, if possible, the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Korea and urge them to send more information.

Rev. DeJong will also report to us insofar as it concerns our mandate.

- 7.11. This is how matters stand at the moment.

We have reported rather extensively on these matters, also to show how “correspondence” with Korea, even if it would be warranted in principle, is quite difficult in practice. The great language barrier plays an important role, of course. In our case also the fact that there have been serious internal difficulties in the Korean Churches has delayed the correspondence considerably.

- 7.12. In the light of the above (7.1.-7.11.)

considering that

a. Synod Edmonton 1965 judged that correspondence with Churches abroad should be established only after an accurate and serious examination has shown that these Churches not only officially have adopted the Reformed Confession and Church Government, but also practically maintain the same, Acts, Article 141, II;

b. since the Committee has had great difficulties to entertain contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea in their preliminary correspondence during the last 6 years, we seriously question whether official ecclesiastical correspondence will be effective and beneficial at this time;

c. our Committee could not finish its examination and evaluation, since

- (i) pertinent information regarding the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in Korea has not yet been received;
- (ii) a report of the Rev. D. DeJong, which may help the Committee in its examination and evaluation has not yet been received.

the Committee recommend to Synod

- a. to refrain at the present time from entering into correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea;
- b. that in accordance with the decision of General Synod Toronto 1974, Acts, Article 140, D, no financial assistance by the Committee on Correspondence on behalf of the Churches be considered before official ecclesiastical correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea has been established;
- c. to state that adoption of these recommendations does not imply that local or regional committees cannot financially support worthy causes within the Presbyterian Church in Korea;
- d. to charge the new Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to continue the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea and submit a report to the next General Synod.

8. **CLOSING DATE**

This report is closed off as per October 17, 1977.

We wish to apologize for the fact that this report reaches you at such a late date. However, it should be stated that this is also due to the fact that some Acts of Synods and important communications, needed for the proper drafting of the report, were received late.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee,
E. C. Baartman
A. C. Lengkeek
J. Mulder
M. van Beveren